INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Legally, the integrated management plan is based on the first paragraph of article 6 habitats directive, stipulating that member states are to establish measures necessary for creating favourable conditions for habitats and/or species.

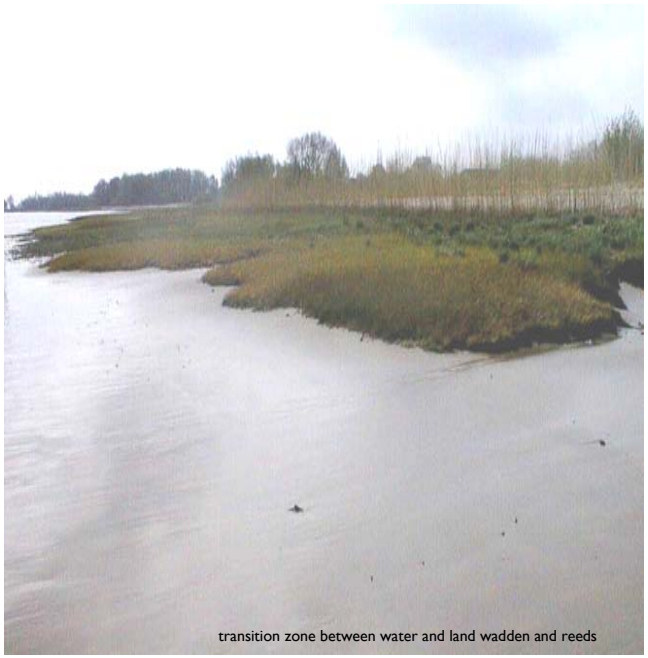
Beyond objectives of nature conservation, economic as well as social , infrastructural and regional aspects have to be taken into account and integrated into the overall concept.


grey geese

The integrated management plan covers the whole of the river estuary from Geesthacht downriver to the mouth of the river proper.

The integrated management plan is a directive for the acting state. It is meant to provide clarity and predictability for all actors without having legal binding force towards any current use.

container vessel not disturbing congregation of barnackle geese


transition zone between water and land wadden and reeds


fritillary (fritillaria meleagris)

Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg,
Department for urban development and the environment

Niedersachsen
Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency

Schleswig-Holstein
Ministry for agriculture, environment and the countryside

Federal Waterways Administration Directorate "North"

Hamburg Port Authority

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Integrated Management Plan
Elbe Estuary

NATURA 2000

metropolregion hamburg

NLWKN

Natura 2000

To safeguard biological diversity and protect numerous species of plants and animals from becoming extinct, the EU has created an extensive system of reserves for most significant habitats and species. It has meanwhile grown to comprise more than 20.000 so-called "FFH"-sites (FFH= Fauna, Flora, Habitats) plus 4.000 sites coming under the "Birds Directive" over all 27 member states of the EU, making it the biggest nature conservation project worldwide.


Tideauwald

Examples for most valuable habitats in the Elbe estuary are mudflats, woods of the tidal floodplains, salt marshes and sand spits.

Examples for highly protected species in the Elbe estuary are birds, e.g. teal, barnacle and grey geese, fish as asp, twaite shad and salmon and others like lamprey, porpoise and harbour seal. From the botanical realm, Schierlings-Wasserfenchel (*Oenanthe conioides*) features most prominently in the list of species to be especially protected, as it is endemic to the freshwater-affected tidal reeds of the lower reaches of the river Elbe.

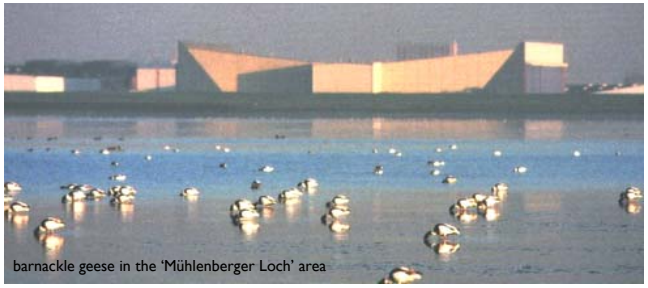

chrup

ELBE RIVER ESTUARY

The estuary is defined as being that part of the lower reaches of the river Elbe as is exposed to the influence of the North Sea in terms of tides, salinity, etc.
This influence makes for the creation of habitats characterized by either salt- or freshwater and brackish water in a transition zone between them.
The estuaries of northern Germany provide habitats for animal and plant species adapted to exactly these conditions.


estuaries of rivers Elbe, (Weser and Ems) and (adjoining) wadden sea

According to the EU commissions definition, the habitat type 'estuaries' covers that stretch of river between its mouth proper and the upriver boundary of brackish water. Being an integral part ecologically of the lower reaches of the Elbe, Hamburg's FFH-site "Mühlenberger Loch / Neßsand" as well as Lower Saxony's FFH-site "Lower Elbe" were proposed to represent this habitat type within the NATURA 2000 net.


barnackle geese in the 'Mühlenberger Loch' area

Joint EFFORTS

The lower reaches of the river Elbe are of outstanding ecological significance.
That is why more than 90 % of its waters and floodplains were designed reserves under NATURA 2000.

But at the same time, the area is economically of international importance and has been so for centuries.
The Elbe marshes around Hamburg have been cultivated for centuries and thus are of cultural and historical importance.


banks of river Elbe in Hamburg

The Elbe estuary is a continually changing, dynamic system. The preservation of this valuable habitat and harmonization of ecological and economical demands in the area is a joint objective of the Federal Waterways Administration and the neighbouring states of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Hamburg.
For this reason a treaty was effected, stipulating that an integrated management plan considered by all relevant stakeholders shall be drawn up by the end of 2010.


harbour seals on sandbank in Elbe estuary