



WELCOME TO THE NETHERLANDS

Try to think of a few themes that represent the core of the last thousand years of history in the Netherlands, and you will come up with trade, water, survival, tolerance and cooperation. For instance, there has been the struggle against the water, the region's oldest and greatest enemy, which from early on has made the inhabitants of the Low Countries a determined, obstinate, inventive and cooperative people. And while elsewhere in Europe, feudal systems still had free rein, there arose in the swampy river deltas, born out of necessity, early forms of democratic governing bodies. The tolerance of dissent – opportunistic in origin though it often was – was much greater in the 17th-century Dutch Republic than in the rest of Europe.

From that time on, the economy went from strength to strength, largely due to trade and shipping, but also helped by the fishing and other industries, and agriculture. The country's location on the North Sea and at the mouth of three major rivers came in useful here. All those aspects of the Netherlands are still visible. And that's what this book is about: what makes the Netherlands so typically Dutch.

Besides looking back, we also look ahead, and when we do so we focus on economic activity and innovation. Our country boasts a number of top economic sectors that enjoy a great deal of international prestige. Maintaining and/or strengthening this top position in certain sectors requires the allocation of extra investment by the Dutch government. Examples of such top sectors include: new technologies to protect the land from the water, and the improvement of cultivation processes in greenhouse horticulture.

For us, it was a wonderful challenge to illustrate all these aspects of the Netherlands – and many more. *The Netherlands at its Best – Throughout the Year* shows how versatile, sparkling and dynamic the Netherlands is from 1 January to 31 December.

We hope you enjoy this photographic journey through the Netherlands.

Frans Lemmens and Marjolijn van Steeden

TRADE ACROSS THE WATER



Top Sector Logistics The Netherlands has established a leading position in the international world of trade due to its location by the sea and the presence of big rivers for transporting the goods further inland.

6 January A huge container ship enters the port of Rotterdam, the largest port and industrial complex in Europe.

7 January Heavy shipping traffic on the Waal river at Nijmegen.

8 January Port of Rotterdam: three main transshipment product groups: ore, container shipping, and oil / chemical products. The port is the gateway to 450 million consumers in its European hinterland.





OUTDOOR WINTER FEVER

Ice skating tops the list of favourite winter activities in this country. As soon as the temperature drops to a few degrees below zero, skating fever sets in. Skates are laced up. Harsh weather conditions are endured.

19 January Traditional ice-sailing yacht on the frozen Gouwee Lake near Monnickendam. The first ice-sailing yachts sailed on Dutch waters as far back as the 17th century.

20 January Classic skating scenes near the windmills of Kinderdijk-Elshout, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

21 January The clog is a traditional symbol of the Netherlands. Some clogs even have spiked soles to prevent slipping on the ice.

22 January Hindeloopen, the Dutch capital of skating culture. A man on skates is pushing his son on an antique sled that they found in the attic.



DUTCH DESIGN

FROM THE PAST



30 January Detail of 16-tile panel with flowers in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (around 1650). After the introduction of Chinese porcelain at the end of the 16th century, the number of factories producing multi-coloured earthenware increased rapidly in the 17th century.

Royal Delft (Koninklijke Porceleynse Fles) is the only remaining factory of the ± 32 earthenware factories that were established in Delft.

DUTCH DESIGN

TODAY



31 January Dutch designer Marcel Wanders at the opening of his retrospective exhibition 'Pinned Up' in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

In the foreground, the porcelain sculpture 'Fragile Fingers on a Grand Piano' which was born out of the wish to tattoo the hands and forearms of world-renowned Dutch pianist Iris Hond. It is executed in Delft Blue colours, a symbol of Dutch tradition and beauty.

WINTER CARNIVAL



22 to 24 February For three days in either February or March, Carnival, originally a Roman Catholic celebration, has the south of the Netherlands under its spell.

In Maastricht, the numerous elaborately-costumed groups and 'hermeniekes' (harmony bands) form the backbone of Carnival.



17TH-CENTURY AMSTERDAM



3 March Jewish people have been worshipping in the Portuguese Synagogue built in 1675. The main building has no electricity. During holidays the synagogue is lit by 1000 candles.

4 March 17th-century canal houses along the Brouwersgracht canal. The 17th-century canal ring has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2010.

The old city centre radiates history. Horses and stagecoaches might have been replaced by bicycles and cars since then, but the gables are still as beautiful as ever.





5 March A white-tailed eagle – also known as ‘flying door’ – takes off in nature reserve the Oostvaardersplassen. This imposing bird of prey, Europe’s largest eagle, started breeding in this country again in 2006.

6 March A grey wolf in GaiaZOO in Kerkrade in Limburg. The wolf is back in the Netherlands after an absence of more than a century. In 2019, the first pups were born in the Veluwe nature reserve.

7 March A beaver crosses a footpath between the pollarded willows at high tide in Rhoo. His lodge is in a so-called tidal willow forest along the Oude Maas. Since its introduction in 1988, the beaver population has increased considerably.



LIVING ON A HOUSEBOAT

Living on a houseboat The Netherlands has about 10,000 official moorings for houseboats and an unknown number of other places where the authorities tolerate moorings.

8 April Left: A houseboat in a channel of water in the Harger and Pettemer Polder.

9 April Top: Living on the water, near the hamlet of Neck on the edge of the Wijde wormer Polder.

10 April Middle: Houseboats on the Keizersgracht canal in Amsterdam, where a total of about 2,500 houseboats are moored.

11 April Bottom: Houseboats appear to hover over the Vecht river near Weesp.



PATCHWORK BLANKET



19 April Aerial view of the village of Oostzaan and the polder of the same name in the province of Noord-Holland. The area, close to Amsterdam, is a favourite spot for cyclists in summer and ice-skaters in winter.

FLOWER POWER



22 April Each spring, the Keukenhof Gardens, the premier flower gardens of the Netherlands, attract about one million visitors.

23 April Bulb growers check tulips for diseased specimens near Egmond aan den Hoef.

24 April Tulip fields, like islands in a sea of fields in a typical Flevoland polder landscape.

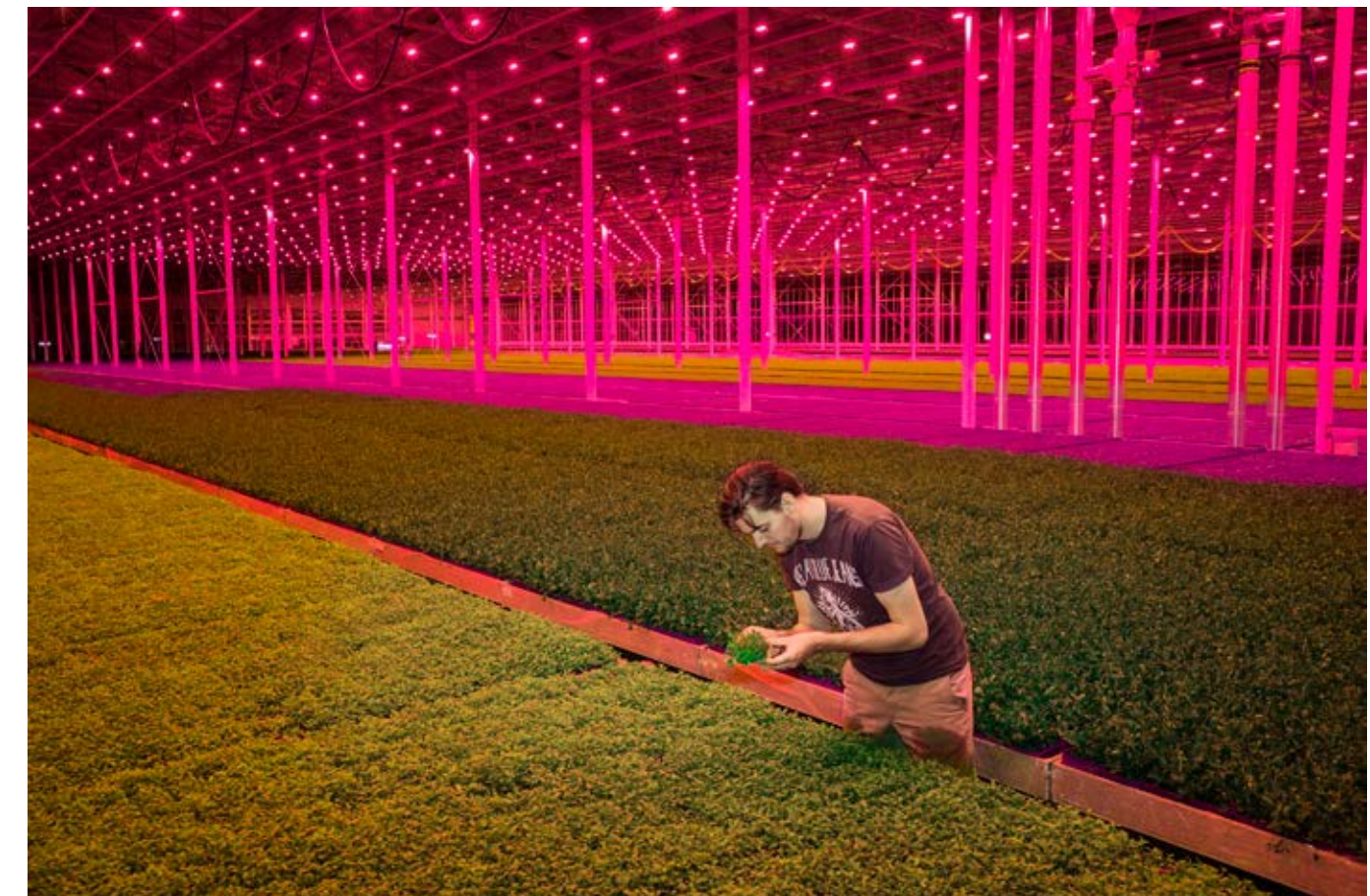


WORLD CLASS DJs



5 July Celebrated DJ Martin Garrix entertains the audience at a leading dance event SENSATION in the Amsterdam Johan Cruijff ArenA. This state-of-the-art multi-purpose stadium (home of Ajax Football Club) is internationally renowned. It is not only the setting for parties, concerts and football matches, but it has also become an icon of sustainability for entertainment, sports and business, a concept which is being exported worldwide.

SEA OF GREENHOUSES



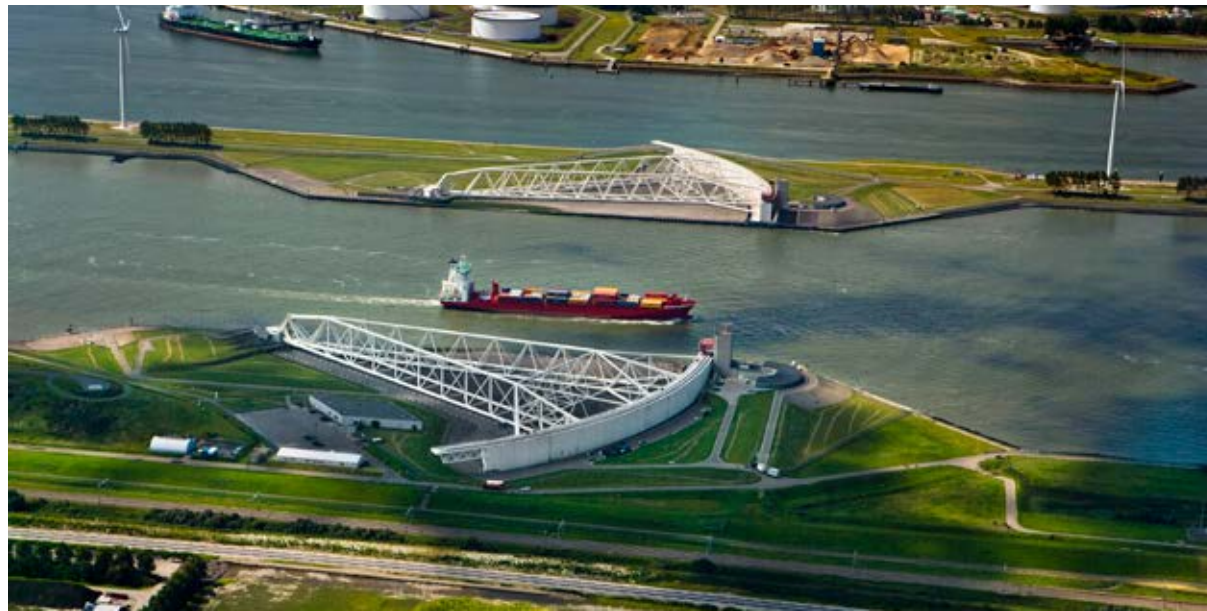
Top sector Horticulture & Propagation Materials aspires to hold the position of world leader when it comes to sustainable solutions for issues including food, energy and water. Already, this is a sector that is at the forefront of the development of, for example, crops that are less sensitive to weather conditions, or that need fewer pesticides.

24 September One of the greenhouses in the Westland is home to the innovative company Koppert Cress. This company specialises in seedlings of unique plants, each with their own taste, smell, feel or appearance. Plants only need reddish-purple light to grow. Using only part of the light spectrum, generated by sustainable LED-lighting, leads to great energy savings.

25 September Left: Aerial view of a sea of greenhouses around the village of Monster in the Westland greenhouse region. You can see why the Westland is nicknamed Glass City.

26 September Following pages: A pleasure boat, sailing down the Vecht river, passes by the stately country house of Rupelmonde.

DELTA WORKS MASTERPIECE



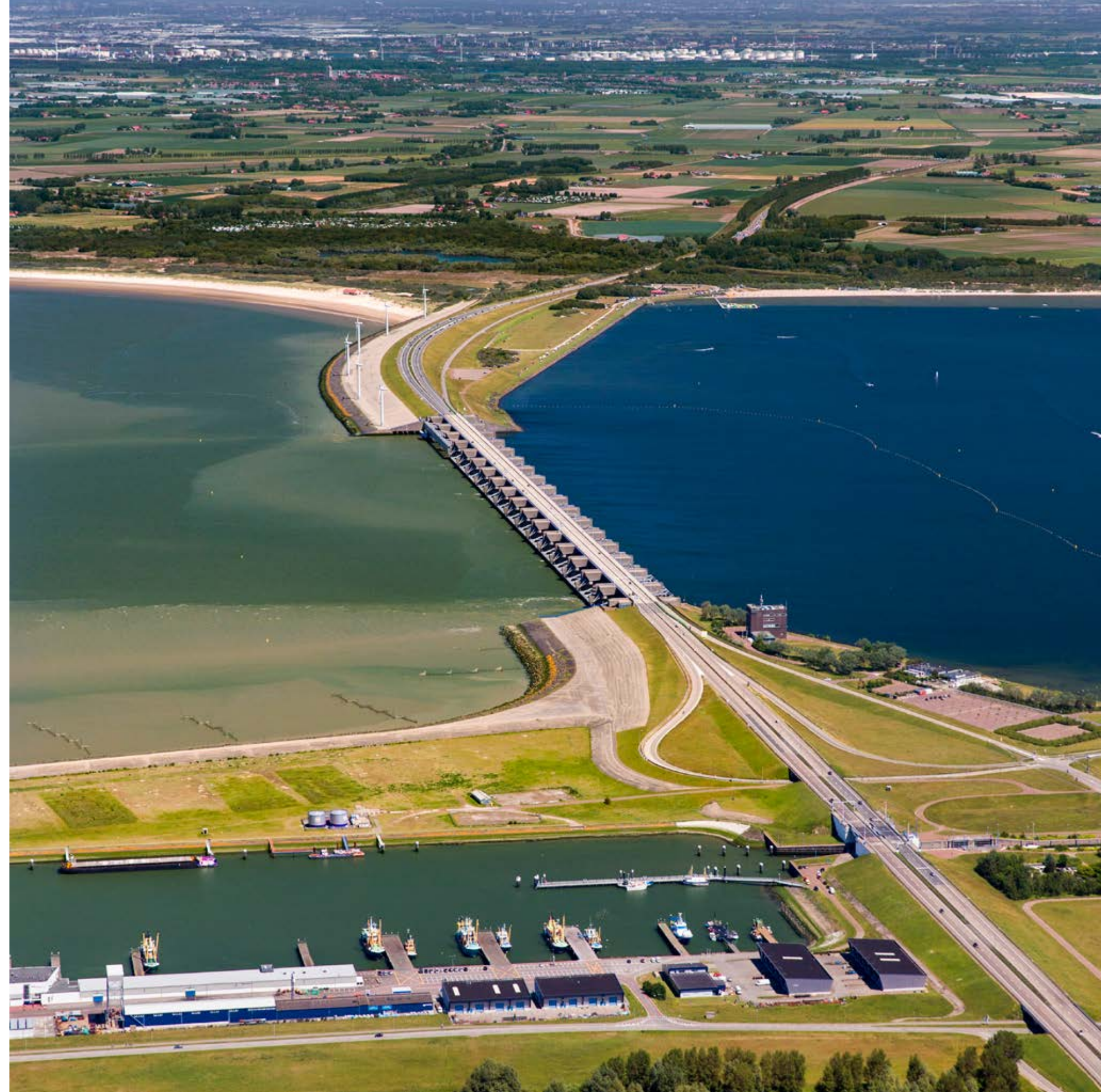
Delta Works On the night of 31 January, 1953, a storm surge pushed seawater into the coastal provinces causing hundreds of dykes to burst. 1,836 people drowned and the damage was enormous. The 1953 flood was a pretext to speed up the implementation of the already existing Delta Plan. This plan provided for the closure of the estuaries of Zeeland and Zuid-Hol-

land, using fixed or movable water barriers. Between 1953 and 1997, billions of euros were invested in the Delta Works; a series of dykes, dams and barrages intended to protect Zeeland and Zuid-Holland against future storms.

9 October The Oosterschelde storm surge barrier. This defensive structure can be opened and closed.

11 October The Maeslant Storm Surge Barrier with two huge, curved submersible gates, each 210 metres wide.

12 October The Haringvliet dam. In 2018, the Haringvliet sluices were set ajar. That way salmon and sea trout, among others, can pass through the lock to lay eggs in the fresh water.





27 October Like ghosts from the past, traditional sailing boats of the Brown Fleet loom in the misty distance. They glide through the water of the Wadden Sea during the annual Brandaris Race from Harlingen to Terschelling.