

The Netherlands: Keeping the Water at Bay

If not for the determination of its people and a whole lot of brilliant engineering, fully two-thirds of the Netherlands would have gone the way of Atlantis a long time ago.

A massive storm in the year 1134 created the archipelago of Zeeland, seen near the center of this ISS photograph from July of 2018. Along with a small strip of mainland to the south, this collection of islands and peninsulas form the Netherlands' southern border with Belgium. The good news - all of this coastline has made Zeeland a very popular destination for vacationing Europeans during the summertime.

Over 1800 died in the North Sea flood of 1953. The government responded by launching a comprehensive civil engineering project called the Delta Works, which uses dams and dykes, locks and levees, and enormous storm surge barriers to make the country's low-lying areas safe and dry. The American Society of Civil Engineers has declared the Delta Works to be one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

The Dutch always manage to find the good news in every situation, and it turns out the region's geology and hydrology combine to make for great farm land. Worldwide agricultural exports from the Netherlands, which includes two-thirds of the world's flowers, are second only to the United States in total value.

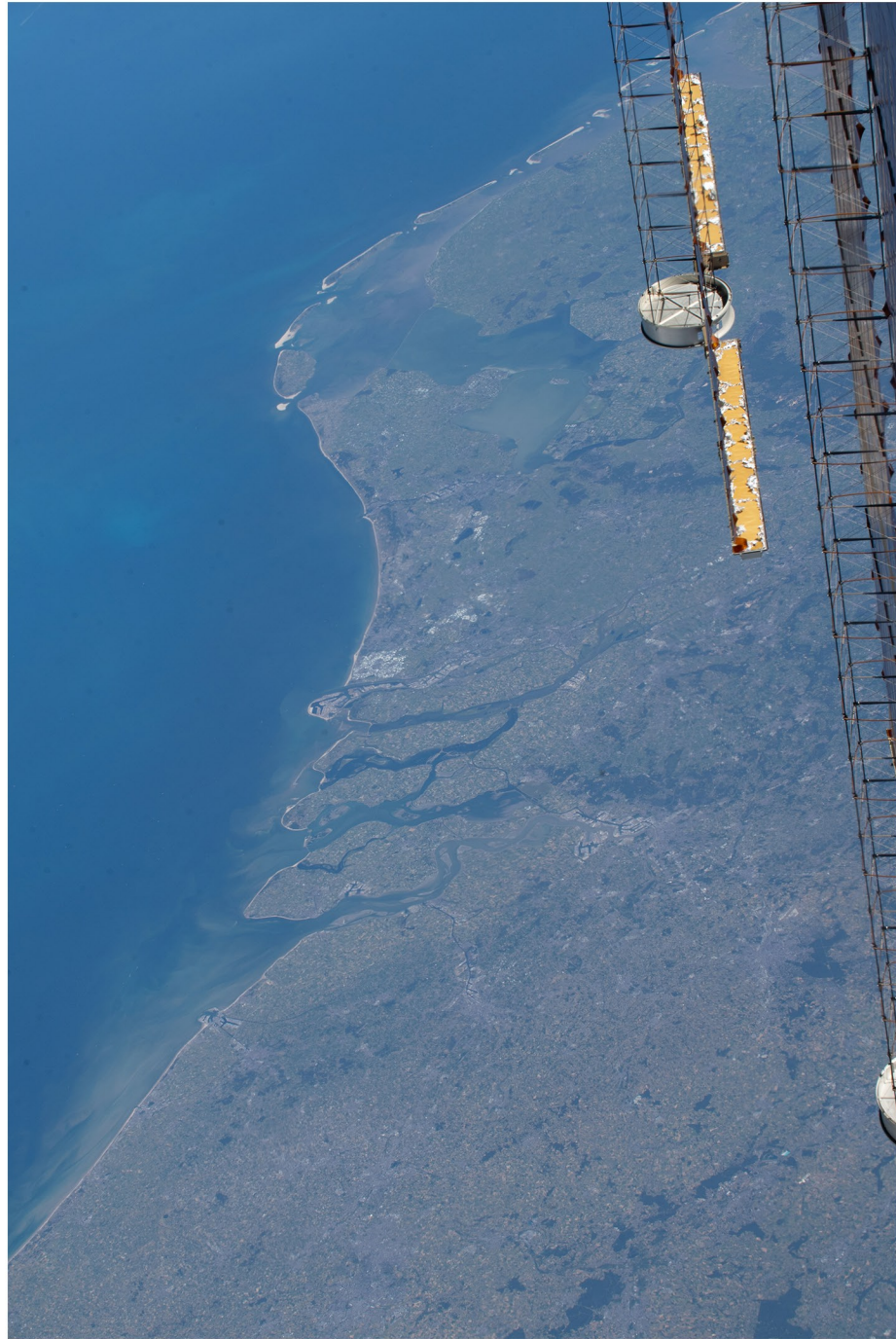


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