



Interview with Award Winner Jochen Lamp

3rd April 2019

- **Briefly tell about yourself. What road have you travelled to get where you are now?**

I grew up on a farm at the Baltic coast near Kiel, 2 km from the sea. What might have triggered my career as a conservationist was when investors showed up with plans to build a huge tourist resort straight into the middle of the landscape where I used to roam around freely with my friends and brothers. And they bought the land and built a resort for 3000 tourist – and we as citizens could just watch and see it happen.

I got into the NGO world just after school for the voluntary service in the Wadden Sea Nature reserve (1975/76) – and I moved on to Berlin for studying landscape planning. After the diploma I started my WWF career in Bremen for supporting the idea to protect the Waddensea through the status of National parks and also to help ending the embankment of saltmarshes for agricultural demands.

In 1991 I came to eastern Germany where WWF had just begun to set up a Baltic Sea project with the aim to support the newly created national parks that conservation activists had managed to establish in the last days of the collapsing GDR. Phasing out unsustainable uses from the parks (military shooting range, leisure boat harbour) and establishing a visitors centre in the Jasmund National Park were immediate activities in the 90ies. The visitors centre hosts since 2004 app. 300.000 visitors per year. Successful campaigns to stop the building of a shipyard close to the national park and later a coal fired power plant with negative impacts on the adjacent lagoon followed with the aim to foster only sustainable developments in the region. Around 2010 the focus lay on trying to convince politicians not to build the pipeline Nordstream between Russia and Germany – when it became clear that we could not stop this project we negotiated at least increased compensation and mitigation measures and we reached that two foundations were created that aim at better nature conservation in the Baltic Sea region.

Since 1992 I am also part of the WWF Baltic Programme – where we first managed successfully that a system of Baltic Sea protected areas was established – including offshore areas and after years of political advocacy the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) classified the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). This was a major foundation for binding environmental regulations for all international ship traffic in the Baltic Sea. As a joint WWF Baltic Team effort we also put the eutrophication issue as a top Baltic Sea issue much more into the focus of the public attention.

Since the 2010-years I focus my international work a lot on the promotion of Maritime Spatial Planning as a good tool to harmonize marine conservation with a sustainable economic development of our seas. Thus I turned back to the topic of my university studies. Here the Baltic Sea experiences serve as a good practice example for other multinational regional seas and within Europe. During last years I also support international capacity building trainings for young planning practitioners in different parts of the world.

The current focus lies on a Baltic Sea project on retrieval and recycling of Ghost nets from the Baltic Sea (MARELITT Baltic) and in another project to restore coastal wetlands back to living saltmarshes that are naturally flooded by the Baltic Sea water – without dikes. After long discussions and negotiations with landowners and farmers we will this year start the construction work in two areas and we will hopefully see the changed nature next summer. This project is carried out in close cooperation with the German Baltic Sea Foundation and other



NGOs . The work as CEO of this foundation is another rewarding activity that levers a lot of additional conservation on the ground.

- **What has been your driving force, inspiration and motivation in the work for the Baltic Sea and the environment?**

The Baltic Sea coast is part of my life since my childhood. But also the negative impacts of development and infrastructure on the coastal landscapes and habitats are trends that I had to observe – or try to be active to foster a more sustainable way. The work for WWF allowed me to promote better marine conservation and also to address the mission to decision makers – backed by the weight of one of the biggest global conservation NGOs and dedicated colleagues. On the other hand there is the exchange and mutual support with colleagues within and outside WWF, in national , Baltic and international networks – and also a respectful and mostly constructive dialogue also with other sectors and policy.

To be able to reach also practical results on the ground like the successful Visitors centre or turning intensively used agricultural areas back into living coastal habitats or just retrieving plastic nets from the sea ground is really rewarding and inspiring.

- **What has, in your own opinion, the highlight and biggest successes of your career?**

Highlights on the positive side were for sure, on the international side, when IMO decided to declare the Baltic as a PSSA and later on to phase out releasing wastewater of passenger ships outside of Baltic ports. On the national side to see the national park visitors centre being opened after 10 years of promotion and negotiations was quite stunning, to see the shipyard giving up after a hot public campaign and again 10 years later happening the same with the coal fired power plant were for sure highlights – the first crowned with the European Conservation award in 1992 was quite emotional. The decision of our state government to replace the harbour in the national park by an alternative harbour outside the park was also an inspiring moment – showing that a more than 25 years of persistent conservation advocacy can be successful – in 2 years a new harbour will be inaugurated and the old site be restored as a coastal lake in the core zone of the national park.

- **What is your finest Baltic Sea memory?**

There are several: the moment, when we learned that the shipyard gave up its plans and then being awarded the European conservation award from the Portuguese President some months later.

When we had finished our negotiations with Nordstream and they had agreed to do much more compensation than the state had ever demanded and this was settled by an agreement, it was a fine moment – with the caveat that it was a compromise and we had not managed to stop the project as such.