



BNIP

# The Belgian part of the North Sea

*Degloire Mieke*

*FPS - Marine Environment*



AGENCY  
NATURE & FORESTS



federal public service  
HEALTH, FOOD CHAIN SAFETY  
AND ENVIRONMENT



Wallonie



natuurpunt



natagora  
la nature avec vous



inverde

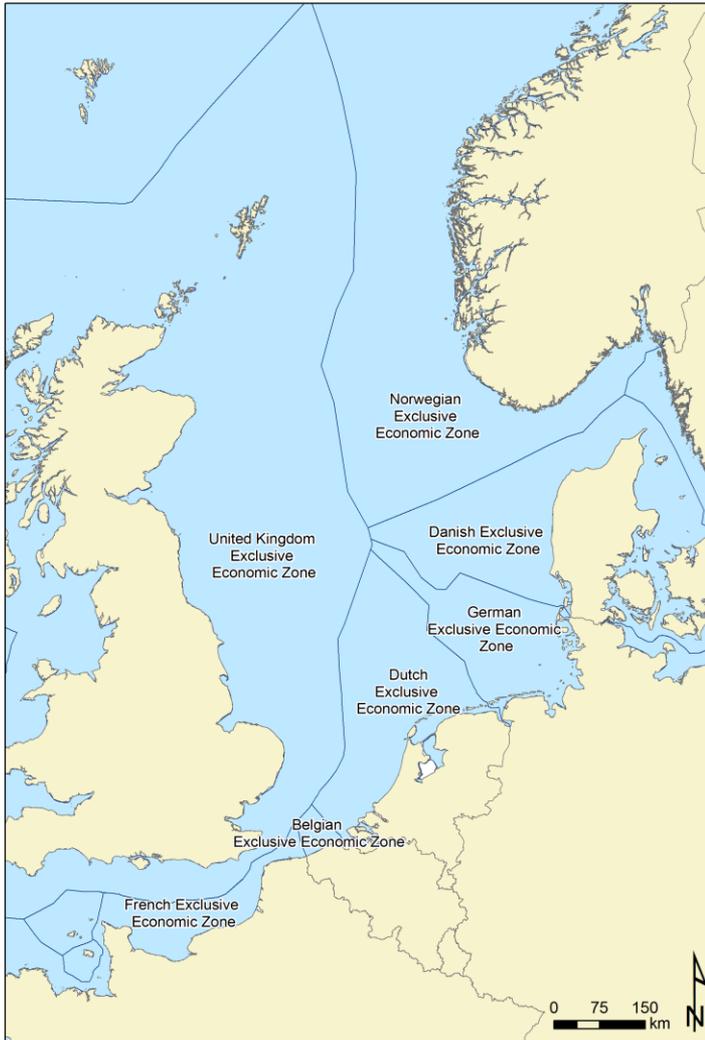


NATURA 2000



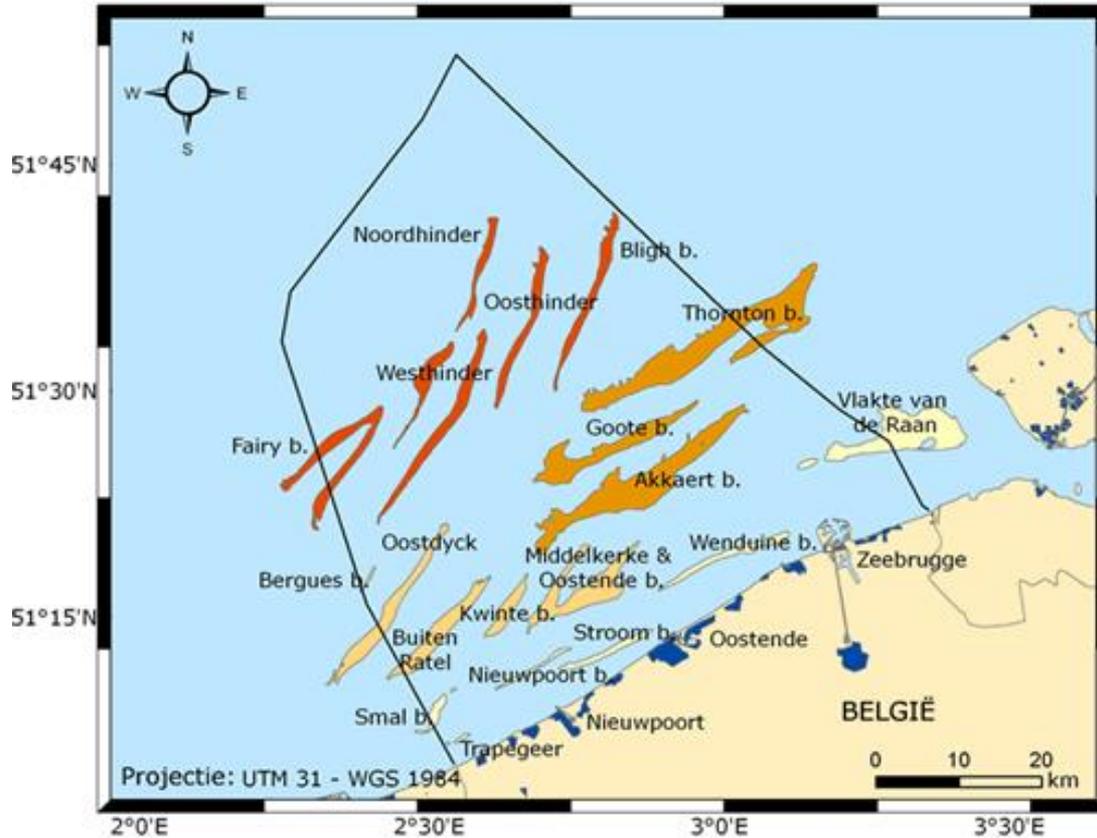
Life

# Belgian Part of the North Sea



- $\pm 3500 \text{ km}^2$
- 65 km coastline
- Shallow (average 20 m – max 45)
- Area with high biodiversity and productivity

# Belgian Part of the North Sea





# What is there to protect?





# What is there to protect?



## Habitats (Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive)

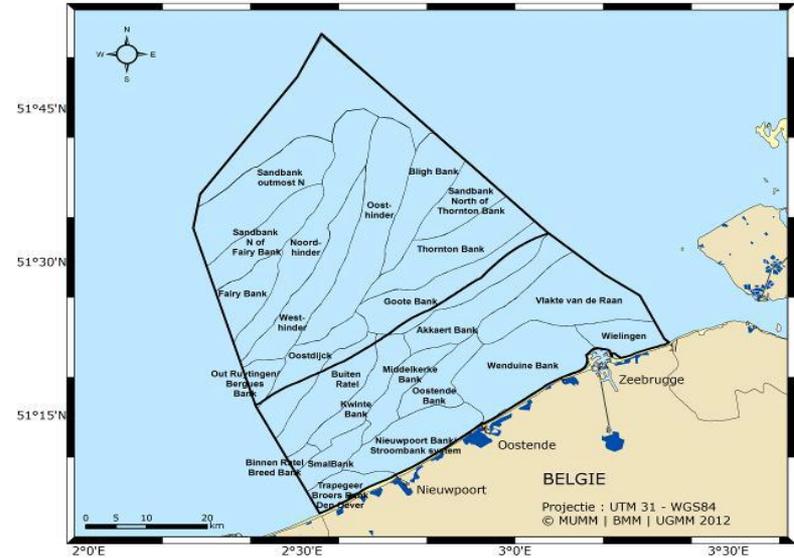
- Sandbanks slightly covered by seawater all the time (habitat type 1110)
- Reefs, including biogenic reefs and geogenic gravel beds (habitat type 1170).



# What is there to protect?



## Sandbanks (code 1110)



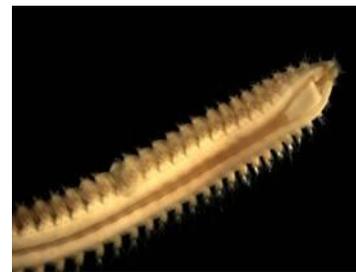
with 4 subtidal benthic communities:



*Macoma balthica*



*Abra alba*



*Nephtys cirrosa*



*Ophelia limacina*



# What is there to protect?



## Biogenic reefs (code 110)

Aggregates of the sand mason worm  
(*Lanice conchilega*)



Foto's Marijn Rabout, Ugent



# What is there to protect?



## Geogenic gravel beds (code 1170)



Foto's A.Noro, KBIN & F. Kerckhofs, KBIN



# What is there to protect?



## Species (Annex II of the Habitat directive)

### Harbour porpoise



### Common seal



### Grey seal





## Birds

*Podiceps cristatus*



*Hydrocoleus minutus*



*Sterna sp.*



*Melanitta Nigra*



*Gavia sp.*





# A Sea of Chaos?



©VLIZ (Haemerlynck)



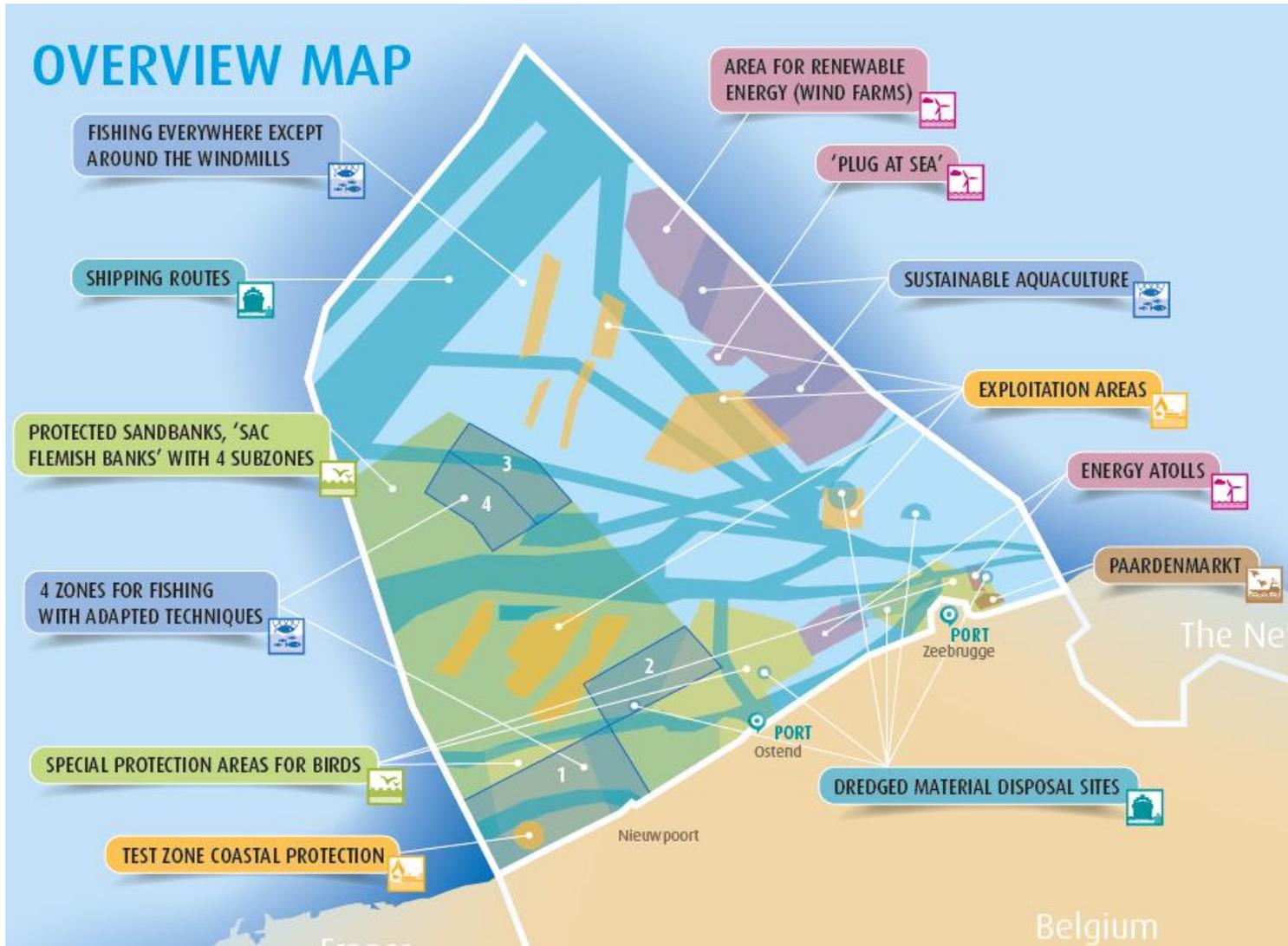
# Environmental Legislation



- Law of 20th January 1999 Marine Environmental Protection Act (MEPA)
  - legal framework to protect the Belgian part of the North Sea from marine pollution and to facilitate the conservation, restoration and development of the natural environment of the sea.
- Marine Spatial Plan (Royal Decree the 20th of March 2014)
  - marine spatial planning is a process to allocate the space available on sea to certain actors within a certain time frame and at the same time to ensure that the ecological, economic and social objectives are achieved.



# Marine Spatial Plan





# Marine Strategy for the BNS



- European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)

→ high level of protection to the marine environment & achieve the "good environmental status" by 2020

2012: Initial assessment

Description of the good environmental status and the associated environmental objectives

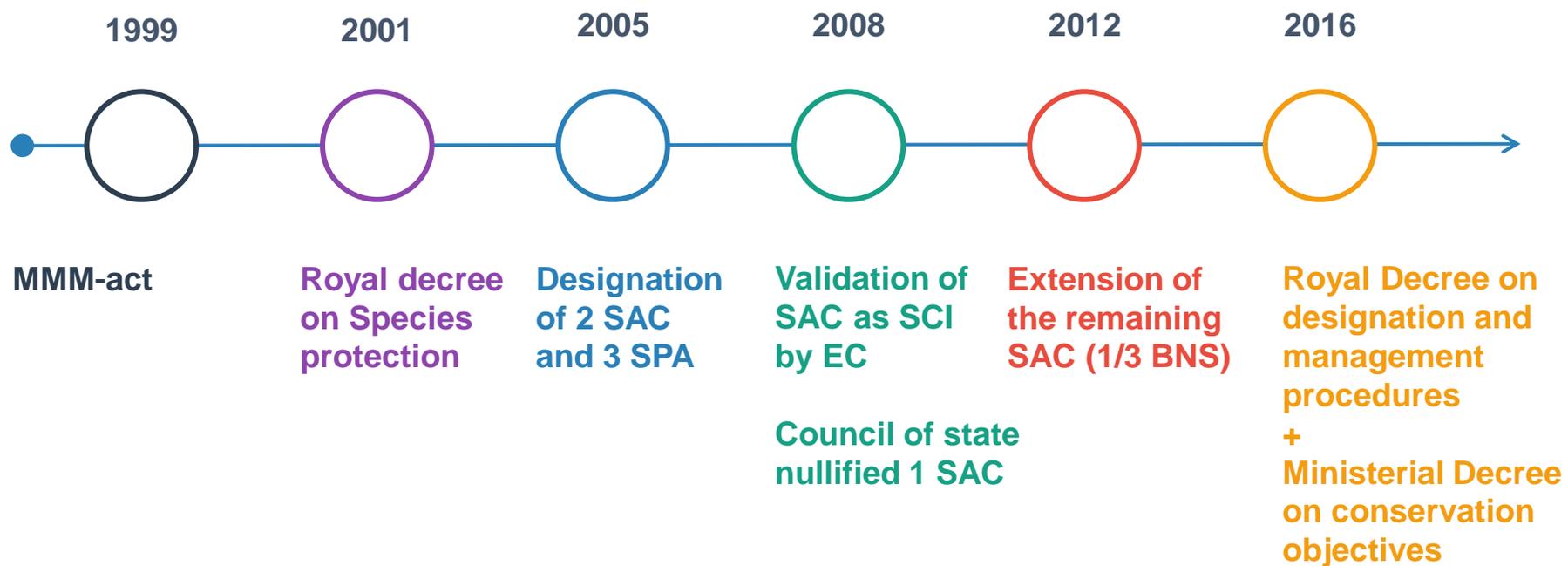
2014: monitoring program

2016: program of measures

2018: first 6-yearly review



# Timeline Natura 2000





# Conservation Status



Conservation state following Art 17 reporting cycle (2007-2012)

- Bad (U2) for reefs (1170)
- Inadequate (U1) for Sandbanks (1110)
- Inadequate (U1) for harbour porpoise, common & gray seal

Birds:

- Unfavorable conservation for *Sterna sp*, *Gavia sp* & *Melanitta nigra*



# Conservation Status



Measures for protection are taken in

## *Marine Spatial Plan:*

- decrease of the volumes of sand extraction
- prohibition of recreational fishing with bottom-affecting gear
- 4 zones where the impact of bottom trawling will be reduced

## *Marine Strategy*

- restoration of gravel beds



# Marine environment in BNIP



## Goals

- Fully implementing and strengthening the Natura 2000 in het Belgian Part of the North Sea
- Strengthening stakeholder participation & setting up of an efficient communication
- Exchange of knowledge and experience with other governments



# Adoption of conservation objectives & management plans for the Marine Natura 2000 sites



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## Management plans

- + conservation objectives
- + consultation process (stakeholders & general public)

special focus on :

collaboration with other gouvernements,

interaction Land-Sea

integration of measures in the Marien Spatial Plan





# Development of a communication strategy on the Marine Natura 2000 Sites

## Communication Strategy

- Analysis of stakeholders & existing communication under the different legislations
- Development of a communication strategy & material

➔ improve the knowlege of the Natura 2000 implementation at sea and improve the understanding of the link with other regulations



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BNIP



hank



ou!