

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2021)2
on the renewal of the European Diploma for protected areas awarded to the National parc of
Weerribben-Wieden (The Netherlands)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 July 2021
at the 1409th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2024

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: The Netherlands

Name of the area: **Weerribben-Wieden National Park**

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

Award in: 1995 Latest renewal 2021, number of years since renewal: 4

Central authority concerned:

Name: Staatsbosbeheer

Address: P.O. Box 2

3800 AA Amersfoort NL

Tel: +31 (0)30 6926111

Fax: +31 (0)30 6922978

e-mail: s.bonekamp@staatsbosbeheer.nl

www: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl

Name: Natuurmonumenten

Address: P.O. Box 9955

3818 LE Amersfoort

Tel: +31 (0)33 4797177

e-mail: N. Altena@natuurmonumenten.nl

www: www.natuurmonumenten.nl

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Staatsbosbeheer Team De Weerribben

Address: Wijkweg 2 7954 Rouveen NL

Tel: +31 (0)384772734

Fax: +31 (0)384772815

e-mail: r.achterdemolen@staatsbosbeheer.nl

e.beens@staatsbosbeheer.nl

m.kuiper@staatsbosbeheer.nl

www: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl

Natuurmonumenten Team De Wieden

Veneweg 253 7946 LV Wanneperveen NL

Tel: +31 (0)527 206520

g.kok@natuurmonumenten.nl

r.martens@natuurmonumenten.nl

www.natuurmonumenten.nl

¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

the development and use of Lelystad Airport should not jeopardise any of the Natura 2000 targets or the quality of the Weerribben-Wieden National Park;

In the past years, the government has continued to work on the Response Letter, which responds to the views submitted and the advice of the EIA Committee on the EIA plan and the appropriate assessment in outline. To be continued.

Given the elections this year, the decision was postponed again. Many parties and citizens are of the opinion that the aviation industry should decrease. We alert regarding this development, the new cabinet will explore this again.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. continue to monitor the effects of the connection between De Weerribben and De Wieden on mammals and invertebrates, paying particular attention to lighting conditions, vegetation continuity and water quality;

De Wieden

Annually, 1/6th of the area in De Wieden is monitored for breeding birds, this year the sub-area west of the Arembergergracht and east of de Barsbeek was monitored.

There is not much difference in data compared to the last time this area was monitored.

De Weerribben:

In 2024, a new network for monitoring rails and bitterns was established in De Weerribben. Now, comprehensive evening surveys are being conducted across the area to inventory spotted crane (Porzana porzana), little crane (Zapornia parva), Eurasian bittern (Botaurus stellaris), marsh harrier (Circus aeruginosus), and common snipe (Gallinago gallinago), providing a more complete picture. In addition, one-seventh of the Weerribben area has been surveyed for trend birds, although the data from these surveys still need to be processed.

Mammals

The roe deer count showed the same numbers as previous years, indicating a stable population of approximately 350 roe deer (Capreolus capreolus). However, due to habitat restructuring and the reset of swamp forests, there has been a noticeable shift in territorial locations. The suspected presence of the raccoon dog (Nyctereutes procyonoides) has been confirmed via wildlife camera footage.

Wetering West marshland has experienced its final year of drought as part of the swamp reset. Marsh vegetation recovery has taken place on a large scale; however, the nesting of the greylag goose (Anser anser) has not decreased. This poses a significant threat to the vegetation, despite the measures we take with treatment and the annual oiling of goose eggs.

2. design and implement a management plan for fish stocks covering all species and continue monitoring their development, with a particular emphasis on eels, to strengthen the ecological function of the reserves and natural reproduction in line with Natura 2000 requirements;

Drents Overijsselse Delta Water Board and all the partners expressed the need for a new fish management plan and perhaps a separate plan for the Weerribben-Wieden area because it is a completely different type compared the rest of the Water Board area. Is still ongoing;

3. monitor the trends in boating activity and its impact on fauna; consider limiting the size and number of boats during peak periods;

A zoning map will again be added to the next Natura 2000 management plan (2nd period). This first requires an investigation that measures the crowds.

Monitoring has not been conducted in De Weerribben; however, all barriers of the peat pits have been replaced and updated to a new version. This largely limits boat access and disturbance of wildlife in a significant part of the national park. Additionally, it was decided to completely restrict boat access by replacing barriers with permanent closures. This prevents propeller turbulence (cloudiness) in the water and supports vegetation succession;

4. continue with the designation of adjoining areas as extensions of, or buffer zones to, the protected areas, especially to the north (Rottige Meente) and south-east (Staphorster Veld), and create a connection between the two separate parts of De Wieden Nature Reserve between the Zuideindiger Wiede and the Bovenwiede;

A political decision has now been taken regarding the connection between Rottige Meente and De Weerribben, in which civil infrastructure and nature have been separated. The discussion on the infrastructural access to Ossenzijl has been abandoned and work will begin this autumn on the detailed planning of the connection's design. Meanwhile, preparatory work is already being carried out on the management front, such as creating habitats for the large copper butterfly (*Lycaena dispar*) on land already owned by the nature reserve management. This has had a positive impact on the population of the large copper butterfly on both the Rottige Meente and the Weerribben sides.

About the connection between the two separate parts of De Wieden:

Since this spring, this ecological buffer zone had new tenants. A management plan has been drawn up and discussed with these tenants with a special focus on the Whinchat and the Corncrake. The management and some minor adjustments to the organisation will be carried out by the tenants in close consultation with Natuurmonumenten in the coming years. So far, we are very happy with how the cooperation is progressing, the tenants are just as enthusiastic about achieving these goals as we are.

Of course, it is still too early to talk about whether the goals have been achieved, but we are now finally on the right track.

5. continue with the renovation works at the Weerribben visitors' centre in Ossenzijl and raise the attractiveness of both this and the Wieden visitors' centre to foreign visitors by introducing texts in English, initially, and preferably also in German and French, at all exhibitions;

Staatsbosbeheer and the municipality of Steenwijkerland will continue to develop a European Wetland Centre. This process is ongoing and will be further developed in 2025. The necessary permits are currently being applied for, and the plan is for the new building to start in 2025 at the current location of the old Visitors' Centre. The European Wetland Centre is in line with the recreation and tourism vision and the strategic mobility vision to spread visitors more widely and to encourage visiting the area in a sustainable way.

The Natuurmonumenten Visitors' Centre in De Wieden was remodelled this spring with a beautiful new exhibition.

6. anticipating the decision of the Dutch authorities to adopt a new definition of national parks, ensure that the Weerribben-Wieden National Park complies with the new criteria for national parks and continues to benefit from this designation;
is still ongoing.

7. avoid any use of burning practices when managing reed lands whenever an alternative, equally effective, management approach is available and compatible with management goals;

In collaboration with the municipality of Steenwijkerland, Staatsbosbeheer has drawn up a map indicating in which reed-hayland plots burning is prohibited. A map has been drawn up, in which it has been decided that

all nature areas accessible by land will no longer be granted permits or fire exemptions. This greatly limits the number of (fire) permits and allows for better enforcement. The result is less smoke pollution and less CO emission. This does mean, however, that the tenants will have to dispose of more reed and hay residues themselves.

8. give more visibility to the European Diploma logo and raise awareness about its aims and objectives on the website of the Weerribben-Wieden National Park, through social media or information panels in visitors' centres.

This year, a joint campaign (Exotic species from the Waterways) was conducted with the Weerribben-Wieden National Park, the Water Board, the Province, the Municipality of Steenwijckland, Natuurmonumenten and Staatsbosbeheer. The aim was to inform residents and visitors about the control programme and about invasive exotic species.

At the end of the campaign, trainees organised a public day in De Weerribben, highlighting the importance of European nature and the European diploma.

For more information, visit the website <https://npweerribbenwieden.nl/exoten-uit-de-slotten/>

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

N/a

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

In the buffer zone between Weerribben & Wieden and Weerribben-Rottige Meente, leased or purchased land has been cleared with the aim of developing these zones. In this process, the Province and Staatsbosbeheer are working together. Is still ongoing.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Nature restoration:

Various nature restoration projects are currently being carried out in De Weerribben and Wieden.

The first two phases in the Kooi van Pen sub-area commenced in 2021, with the last phase starting at the end of 2023 and will be finished in 2025. The measures consist of the removal of volunteer shrubs and trees, the restoration of the bog moss reed lands and floating fens, and the excavation of extended and wooded peat holes. The activities are carried out outside the breeding season. Residents and visitors will be regularly informed about the project through newsletters, meetings and YouTube videos.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIkVg_rwloyGPLjIWDKbL5Wo8rHCyy5GI&si=CtdoCQoVKkrOr7_b

The Noordmanen sub-area

The development plan for the Noordmanen sub-area is now available for inspection and is expected to be implemented in the period from 2024-2028. Activities are planned to commence in 2025.

Nitrogen deposition: the Dutch government has announced plans to reduce ammonia emissions from livestock farms around N2000 areas. The aim is to reduce emissions by around 50% in a zone of 2 km by buying out or extending impact reduction measures on livestock farms. Technical solutions that reduce NH3 emissions will also be used. This is still ongoing. It is a long process.

Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover.

During the mapping in 2022-2023 invasive exotics were also encountered in the water and on land. We must act quickly against this, otherwise nature objectives will not be achieved.

Because the province is responsible for the Natura 2000 goals, it has money to combat these invasive exotics. We are working together to achieve this.

In De Weerribben, this mainly involves the Cabomba aquatic and Staatsbosbeheer is contributing to the control of this exotic aquatic plant in the waterways. Growths in peat holes are not controlled due to the extensive damage that such control causes to the already existing marsh vegetation. A study has been initiated by the Province of Overijssel to see what the influence of Cacomba is on the development of marsh vegetation in open water and without control. Managing Cacomba costs a lot of money, which is a major problem for the TBOs. Attempts are being made to include the control as a conservation measure in the N2000 management plan. The costs incurred by the TBOs will then be reimbursed by the Province.

In De Wieden, many parties have been working hard this year to ensure that the Watercrassula (*Crassula helmsii*) and Myriophyllum (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) would not increase further. Unfortunately, we have found that this is a very difficult and complicated task. But above all, a very expensive measure, for which no money is available from the nature organisations. So far, the governments are still paying the costs, but we have noticed that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find enthusiastic support for this, especially with the apparent political shift. This is considered an ecological problem for which very little, if any, money is being made available.

Fortunately, the parties involved have managed to incorporate this issue in the addendum of the N2000 management plan as an additional measure so that the money can be organised in this way in the coming years.

Meanwhile, the Province of Overijssel has secured a Life grant to tackle the invasive exotic aquatic plants. This project is being carried out together with the Drents Overijsselse Delta, the Municipality of Steenwijkerland and Natuurmonumenten as partners. Staatsbosbeheer is the beneficiary and advisor in this project.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

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