

Natural beaches in The Netherlands

The importance of beach reserves

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The current situation and threats to the ecology on Dutch beaches and embryonic dunes:



Beach fixation (since ca. 1850):

- controlled morphodynamics
- fixation of white dunes
- decreased natural growth of white dunes
- less natural variation in habitats



Recreation:

- disturbance
- higher predation due to waste deposition
- compaction of the beach



Beach cleaning:

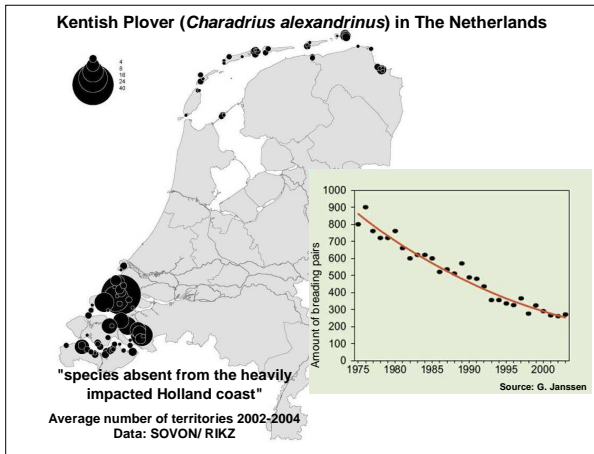
- disturbance
- compaction of the beach
- removal of drift lines



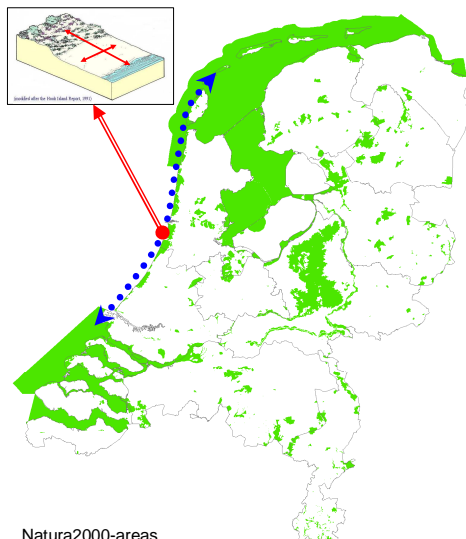
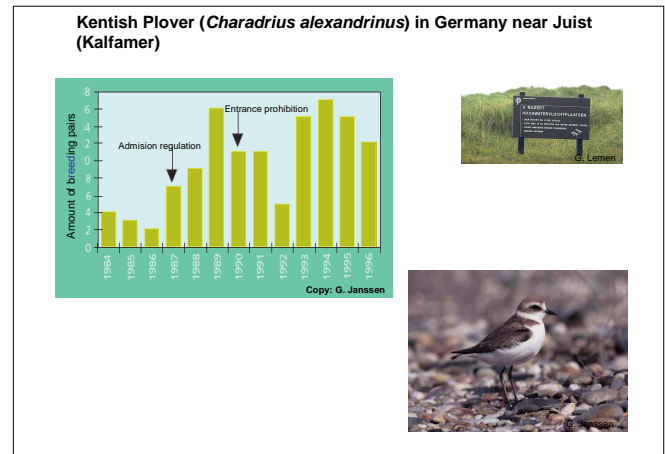
Beach nourishment for coastal defence (since 1979):

- habitat destruction for beach and foreshore communities
- compaction of the beach
- introduction of allocthonous sand (of unnatural grain size);
- disturbance

Current trends without habitat protection



Current trends if habitat is protected



Toward natural beaches in the Netherlands!

Future beach reserves to:

- Create corridors for plants and animals from the sea to the dunes
- Create ecological corridors connecting metapopulations in the southern & northern part of The Netherlands
- Restore the natural morphodynamics and habitats on beaches, reinforcing the natural function of the dunes to protect the hinterland
- Mitigate & compensate for beach nourishment

Possible types of beach protection:

- reserves (whole year closed)
- zonation of beaches (crowded & busy vs. quiet & desolate)
- temporarily closed beaches, during the breeding season
- ecological beach cleaning

Current Dutch beach protection areas (mainly on sandbanks):

- Griend (Wadden Sea)
- Hompelvoet (Grevelingen salt lake)
- Hooge Platen (Westerschelde)
- Banjaardstrand (Noord-Beveland)

New initiatives for beach protection:

- Waterleidingbedrijf Amsterdam

