



**East Atlantic Flyway Seminar
Hallig Langeneß
Programme April 11 - 14, 2025**

Friday, April 11:

8:00 Breakfast

Seminar Session I:

9:00: *Jonny Waller, Schutzstation Wattenmeer Chair of the Board: **History and role of the Wadden Sea nature conservation society “[Schutzstation Wattenmeer](#)”.***

The Wadden Sea Conservation NGO "Schutzstation Wattenmeer" was founded in 1962 by a group of dedicated young people to protect the Wadden Sea. At that time, the association differed from the established nature conservation organizations in its approach of 'educational nature conservation': inspiring people to protect the Wadden Sea habitats through guided nature tours.

The extensive voluntary work of the association's members was supported and expanded from 1972 by people doing alternative national service. Later, full-time employees were added to the administration and protected area management. After more than 60 years, the association, which was originally run by dedicated members, has become an organization with full-time professionals. Today, around 40 full-time colleagues and almost 100 volunteers from the BFD and FÖJ work for the association at 18 locations along the West Coast of Schleswig-Holstein".

9:30: Peter Prokosch, [VISION 52](#), Arendal: **Introduction and expectations.**

A brief review of a similar seminar held two years ago on Hallig Langeneß. How excellent teamwork led to the book on the [East Atlantic Flyway of Coastal Birds](#). This year's seminar should provide a further valuable update on protected area developments and initiatives along the flyway.

10:00 *Excursion:* Watching shorebirds coming on land with the rising tide at Hunnenswarf.

13:00: Lunch

Seminar Session II:

14:00: Bernd Scherer, former Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park: **What we experienced and learned when administrating the [Schleswig Holstein Wadden Sea National Park](#).**

14:30: Hans-Ulrich Rösner, Head WWF Wadden Sea, Husum: **Looking back and into the future of the [Schleswig Holstein Wadden Sea National Park](#) from the perspective of non-governmental organizations.**

15:00: Karsten Reise, Karsten Reise, formerly Wadden Sea Station Sylt of Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research, Germany: **History and effects of research work in the [Schleswig Holstein Wadden Sea National Park](#).**

Aims of research in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea shifted fundamentally in the course of the past one hundred years. Research for land claim dominated until the National Park was born in 1985. From then on ecological research took over. Finally, research for coastal sustainability facing the effects of global warming became the common goal. In the future, research for the National Park should reach out beyond its landward boundary with long-term, real-world experiments.

15:30: Coffee Break

16:00: John Frikke, Danish Wadden Sea National Park: **Experiences and concept of the [Danish Wadden Sea National Park](#).**

16:30: *Jens Enemark, former Head of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat: How the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site was achieved for the [International adden Sea](#), and what effects it has.*

17:00: *Nicola Crockford, [RSPB](#), BirdLife in the UK: Protecting Flyway Ecological Networks in the East Atlantic Flyway.*

Late last year several species of East Atlantic Flyway coastal waders were uplisted on the IUCN Red List. Furthermore, evidence was published that the Slender-billed Curlew is the Western Palearctic's first mainland bird extinction since records began. This underlines that the urgency has never been greater to step up our conservation of these birds and the ecological networks on which they depend. The next most threatened shorebird after the Slender-billed Curlew is the Spoon-billed Sandpiper of the East Asian Australasian Flyway. It depends on the Yellow Sea of China, South Korea and North Korea as a staging area. Inspired by the Wadden Sea these three countries have been progressing their own serial World Heritage nominations. This has inspired other countries of that flyway to begin considering serial transnational nominations. The RSPB has been supporting these efforts as the Spoon-billed Sandpiper is one of its global species recovery priorities.

This has catalysed us, also inspired by the Wadden Sea, to embark on World Heritage nomination of English East Coast Wetlands (Humber to the Thames). This is for their global importance for migratory birds and as an exemplar of coastal adaptation and conservation management in the face of climate change. Conversations have now begun in this the East Atlantic Flyway about possible serial transnational World Heritage nominations inspired by RSPB's work with a) the Icelandic BirdLife Partner, to conserve the lowland habitat that supports many breeding waterbirds of the East Atlantic Flyway and b) the Portuguese BirdLife Partner to defend the Tagus Estuary from the building of a new Lisbon airport. BirdLife with IUCN is embarking on producing a common roadmap, for relevant treaties, governments, and stakeholders, of priority sites for conservation of flyway ecological networks.

20:00: Dinner

Saturday, 12 April:

8:00: Breakfast

9:00: Bicycling to the Westend of Hallig Langeness

10:45: pick-up by MS Seeadler and transfer to Hallig Hooge

Participation at the opening ceremony and other programmes of the "[Ringelganstage](#)" on Hallig Hooge.

17:30: Return from Hallig Hooge by MS Seeadler to Hallig Langeness:

18:30: Dinner at [Gasthaus Hilligenley](#).

Sunday, April 13:

8:00: Breakfast

Seminar Session III:

9:00: *Thomas Krumenacker, RiffReporter: [Project "Future Earth"](#): Raising public awareness for Wetlands - A journalistic approach (including also fresh news from a visit to the Banc d' Arguin National Park, Mauretania).*

9:30: *Barwolt S. Ebbinge, Team Animal Ecology, Wageningen Environmental Research, P.O. Box 47, NL-6700 AA Wageningen, Netherlands : **Effect of hunting closure on the population development and behaviour of Dark-bellied Brent geese.***

The huge numbers of dark-bellied brent geese, that "darkened the sky" along the coasts of western Europe in the early 1900-s had declined to only 16,500 in 1958 because of excessive hunting. A hunting ban in France, England and the Netherlands, and finally in 1972 in Denmark, and in 1976 in Germany resulted in a spectacular recovery of the population to more than 300,000 individuals in 1992. Annual survival was estimated from counts and age ratio- censuses at 78 %: before 1972, and rose to 88 % after 1972 as estimated from colour-ring resightings. Breeding success usually shows a typical three-year cycle, in line with the lemming cycle on the key breeding grounds on the Taimyr peninsula in northern Siberia.

Small geese like brent can only nest successfully if they manage to avoid predation by arctic foxes. In order to do so brent nest on small islands in

between large gull colonies, or in a lemming peak years also within the territories of nesting snowy owls. The latter is only possible because pomarine skuas (like snowy owls also only nesting in lemming peak years) attack these snowy owls so frequently that the owls can hardly prey on adult geese and their goslings and keep arctic foxes away. The extra breeding possibility in lemming peak years results in a higher breeding success for brent in such years. However, the number of predators (arctic foxes and snowy owls) has increased so much in the following year, that brent goose breeding success in the year following a lemming peak year is often virtually nil.

The spectacular increase in numbers of brent from 1972 to 1992 is now levelling off at 200,000 to 300,000 individuals. Possibly this is because safe nesting sites that were readily available when the brent Goose population was extremely low due to excessive hunting on the wintering grounds, are now becoming a limiting factor, resulting in a marked reduction in breeding success.

Another interesting phenomenon is that with the increased population size, the sex ratio in adult geese has changed significantly. In the period 1970-80 the proportion of adult males in our catches was 48 %, but from 2000-2010 this had increased to 56 %. Another factor that could have an impact on breeding success is faltering lemming peaks because of earlier snow melt followed by refreezing that in some years has devastating effects on the number of lemmings.

10:00: *Preben Clausen (by Zoom), Senior Resercher, Department if Ecoscience – Wildlife Ecology, University Aarhus, Denmark:* **The population development of the Svalbard Light-bellied Brent Goose and the changing history of hunting waterbirds in protected areas in Denmark**

10:30: *Hans Meltofte, Chief Scientist and Executive Editor [Arctic Biodiversity Assessment](#); Danish Ornithological Society (presented by Peter Prokosch):* **A worldwide assessment of flight distance changes of waterbirds about hunting.**

A worldwide assessment of flight distances of hunted and non-hunted waterbirds. Key findings: The flight initiation distance of hunted waterbird populations is 10-12 times that for non-hunted populations in regions with little or no hunting.

Measured as square meters, the area devoid of waterbirds in hunted populations is a factor of 100 larger than in non-hunted parts of the world.

11:00: Coffee break

11:30: *Nicola Crockford, [RSPB](#), BirdLife in the UK: Using flyway ecological connectivity to identify and protect sites from development threats – the example of the Tagus Airport in Portugal.*

In supporting BirdLife Portugal to prevent a new airport in the Tagus Estuary, the RSPB developed an approach to demonstrate to the national court and concerned treaties its transnational impact. Because these birds are shared along the East Atlantic Flyway, the airport would undermine conservation efforts of some 30 countries and 300 protected areas. This inspired a project of BirdLife's East Atlantic Flyway Initiative to apply network analysis to waterbird connectivity data from tracking and ring recoveries and sightings. The results for Black-tailed Godwit are published, revealing previously unknown key sites and key gaps in protection. The analysis for Eurasian Curlew is nearing completion.

12:00: *Andrew St Joseph; Initiator and former Head of the [IWRB Brent Goose Research Group](#); Farmer in Essex, UK: How Nature Conservation, Agriculture and Coast Protection fit together at the South-East Coast of England.*

12:30: *Myriam Johanna Perschke, University of Southern Denmark: Enhancing Marine Protected Areas: The Blue4all Project and Conservation Efforts in the Danish Wadden Sea.*

Development plans and environmental threats guide the research of protected area initiatives, such as the Blue4all project. This EU-funded marine protected area initiative, involving 22 partners, aims to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and resilience of marine protected areas (MPAs) through a bottom-up approach. The project engages with 12 living labs, including the Danish Wadden Sea, to co-create solutions with local stakeholders.

This talk will focus on the Danish Wadden Sea conservation area. Conservation area managers in the Danish Wadden Sea were engaged in identifying needs through comprehensive needs assessments, highlighting, among 12 other needs, the necessity for funding to support conservation activities. Subsequent research under Blue4all aims to guide the investment of funds in the area by demonstrating the value of nature and addressing development initiatives that pose environmental threats, such as the Esbjerg harbour development. The research focuses on sensitive and flagship species, including the dark-bellied Brent goose and dwarf eelgrass, to assess ecosystem services. Expert-based and visually appealing ecosystem service assessments are applied to link

components, functions, services, and pressures, supporting decision-making and illustrating the complexity and value of the Danish Wadden Sea.

13:00: Lunch

14:00: Eileen Rees, [THE Bewick's Swan Scientist](#); Chair IUCN SSC Swan Specialists Group; Editor of Wildfowl; University of Cambridge: **Trends and distribution for Bewick's Swans in the NW European and East Med–Central Asian populations: implications for site protection.**

14:30: Peter Prokosch, VISION 52, Arendal, Norway: **Examples and effects of no-take zones in marine protected areas from different parts of the world.**

The effects, significance, and challenges of no-take zones in marine protected areas in the context of the 30x30 / SDG 14 goal. A brief presentation of 12 examples of MPAs with no-take zones that were initially introduced against the resistance of local communities and fishers, who later became advocates of such areas.

15:00: Karin Olsen, Boad Member LEVE HAVET, Norway: **History and mission of the newly established “[Folkeaksjonen LEVE HAVET](#)” for safeguarding the marine environment and sustainable fishery around the Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja in Northern Norway.**

I am going to talk about the fight against oil/gas production in the region of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja in the north of Norway.

To give some insight into the reasons, there will be some information about Lofoten's history and fishing conditions and history.

15:30: Coffee break

16:00: Nicole Schrader, [Biosphere Halligen](#): **How the initiative of the North Frisian Island communities for a [UNESCO MaB biosphere area within the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park](#) improved mutual understanding and cooperation between nature- and culture-conservation societies.**

16:30: Pål Hals, Vice Mayor of Farsund, Head of Lista Lighthouse, Norway: **[The Western Agder Biosphere Initiative.](#)**

16:45: *Inge Charlotte Jensen, Department Ecoscience – Wildlife Ecology, University Aarhus, Denmark*: **From opposition to partnerships in the [Danish Wadden Sea area](#)**.

17:15: *Kristine Meise, Programme Officer | Biodiversity & Flyway Common Wadden Sea Secretariat*: **Development and Perspectives of the [Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative](#)**.

17:45: Summarizing together the key findings of the seminar and discussing ways of communicating them

19:00: Dinner

Monday, April 14 (high water at Oland ca. 16:00):

6:00: Breakfast

7:00: Excursion (walk over the mudflats during low water) to Hallig Oland. Here talk with local people about their experience with and attitude to the National Park & Biosphere.

10:00: Coffee & Cake in the local pub

11:30: Start returning over the mudflats to Langeneß

14:00: We perform a high-water bird count on Langeneß

20:00 Dinner and closing social evening.

Tuesday, April 15:

5:00: Wake-up.

7:15: Departure from Rixwarf (Westend) by ferry at to arrive in Schlüttsiel at 9:30.

