

Post-congres excursion to the Dutch Waddensea area

Organisers :

Dr. E.J. Lammerts & F. Zwart; Staatsbosbeheer (the National Forest Service in the Netherlands)

Period : 30 July- 5 August

Group size : max. 30

Costs : €1500,- (with a possible refund of €100-200 when using double rooms in the hotel or triple rooms on the boat)

Including:

- all transportation from Utrecht, during the field trip and to Groningen railway station,
- all accommodation : twin rooms and some 3 and 4 persons at the boat and single rooms (a few double) in the hotels,
- all meals,
- guided excursions where researchers and nature conservationists will inform you on general ecological developments, the role of stabilising and dynamic processes in parts of the areas, the effects of different management strategies and the results of restoration projects.

The Wadden Sea area can be considered as the largest coastal wetland in Europe. It consists of saltmarshes along the mainland coast, transcending in a shallow sea with large intertidal mud flats, channels and shoals, and at the transition to the North Sea, a line of islands each harbouring dunes and small villages and sometimes also salt marshes and polderland. There is a great variation in ecosystems all originated by wind and water dynamics. The excursion will focus on this ecological variety, on the problems and perspectives for nature management in the area and on some actual ecological research topics. Further information on the area can be found at www.waddenzee.nl (with an English section and many links).

The program :

Friday 30 July :

18:00 Departure from Utrecht by touringcar, diner en route. Arrival in Harlingen harbour at ca. 21:00 hr. Signing on the "Iselmar", a traditional sailing ship with adequate sleeping accommodation.

Saturday 31 July :

Sailing on the Wadden Sea experiencing the large tidal differences, the ecosystems of tidal flats with its seals, birds and soil fauna. Attention will be paid to the management issues concerning effects of fisheries and recreation. Having diner at the boat and arriving in the harbour of the Wadden Sea Island of Terschelling in the evening. Staying over at the boat again.

Sunday 1 August :

Visiting old and young dune areas of Terschelling, showing different stages of natural succession in dry and wet dunes and the effects of different management strategies such as grazing, sod-cutting, mowing, burning and stimulating sand blowing. Diner and staying overnight in two hotels on the island.

Monday 2 August :

Departure from Terschelling by ferry. Visiting the mainland-saltmarshes along the north coast of the Province of Friesland. Demonstration of the landscape structures, vegetation zonation and management practices in former land

reclamation areas. In large parts marshes are restored by depolderization. Diner and overnight stay in Dokkum, the most northern city in Friesland.

Tuesday 3 August :

Visiting the Lauwersmeer area, up till 1969 as Lauwerszee being part of the Waddensea. It is primarily a nature area (National Park in formation). However parts are also used for recreational, agricultural and military practices.

Physically the area consists of a fresh water lake bordering more or less elevated sand flats where the results of primary succession can be seen and the effects of different management regimes. At the end of the day departure by ferry from the village of Lauwersoog to the Wadden Sea Island of Schiermonnikoog. Diner and overnight stay at the island.

Wednesday 4 August :

Visiting the different landscapes of Schiermonnikoog, partly by bicycle. Special attention for the development of natural primary dune slacks, integral water management and the natural zonation and management practices on the island's salt marshes. Again diner and overnight stay at the island.

Thursday 5 August :

Departure from Schiermonnikoog to the mainland. By touringcar to the city of Groningen railway station, from where there is easy access to all destinations in the Netherlands, including direct connections to Utrecht and Schiphol airport.