

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

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

**Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports**

**Annual report for the year 2025**

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: 5**

**Central authority concerned:**

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**Authority responsible for its management:**

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<sup>1</sup> 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 recent years, the government has continued to work on the Response Letter, which reacts to the submitted opinions and the advice from the EIA committee about the EIA plan and the appropriate assessment, in an overview. To be continued. Given the fall of the Schoof cabinet and the forthcoming election, the decision has been postponed 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 the Weerribben and the Wieden on mammals and invertebrates, paying particular attention to lighting conditions, vegetation continuity and water quality;

The Wieden

Annually, 1/6th of the area in the Wieden is monitored for breeding birds, this year the sub-area west of the Beukalerwiede was monitored.

There were a few changes but no significant or disastrous reductions.

The Weerribben

In the Weerribben, major restoration efforts over the past three years have aimed to restart natural succession and peat-forming processes. Early results are positive: marshland species such as Savi's warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*), common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), and the large copper butterfly (*Lycaena dispar*) are increasing. Woodland species like the nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) and great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) are declining. due to woodland transformation.

The conservation programme for the large copper butterfly is clearly successful, showing strong population growth and receiving national attention. In contrast, the Irish damselfly (*Coenagrion lunulatum*) continues to decline, mainly due to climate change and competition from other damselflies. Habitat improvements are therefore being carried out in 2025.

Overall, marshland-breeding birds show a slight decrease, habitat types 7140A/B are expanding but species-poor, the roe deer population remains stable, and invasive species pose a growing concern. Positive developments include the strong increase of the black tern (*Chlidonias niger*) and the return of the purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*).

Research into the Raccoon Dog

Commissioned by the Province of Overijssel, the Mulder-natuurlijk bureau and Ten Den Flora & Fauna carried out research into the Raccoon Dog in 2022. Based on literature, recent distribution data, our own inventory (feeding sites with wildlife cameras), analysis of stomach contents and GPS tracking of an established pair in the Wieden, an assessment was made of the current numbers, the expected population growth in the coming years, the possible effect on other species and values, the rationale and necessity of generic or targeted management and the possibilities to do so (Mulder & Ten Den, 2023).

It has been established, among other things that not only in the Provinces of Friesland, Drenthe and Flevoland are there multiple reproducing pairs, but that this is currently also the case in North-West-Overijssel. It is expected that local reproduction will become increasingly important compared to the influx from other provinces and Germany and that their numbers will increase rapidly in the coming years.

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

The 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 to the rest of the Water Board area; No new developments

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

Due to the sharp increase of the Cabomba (*Cabomba caroliniana*), many waterways and peat holes are hardly navigable, if at all. This mainly occurs in the Weerribben. In the Wieden, it is mainly the Twoleaf Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) that is a problem.

To limit the spreading of these exotic species, collection bins have been placed at various locations throughout the park for boat hire operators and residents. And exotics are controlled both manually and mechanically.

In addition, some waterways (peat holes) have been closed so that boats can no longer enter and also to limit the spreading of exotic species.

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

Preparations for the natural connection between the Weerribben and the Rottige Meenthe are well under way. The plan is for the development works to start in 2026.

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;

This year, the old Visitor centre was demolished. Because further research is required with regard to the nitrogen deposition in N2000 areas, no permit has yet been issued. The plan is that new construction can start in 2026. During this interim phase, a temporary Visitor centre has been set up in the former catering building.

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

National Parks Policy programme 2024 – 2030 5 objectives have been established

In 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality drew up a new policy programme.

The new policy programme indicates how park authorities, provinces, national government and partners wish to shape the development of national parks into robust, high-quality nature and landscape areas in the coming years.

The policy programme sets out the shared ambitions and objectives for the future of the national parks in the Netherlands and indicates the new direction for all national parks.

In the National Parks Policy Programme 2024-2030, 5 objectives have been established:

- 1 Strengthening the natural, landscape, heritage, and spatial qualities of each national park – with each park based on its own area identity.
- 2 Developing each national park into more robust natural and landscape areas with strong nature cores.
- 3 Enhancing the unique natural experience of each national park, in balance with nature's carrying capacity.
- 4 Connecting society more closely with the national parks.
- 5 Increasing the recognition and unity of the Dutch national parks as a whole.

To further fill in the implementation of this national programme, it must first be clear how much funding is available from the national government and the provinces. Once that clarity is achieved, work can begin on finalising and formalising agreements at national level with the parks and partners.

In the 2025-2026 Annual Plan of the Weerribben-Wieden National Park Foundation, this national policy programme has been translated into projects that the National Park wishes to carry out in the coming years.

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 CO2 emission.

The measures concerning burning have been further tightened.

In collaboration with the reed sector and the municipality of Steenwijkerland, only a conditional permit will be granted for boating (only boat-accessible reed beds). For the remaining land, this means that burning will no longer be permitted, and the cuttings must be removed.

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

Is still ongoing. See website <https://npweerribbenwieden.nl/>

**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

In February 2025, district manager Nico Altena stepped down and was succeeded by Wessel Mak.

**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 Meenthe, 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.

This year, Weerribben-Wieden National Park received the Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Awarding by EUROPARC, of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism underlines the commitment to balance between nature, quality of life, and economy. The award is a recognition of the steps already taken in recent years. This includes strengthening nature and biodiversity, preserving cultural heritage and landscape features, promoting sustainable transport, and offering recreation that aligns with the area's identity. In addition, there are numerous initiatives that involve residents and entrepreneurs, ranging from residents' evenings, area dialogues, and educational programmes to the 'Gastvrij in het Landschap' (Hospitality in the Landscape) course for entrepreneurs. In addition, there are numerous initiatives that involve residents and entrepreneurs, ranging from residents' evenings, area dialogues, and educational programmes to the 'Gastvrij in het Landschap' (Hospitality in the Landscape) course for entrepreneurs.

The Charter is also a process: with a joint strategy and concrete actions for the next five years. It addresses ten main topics, such as cooperation with local partners, visitor management, sustainable mobility, communication and awareness, and monitoring the effects of tourism. All these elements contribute to ensuring that tourism does not harm nature, enhances the quality of life, and offers opportunities for the local economy.

Nature restoration:

Various nature restoration projects are currently being carried out in the Weerribben and the 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 finishing 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](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.

The plans for the redevelopment of the Noordmanen sub-area have been approved, with the first works in the field having started this summer.

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 NH<sub>3</sub> 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. Many parties have been working hard this to ensure that the Waterwaaier (*Cabomba caroliniana*) and Myriophyllum (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) would not increase further. Unfortunately, we have found that this is a very difficult and complicated task.

In the LIFE-IAAS project, the Province of Overijssel is working together with the Drents-Overijsselse Delta Water board, the Municipality of Steenwijkerland, Natuurmonumenten and Staatsbosbeheer to remove invasive exotic aquatic plants and thereby restore native nature.

Project name: Control of invasive exotic aquatic plants in the Wieden and the Weerribben. English name: PeatProtect IAAS

Project code: IAAS-101148341

Weerribben vision

Within the Weerribben-Wieden Natura 2000 areas, various analyses, management plans and future outlooks have already been drawn up. Staatsbosbeheer needed a single, integrated, long-term vision until 2050, in which existing plans – such as the Natura 2000 management plan and the 'Weerribben 2050' note – are brought together. This "Weerribben" vision describes the main landscape structure and the key challenges

for landscape, ecology and water quality, management and maintenance, and recreation and tourism. The document is intended to provide direction for the future development of the area, offer clarity to stakeholders (such as tenants, entrepreneurs and the National Park) and contribute to ecological enhancement, sustainable management and an attractive living and visitor environment. The aim is for the vision to provide clarity for stakeholders within Staatsbosbeheer, but also for stakeholders in the surrounding area. This includes leaseholders, (leisure and other) entrepreneurs, national park, etc.

#### Natura 2000 management plan

The province of Overijssel is working on renewing the management plan for the Natura 2000 areas. The Wieden and the Weerribben. This plan describes how nature in these areas will be protected and improved. The previous plan was for the period from 2017 to 2023 and has been extended until 2029. Now it is time to draw up a new management plan. In addition, new Nature Objective Analyses (NOAs) should be drawn up. This research will look at whether the nature goals in the areas are being achieved or whether extra measures are needed. In the autumn, a number of drop-in sessions were organised to inform people and share knowledge and experiences.

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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 behaviour (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**