

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2023

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: 3

Central authority concerned:

Name:	Staatsbosbeheer	Name:	Natuurmonumenten
Address:	P.O. Box 2, 3800 AA Amersfoort NL	Address:	P.O. Box 9955 3818 LE Amersfoort
Tel:	+31 (0)30 6926111	Tel:	+31 (0)33 4797177
Fax:	+31 (0)30 6922978		
e-mail:	s.bonekamp@staatsbosbeheer.nl	e-mail:	N. Altena@natuurmonumenten.nl
www:	www.staatsbosbeheer.nl	www:	www.natuurmonumenten.nl

Authority responsible for its management:

Name:	Staatsbosbeheer Team De Weerribben	Natuurmonumenten Team De Wieden
Address:	Wijkweg 2 7954 Rouveen, NL	Veneweg 253 7946 LV Waneperveen NL
Tel:	+31 (0)384772734	Tel: +31 (0)527 206520
Fax:	+31 (0)384772815	
e-mail:	r.achterdemolen@staatsbosbeheer.nl e.beens@staatsbosbeheer.nl j.bredenbeek@staatsbosbeheer.nl	g.kok@natuurmonumenten.nl r.martens@natuurmonumenten.nl
www:	www.staatsbosbeheer.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.

1. 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 year, 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.

The Cabinet needs more time to take a final decision.

For the Cabinet, the possible opening of Lelystad Airport for holiday flights should contribute to a strong network of worldwide destinations at Schiphol. Before the opening, a solution must have been found for the low-flying routes. And Lelystad Airport should have a nature permit. This will take some time and is still very uncertain given the current developments around excessive nitrogen emissions in the Netherlands. The Cabinet will therefore not take a decision on the opening of Lelystad Airport until the summer of 2024.

To be continued.

Given the election, the decision was again postponed. Many parties and citizens are of the opinion that the aviation industry should decrease.

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;

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

This clearly shows that a lot of swamp wood had changed into botanical hay meadow, which is clearly reflected in the observed number of Willow Warblers. A typical forest bird that shows a decline in this area. Furthermore, the Reed Warbler also shows a decline, which is not seen nationwide. The exact reason is not (yet) entirely clear.

In the Wetering West area, a section has been partially drained this year. The reason for doing this was to reduce the number of geese grazing in the reed land vegetation, with the aim of allowing the reed land to recover and the reed birds to benefit.

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;

Since the merger of the Groot Salland and Reest & Wieden Water Boards, there has been a joint fish management plan.

The new 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.

3. monitor the trends in boating activity and their 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.

However, there is a noticeable decrease after the Covid period. A study has not yet been carried out.

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;

The plans for the buffer zone between the Weerribben and Rottige Meente are being further developed by the Province of Overijssel. In addition to the development plan, the possibility is also being investigated as to whether the municipality of Steenwijkerland can construct a bypass around the village of Ossenzijl. This is still on going.

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

Since this spring, this ecological buffer zone has seen 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. This is a very promising collaboration in which the tenants themselves will focus on these two N2000 target species.

5. continue with the renovation works at the Weerribben visitors' centre in Ossenzijl and raise the attractiveness of both this and the De Wieden visitors' centre to foreign visitors by introducing texts in English, at least, 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 2024. The European Wetland Centre is in line with the recreation and tourism vision and the strategic mobility vision to spread visitors more and to encourage visiting the area in a sustainable way.

A beautiful nature guide was published this year: the Weerribben-Wieden Crossbill Guide. This guide, full of nature, history and trails describes over than 300 pages why the National Park is so special. The new nature guide has been written for people who wish to discover all about nature. From watching birds, plants and butterflies to how to 'read' the countryside. The nature guide consists of 4 parts. The 1st two parts are about landscape and flora. The part about the landscape tells about the different ecosystems (peat marsh, high grounds and peat meadows), the history of its development, and the current nature conservation and threats. The last 2 parts are practical: routes and tourist information.

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

One of the criteria from the National Parks Guideline is the preparation of a landscape biography and landscape ecological system analysis. This year, we started an objective study that maps the landscape and its human use, the ecological value and natural processes. In 2023, the landscape biography will be available to all residents, entrepreneurs and interested parties.

The landscape biography was presented at the end of October. It is available digitally through the Weerribben-Wieden National Park website, <https://npweerribbenwieden.nl/documenten/landschapsbiografie-weerribben-wieden/>

The landscape biography is a research-based comprehensive biography of the area around Weerribben and Wieden and contributes to the strategic choice of the area. The biography, together with the Landscape Ecological System Analysis (LESA) are important underlying documents for the future of the National Park and is available to all residents, entrepreneurs and interested parties.

Students' commitments for the future of the National Park

Throughout the year, the Weerribben-Wieden Foundation has given guidance to many students from various professional backgrounds. An example is a forest and nature conservation student doing research on flower borders and fields, a project in which the National Park Foundation gives away native flower seeds to farmers in the vicinity of the National Park. A total of 60 farmers participated in this project. Furthermore, students are working on an analysis of the economic value of nature as a recreational objective. And tourism students are doing research on smart tourism, the identity of the perfect visitor, and the market identity of the area

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;

Burning is still happening in De Weerribben, albeit much less than before. The (summer) clippings from the hayfields are increasingly being removed and disposed of as soil improver to farmers in the area. Unfortunately, the fee for managing the disposal is very minimal. Staatsbosbeheer and Natuurmonumenten are looking together for new sales opportunities.

This year, small trials were carried out in De Weerribben to convert reed waste into building material such as hard-pressed reed boards and insulation boards. All of this will be further tested in the coming years and is currently ongoing.

In 2024, a study will be started into the effect of the burned sites on the Large Copper butterfly population. The burned sites are also the locations where many nectar plants grow that the Large copper uses.

In 2023, the road map was further developed with steps to minimise the burning of grass clippings in the Weerribben, and includes further formalisation of the agreements regarding the exemption of the municipality of Steenwijkerland and that there will be gradually less burning in the coming years. In addition to this map, a zone map has been developed to see where the reed waste can be disposed of or where adjustments need to be made. In order to achieve this, investment is needed for loading and unloading locations. Furthermore, the current nature types will be examined for their relevance and whether they need to be managed differently and a study will be started into reed burning and what the effect is on the Large Copper butterfly population.

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

In order to increase public awareness of the European diploma, attention is being paid to this at various (social and other) media moments.

This year, the annual EUROPARC Conference took place in the Netherlands where 475 participants from various European national parks took part. The theme this year was 'Tribute to our Landscape, where Nature and People meet in Harmony'. One of the components of the conference was a field trip to one of the National Parks. More than 40 participants visited the Weerribben-Wieden National Park.

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.

Natuurmonumenten

In February 2023, district manager Jos Bisschops stepped down and was succeeded by Nico Altena. Halfway through 2023, area manager Chris Braat dropped out due to illness. He will now be temporarily replaced by Gidion Kok.

Staatsbosbeheer

Colleague Jeroen Bredenbeek (ecology warden) retired in October and was succeeded by Merijn Kuiper.

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.

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.

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.

A number of farmers in the Baarlingerpolder on the southwest side of the Weerribben started a pilot together with the National Park and Staatsbosbeheer to investigate how they can contribute to this. The purpose of this project is to formulate an answer to the following question: How can the agricultural entrepreneurs in the Baarlingerpolder take measures to reduce nitrogen deposition, prevent land subsidence, reduce CO2 emissions and give nature and biodiversity space on their farms in a way that at least does not worsen their competitive position compared to other agricultural entrepreneurs? Are agricultural entrepreneurs able to make a unique and future-proof proposition in these circumstances? In addition, we also want to investigate whether we can stimulate and improve the interplay between entrepreneur and adjacent nature. The aim of the pilot is ultimately to lead to a feasible plan, which can serve as an example for other area assignments and developments. This is still ongoing.

At the end of this year, the final product will be presented to the Province and other stakeholders and the pilot phase will have been completed. It comprises a thorough ecological and socio-economic study and a 'sketch' of the future perspective for the farmers.

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

During the mapping in 2022, 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 combat them.

In the Weerribben, it mainly concerns 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. Management of 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 the 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 a nature 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.

Additional measures Natura 2000 management plan

Draft Addendum.

The Natura 2000 management plan for De Wieden and Weerribben was adopted by the Provincial Executive of Overijssel on 4 April 2017 and entered into force on 30 May 2017. The province is the competent authority for the management plan. On 29 March 2022, the Provincial Executive of Overijssel decided to extend the management plan for De Wieden and Weerribben for a maximum of 6 years. Within the duration of the extended management plan, i.e. before 30 May 2029, the management plan will be reviewed.

If, during the term of the Natura 2000 management plan, additional measures are necessary to achieve the conservation objectives, the Provincial Executive of Overijssel may amend the Natura 2000 management plan in the interim. This can be done with an addendum. An addendum will only be drawn up for new measures or additions to the text of the existing management plan resulting from them and that have not yet been made available for inspection through another procedure. When the management plan is reviewed, the entire management plan will be updated.

This draft addendum adds measures for:

- Phosphate reduction of surface water
- The Great Reed Warbler
- Control of invasive exotic species

Ways and means will be looked for in the coming period to cover the costs of the measures mentioned above. Some of these will be covered by the Nature programme. On 6 September 2023 an application was submitted for an EU LIFE subsidy for the control of invasive exotic species in the field of aquatic plants: Protecting Peatlands of Invasive Alien Aquatic Species (LIFE23-NAT-NL-LIFE Peat Protect IAAS).

Nature restoration:

Various nature restoration projects are currently being carried out in the Weerrribben and Wieden. The first two phases in the Kooi van Pen sub-area were carried out from 2021, with the last phase starting at the end of 2023. The measures consist of the removal of volunteer shrubs and trees, the restoration of the bog moss reed lands, 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.

In the Muggenbeet sub-area and further towards the buffer zone to Stroïnk, the area will be made completely ready as a connection for the Large Copper butterfly and the Otter. Contractor Boskalis is widening the ditches here and redeveloping marshland and hay meadows.

Furthermore, as part of IBP and LNV, bog holes were dug at various locations in 2023 where they were traditionally located but had been completely overgrown with swamp wood. This involves almost 30 hectares in total.

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