



Sunset at the Dutch coast near The Hague, The Netherlands

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Sunset at the Dutch coast near The Hague, The Netherlands. This photo was taken at an unusual time (16.00 hr) with special light. It is near sunset at the shortest day(light) of the year. The coast is composed of a sandy beach and dune environment where erosion is the main trend here. However, regular nourishments with sand from the nearby North Sea bottom ensure a stable sediment equilibrium. The sediment consists of sand grains (250-300 μ) with an iron coating. This gives them a blond appearance. The coast is a dissipative environment with a shallow foreshore. The waves are usually low (<1-1,5 m) and dissipate their energy over a wide surf zone.

Remarkable is the white foam. This is caused by dead colonies of the one-cellular chlorophyllous algae, *Phaeocystis pouchettii*. The species reproduces quickly under favorable circumstances, with inputs of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) and moderate sea temperatures. When the colonies die, a gelatinous substance is formed. The breakers fluff it up to create foam. Normally, this effect can be seen in spring, when warmer sea temperatures and an increase of nutrients may cause larger algae bloom, however, it can also occur in winter and other times of the year. (Photograph taken December 2019 by Frank van der Meulen.)