If you look at Zeeland and the islands of South Holland from the air, you can see that this is actually a delta. The place where the great rivers flow into the sea. That is why the area is known as the Voordelta. While you enjoy the beach, thousands of animals will be going their separate ways in this varied green landscape. No fewer than 36 special and protected animal species live here. And not least because the Voordelta is a Natura 2000 area, you should enjoy the nature and the animals without disturbing them.

The North Sea coast is the ideal nursery for various species of fish. In the shallow water, young fish find a safe place to grow because of the relatively low numbers of large fish that hunt here. The young flounder, sole, plaice, dab, cod and herring grow up here and swim out to other waters.

Abundant feast
The sandbanks, salt marshes and mud flats are an ideal habitat for all kinds of bed fauna. The bed is teeming with worms, shellfish, crabs and shrimps. At low tide, birds search for food on the exposed sandbanks and mudflats. This is an abundant feast for the tens of thousands of birds that live here or pass through. The sandbanks are submerged again at high tide and so the birds only have a few hours to rest and feed themselves. Keep a respectful distance and don’t disturb the birds.

Common seal and grey seal
The common seal and the grey seal live in the Voordelta. They feel at home in Zeeland’s waters and this is where they feed. The seal pups are born on the sandbanks. The seals also rest here. Seals that are disturbed while resting get weaker. The pups of grey seals will even drown if they are frightened away from their dry sandbank in the first three weeks because their fur is not yet waterproof. So make sure you do not disturb the seals. You can tell whether you are disturbing them by their behaviour: as long as a seal is lying in a relaxed position, you are far enough away. If it lifts its head, you’re too close.

Resting areas
Seals and large groups of birds are of course wonderful to watch. It’s best to keep your distance so that you don’t disturb them. If you’re lucky, curious seals will come and take a look at you themselves. ‘Resting areas’ have also been designated to ensure that the animals get enough rest. They are located at sea around dry sandbanks and marked with yellow barrels. Water sports enthusiasts will also see these areas on charts. And there are information boards at entrances to the beach showing the areas where access is prohibited. There are no restrictions on access to the beaches along the entire coast.
Protected nature area

The Voordelta is a Natura 2000 area. Natura 2000 is a network of protected natural areas in Europe. Some areas are open at specific times; access to others is prohibited. In this way, we protect the special flora and fauna that live here. If nature is not disturbed, and the safety and privacy rules are respected, the use of drones is permitted in the Natura 2000 areas (except in the areas where access is prohibited). Exceptions apply to some areas where access is prohibited. These are listed in the access restriction order.

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.rwsnatura2000.nl.

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