

Beach Nourishment and Use in Catalonia (Spain) and the Netherlands

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Abstract

In 1990 the Dutch government decided to stop any further landward retreat of the coastline, using beach nourishment as the principal tool. Nourishment can impact upon beach morphology appearance and other aspects related to beach recreation. This last aspect is of particular importance since the Dutch coast is an invaluable recreational resource, accounting for 30% of all holidays in the Netherlands. In Catalonia, Spain, investigations of beach user perceptions on recently nourished beaches illuminated several reasons for reduced visitor enjoyment. Investigations of Dutch beach user's attitudes to nourishment were carried out at Callantsoog (Noord-Holland, n = 66) and De Koog (Texel, n = 101). Of those interviewed, 38% were German and the rest Dutch, but few were local residents. Perceived adverse effects of nourishment on beach use and amenity appeared slight. Reasons appear to include the lengthy and extensive public consultation process, the use of a more appropriate grade of sediment for nourishment, the tidal regime which tended to restore a natural profile to the Dutch beaches, the socio-demographics of beach use and public attitudes to coastal defence issues. Findings emphasised the importance of full public involvement in decision-making processes concerning coastal defence and erosion control.