

The northern section of the North Sea

In March, the lowest annual average temperatures at the surface of the water ranged between 7°C in the northwest (Atlantic water) and 4.5°C in the southeast (Dutch coast). At the end of August, the highest average temperatures at the surface of the water ranged correspondingly (NW and SE) between 13°C and 17.5°C in the Helgoland Bight.

From May until August, a horizontal thermo-cline builds up, but declines during the autumn months. Temperature level increases at lower water levels (e.g. 20m, 40m) in autumn and decreases at the bottom (60m). It is therefore possible for the whole water body to be warmer in September than in August. Even if, after calculating the 'monthly averages', we get only an approximate figure, this gives us an indication about the monthly decrease in temperature (or energy release) which takes place in small quantities: from 11°C in August to 4.5°C in March, i.e. on an average it could be as little as only one degree per month.

