



Ministry of Infrastructure  
and Water Management

Natura 2000 area

## Vlakte van de Raan

The Vlakte van de Raan, a marine area covering 175 km<sup>2</sup>, is located in front of the estuary of the Western Scheldt. It is part of the Zeeland and South Holland Delta. The Vlakte van de Raan is the transitional zone between the open sea and the Western Scheldt and it consists of shallow coastal water.

### Sandbanks

The Vlakte van de Raan consists of permanently submerged sandbanks stretching from the Western Scheldt estuary to the Belgian coast at Knokke-Heist. Sandbanks like these are rare throughout Europe and they are highly important as habitats for marine animals.

### Marine mammals

The Vlakte van de Raan is home to harbour porpoises, which belong to the cetacean family. In addition, it is important for the common seal and the grey seal, which feed here.

### Migratory fish species

The migratory fish species twaite shad, river lamprey and sea lamprey are also characteristic inhabitants of the Vlakte van de Raan. Migratory fish swim to and fro between salt and fresh water. Their presence indicates the good quality of the connection between the rivers and the sea. The Vlakte van de Raan is part of their habitat.

### Use of the area

Human activity and nature have traditionally been interwoven with the Vlakte van de Raan. Two important routes for professional shipping run through the area: the Wielingen and the Oostgat. In addition, shrimp and flatfish have been fished in the area for generations. The Vlakte van de Raan is also a popular area among sailors, anglers, divers and other leisure groups.

### Natura 2000

Westerschelde & Saeftinghe is a Natura 2000 area. Natura 2000 is a network of protected nature areas in Europe.

For more information, see [www.rwsnaturazoo0.nl](http://www.rwsnaturazoo0.nl).



Published by Rijkswaterstaat  
[www.rijkswaterstaat.nl](http://www.rijkswaterstaat.nl)  
0800 - 8002  
February 2020