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CTQ NEWSLETTER

Monthly bulletin of Ctq GmbH

Issue # 08

Julia Sack

Ctq participates in RhineCleanUp Action '25

Ctq GmbH is one of the participants supporting BlockBlocks Cleanup Action in Düsseldorf

We in Ctq GmbH support RheinCleanUp Action on September, 13 this year participating in the action in Düsseldorf, Karolingerstr. 100.

In doing so, we would support the Rhine Cleanup campaign and confirm Ctq's commitment to the UNGC sustainability goals:
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation
Goal 13: Climate action
in a practical way.

Results of Sustainability Challenge 2025 by Ctq

As we have already announced, Ctq GmbH has performed Sustainability Challenge this summer when you could become a Sustainability Contributor with Ctq.
Now we would introduce the results of this Challenge for Sustainability Award 2025 and are pleased to list Ctq Sustainability Contributors this year:

- 1- Blockblocks Cleanup GmbH, DE



- 2- Interflora, FR



- 3- Deko Gardens GmbH, DE



Congratulations on these results in Ctq Sustainability Challenge 2025. We hope to continue to work with our customers and partners in future!

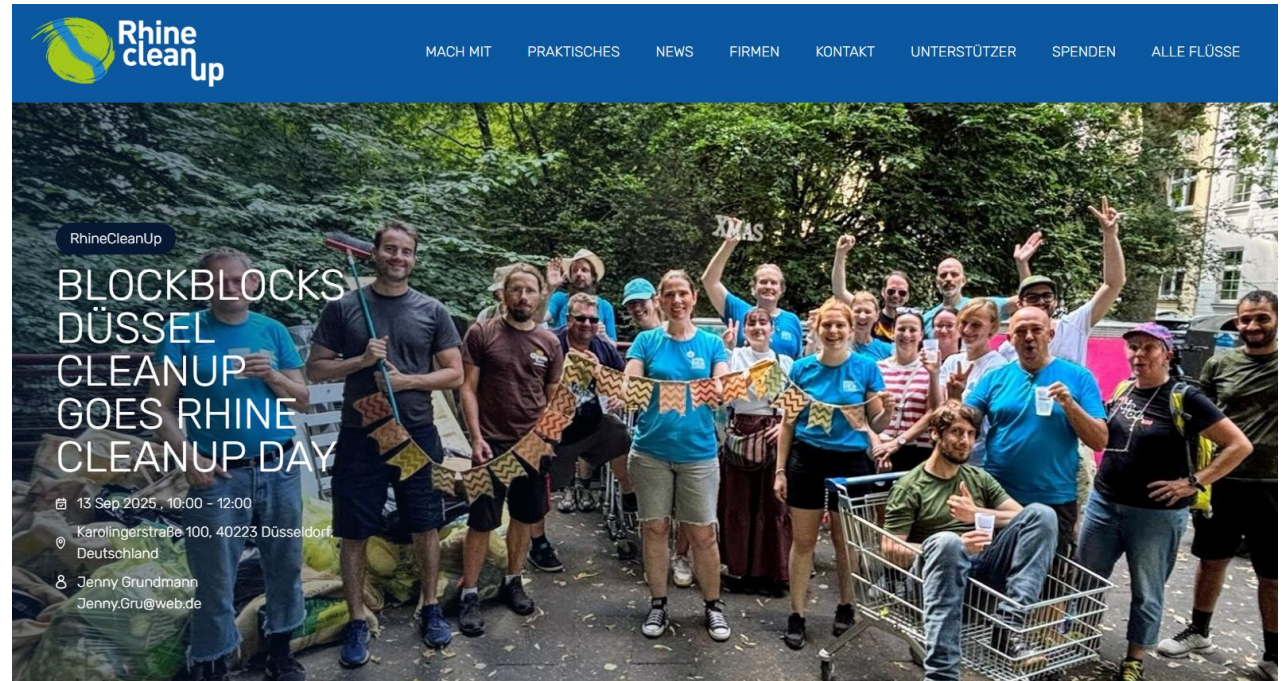
In our next newsletter we would present company profiles and sustainability achievements of the finalists.

CTQ tree experience

This is to open new section in our newsletter - Ctq tree experience.

We in Ctq would provide you with some facts about rare trees and biodiversity and ecosystems where they play very important role for nature and environment.

The swamp oak is often used in parks because of its imposing habit and impressive red autumn colouring. Before the swamp oak became



Ctq GmbH participates in RhineCleanUp Aktion im September 2025

popular as an ornamental the major cities of Europe.

Did you know? The swamp oak was planted extensively in Berlin's new government district in the 1990s and is therefore often referred to as the 'Spree oak' in Germany.

Origin: North-eastern to south-eastern America, eastern Canada.

Height: 15-25 metres, width: 12-15 metres

Flowers: Yellow-green catkins, female flowers on short stems

Fruit: Acorns



Ctq tree experience - swamp oak, Düsseldorf

It's interesting:

a mature oak can produce, on average, 100,000 liters of oxygen a year. That's about 274 liters of oxygen a day. A single tree compensates for a variable amount of CO2, with a rough average of 10 to 40 kg of CO2 per year.

Sustainability context

We in Ctq initiate this section in our newsletter titled Sustainability context.

Here we'll provide you with brief overview on publications, books and sources to sustainability and ESG topics.

Please have a seat and be our guest. Are you ready? Then let's go.

Top-5 books and publications for August:

- Process management, Roman Stöger
- Forum Operate Sustainable 02/2025
Economy of future - by Simon Berkler
- Forum Operate Sustainable 02/2025
From having to to wanting to: making sustainability tangible in the company - by Christiane Dunsbach
- WWF Journal 03/2025 - Circular economy - moving forward in a circle by Björn Schulz
- WWF Journal 03/2025 - Could we save the forests with recycling? - by Oliver Samson

Happy and sustainable reading in August!
And stay in context.

Your Ctq GmbH Team

Quote of the month:

Even from stones placed in one's path, one can build something beautiful

J. W. Goethe

Wadden Sea – WWF tour for the explorers

Interview summaries from trip report to Wadden Sea

Noted by Julia Sack

Gather round, hello and welcome to our section 'Hero of the month' where we usually meet and greet fabulous and outstanding 'heads' to ask them on important topics of environment, sustainability, governance and actuals.

Who is our Hero of the Month this August?

End of summer and we are in the middle of summer time and vacations. We in Ctq have thought, we need to have a look on biodiversity 'in action'. And that's really great, we have applied to WWF Tour Wadden Sea supported by travel center Ostfriesland. Joke Pouliart supports Team Ostfriesland and offers exhibitions and a wide range of GreenEvent activities of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea.

We didn't have an interview with Joke Pouliart during the trip but the Hero of The Month this time is WWF Team travel center Ostfriesland who made this trip happen and take care of nature and Wadden Sea's biodiversity area.

Ctq's adventure in National Park Wadden Sea begins. 2 hours of tour and further several days on Wadden Sea - we have explored life and nature in the Wadden Sea. Equipped with the notebook and photo camera, observation and identification aids, we discovered life in the north and Wadden Sea. Thank to WWF we have experienced the biological diversity and explored who lives in the water and in the surf zone, who is dependent on whom, and who benefits from whom.

We made the trip report on Wadden Sea and are pleased to provide the notes and photo-report from the trip. What comes from this, please read here and after.

JS: The Wadden Sea National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, invites visitors to experience a world of breathtaking natural beauty right on their doorstep. Stretching 4,400 square kilometers, it is the largest national park, lying between Denmark to the north and the Elbe River to the south. This park's dynamic landscape changes twice a day as the tides come and go, revealing mudflats and salt marshes teeming with life.

A truly pristine habitat, the Wadden Sea remains largely untouched by human intervention, offering a rare glimpse into unspoiled nature. It is one of the last remaining areas in Central Europe where nature has been left to develop freely. Every year, around two million migratory birds pass through the park on their long journeys from North America, Scandinavia, and the Arctic to West Africa. These birds find abundant food in the mudflats and salt marshes, which serve as an essential energy station during their migration.

The park also hosts almost 100,000 pairs of coastal birds that breed here, benefiting from the rich food supply. Species like the eider duck, which migrates from the Baltic Sea, find a safe haven for nesting in this bird-rich sanctuary. The Wadden Sea is renowned as Europe's most bird-rich area, making it a key stopover for bird migration.

For those seeking more than just wildlife, the national park and its surrounding communities, including St. Peter-Ording, offer recreational opportunities such as long walks along vast sandy shores. Visitors can explore the park's tidal creeks during low tide, when the receding water leaves behind ever-changing patterns on the mudflats, home to mud snails, crabs, and mussels.

In the center of the park lies Süderurg, one of the Halligen islands, where homes are built on raised mounds to protect against flooding. These islands, free from dykes, offer a unique way of life, where the residents live in harmony with the tides.

Despite its pristine nature, the park contains Germany's only oil rig, which will cease operations by 2041 as part of efforts toward climate neutrality. Schleswig-Holstein aims to become the first climate-neutral state in Germany by 2040, underscoring its commitment to preserving this precious ecosystem.

In essence, the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is a place where nature thrives, offering a sanctuary for wildlife and a peaceful retreat for humans, all while showcasing the urgent need for sustainable practices to protect the environment.

The Wadden Sea National Park offers a fascinating landscape where nature thrives, yet human interaction is carefully



The Wadden Sea National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site



WWF Tour Wadden Sea by travel center Ostfriesland



Meeting point WWF Tour Wadden Sea

balanced. The mudflats and exposed seabed, especially during low tide, present a unique opportunity for visitors to explore the park on foot, although caution is necessary due to the fast-changing tides. The park's partners provide guided expeditions, helping visitors navigate this dynamic environment. A popular activity is a trip to the dry fall, where the seabed is exposed temporarily before the tide returns.

At the heart of the park lies Süderurg, one of the Halligen islands, which are unique for being unprotected by dykes. The houses on these islands are built on specially constructed mounds, called Warften, to protect them from rising water.



The Wadden Sea National Park ecosystem



Wadden Sea National Park is a treasure trove of biodiversity, with a staggering 2,000 species of invertebrates inhabiting its salt marshes.



On the Wadden Sea coast

Life here is shaped by the tides, and the residents live in harmony with nature, farming the land and interacting with the local wildlife.

Interestingly, the national park is located on Mittelplatte. Schleswig-Holstein aims to become the first climate-neutral state by 2040, although wind turbines are not allowed in the national park to preserve its untouched landscape.

Fishing is an important activity in the Wadden Sea, with crab boats, often surrounded by a cloud of seagulls scavenging for bycatch. Efforts are underway to reduce bycatch through technological innovations, and some areas are being designated as fishing-free zones to allow ecosystems to develop without human interference.

The Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is a treasure trove of biodiversity, with a staggering 2,000 species of invertebrates inhabiting its salt marshes. These salt marshes are not only rich in species but also serve as a vital ecosystem for plants and small animals that have adapted specifically to this unique environment. The return of many grazed marshes to their natural state, thanks to conservation efforts, has further strengthened the park's ecological importance.

One of the most iconic landmarks in the park is Wester Hever Lighthouse, which is widely regarded as the most photographed lighthouse on the German coast. Its former keeper's houses now serve as one of over 20 national park stations, where young volunteers live and work for a year to protect the park's natural beauty. The lighthouse tower offers a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape, and during spring and autumn, visitors can witness spectacular flight displays by migratory birds on the nearby sandbanks.

In 2009, UNESCO recognized the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site, elevating its status to that of some of the world's most iconic natural landmarks, such as the Serengeti and the Great Barrier Reef. This designation highlights the park's exceptional ecological significance and the richness of life it supports.

The people of the region take great pride in this recognition and are committed to maintaining the park's pristine nature. They see themselves as stewards of this World Heritage Site, responsible for preserving it for future generations. With its remarkable biodiversity and stunning landscapes, the Wadden Sea truly is a world of its own, a sanctuary of unspoiled nature.

The landscape of the North Sea coast is unique. Twice a day, a powerful force pulls at the sea, which then, at low tide, reveals the mudflats that gave the sea its name. Ten million wading birds and waterfowl come to the mudflats every year from their Arctic breeding grounds, where they find abundant food.

And the Wadden Sea still has a lot to offer that you won't find anywhere else in Central Europe. Real Wicks. The WWF has been campaigning for the protection of this unique habitat for over 40 years.

This is because the Wadden Sea was in great danger for a long time. Parts of it were diked until the 1980s. In other words, mudflats and ensuring that many people, can experience nature in the Wadden Sea. With global



Wadden Sea coast



There are numerous opportunities for tourists to explore the area



During the Wadden Sea Coast Tour

warming, the Wadden Sea is facing what is probably its greatest challenge. Salt marshes disappeared behind dykes. But the protection was successful. In the mid-1980s, the Wadden

Sea was declared a national park. And in 2009, it gained worldwide recognition at a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We at the WWF are proud of this. Despite all the successes, even national parks are constantly faced with old and new demands and solutions. Fishing, industry, shipping and airports leave a lot to be desired.

That is why the WWF remains active in protecting the Wadden Sea and is looking for solutions for people and nature. This includes underwater nature. The Seabed National Park needs just as much protection from trawling grounds in commercial fishing as fish, too many of which still end up in nets as so-called bycatch.

The Wadden Sea is one of Germany's most popular tourist destinations. Tourism has an impact on nature. On the other hand, most visitors come for nature and want it to be preserved.

Partnerships with the tourism industry can therefore benefit conservation. The WWF supports this and is also committed to

environment and saving of ecosystems. It is clear that global climate protection can and must help. In addition, however, the Wadden Sea must grow with the sea level.

We must help nature to adapt to the changing conditions. Many years of work to protect the Wadden Sea have shown that optimism is justified. Together, and this is both an invitation and an appeal, we will succeed in preserving the wonderful natural landscape of the North Sea coast for the future.

The Wadden Sea National Park owes much of its current status to the early efforts to preserve its unique ecosystems. Initially, nature reserves were established in the region, laying the foundation for the expansive park we know today. The mudflat region of the Wadden Sea, stretching off the coasts of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, and Hamburg, is home to a remarkable and diverse ecosystem. While mudflats exist on other continents, this area boasts the largest contiguous, relatively unbroken stretch of such a habitat, making it one of the most significant natural environments in the world.

The fascinating aspect of the Wadden Sea is not just the mudflats themselves, but the life within the mudflat soil. Walking on the mudflats is a direct way to experience how life begins here - from the smallest microorganisms to the larger creatures that rely on them for food. The soil's ability to support life in this harsh environment is extraordinary. Twice a day, the tides come and go, forcing all living things to adapt to an ever-changing landscape. The soil itself plays a pivotal role in the region's food chain. Microalgae and bacteria thrive in the nutrients brought in by the tides, forming the basis for an intricate web of life. Worms, mussels, and snails consume these nutrients, which then become food for seals, fish, and migratory birds.

The birds that travel thousands of kilometers from Africa and the Arctic to feed in the Wadden Sea are a prime example of this vast interconnectedness. These birds depend on the Wadden Sea's mudflats to fuel their journeys, a journey that can span 10,000 kilometers between their breeding and wintering grounds. This global significance of the Wadden Sea's ecosystem illustrates the intricate, ecological interdependence of the region, which is unique to this area.

However, before the establishment of the Wadden Sea National Park, this vibrant ecosystem faced significant threats. The area was heavily polluted, and wildlife populations, including fish and animals, were in serious decline. The rapid industrial exploitation of coastal areas led to pollution, the construction of extensive dikes, and a general disregard for the environmental impacts of these developments. The Wadden Sea, once expansive, was shrinking and increasingly endangered by human activity.

Recognizing this, the importance of declaring the Wadden Sea a nature reserve became clear. By the 1970s, environmental movements, to care about the environment and act in ways that protect it, thus ensuring the park's preservation for future generations. The tourism industry has become a strong partner in this effort, supporting both the experience of nature and its protection.

Looking to the future, climate change remains one of the most significant challenges for the Wadden Sea.



Wadden Sea ecosystem

Rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and other environmental changes are expected to put additional pressure on the park's ecosystems. It began to gain momentum, pushing for more awareness and action toward protecting nature. These debates helped fuel the drive to establish nature reserves, aiming to counterbalance the destructive forces of industrialization and preserve the Wadden Sea for future generations.

The creation of the Wadden Sea National Park was not just about conservation but about recognizing the ecological significance of this unique habitat - both for local wildlife and the broader environment. Today, the park stands as a testament to the efforts to protect a truly remarkable and irreplaceable ecosystem, demonstrating how human action, when guided by environmental awareness, can help restore and preserve nature.

That was the period when the national parks were successfully established in the mid-1980s. But of course, this was based on the decade before, when these discussions and debates were taking place in society. What was the condition of the Wadden Sea when these nature reserves were established? Well, perhaps the term that characterises this area from a threat perspective is cauliflower disease in fish. You could actually see that the fish living here were becoming ill.

And that makes it very clear once again how much pressure the mudflats and the marine ecosystem here just off our coast were under, but also, of course, the dykes. In other words, we actually took this space, this transitional space or retention space, away from nature. And that is the core ecological significance of what I just said, the food source in the mudflats for birds that breed 5,000 kilometres away or for the seals of the southern North Sea.

And that became evident. And then there was the counter-movement saying: okay, we have industrial settlements in the estuaries, i.e. the river mouth areas. But we also need an intact habitat for us humans, for those who live here and, of course, very importantly for those who holiday here. And that was the rationale for nature conservation here. How did the Wadden Sea recover after these nature reserves were established?

The big thing was the establishment of national parks, especially in Germany.

We have had international cross-border cooperation for over 50 years.

This is quite exemplary, and today it is also a World Heritage Site that transcends borders. And this, of course, follows the ecological imperative of viewing the Wadden Sea as a single entity. This unified approach was then implemented in nature conservation initiatives through the Wadden Sea Plan, a joint monitoring and surveillance programme, and many other initiatives.



Wadden Sea plants include salt-tolerant species in salt marshes like Sea Lavender and Samphire which adapt to frequent saltwater flooding

And locally, with the corresponding activities and protective measures, for example, water pollution control, habitat renaturation, coastal protection cooperation, i.e., how to ensure the survival of humans, but also the survival of the Earth's natural community, and many other aspects. So today, an avalanche, a wave of protective measures has been brought to the region, where we say that we are not satisfied with the status quo, but that we continue to say that we have a very valuable habitat with the designation of World Natural Heritage and that we must work to ensure that this remains the case in view of the many challenges we face. One challenge for the entire coast is tourism.

People want to go to the sea, they want to see the Wadden Sea, they want to relax there. How can this be reconciled? On the one hand, not restricting tourism, but then please really saving the nature reserves. So, there are two essential answers.

The Wadden Sea National Park is a vital ecosystem that faces both unique challenges and opportunities, particularly as human activity and climate change intersect with its delicate environment. The national park stretches across much of Lower Saxony's coastline, and while this large area provides significant protection for the natural landscape, it also presents a complex challenge for both residents and visitors. To help manage this, a zoning system has been put in place, which establishes varying levels of protection. This system ensures that sensitive areas are avoided during vulnerable phases, allowing for the conservation of these habitats while still offering areas where people can visit and experience nature without compromising its integrity.

A key point of pride for the Wadden Sea is its ability to balance conservation with recreation. While protecting the environment is crucial, the park also recognizes the value of connecting visitors to the natural world. There are numerous opportunities for tourists to explore the area, such as certified national park tours and special events like migratory bird days, where people can learn about the rich birdlife that passes through the region. The goal is not only to allow visitors to enjoy the park but also to instil in them a sense of responsibility for preserving it.

To tackle this, climate protection must remain a top priority, with measures in place to help the region adapt to these changes. A key issue for the future is also the energy transition, particularly the use of offshore wind farms. While wind energy is essential for tackling climate change, the construction of wind farms in the Wadden Sea - and the necessary infrastructure to transport electricity to the mainland - poses its own set of challenges, as it may disrupt the park's natural balance.



The most common "Wadden Sea crab", a vital inhabitant of the Wadden Sea tidal flats

Additionally, the safety of shipping remains an ongoing concern. Given the park's proximity to busy shipping lanes, any accidents or oil spills would be catastrophic for the region's delicate ecosystems. There have been close calls, and ensuring high standards of ship safety is vital to prevent disasters that could permanently damage the area.

To successfully navigate these challenges, it's crucial to engage the local community and visitors as partners in conservation. Raising awareness and fostering a deep understanding of the park's value are essential to ensuring that everyone - residents and tourists alike - shares in the responsibility of preserving this unique and vital ecosystem. The Wadden Sea's future relies not just on policy and regulations but also on the collective efforts of the people who live in and visit the area. Nature conservation is not only about protecting the environment - it's also about securing a sustainable future for everyone.

JS: We would thank once again for this interesting tour and trip.

Ladies and gentlemen, that was WWF Team Travel Center Ostfriesland.