



4th East Atlantic Flyway Seminar on Langeneß, April 16-20, 2026

Draft Announcement (21.03.2026)

After the seminars we had on [Hallig Langeneß](#) in 2023 (producing a book on the [East Atlantic Flyway](#)), in 2024 ("50 Years Schutzstation Wattenmeer on Hallig Langeneß") and in 2025 celebrating the 40th anniversary of the [Schleswig-Holsten Wadden Sea National Park](#), **VISION 52**, **SCHUTZSTATION WATTENMEER** and the **WWF WADDEN SEA office** are planning another similar gathering back to back with the "[Ringelganstage](#)" (Brent Goose Days) also in 2026. It was 50 years ago when the storm surge of the century struck the North Frisian and Danish Wadden Sea coast on 3 January 1976.

The near-breaches of the dykes near Tønder, in particular, led to German-Danish plans to build a new dyke in front of the salt marshes and mudflats of the Rodenäs foreland, extending as far as the Emmerlev cliff in Denmark. The feared loss of Germany's most important resting area for three species of geese, including the then small population of pink-footed geese from Spitsbergen, led to the merger of several nature conservation organisations into the 'Aktionsgemeinschaft Nordseewatten' (AGN) in opposition to this embankment. The simultaneous fight against the resumption of plans to enclose the Nordstrander Bay, which were a continuation of earlier land reclamation policies, ultimately led to a historic change in the assessment of the irreplaceable and internationally valuable nature of the Wadden Sea. Finally, the embankments were built on a smaller scale, and the areas reclaimed from the Wadden Sea were turned into diverse wetland nature reserves (Rickelsbüller Koog and Beltringharder Koog – now hotspots for wetland birds and birdwatchers) rather than being converted into intensive agricultural land as originally planned.

However, the main outcome of the debate was the general abandonment of a centuries-old tradition throughout the entire international Wadden Sea region of a policy that always linked coastal protection with the reclamation of new land for intensive agriculture. Due to the high international esteem in which the Wadden Sea is now held, national parks were established instead (first 1985 in Schleswig-Holstein, where they met with immense resistance from the local population and dyke builders), and the entire Wadden Sea area of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark is now recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. A dedicated [Common Wadden Sea Secretariat](#), representing the environment ministries of the three countries, is continuously preparing further decisions to improve trilateral Wadden Sea protection.

Today, 50 years later, new coalitions and interest groups have formed between technical coastal protection engineers and nature conservation organisations. The local population now also supports the national park, has established the Halligen Biosphere Reserve and celebrates Brent goose Days every year, honoring the birds that were considered a plague 50 years ago and symbolised the once hated conservationists.

Today, we face completely different and, above all, shared challenges:

- 1) How can the Wadden Sea and other important mudflat areas along the East Atlantic Flyway be saved from destruction in the long term in view of accelerated sea level rise expected as a result of climate change?**

At the same time, we face the short-term challenge of achieving the so-called 30X30 goal the world has committed to for the East Atlantic Flyway by 2030. This leads to the following question:

- 2) How can further coalitions between local people and nature conservation organisations be created to complete the 'string of pearls' of effectively protected nature areas along the East Atlantic Flyway by 2030?**

Invited are experts and experienced individuals from the African and European West coasts to our 4th East Atlantic Flyway Seminar on Hallig Langeneß to answer these two questions. We are not only thinking of **nature conservation experts** and **biologists**, but also of **coastal protection technicians**, **representatives of local administrations** and **people who have experience**,

communication skills or can share secrets on how representatives of different local interest groups (e.g. fisheries) could be won over for the establishment of effective protected nature areas.

The seminar will be held in the same way as in previous years at the

[Seminar House of the “Schutzstation Wattenmeer” on Peterwarf/Hallig Langeness](#)

The status of the program as of today (21.03.2026) is:

Thursday, April 16:

18:00 Departure by ferry from Schlüttsiel (voyage via Hallig Hooge and along seal banks at low water; information on how to reach Schlüttsiel will be provided for those not familiar yet)

You can choose and take your evening meal in the cafeteria of the ferry (covered by the seminar fee)

19:45 Arrival on Hallig Langeneß at Rixwarf (bicycle rent)

20:00 Bicycling ca 8 km from the Westside of the Hallig to Peterswarf in the East (we organize extra transport for luggage and those, which need/want to take a car)

21:00 Social gathering with snacks and drinks

Friday, April 17:

8:00 Breakfast

9:00-12:00 Excursion to Hunnenswarf: watching birds, such as clouds of Red Knots, Bar-tailed Godwits, Grey Plovers and Dunlins, leaving the mudflats to the highwater roosts on the island (highwater ca. 13:30).

12:00-13:00 Lunch

Seminar Session I:

13:00 - 15:30 (presentations are 15 minutes each + 5 min. discussion)

Peter Prokosch & Harald Förster, VISION 52 & Schutzstation Wattenmeer: The storm surge on 3 January 1976 and how it influenced conservation development in the Wadden Sea; welcome of our host – the Schutzstation Wattenmeer.

The presentation reflects on the storm surge of 3 January 1976—now 50 years ago—as a historic turning point in how the Wadden Sea came to be understood and valued as a unique international ecosystem. For centuries, the region’s worth had been measured primarily in terms of land reclamation, with salt marshes and mudflats converted into agricultural land through embankment. In contrast, the events of 1976 helped shift perspectives toward recognising the ecological importance and vulnerability of this dynamic coastal landscape. Today, the Wadden Sea is protected by a network of national parks across several countries and has been designated a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site. The presentation also includes a welcome from the host, Schutzstation Wattenmeer, whose ongoing work supports the conservation and awareness of this exceptional environment.

Kees Weevers, The Netherlands: How action in 1965 against a plan for dams to Ameland led to the establishment of the Dutch Waddenvereniging.

This presentation tells the remarkable story of Kees Weevers, who as a 16-year-old boy in 1965 used a simple newsletter article to oppose plans to embank and reclaim the tidal flats between Ameland and the Dutch mainland, sparking public debate and mobilizing support that ultimately led to the creation of the Waddenvereniging and marked a decisive shift away from land reclamation toward protecting the Wadden Sea as a valuable natural ecosystem.

Christian Winter, Coastal Geology and Sedimentology, Institute of Geosciences, Kiel University: Will the Wadden Sea grow with the sea?

Jannes Fröhlich, WWF Wadden Sea Office: The challenge of sea level rise for natural and climate-adapted Wadden Sea Region: about dikes, restoration, and sediments.

The presentation provides an overview and assessment of the implementation of the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea Strategy 2100, highlighting its goal of preserving the Wadden Sea as both a natural ecosystem and a buffer for coastal protection in the face of climate change and sea-level rise, reviewing progress since 2015, ongoing research and pilot projects, and emphasizing the need for integrated, nature-based solutions, particularly sediment management and adaptive coastal measures, to ensure the long-term resilience of both nature and human communities in the region.

Wenyan Zhang, Helmholtz-Zentrum hereon GmbH, Geesthacht: **Co-design of climate impact modeling of coastal wetlands along the East Atlantic Flyway.**

Karsten Reise, Senior marine scientist; former director Wadden Sea Station AWI, List/Sylt: **Bleak or bright futures for the life of tidal flats in the Wadden Sea?**

With 4000 km², the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site comprises the largest coherent tidal flat area of the planet. For tidal flat organisms, (1) there is no ongoing negative trend, and (2) an ecological collapse is not in sight for the next few decades. (3) There is room for major improvements at the upper shore by dispensing brushwood groins and by trying sand nourishments instead, and (4) at the lower shore, there is a fair chance that introduced species could mitigate aggravating sediment mobility.

Hans-Ulrich Rösner & Bernd Scherer: Nature conservation visions for the Wadden Sea

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 – 18:30

Seminar Session II

Gwenal Hervouet Conservatoire-du-littoral, France:
How the EU MANABAS-Projekt/ with its Nature-based solutions and other projects are visi are visionary for the future of the French tidal flat areas.

Even Moland, Flødevigen Research Station, Institute for Marine Research, Norway: Norwegian and worldwide experiences with effectively protected marine areas.

Andrew St Joseph, Maldon, UK: How can coastal protection and nature conservation go hand in hand?

This presentation explores England's estuarine coasts as a vital part of the East Atlantic Flyway, highlighting how a mosaic of managed tidal estuaries, shaped by centuries of land reclamation and coastal engineering, supports over a million migratory and wintering waterbirds while facing increasing pressures from sea-level rise, ageing flood defences and competing land-use priorities; it examines regional differences between east and west coast flyway functions, emphasises the ecological importance of major systems such as The Wash, and focuses on the growing role of adaptive strategies like managed realignment, integrated coastal management and landscape-scale planning to balance flood protection, agriculture and biodiversity, positioning England's coast as a global test case for climate-resilient conservation and a potential World Heritage Flyway site.

Hyeseon Do, RSPB, UK: The Relationship between the East Atlantic and East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

Wei Chen, Helmholtz-Zentrum hereon GmbH, Geesthacht: The CoastShape project.

Fatima Rassoul Gueye, Master's program in Ornithology, Conservation, and Development at Gaston Berger University in SENEGAL: Langue de Barbarie National Park: Conservation status of coastline habitats and birds under anthropogenic and climatic pressure (tbc).

Oumy Signaté, Master's program in Ornithology, Conservation, and Development at Gaston Berger University in SENEGAL: The re-institutionalization of community participation in biodiversity management at the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (tbc).

19:00 Dinner at the seminar house

Saturday, 18 April:

8:00: Breakfast

9:00: Bicycling to the Westend of Hallig Langeness

(Ca 10:45: pick-up by MS Seeadler and transfer to Hallig Hooge tbc)

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

17:00 Dinner at «Friesenpesel» on Backenswarf, Hallig Hooge

19.15: Return from Hallig Hooge by ferry to Hallig Langeneß.

Ca 20:00: Return to the seminar house on Peterswarf, Langeneß, and thereafter a social gathering with snacks and drinks

Sunday, April 19:

8:00: Breakfast

Seminar Session III:

9:00 - 11:00

Barwolt S. Ebbing et al. *Team Animal Ecology, Wageningen Environmental Research, Wageningen, The Netherlands: Down and up again: Population size changes of Dark-bellied Brent Geese, a classic case of density dependence.*

Veronika Mohr, *Helmholtz-Zentrum hereon GmbH, Geesthacht, Germany: seagrass meadows in the Wadden Sea, with particular focus on their function for coastal protection and carbon sequestration.*

Mohamed Henriques, *Guinea Bissau: The further development of the protected areas in the Bijagós Archipelago and how the local people are involved and benefitting. (tbc)*

Ulf Bauchinger, *Scientific Coordinator LIFE Godwit Flyway | State Agency for Bird Conservation, Lower Saxony, Germany: The southern dimension of the*

East-Atlantic Flyway - conservation efforts for an umbrella species, the black-tailed godwit.

Naid Mubalegh, BirdLife Asker og Bærum, Norway: Overview about the most important tidal flat sites in Norway, their forecasted development and protection status.

Norway is portrayed as a wealthy and globally engaged nation with a strong international reputation in environmental leadership, yet one where significant gaps exist between ambitious conservation commitments and their implementation at home—particularly in marine protection and the effectiveness of national parks, where activities like hunting and fishing remain widespread. The country plays a vital ecological role along the East Atlantic Flyway, serving both as a breeding and staging area for numerous waders and waterbirds, with key habitats such as Arctic tundra, coastal wetlands, and scattered mudflats supporting species like golden plover, dunlin, and red knot. Important sites such as the Varanger Peninsula and Porsangerfjord highlight Norway's international responsibility for migratory birds, while also underscoring the vulnerability of these ecosystems. The vision presented calls for stronger, more effective protection measures, especially no-take zones and hunting-free reserves, to align national practice with international standards, with recent steps such as fishing-free zones in the Oslo Fjord offering cautious optimism. Ultimately, Norway is positioned to become a true global leader in conservation if it succeeds in translating its international ambitions into robust, credible action at home.

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00

Peter Prokosch, VISION 52: Visions for Svalbard.

Svalbard is a uniquely important High Arctic region where highly productive marine systems and tundra habitats support globally significant wildlife, particularly migratory birds of the East Atlantic Flyway, while also serving as an early warning system for climate change. It has evolved from a history of overexploitation to one of extensive protection, with most of its land and waters now safeguarded under Norwegian management shaped by the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, despite ongoing geopolitical tensions over resource access. International research, well-regulated tourism, and strong conservation policies

have contributed to a vision of Svalbard as the “best-managed wilderness area in the world.” Achieving this ambition, however, depends on extending protection more effectively into marine environments, positioning Svalbard as a potential global model for balancing environmental stewardship, science, and international governance in a rapidly changing Arctic.

Henning Thiessen, Kiel: Impressions from two visits to Grand Béréby, once designated as Ivory Coast’s first Marine Protected Area.

Thurid Otto, Stationsleitung, Landesamt für Umwelt des Landes Schleswig-Holstein (LfU) Integrierte Station Westküste: Wetland management in the Beltringharder Koog Koog and how the bird fauna in this nature reserve has developed to date.

The Beltringharder Koog, the largest terrestrial nature conservation area in Schleswig-Holstein and part of the Natura 2000 network, is intensively managed from a technical nature conservation perspective. The focus of the management measures conducted by the West Coast Integrated Station (belonging to the Schleswig-Holstein State Office for Environment) is to improve the breeding habitat conditions for the endangered coastal and meadow birds. Management measures include, for example, intensive monitoring of meadow and coastal breeding birds, water management, seasonal extensive grazing, removing woody plants, mowing and mulching after the breeding season, and predation management. Due to this focused management, breeding populations of endangered species such as northern lapwing, common redshank, common ringed plover, and black-tailed godwit have increased.

13:00: Lunch

14:00 - 18:00 with a break

Inge Charlotte Jensen, Institute of Eco-science, Aarhus University
Conflict resolution and coalition building along the East Atlantic Flyway. Learnings from the past and ideas for the future.

Britta Diederichs, Deputy Director, National Park Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea: Bridging Tradition and Innovation: Multiple Pathways in Conservation Planning.

Kristine Meise, Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat: Integrating monitoring and research results into local management - the latest plans of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative.

17:45: Summarizing together the key findings of the seminar and discussing ways of communicating them, among other through a second East Atlantic Flyway book, which looks into the future of the most important sites for coastal birds along the Flyway

19:00: Dinner at the seminar house

Monday, April 20:

07:00: Departure by ferry from Langeneß (arrival 09:30 in Schlüttsiel)

10:00 – 12:00 Excursion Beltringharder Koog

13:00 – 15:00 Visit of Multimar Wattforum in Tönning

The **per-person** seminar fee is **€380** for the entire period and will cover all costs on Hallig Langeneß and Hallig Hooge.

P.S. For further questions or proposals, please contact:

Peter Prokosch
O.T. Bjanes vei 3B
N-1352 Kolsås, Norway
+47-90254755
peter.prokosch@gmail.com
www.vision52.info