

From the West along the East Frisian Islands to the Weser to the IMM 2022 Bremerhaven

Coming from the direction of the Netherlands, England, France in the direction of the Weser - Bremerhaven one has first to make the decision:

A - fast and less tide-dependent over sea north of the East Frisian Islands or B - through the East Frisian Wadden Sea in peace and with often interesting encounters with boats or maritime wildlife.

The route A is quickly explained: as far north as possible along the islands so that you have enough water depth to avoid getting into the surf zones of the individual sea tidal flats between the islands. Passing Wangerooge after crossing the Jade Seaway, the Weser fairway is reached after a few nautical miles.

Those who choose route B will have to deal more with low and high tide and may have to allow for an overnight stay on the tidal flats or in an island harbor. Also, various Wadden Sea protected areas must be considered. For the start, an overnight stay in the Borkum shelter harbor would be a good idea. Approx. 3 h before high tide in Borkum one drives through the Borkumer Wattfahrwasser to the Osterems. This is crossed in the direction of Memmert fairway. Through the following Juister mudflat fairway you reach the Norderney reef, through which you continue south of the island to Baltrum. At this point, at the latest, you should consider whether you can go further or whether it might be better to spend the night in Baltrum, for example. Our experience shows that at about 1 m boat draft until about 2½ h after high tide (on site) the tidal flats are well navigable.

So it goes then further approx. 3 h before to 2½ after high water south of the following islands along in the respective mudflat fairways up to Wangerooge past and through the "Blue Balje" between Wangerooge and Minsener Oog in the direction of the sea routes Jade, Weser. Between buoys B6 and B4 the voyage can then be continued towards the Weser fairway on course northwest for 5 - 6 nautical miles across the Jade fairway to the Weser sea lane.

In very good conditions (southwest wind around 5 Bft.) we sailed with our then 8 m cruising catamaran in one tide from Borkum to Wangerooge. But that doesn't always work out so well.

If the Wattenfahrt should be broken off to get to the northern way A, some information should be considered:

C - Basically, when sailing through the sea tidelands, surf is almost always to be expected in various places; often caused by old swells. From a greater distance, one often sees a continuous surf zone ahead, which only reveals a narrow surf-free passage as one gets closer. This is sometimes an exciting (and sometimes risky) affair.

For the individual sea-regattas, here is some more information for the journey from west to east:

The Osterems Seagate (east of Borkum) is easy to navigate through, but leads almost in the opposite direction and therefore means a considerable detour.

The Norderneyer Seegatt (west of the island) is well suited for this trip and is also well marked.

The Baltrumer Seegatt is officially not buoyed and should only be passed with a lot of experience of the boatman in this area (e.g. fishermen, excursion steamers).

The three following seaways are well buoyed and easy to navigate.

But also for the well-marked sea straights the sentence C is valid!

The entry into the Weser fairway should be made at rising water, if possible, because of the strong tidal current. In case of very good sailing wind without am-wind courses (e.g. westerly wind 4 - 5 Bft.) a fast multihull can also sail up the Weser against the ebb current. From the entrance to the Weser fairway at buoy 15 it is still about 25 nautical miles to Bremerhaven.

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