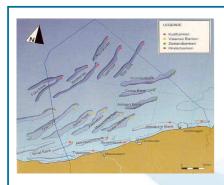


TROPHOS

Highertrophic levelsintheSouthernNorthSea



TheBelgianContinentalShelf(BCS)ischaracterize subtidals and banks. Their close position to the coa shallownessoftheareamakethemunique,bothfrom andgeologicalpointofview.lthasrecentlybeen sandbanksystemintheBelgiancoastalareaactsas aninternationallyimportantrestingandforaginga forvariousseabirdspecies. The larged ensities of benthicliveonthesesandbanksprovidesan importantfoodsourcefortheseabirds.

dbynumerous stlineandthe anecological shownthatthe



TheTROPHOSresearchprojectwillmainlyfocusont levels(seabirds,fish,benthos...)intheNorthSea ontheprocessesstructuringthesehighertrophicl

- Thefoodwebinteractionsthatshapethebenthicco
- The dispersal mechanisms of keyspecies.
- Theimportance of the benthic communities in the fu totalBCSecosystem.
- Spatialdistributionpatternsofcoastalandseabi distributionpatternsofpossiblefoodsources.

hestructurethatispresentinthehighertrophic ecosystem.Theaimistogetabetterunderstanding evels. Special attention will be given to:

mmunities.

nctioning of the

rdsandthelinkwith





Abetterunderstandingoftheprocessesstructuring thehighertrophiclevelsandan insightintothefoodwebinteractionsandthedisp ersalmechanismswillallowtomake morereliablepredictionsoftheimpactofnatural orantropogeniceffectsonthe ecosystemfunctioning.

Asthelinkbetweenecosystemfunctioningandaquat icbiodiversitywillnotbeignored, theresultsofthisprojectwillalsocontributeto thesustainablemanagementofthose areasoftheBelgianContinentalShelf(SouthernBi ghtoftheNorthSea)thatmeetthe criteriaforprotectionasmarinereserves.

Trophosisafour-yearproject (2002-2006)thatisc andfiveBelgianresearchgroups.Thisprojectisf "SecondPlanForScientificSupportforaPolicyof researchactionoftheBelgianFederalSciencePoli

arriedoutby aconsortiumofoneDutch inancedwithintheframeworkofthe SustainableDevelopment" (SPSD-II),a cyOffice.



Projectpartnersare:











- Ghent University, MarineBiologySection
- NetherlandsInstituteofEcology,CentreforEstuar ineandMarineEcology
- K.U.Leuven, Laboratory of Aquatic Ecology
- ManagementUnitoftheNorthSeaMathematicalModel
- InstituteofNatureConservation
- FlandersMarineInstitute

Moreinfocanbefoundontheproject website:

http://www.vliz.be/projects/trophos