



Marine Protected Areas Workshop

27-29th October 2008

The Liner Hotel, Liverpool

Workshop report

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Contents

Introduction	3
Agenda.....	4
Abstracts and notes	6
Session 1:	6
Restoration of sites – Strangford Lough.....	6
Does Site Condition Monitoring help with management of marine SACs?	6
Links between monitoring and management	6
Discussion: Casework Consistency	7
Session 2	9
Marine Protected Areas 2012 - Communicating the designations	9
Natural England’s Undersea Landscapes Campaign	9
Pen Llŷn a’r Sarnau SAC: Living Coasts Living Seas - awareness raising project	10
Relationships with authorities - experience and learning from the field	10
Linking protected area management on land with the sea – opportunities for European Marine Sites	12
Future Roles of Project Officers	12
Session 3: Improving management of European Marine Sites – risks and solutions	15
Keynote speech: Wadden Sea: Protection and Management in a Trans-boundary Context.....	15
Understanding the risks to European Marine Sites.....	16
Improving Water Quality in European Marine Sites - Just a Pipe Dream?	17
Coastal Development: Levies on new build to offset pressures on the European Marine Site	17
Fisheries Sensitivity mapping to support management of SACs	18
Towed Demersal Gear & Scalping – Case Study from the Fal & Helford	18
Marine non-natives and the Menai Strait mussel fishery: A Code of Good Practice.....	19
Session summary.....	20
Session 4 – Emerging Issues and Drivers	20
Marine Strategy Framework Directive and MPAs	20
Completing the MPA network.....	21
Coastal Access- the implications for Marine Protected Areas	22
Use of Nature Conservation Orders within European Marine Sites	23
WFD River Basin Management Plans, opportunities and implications	24
Working with the aggregate and oil and gas industries.....	24
Meeting the renewable energy and MPA targets - challenges and opportunities	24
The Role of the UK MPA Centre	25
New global tools and resources – Protect Planet Ocean.....	26
Discussion - How can industry, nature conservation and existing site managers work better together?	26
Key workshop conclusions.....	28
Annex 1	29
Feedback	29
Annex 2.....	31
Delegate list	31

Introduction

Background to workshop

The Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee) have previously held workshops with their staff working on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), particularly European Marine Sites (EMS) and EMS project officers since 2001. These have enabled SNCB staff and project officers to share good practise in site management, discussion problems and solutions, learn of new projects and tools and build networks.

In 2007 Natural England held a Marine Protected Area Conference in Scarborough. This event, timed to coincide with discussions on the Marine Bill, looked at both existing MPAs and how an ecologically coherent network might be completed in the UK. The conference was very well received but lacked the ability to discuss specific site-based issues. Thus the SNCB's decided to return to a workshop format for 2008.

Aim and objectives of the workshop

The overall aim of the workshop was to share learning and good practice amongst MPA practioners in completing the UK vision for a well-managed and ecologically coherent MPA network.

The workshop was split into four sessions, each with a specific objective.

1. **Improving our sites, improving consistency.** To share results of monitoring, highlighting case studies on site condition, how EMS monitoring fits into wider surveillance and how we can work towards improving consistency across sites
2. **Engaging with partners and public.** To share best practice on how conservation agencies and Project Officers can engage with relevant authorities and the wider public
3. **Improving management of EMS - Risks and Solutions.** To share best practice and discuss issues and challenges in managing EMSs.
4. **Emerging Issues and Drivers.** To look ahead at emerging issues that will effect MPA designation & management.

Structure of report

The report contains abstracts of the presentations and write ups of the breakout groups in the order within which they occurred in the agenda. Key questions and comments are included at the end of each abstract. Feedback from the conference is included in Annex 1 and a list of delegates and their contact details are in Annex 2.

Agenda

Monday 27th October

Part 1 – SNCB staff and EMS project officers

Session 1: Improving our sites, improving consistency

To share results of monitoring, highlighting case studies on site condition, how EMS monitoring fits into wider surveillance and how we can work towards improving consistency across sites

Chair: Dan Laffoley, NE

- 13.00 **Welcome to workshop and introduction to session**
- 13.15 **Keynote speech: Restoration of sites – Strangford Lough**
Joe Breen, NIEA
- 14:00 **Does Site Condition Monitoring help with management of marine SACs?**
Carol Hume, SNH
- 14.15 **Making the links between monitoring and management**
Paolo Pizzolla, JNCC
- 14.35 **Discussion**
- 14.55 *Break*
- 15.15 **Casework consistency – the need for national guidelines**
Roger Covey, NE
- 15.30 **Breakout discussions**
- 16.45 **Report back & Discussion**
- 17:15 *Session finish*

- 17.30 -19:00 **'5 successes/5 issues'**
Evening Poster session

Tuesday 28th October

Session 2: Engaging with partners and public

To share best practice on how conservation agencies and Project Officers can engage with relevant authorities and the wider public

Chair: Paolo Pizzolla, JNCC

- 9.00 **Introduction to session**
- 9:05 **New MPAs – communicating the different designations**
Chris Davis, NE
- 9.25 **Living Coasts Living Seas - around the Pen Llyn SAC**
Lucy Kay, CCW
- 9.40 **Engaging the public in what's under the waves**
Karen Mitchell, NE
- 10.00 **Experience and learning from the field**
Aisling Lannin, B&NNC EMS and Ben Sampson, Cardigan Bay EMS
- 10.15 **Discussion**
- 10.45 *Break*
- 11.00 **Linking protected area management on land with the sea – new guidance on AONBs and EMSs**
Kirsty Lindenbaum, CCW & Edward Holdaway, Europarc
- 11.15 **Evolution of the EMS Project Officer role**
Mike Quigley, NE
- 11.30 **Break Out**
- 12.15 **Discussion**
- 12.45 *Lunch*

Part 2 – SNCB staff, EMS project officers & competent authorities

Session 3: Improving management of EMS - Risks and Solutions

To share best practice and discuss issues and challenges in managing EMSs.

Chair: Mary Lewis, CCW

13.30 **Welcome & introduction to session**

13.40 **Keynote speech: Experience from the Waddenzee**

Jens Enemark, CWSS

14.20 **European marine sites – a shared responsibility**

Tim Andrews, Defra

} Late drop out

14.35 **Understanding the risks to European Marine Sites**

Chris Pirie, NE

14.55 **Breakout group discussion – how to identify and manage risks**

15.55 *Break*

16.15 **Improving Water Quality in European Marine Sites - Just a pipe dream?**

Michael Coyle, NE

16.30 **Coastal Development– levies on new build to offset pressures**

Kaja Curry, Plymouth CC

16.45 **Fisheries sensitivity mapping to support management of SACs**

Clare Eno, CCW

17.00 **Towed demersal gear and scalloping – casework example from the Fal and Helford SAC**

Eddy Derriman, CSFC & Sangeeta McNair, NE

17.15 **Non-natives: Menai Strait code for the mussel fishery**

Kate Smith, CCW

17.30 **Discussion** – reflection on session

18.00 *Session close*

19.30 *Workshop dinner*

Wednesday 29th October

Session 4: Emerging Issues and Drivers

To look ahead at emerging issues that will effect MPA designation & management.

Chair: Mark Duffy, NE

9.15 **Introduction to session**

9.20 **Marine Strategy Framework Directive & MPAs**

Paul Gilliland, NE

9.40 **Completing the MPA network**

Beth Stoker & Annabelle Aish JNCC

10.00 **Break out groups**

- **Coastal Access and its implications for MPAs**

Andrew Best, NE

- **Use of nature conservation orders within EMSs**

Kirsty Lindenbaum, CCW

- **WFD river basin management plans, opportunities and implications**

Michael Coyle, NE

10:50 *Break*

11.10 **Meeting the renewable energy and MPA targets – challenges & opportunities**

Alex Fawcett, NE

11.30 **Working with the aggregates industry / oil and gas**

Zoe Crutchfield, JNCC

11.50 **Supporting UK MPA work, national and global tools**

Jen Ashworth, NE & Emma Jackson UK MPA Centre

12.05 **Future management of sites. How can industry, nature conservation and existing site managers work better together?**

Discussion

12.45 **Closing Remarks**

Mark Duffy, NE

13.00 *Lunch and finish*

Abstracts and notes

Session 1:

Restoration of sites – Strangford Lough

Joe Breen, Northern Ireland Environment Agency

No abstract provided.

Talk covered:

- Background to the degradation & infraction process
- Plan for restoration
- Performance measures

Does Site Condition Monitoring help with management of marine SACs?

Carol Hume, Policy & Advice Officer: Marine Natura, Scottish Natural Heritage

This talk looked at the role Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) has played in informing management decisions within two marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) on the west coast of Scotland. The two sites, the Firth of Lorn and Loch Creran, are both designated for the Annex I habitat 'Reefs'. However, the extent of the sites and their qualifying interests, and indeed the reef types within each site differ considerably. Bedrock reefs are prevalent in the Firth of Lorn (together with areas of qualifying boulder and cobble habitats) but form a lesser component of the reef habitat in Loch Creran where fragile and highly sensitive biogenic reefs of *Serpula vermicularis* (and to a lesser degree beds of *Modiolus modiolus*) are of primary interest.

Both sites have a Management Group and these groups have been heavily involved in resolution discussions for relevant management issues. Within the Firth of Lorn, the key management issue (concerns regarding damage to the reef interests arising from fishing by mobile gear for king scallops) could not be satisfactorily resolved by the management group, resulting in the closure of the entire SAC to scallop dredging via the Inshore Fishing (Prohibited Methods of Fishing) (Firth of Lorn) Order 2007. This Order is intended to be temporary until further assessment can be made as to the full extent of the interaction between the fishery and the qualifying interests. Unfortunately in this instance the results of the SCM were insufficient on their own to inform any long-term management decision in relation to this activity. The SCM work was undertaken at too coarse a resolution (issues relating to methods employed and also to monitoring coverage within this very large site), and importantly the work was devised in almost complete isolation to any information on this key pressure (fisheries activity information not available to inform development of a targeted sampling programme).

In contrast, broadscale habitat mapping, SCM data and a legacy of scientific studies have underpinned decisions on key management issues within the Loch Creran SAC (predominantly anchoring, moorings, fishing by mobile gear for queen scallops and static gear). A clear connection was demonstrable between the management issues raised and the inaugural SCM results. This SCM work utilised high-resolution side-scan sonar and the resultant images clearly illustrated damaged areas of biogenic reef amongst living reef areas. Actions that have been taken under the site management plan include the following: installation of signs for designated anchorages; updating of sailing information; and the production and dissemination of a 'mooring pack' best practice guide. Zonation of fishing activities within this loch has also been achieved under the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984 and represents probably the most complex application of an Order under this Act. Communication with stakeholders was essential to the success of these management actions, enabling proportional measures to be implemented on the basis of a thorough understanding of fishing activities and the distribution of the qualifying reef features. The very nature of the 'structurally complex' biogenic reefs aids the collection of unambiguous evidence of structural damage or loss (compared to cobble/boulder reef habitats) - making the SCM data invaluable in this instance.

Links between monitoring and management

Paolo Pizzolla, JNCC

This talk looked at the current state of monitoring on European Marine Sites and how this is linked **or not** to effective management of those sites.

A regularly recurring issue is that the existing methods for site monitoring (i.e. the Common Standards Monitoring) is too narrow in scope and too under resourced to provide enough information for effective site management. In spite of spending around £ 1 million a year during the first CSM cycle between the 4 Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, the results that were available to feed into reporting such as the Habitats Directive 'Favourable Conservation Status' were limited in many cases and lead to large gaps in the assessments. In particular it was not possible to infer any trends from the results.

The following are some of the causes of this situation

- We have inadequate baseline information to start with – it could be argued that the 'monitoring' currently undertaken is actually baseline survey
- We have a limited understanding of anthropogenic vs. natural change within the habitats
- There will never be enough funds to undertake all the survey we would like

In addition, we are also faced with some other issues

- Scale – are we undertaking the correct survey to identify problems?
- Scale – how do we effectively sample some of the huge sites (e.g. the Welsh EMSs) and have confidence in our results?
- Contextual information – how do we incorporate non-ecological data in our assessment (e.g. level of development on a site, intensity of fishing) alongside the traditional monitoring data?

While we are at the beginning of this process in real terms, we should seek to evolve our techniques and thinking so that the survey we are conducting has a clear link back to how we manage our sites – i.e. how we manage the activities within them to maintain or restore the habitats. Essentially we need to be able to say which activities are having negative effects and at what intensities.

Currently the JNCC and the Inter-Agency Marine Monitoring Group is looking at ways to revise CSM to include activities information to assess alongside ecological data – this is in line with other thinking on activities based habitat assessment within the wider surveillance and monitoring debate of the UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy. It also compliments risk-based approaches and more joined-up approaches (e.g. linking in with Water Framework Assessment monitoring).

Discussion: Casework Consistency.

Roger Covey, Senior Marine Specialist, South West Region, Natural England

Key points

Need for guidance

- Consistency within and across organisations
- Need to adequately record losses of habitat for assessing cumulative effect.
- Don't have good practice on fisheries casework.
- Key casework for guidance is Port development, jetties, dredging,
- Legitimate differences in decisions are not always understood by Relevant Authorities (we need to be better at explaining decisions)
- Why are differences occurring? – Variation in Conservation Objectives, Variation in principle of Habitats Regulations No habitat loss.
- Consistency – how would you know if there's consistency, relies on ad hoc discussions between regions.
- Some inconsistency of application of process.
- Consistency of process, but not on technical decision making.
- Considerable inconsistency of in combination judgement.

- High risk, high profile – engage specialists, so likely to be consistent. Whereas medium risk more likely to be inconsistent between regions.

Regional issues

- Structures – Potential ‘triage’ system in team. Allot work to staff on basis of expertise/experience.
- Triage system or casework – grid refs or particular types of casework (to enable cumulative loss to be measured) – need to link back to development of policy.
- Better use of casework tracker system – wider access across teams, standardised coding to enable searching for similar casework.
- Generally processes are the same, but the decision making can be different.
- With more staff dealing with more sites, likely to be more inconsistency.
- Within region consistency not bad – between regions, definitely not consistent.
- Casework tracker doesn’t currently help.
- Potential to use Technical Information Exchange pages (NE system, soon to be superseded by Sharepoint?). But Technical Information Exchange not always an easy place to find stuff

National issues

- Erosion of National Support is an issue.
- Need marine casework lead in NE’s Regulatory Services team.
- Need national support and better mapping of staff skills and expertise.
- Need National Post to deliver guidance which is relevant and up to date.

Working with others

- EA have teleconferencing system, which is developing into a casework group.
- Guidance – need to think of external partners too, which would help early applicants.
- EA Review of Consents Guidance available.
- Potential Interagency Task and Finish Group to write guidance.
- Use UKMPA centre – advantage of transparency as open to all, regulators and developers.
- SNH have ‘Good examples’ database with examples of good responses to casework.

Format and contents of guidance

- Format needs to be accessible.
- Any guidance needs to be succinct – not too detailed.
- Need Sector and Habitat specific guidance.
- Decision tree to guide?
- Split guidance into within site and adjacent.
- Compensation/mitigation Ratios for habitat creation.

Actions needed

- Conditions on planning consents – never followed through.
- Need to codify casework to enable easy search for previous examples.
- Update of existing guidance following marine bill.
- Standard letters need re-visiting.
- Is Guidance available? – Some: HRGNs, International Guidance such as IMO Ballast Water, Ship recycling.
- Guidance to new staff on risk.
- Staff turnover makes rolling programme of training essential.
- High level interpretation of EU Judgements would be useful.
- Need common letters, common phrases.
- Guidance on application basis.
- Haven’t captured good practice.

General points

- Is there a mechanism put in place – can’t expect consistency to spontaneously occur.
- Need to celebrate successes and spread information more widely.
- Need accurate Conservation Objectives essential for sites.
- Searchable Casework database which records decision.
- Priority is Habitat Loss – should we allow any at all?

- Emma Hawthorne – Guidance on Wildfowling
- EIA versus LSE – does need for EIA always equate to LSE?
- Protected Species pages on intranet in EN were useful.
- Maintenance dredging protocol good example
- Tamar have a Marine Development working Group

Summary

General agreement that although the process of dealing with casework is reasonably consistent, the actual technical decision-making is certainly not. Large, obviously risky casework tends to involve national specialists, which helps to make it consistent. Medium scale casework is probably where the most risks of inconsistency occur.

Quick fixes?

For Natural England: Include all marine casework into the Casework tracker. Adopt standard coding, and make tracker accessible and searchable across regions. This would enable staff to search for similar pieces of casework and seek information from staff who had dealt with it.

Draw together existing guidance and best practice into one place – Initially keep internal to Country Agencies pending quality assurance and policy checking, then consider placing (all or some?) on UKMPA centre. Probably some guidance will be only internally appropriate (flow charts, staff specialisms etc) while other such as Habs Regs Guidance notes would be of wider use.

Session 2

Marine Protected Areas 2012 - Communicating the designations

Chris Davis, Senior Specialist – Marine Policy, Natural England.

The UK Government vision is to recover and protect the richness of our marine wildlife and environment through development of a strong, ecologically coherent and well managed network of marine protected areas that is well understood and supported. The UK is committed to establishing the network MPAs by 2012. This is an exciting and considerable challenge that Natural England and JNCC will be leading on.

The presentation will describe how Natural England and JNCC will identify and recommend to Government England's marine protected area network. The MPA network will consist of four separate designations:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – protect species and habitats threatened at a European level;
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) – protect bird populations threatened at a European level;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – protect nationally important species, habitats and geology (use will primarily be to Low Water Mark);
- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) – protect and recover nationally important marine habitats, species and geology (as proposed in the draft marine bill).

Some progress has already been made in the delivery of the network through the designation of SSSIs, SACs and SPAs. However, the marine environment remains significantly unprotected compared to land. The next three years will see an unprecedented focus on marine protected areas focusing on the delivery of the 2012 target. The presentation will describe the programme that Natural England and JNCC will be implementing in England to deliver for the Government's vision.

For further information on the delivery of the MPA 2012 target contact -

chris.davis@naturalengland.org.uk

jamie.davies@jncc.gov.uk

Natural England's Undersea Landscapes Campaign

Karen Mitchell, Marine Campaign Manager, Natural England

Unlike terrestrial habitats and land formations, the underwater world has remained largely unseen and unknown to the English public. There are few marine equivalents to dog walkers, ramblers and birdwatchers. So whilst terrestrial landscape types such as moorland, woodland and meadow are known and loved by millions of people, who actively support their protection, the same cannot be said for the marine environment. Public interest here is limited by the relatively intangible nature of the marine environment, particularly seabed wildlife and features.

Qualitative market research of public perceptions of undersea landscapes undertaken on behalf of Natural England has identified how we can best change the current negative public perceptions of our seas and create realisable public support for the protection of undersea wildlife and habitats. We will be using strong visual imagery, multi-sensory experiences and popular, familiar, language to convey the drama and wonder of undersea landscapes to the public, targeting families in particular.

Reference:

Natural England Research Report (NERR) 019 Qualitative and quantitative research into public engagement with the undersea landscape in England

<http://naturalengland.communisis.com/naturalenglandshop/docs/NERR019.pdf>

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC: Living Coasts Living Seas - awareness raising project

Lucy Kay, Marine Conservation Officer, Countryside Council for Wales

The Living Coasts Living Seas Project was an Interreg-funded awareness raising project that took place on the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from 2005-2008. The project was a partnership between Gwynedd Council in Wales and Fingal County Council in Ireland, with both partners interpreting their local marine and coastal environments through various sub-projects. The Natura 2000 network in the two countries was a key link in the project with the focus on Special Protection Areas and the coastal environment in Ireland, and the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau marine SAC in Wales.

In Wales the sub-projects had a strong focus on raising awareness through the arts and involvement of local people covering different age groups and interests, e.g. theatre project with primary schools, art projects (sculpture inspired by art workshops with children, photographic curtain with local primary schools, outdoor murals inspired by local secondary school art group and local community art group), poster competition (open to all), short 'advert-style' video.

The project helped raise awareness of and generate pride amongst local residents and visitors of the marine environment of the area in general and the SAC in particular. The Interreg funding provided a unique opportunity to try different approaches to engage community groups to raise awareness about the marine environment. In Wales, the art projects in particular generated a sense of involvement and ownership and provided a fun and entertaining way to engage of a wide variety of different groups of people about their local marine environment.

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC website: www.penllynarsarnau.co.uk

Relationships with authorities - experience and learning from the field

Ben Sampson - Cardigan Bay SAC Officer

Aisling Lannin - Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast EMS Implementation Officer

1. Authorities responsibilities

- Competent Authority – statutory body or public office exercising legislative powers on land or sea

- Relevant Authority – competent authorities with local powers/functions that have or could have an impact on the European marine site or adjacent areas

They are responsible for fulfilling the Habitats Regulations. Funding is given to officers to develop, implement and update management plans that help authorities to fulfil their statutory duties

2. Challenges and successes – moving with the times

Nature conservation is evolving, there are

- New paradigms e.g. ecosystem approach, ICZM, managed realignment, sustainable resource use
- New challenges e.g. Climate change, invasive species
- New legislation e.g. biodiversity duty, Marine Bill, Water Framework Directive, Climate Change Bill

Officers guide authorities through these changes, incorporating them into updated management plans and offering expertise.

3. Challenges and successes – integrated management

Officers work with parallel strands of legislation implemented by agencies and authorities across different departments and different specialisms, helping to connect within and between authorities and departments. Examples of this are:

- Water Framework Directive and Bathing Water Directive including coastal/flood defence and habitat creation, monitoring and data collection
- Land and sea conservation management including recreation/tourism and nature protection, work/industry and resource conservation

Integrating site management with the other duties of authorities can be a challenge but has great opportunities for mutual benefit

4. Challenges and successes – engaging stakeholders/public

- As well as management plan duties officers administer and facilitate management, steering and advisory groups
- Officers also produce and promote awareness materials that pass on the message of authorities to other stakeholders and the public
- Officers are on the ground and in the field connected to people and are often the only line of communication with the stakeholders and the public
- Officers administer projects that are externally funded but deliver many objectives for authorities
- In short there is ADDED VALUE in employing officers

5. Lessons for the future

- Securing long term core and project funding would be beneficial
 - Has not been easy when EMS officers work across (and are funded by) many authorities even though most see the merit in this
 - For officers it is very difficult to plan long term with year on year contracts
 - For authorities there can be high officer turnover, lack of staff resulting in skill and knowledge loss
- Public engagement and “ownership” of sites is essential for the success of complex, multi use sites so this should be a supported activity
- A dedicated site officer provides vital links to relevant and competent authorities and a human face to the site
- Data gathering
 - There is often a lack of basic information about features and site use but this information is essential to guide management plan implementation and inform plan updating or provide consultation on developments within the sites so further support in data gathering should be considered
- Promotion and integration of officers, coastal partnerships, heritage coasts with coastal landscape designations connecting the land and sea would be beneficial
- Officers also work across borders, ensuring consistency (between sites) and extending conservation management beyond the strict borders of sites so can be a source of information and connection across different governments and their agencies

Linking protected area management on land with the sea – opportunities for European Marine Sites

Kirsty Lindenbaum, CCW (for Edward Holdaway, Europarc Atlantic Isles)

There are numerous protected landscapes at the coast, which derive many of their special qualities from the marine environment. However this relationship is not well understood and therefore tends to be neglected. A coastal and marine working group has formed, under Europarc Atlantic Isles. The role of the group is to raise awareness of the connection between land and sea and published a booklet describing the connection, the issues and opportunities facing protected landscapes, and promoting a way forward.

In 2008, the group undertook a piece of work, funded by CCW, NE and SNH, to develop guidance for managers of coastal protected landscapes on making the connection between land and sea in management plans. The guidance sets out a routemap for the identification of those special qualities of the landscape that are derived from the marine environment, the definition of a marine 'area of significance' and the development of management strategies and action plans to address potential risks and opportunities.

In many cases around the UK, protected landscapes at the coast exist adjacent to European Marine Sites, offering an opportunity to consider the management of these areas in a more joined up way. This new guidance provides an additional driver for managers of coastal protected landscapes to consider the marine area beyond their boundaries, and to integrate marine issues into their own management strategies. EMS officers are encouraged to work together with local protected area officers, where relevant and possible, to develop more integrated and effective management.

A current example of effective joint working exists between the Berwickshire and North Northumberland coast EMS and the North Northumberland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which share most of the same coastline. Recognising that the sites deal with many of the same stakeholders and agencies, they are now working towards a joint management plan. This joint working has had a number of benefits in terms of sharing of resources, reducing 'stakeholder overload', raising awareness about the different sites to a wider audience and enabling the sourcing of a wider range of funding.

Booklet reference:

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/pdf/Europarc%20connecting%20land%20&%20sea%20English.pdf>

Future Roles of Project Officers

Mike Quigley, Marine Conservation Officer, Natural England

Introduction

The context of marine conservation is currently undergoing a paradigm shift with new challenges and exciting opportunities needing to be grasped. The role of European Marine Site (EMS) Project Officer (PO) has always been a moveable feast as each individual seeks to respond to the specific needs of their site, communities and management groups. The discussion and break-out session held at the event was designed to identify issues that officers currently face and equally to seek opportunities for enhancing their roles into the future.

A brief presentation was given attempting to succinctly summarise the current work areas and issues fielded by officers around the UK. This was followed by a discussion session with four groups of 8-10 people. The six Project Officers present were spread amongst the groups.

Delegates were asked to comment upon and discuss the topics listed below. The resulting comments are both those notes made by the "scribe" on each table during the "break out" session and those captured from the following plenary discussion:

Funding

The issue of **funding** was unsurprisingly of central interest. Funding needs to be greater, centrally or at least better coordinated and secure. The burden of funding needs to be shared more equitably between Competent and Relevant Authorities (CAs and RAs) and needs to be extended more frequently to project working not just to meet salary costs.

- Because of regular pleas for better funding it is felt that the message is not really getting through as nothing has changed significantly;
- Move towards long-term funding across all sites, the benefits of longer-term funding could be sold more convincingly to CAs/RAs;
- Job security is a key concern for Pos, permanent posts are required. There is inconsistency between salary scales dependant upon where the project officer is hosted. There also seems to be significant differences in salary progression;
- EMS management need to be designed and funded as a “project” and not solely around the employment of a Project Officer. This approach provides more tangible objectives and context and hence greater clarity to the requirements of the role;
- Funding needs to be handled more strategically especially by the larger agencies and organisations to reduce inconsistencies across the country;
- On some sites not all CAs or RAs contribute to funding. It might be better to promote a system for contributions that applies across sites. Perhaps a nationally agreed system (MoA) might carry more weight in persuading RAs and CAs to contribute or a statutory requirement upon CAs/RAs to fund project officers or EMS management projects?
- Could project officers be funded centrally via NE/CCW/SNH grant in aid?
- It was felt that if one CA/RA provided more than half the project officer funding, they might be seen as dominating the process unduly. This must be balanced with the need to accept money where it can be found as there is no perceived excess of support. *Pro rata* influence could be controlled by an appropriate constitution or terms of reference for the Management Group providing for democratic processes;
- New funding streams need to be explored, either sponsorship of posts by commercial sector or European “Life” funding. Are there funds available to promote a “Life Revisited” programme to assess the performance of the Natura Network thus far?

Hosting

There are almost as many different **hosting** arrangements as there are sites. Some are better than others; none seem to offer an ideal solution. There seems to be some merit in seeking hosting arrangements with organisations that allow the process to maintain a broad outlook. Equally joint hosting with other designation teams (i.e. AONBs) may bring benefits in integrated working and delivery.

- A number of alternative hosting arrangements were flagged up, including the Wildlife Trusts or Universities. These hosts might serve to provide access to new initiatives and to be innovative. Some hosts might have their own agenda with reference to marine issues. This may serve to complicate delivery of the role or overly influence the project officer’s work areas;
- It was suggested that being hosted within a local authority undermines the fact that the PO works for all the competent authorities and not just the hosting authority. Hosting with another more “neutral” party might offer a solution to this situation. Alternatively a roving work place / hot-desking might provide better access to POs by their management group members;
- Alternatively, POs could effectively work from home and operate independently.
- Could there be opportunities for hosting within the new MMO?
- If PO can be aligned / based with coastal terrestrial designation (e.g. Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast SAC and Northumberland Coast AONB), this might help to strengthen the ability to work more effectively and in an integrated manner. This may also enhance access to funding bodies.
- There are tangible benefits to being located within a large organisation i.e. technical support, access to training and logistics;
- It is important that the EMS develops its own profile and branding regardless of hosting arrangements;

New Work Areas

It is clear that **new work areas** will need to be adequately resourced before additional work can be fielded by POs. Most POs are already working beyond capacity in the face of an ever increasing range of agendas

and issues. Conversely there is an enthusiasm amongst officers to engage with a more integrated agenda and to embrace opportunities arising from the Marine Bill and other emerging issues.

- If new work areas are to be developed then additional funding will be required for projects or creating new posts, as most project officers tend to be working at delivery capacity;
- DEFRA need to develop a long-term view regarding the funding of marine work in the light of the Marine Bill and MCZ's and their possible overlap with SACs and SPAs;
- Core work needs to be cemented across EMS's before advancing into new work areas;
- POs could promote better integration with other designations (e.g. Berwickshire and integration of EMS and AONB management schemes) or in "zipping" together marine spatial planning and land use planning, although there are still IT problems to be overcome;
- There needs to be greater inclusion of POs in Coastal Access roll-out and meetings. This needs to be fixed at a high level within country agencies. Ecotourism is expanding, as are associated issues requiring management;
- There is a need for more warden/ranger type posts, in addition to existing posts. This is particularly required if project officers are to migrate into new work areas. It is important to keep enforcement action outside the PO role as this will undermine role as "honest broker". The role of those POs who currently engage in planning and licensing is not consistent and requires differing proportions of officer time;
- An approach taken in Menai has been to broaden the role to encompass an ICZM remit or to operate as a general marine officer with responsibilities not only for the SAC/EMS but for a broader marine area. These posts might be more able to link together better at a national level and deliver a more ecosystem-based approach to management.
- There is a need to find new ways to keep existing stakeholders involved in the face of increasing apathy. The Marine Bill outcomes might be an opportunity to breathe new life into this agenda;
- The existing network of European site project officers could be used to help develop the stakeholder consultation process for the MPA consultation process. However, this cannot be considered as resource neutral, support will be required.

Training

Training needs to be more available, strategically delivered and tailored to PO needs. The provision of training can make POs feel more valued and contribute to reducing staff turnover. The country agencies could play a stronger role in this respect.

- There need to be clearer strategic objectives for the PO role thus allowing training needs to be identified against these goals. Joint training events are required to promote consistency and good practice;
- Country Agency training programmes need to be more inclusive of external project officer training needs or automatically open to project officers;
- POs need to make more use of training available from host organisations or other CAs/RAs;
- The EMS Event in Suffolk (2006) was attended by 30 officers, in 2007 5 attended and there were 6 in 2008. Clearly the ability of this event to engage project officers needs to be reviewed and re-directed;
- The large turnover of staff due to short term contracts, officers not being allowed to develop or not feeling valued, is also a barrier to effective training of officers and for their management groups to subsequently benefit from this training.

Networking with other Officers

Networking between themselves is recognised by officers as being of crucial importance; however, opportunities for this are often limited. Support for networking opportunities for POs could also benefit from greater support from the country agencies. Equally, web based support and communication via the UKMPA Centre would also provide a useful tool.

- Networking is considered very important in order to develop solutions to the vast range of issues and new work areas that sites/officers face;
- There are significant differences in the way individual project officers deliver their role. Some of this simply reflects the differing nature of sites, governance structures and hosts. However, greater communication between officers will enable more effective and timely development of good practice where it is needed;
- An EMS officer only forum/event would be useful;

- Regular teleconferencing would be useful on specific issues/topics;
- It was suggested that a dedicated project officer space on the UKMPA Centre website might help project officer communication and reduce possible isolation. Officers might highlight particular areas for which they have particular skills/experience to promote more targeted networking.

Summary

European Marine Site/SAC Project Officers represent a community of highly motivated and skilled people with a genuine interest in the roles they perform. Now is the time to enhance the support to this community and to expand its capacity, remit and functionality in order to meet forthcoming challenges. The above comments should be viewed as a list of actions to be taken up, planned for and delivered.

Session 3: Improving management of European Marine Sites – risks and solutions

Keynote speech: Wadden Sea: Protection and Management in a Trans-boundary Context

Jens Enemark, Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

The Wadden Sea is the world's largest contiguous tidal area and barrier island system an area of outstanding international importance shared by The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Since 1978 the three countries cooperate to protect the Wadden Sea as one ecological entity. In 1987 the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat was established by the governments to facilitate the Cooperation. Wadden Sea Ministerial Conferences are held every 3-4 years to discuss progress on the joint protection and management of the Wadden Sea and decide on the programme for the next period.

The Wadden Sea is now under comprehensive protection and management making it one of the largest protected coastal wetland in Europe. It now enjoys a level of environmental protection and wise management that is unprecedented throughout Europe and other parts of the World in terms of harmonised international and national policies, management arrangements, and integrated environmental monitoring and assessment processes.

The common principles, Targets and policies for the Wadden Sea are laid down in the Wadden Sea Plan (WSP), which was adopted at the 1997 Ministerial Conference. The Guiding Principle of the trilateral Wadden Sea policy is to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way. The trilateral conservation policy and management is directed towards achieving the full scale of habitat types which belong to a natural and dynamic Wadden Sea. The quality of the habitats shall be maintained or improved by working towards achieving Targets which have been agreed upon for six habitat types. Targets on the quality of water and sediment are valid for all habitats. Supplementary Targets on birds and marine mammals have been adopted, as well as, Targets on landscape and cultural aspects. On the basis hereof, trilateral policy and management and proposals for trilateral projects and actions necessary for the implementation of the Targets have been developed.

A recent external evaluation of the Cooperation concluded that it has been a pioneering model for the protection and management of a trans-boundary ecological system of international importance. It has been very effective in meeting its original 1982 objective of a comprehensive protection of the Wadden Sea. There is much pride and a strong sense of ownership of this achievement among the key stakeholders. The Cooperation has delivered significant added-value to the work of the individual countries, and many aspects of its work are world-class in quality. Most notable of these are the politically-adopted Targets, the Wadden Sea Plan, the harmonised monitoring programme and Quality Status Report, Policy Assessment Report, and the Seal Agreement and Management Plan.

But the Cooperation faces new challenges which will significantly determine the future of the Cooperation. Three challenges are in particular important in this regard.

At the 2010 the Wadden Sea Plan will be updated and developed into a management plan in accordance with the stipulations entailed in the Habitats, Birds and the Water Framework Directives and other European

Union directives and regulations, in particular Article 6 (1) of the Habitats Directive. The Directives are directed at the Member States, which are responsible for their implementation. The challenge is to implement those in a cross boundary context in a harmonized and coordinated way within the trilateral cooperation and achieve the same or similar results for a commonly shared ecosystem. Currently a review is carried out of the relevant EC Directives to determine the priorities for collaboration and harmonization. Further, the challenge is to use the Cooperation to achieve a synergy between the relevant Directives across the boundaries and add a value to the national protection and management efforts.

A further challenge is the inscription of the Wadden Sea into the World Heritage List. A Dutch-German nomination has been submitted to the UNESCO last year and it is expected that a positive decision will be taken at the meeting of the World Heritage Committee mid 2009. This will be the end of a more than 15 year process to obtain the designation and constitute an award for the protection measures for more than a generation. It will at the same time be the challenge to use this "trade mark" in a positive way for the region in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders also in a trans-boundary context.

And finally, emerging issues such as in particular climate change and the impacts on the natural environment and the coastal protection will have to be devoted more extensive recognition. It is critical that the Cooperation develops its own strategies and policies at this stage to respond in adequate way.

But there can be no doubt that Cooperation between the three countries will "survive" the challenges and live on. The Wadden Sea being the world's largest contiguous tidal area and barrier island system, an area of outstanding international importance shared by The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark deserves it.

Understanding the risks to European Marine Sites

Chris Pirie, Senior Specialist Marine Monitoring, Natural England
Michael Coyle, Senior Specialist Marine Water Quality, Natural England

European Marine Sites (EMSs) are defined in The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 as marine areas of both Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are protected under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. In England there are 45 EMSs which comprise 28 SACs and 40 SPAs.

Natural England has a responsibility for setting conservation objectives and advising relevant authorities on operations which may cause deterioration to the site's interest features. Such information is contained within advice packages (known as "Regulation 33 packages").

There is a wide range of pressures from human activities within, and adjacent to EMSs. In 2008, Natural England initiated a strategic review of risks from all ongoing activities within EMSs in order to identify future management required and ensure site features are maintained or restored to favourable condition. This review is part of Natural England's Marine Protected Areas work programme which is driven by its Strategic Direction 2008-2015 document.

Work undertaken so far includes:

- An internal, broad high-level review of potential risks via a structured questionnaire completed by Natural England area staff with responsibilities for EMSs;
- The completion of a Natural England commissioned independent assessment of potential effects on EMSs from commercial fisheries;

These two pieces of work provided an initial view of where the highest risks from activities were. The next stage of work involves undertaking more detailed risk assessments for a prioritised list of activities. A standardised proforma will be used to capture information in a systematic way. In consultation with relevant authorities, risks will be recorded as either High, Moderate, Low, or None, and suitable future management will be identified.

This next stage of assessments for prioritised activities will be completed by December 2008, and rolled out to remaining activities throughout 2009.

Improving Water Quality in European Marine Sites - Just a Pipe Dream?

Michael Coyle, Senior Specialist Marine Water Quality, Natural England

The Environment Agency's Review of Consents (EAROC) programme was initiated in 1997 and will continue until 2010. The programme has involved a systematic round of appropriate assessments of all EA permissions which could have a likely significant effect on N2K sites, as required under Regulation 50 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.

This programme of work is the main mechanisms for both establishing the risks and impacts to water and sediment quality across marine N2K sites, and for taking remedial action. The work also provides the bulk of Natural England's evidence on site condition with regards to water quality.

Understanding the risks posed by the spectrum of EA licenced effluent discharges into dynamic estuarine and coastal environments is a significant challenge, and has stimulated significant amounts of joint working between the EA and its statutory consultees (Natural England and The Countryside Council for Wales). At a national level, targets and thresholds have been developed to inform judgements such as "likely significant effect" and "adverse effect on integrity". At a site level, further work has been undertaken to increase our understanding of the water quality issues, either by data collation exercises, or by development of bespoke models.

Sites prioritised as either high or medium priority have mostly now been reviewed. The programme has highlighted a number of sites which are being affected by poor water quality and the reasons for this. Action is being taken on licences such as modification or relocation. In many cases, poor water quality has resulted from a combination of EA licenced discharges and diffuse (unregulated) sources. This means that in order to restore some sites to "favourable condition", further action on diffuse sources will be necessary.

Coastal Development: Levies on new build to offset pressures on the European Marine Site

Kaja Curry, Coastal Planning Coordinator, Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum

The question of how best to address cumulative impacts on European Marine Sites which arise from urban development has long been an issue, not least how best to secure the funding in order to assess and manage them.

As part of their Local Development Framework, Plymouth City Council has made use of planning obligations, or agreements, to do just this. In 2008 they adopted a Supplementary Planning Document which established the use of a tariff on all new developments. Whilst this includes all the usual infrastructure categories such as transport, health and education, it also has an element that is linked to avoiding adverse impacts on the integrity of the Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries European Marine Site arising from increased recreational pressures.

The process by which this tariff was set was remarkably straight forward. It involved costing up the delivery of the relevant sections of the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan over the plan period and then dividing that figure by the anticipated population in the wider area. This gave a figure of some £12.90 / head which was then used to generate a tariff dependant on dwelling size. If development occurs to plan, then this could generate as much as £67,000 / year although clearly the recession is likely to have an impact.

Central to this process was the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum which is the established partnership of relevant authorities that collectively agree and deliver the single management plan for the European Marine Site.

Other actions that Plymouth City Council are obliged to deliver as identified in the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LDF include continuing funding for the Estuary Partnership, providing funding and relevant officer support to deliver the management plan and developing a Coastal Planning Supplementary Planning Document. Together they form a powerful example of how the Local Development Framework process can be used to safeguard European Marine Sites.

For further information please see www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningobligations or contact:

Kaja Curry, Coastal Planning Co-ordinator, Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum, c/o Planning Services, Plymouth City Council, FI 08 Civic Centre, Plymouth. PL1 2AA

Tel (01752) 304339 email: kaja.curry@plymouth.gov.uk

Fisheries Sensitivity mapping to support management of SACs

N.Clare Eno, Senior Fisheries Policy Officer, Countryside Council for Wales

How it can be applied in an interpretative tool to aid decision making.

Fishing is very extensive and varied around Wales and many activities can overlap spatially if not temporally and occurs in many marine Natura 2000 sites in Wales where it may a range of effects. To help determine whether fishing activity is compatible with features of the sites, the Countryside Council for Wales, along with outside contractors and researchers, have been developing a systematic approach to the mapping of seabed sensitivity to fishing activities practised in Welsh waters. There has been considerable engagement of scientific experts through workshops in the development of a methodology. The method involves grouping seabed biotopes into 30 more general habitats according to their response to fishing; it also involves categorising fishing activities according to their effect on the seabed. In addition to a number of subtidal mobile and static gear grouping as well as intertidal and aquaculture activities, there was a category was added of access across the foreshore – subdivided to cover foot and vehicle access. The intensity at which a fishing activity occurs will also affect the severity of the impact on the benthos, so sensitivity is scored at four different fishing intensities – heavy, moderate, light and for a single (or accidental) pass. Based on available literature and expert judgement a colour scoring system of high, medium and low sensitivity was developed with blanks left where fishing activity was unlikely to occur on a particular habitat. While expert judgement is semi-quantitative in nature and hence second best, it nonetheless is comprehensive in its coverage and allows assessment for many situations which have otherwise not been fully assessed in a quantitative manner. A matrix of scores was developed of habitat type against fishing activity at each of the four different intensities. The darker colours indicate higher sensitivity. In order to represent how sensitivity is distributed across a site, seabed habitat maps were drawn up and using the matrices, sensitivity scores applied for each fishing activity. A progression of maps at increasing intensity gives a visual indication of the cumulative effect of a particular fishing activity. Sensitivity maps have been produced for all of the intertidal around Wales. Some subtidal maps are available at a lower resolution.

An interactive tool to aid decision making is being developed to illustrate how fishing practices may have an influence on seabed habitats. It could be particularly useful to illustrate how the effects of overlapping activities may combine. Extra layers of sensitivity are being developed to accommodate mobile species including marine mammals, birds and fish as these are also features of Natura 2000 sites. Their assessments will also involve a seasonal element as they move around and the different behaviours they engage in might be spatially and temporally distinct. The outputs from the interactive tool and maps could be of use to inform fisheries managers and the management of fisheries within marine protected areas.

Towed Demersal Gear & Scalloping – Case Study from the Fal & Helford

Edwin Derriman Chief Fishery Officer, Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee
Sangeeta McNair - Maritime Adviser, Natural England

The Fal & Helford Special Area of Conservation (F&H SAC) was designated by the EC for a number of marine habitats and features including, subtidal sandbanks (including maerl bed communities); large shallow inlets & bays; reefs. This jointly written talk provided a brief historical account of scalloping activity within the F&H SAC, and then focussed on the events from winter 2006 through to the eventual decision by the Fishery Minister to close the entire F&H SAC to scallop dredging in 2007, to prevent the deterioration of and disturbance to the features of the SAC.

Following this decision, the SFC is exploring the benefits of turning the majority of the outer SAC area into an experimental Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the purposes of managing the scallop stocks within it and adjacent areas. This is being done in collaboration with CEFAS.

- The closure of the SAC to scallop dredging by Statutory Instrument provides protection to the SAC features designated under the Habitats Directive.
- The experimental MPA is purely for fisheries management purposes and is not related to the features the site was designated for.

Lessons learnt from the SI closure were discussed, including:

- The need for clearer guidance, advice and consistency from NE on which activities would be damaging to interest features, upon site designation (1996).
- The need for adequate resources to be provided to NE, particularly with respect to identifying habitats at risk and potentially damaging activities. (Note the new 0-12 SAC Impact Assessment work); and more adequate resources for all relevant authorities to assist them in carrying out their duties under the Habitats Regulations, again much earlier on in the designation process.
- The need for NE to be transparent, upfront and consistent in its advice; and it has a responsibility to be open and honest in its consultation regarding all aspects of future MPAs, particularly the 0-12 SAC designations, such as what exactly is up for discussion and the need to manage expectations, plus the implications of the designation for existing activities through the Impact Assessment work
- Clarification is required on the responsibility for undertaking Appropriate Assessments for fisheries that are not currently managed under a specific Several or Regulating Order, or under other SFC byelaws. Natural England believes this to be a fundamental issue which must be resolved to enable proactive fisheries management within all international sites so that similar situations are avoided in the future.

The issue of displacement of scalloping activity was also discussed including that the current piecemeal approach to a national issue is not fair on the industry, or on the organisations which end up spending a huge amount of staff resources on each individual case. It was highlighted that there is currently a national scalloping strategy being developed.

Marine non-natives and the Menai Strait mussel fishery: A Code of Good Practice

Kate Smith, Marine Conservation Officer, North Region, Countryside Council for Wales

The seabed lay mussel fishery operating in the Menai Strait, North Wales is the largest in the UK and accounts for at least half of the entire UK output. It is almost entirely dependant on the import of 'seed' mussels from areas outside of North Wales. Around 7000 tonnes of seed mussels are fished and re-laid onto leased plots within the Menai Strait each year, where they are cultured until they reach marketable size. The import of large quantities of mussel seed carries with it an associated risk of introducing invasive non-native species (either in the mussel seed, substrate or surrounding water). This was illustrated in 2006, when the slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata* was accidentally introduced into the Menai Strait with a consignment of mussels from the English Channel.

The whole of the Menai Strait is within a European marine protected area, or Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Introductions of certain non-native species to this area could be extremely damaging to the protected marine habitat features of the SAC, as well as having serious operational and commercial consequences for the mussel fishery. In the absence of current formal procedures licencing the deposition of mussels in the SAC, the Countryside Council for Wales worked collaboratively with the mussel industry to produce a Code of Good Practice relating to sourcing mussel seed and importing it into the Menai Strait.

Producing the Code required a short list of 'problem' species to be drawn up, based on the results of an information review of the ecology and biology of invasive non-native species. A risk assessment process

for the operations of the industry was undertaken and a 'traffic light' approach to mussel imports devised, based on the distance of mussel seed from populations of invasive non-native species. Species specific and additional precautionary measures have also been included in the Code. The Code applies to all imports of mussels, from land and sea. A series of 'pest identification' cards has been produced, to be carried onboard mussel fishing vessels, to enable the crews to be vigilant for these species at all times and during all operations.

All operators in the Menai Strait have signed up to the Code, which is now fully operational. Although there is no direct statutory basis to the Code, the mussel fishery wishes to be seen as an environmentally responsible industry, so they recognise the importance of adhering to it. In addition, since the introduction of invasive non-native species could have a significant detrimental impact on the fishery, the Code is also helping protect the long-term prospects of the industry, whilst also protecting the SAC from future accidental introductions.

Session summary

This session included presentations on a range of different activities and issues within EMS, including fisheries management, introduction of non-natives and coastal development. Whilst it highlighted that there remain a number of outstanding issues relating to the way different activities are managed and regulated within these sites, the focus was very much on the solutions that have been developed to deal with these issues. Presentations included examples of site condition monitoring supporting effective site management measures in Loch Creran SAC, the development of a code of practice for the Menai Strait mussel fishery and non-native species, collaborative work between scalloping interests and NE to secure effective management of the Fal and Helford SAC and the development of sensitivity mapping tool to support fisheries management in Wales. The session emphasised the positive that is being made in many areas and the importance both of partnership working and scientific evidence to underpin effective site management.

Session 4 – Emerging Issues and Drivers

Marine Strategy Framework Directive and MPAs

Paul Gilliland, Senior Specialist Marine Policy, Natural England

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Directive came into force in July 2008. It establishes a framework within which Member States will take measures to maintain or achieve 'good environmental status' (GES) in the marine environment by 2020 for which 'marine strategies' will be developed and implemented. It includes a timetable with various milestones such as transposition in to domestic law (2010), defining GES (2012), developing measures (2015 at the latest) and starting to implement measures (2016 at the latest).

The legislation is "*aimed at the conservation of the marine ecosystems*", requires measures to "*protect and preserve...prevent deterioration or, where practicable, restore marine ecosystems...*", includes, within the definition of GES, maintaining resilience of ecosystems and "*Marine species and habitats are protected, human-induced decline of biodiversity is prevented*", and will apply to all waters around the UK. As such as it will be very important to delivering objectives for biodiversity and conservation, is relevant to the Marine Bill (and *vice-versa*), e.g. Defra have stated that Marine Planning should play a key role in delivering the programme of measures, and provides general context for implementing MPAs. For example, the Common Fisheries Policy should take account of the Directive's objectives.

Furthermore, the MSFD includes specific support and text on MPAs, e.g. refers to commitments such as under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and recognises that MPAs will make an important contribution to implementing the MSFD. MPAs are the only measure prescribed in the MSFD, i.e. "*spatial protection measures, contributing to coherent and representative networks of MPAs, adequately covering the diversity of the constituent ecosystems*". There are also a number of specific provisions on MPAs including the need for competent authorities at European or international, e.g. the EC in relation to fisheries, to consider and adopt measures where there are significant impacts on the marine environment, particularly in MPAs. There

are also requirements for Member States to report on progress with MPAs by 2013 and for the EC to provide an EU-wide report by 2014. These provisions have implications for implementation of MPAs in the UK, potentially including Marine Conservation Zones, which merit further consideration and clarification.

Completing the MPA network

Bethany Stoker, MPA Advisor, Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Annabelle Aish, MPA Policy Specialist, Joint Nature Conservation Committee

International conventions are driving the development of further marine conservation initiatives in the UK. The UK Government, Devolved Administrations and Statutory Nature Conservation Agencies have developed a joint UK MPA network vision, which looks to '*...establish, in consultation with stakeholders, a well managed and ecologically coherent network of UK Marine Protected Areas*¹'. The UK MPA network will consist of sites designated under existing legislation (e.g. Natura 2000) and new, upcoming legislation (e.g. UK Marine & Coastal Access Act).

The draft UK Marine & Coastal Access Bill provides for the designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Defra, Natural England and JNCC are establishing an England MCZ project which will recommend to the UK Government a network of Marine Conservation Zones in English territorial waters and offshore waters adjacent to England, Wales & Northern Ireland by March 2011. This project will consist of four Regional MCZ Projects. The Welsh Assembly Government will use the MCZ mechanism provided for in the draft UK Marine & Coastal Access Bill to establish Highly Protected Marine Reserves (HPMRs) in Welsh territorial waters. The Welsh Assembly Government and the Countryside Council for Wales are embarking on a programme of collaborative work to identify and designate appropriate sites by 2012.

The Scottish Government, in a recent consultation document, have proposed a new flexible power for Scottish Ministers to identify, designate or recognise particular locations of biodiversity importance in Scottish territorial waters. For offshore waters adjacent to Scotland, JNCC and the Scottish Government are looking to establish a collaborative project to identify MPAs. In Northern Ireland, current efforts are focusing on finalising the marine Natura 2000 designation programme to meet commitments under the EU Habitats Directive.

In 2007 the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations came into force. These represent the legal basis for the designation and protection of offshore Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Seven offshore SACs underwent public consultation early in 2008 and of these five have been approved by Government and submitted to the European Commission. A further two sites (Dogger Bank and North West Rockall) have been recommended to the UK Government by JNCC and a formal consultation is expected to commence in late December 2008. JNCC have identified four further areas as potentially suitable for selection as SACs and documentation is currently being prepared to support these sites. Further SACs may be identified beyond these, with the SAC site series being completed by 2010.

In summary, to complete the UK MPA network new projects will be established to identify MPAs in UK waters; and the designation of SACs and SPAs away from the coast will continue to ensure that offshore occurrences of Habitats and Birds Directive interest features are fully represented within the Natura 2000 network.

Questions and comments

- Devolution
 - Cooperation, integration talked about but UK Marine Bill has counter aspirations – devolved administrations – ploughing their own furrows
- MCZ projects
 - Need to develop regional ownership of MCZ projects.
 - Regional ownership on long linear sites will be difficult
 - How can we make sure the project engages the communities?
 - North Sea most difficult area
- Role of SFCs

¹ UK MPA Policy group (2007) UK Marine Protected Area Network: Vision and Principles

- CCW funded post in North Wales SFC – biodiversity post
- SFC can help as they have experience of dealing with MPAs
- SFC will become IFCA's and have a bigger role – will have the duty to look at conservation.

Coastal Access- the implications for Marine Protected Areas

Andrew Best, Specialist Coastal Access, Natural England
Jo Ramsay, Environmental Protection Senior Specialist, Natural England

- **The Government's vision for coastal access:**

"A coastal environment where rights to walk along the length of the English coast lie within a wildlife and landscape corridor that offers enjoyment, understanding of the natural environment and a high quality experience; and is managed sustainably in the context of a changing coastline."

- **Headlines from Natural England's advice to Government (Feb. 2007):**

"Enable Natural England to align a 'coastal access corridor' around the coast that people could enjoy with confidence and certainty.

The corridor should 'roll back' automatically as erosion occurs.

Based on the gap analysis and experience from the study areas, we estimate about half of the coast will need some type of intervention to improve the continuity and quality of access.

The corridor would also include regular spreading room such as beaches, dunes and headlands."

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/leisure/access/coastal/coastalaccessreport.htm>

- **Framework for the alignment of the coastal trail:**

The new access will consist of:

'the trail' - a long-distance walking route around the English coast; and often,
'spreading room' - land beside the route where people can spread out and explore, rest or picnic.

Certain land categories are automatically excepted.

There will be opportunities for access to certain areas to be restricted, in a similar way to the restrictions regime under CRoW.

- **The Coastal Access team is currently:**

Carrying out access audits with coastal local authorities to identify both existing good access and where there are gaps in existing access.

Developing our procedures to ensure that we meet or exceed the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Developing plans for environmental enhancement of land adjacent to the coastal trail.

- **Natural England is in the process of developing a scheme in order to give clear, statutory guidance regarding any future coastal access regime:**

The *outline* scheme is the first step towards publishing a full scheme approved by the Secretary of State.
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/leisure/access/coastal/docs/coastalaccess-outlinescheme.pdf>

A first full draft will be published once the Marine Bill is introduced into Parliament.

Once the Bill receives Royal Assent we will finalise the scheme in consultation with key interests and submit it to the SoS for approval

It is anticipated that the new access rights will be delivered over a ten year period, beginning, approximately, in 2010.

Discussion points

- The mechanics of the new access arrangements- the architecture (spreading room, alignment etc.)
- The legal framework (CRoW and the 1949 Act).
- Our appropriate assessment aspirations (to carry out an "AA" on all identified sites, not only the statutory N2K ones)
- The addition of coastal access and arable deintensification to agri-environment targets.

Use of Nature Conservation Orders within European Marine Sites

Kirsty Lindenbaum, Countryside Council for Wales

Breakout group summary

Nature Conservation Orders are a tool set out within the Marine and Coastal Access Bill to control or prohibit potentially harmful activities which are otherwise unregulated. Within the Bill they have been developed as a tool for ensuring effective management of MCZs. However, it will also be possible to use NCOs within European Marine Sites. The purpose of the breakout session was to explore the potential use of NCOs within existing sites, potential limitations to their use, activities they may help to control and how they should be used.

Prior to the group discussion starting, Defra provided further information about NCOs. In England, the MMO will have the power to make byelaws – in Wales, WAG will have the power to make NCOs – but they are effectively the same thing and do the same job.

Would the NCO be a useful tool within EMS?

It was broadly agreed that this tool would be useful for European Marine Sites, provided it was usable (see 'limitations').

- Yes they should be useful, provided they fill gaps that exist in current powers
- First phase approach should be voluntary. Having the potential to use them should mean it will be easier to reach voluntary agreement
- Allow local ownership with byelaws

What activities might the tool be useful in managing?

- Marine ecotourism – any unregulated tourism activity on water
- Use of 4x4's and motorcycles on the foreshore
- Dumping of rubbish
- Anchoring
- Bio-prospecting
- Shingle removal
- Recreation – kitesurfing, angling
- Crab tiling
- Non-fisheries impacts of commercial fishing

What limitations may there be?

- The way they are prescribed is important. Until they are tried and tested we don't know how they will work.
- Who does what? For example, managing bait digging - will it be done through new IFCA powers, or through NCOs?
- Enforcement
- Resources (for enforcement...)
- Introducing these byelaws (NCOs) in the first place may be an issue

- Could be very complicated –activity focussed, not habitat focussed
- Needs awareness and understanding to ensure that the right orders are made
- Collection of evidence (resources) – avoid threat of judicial review
- New byelaw – limited enforcement resources – how useful in practise?

Should the tool be used proactively or reactively?

- Proactive:
 - BUT – how does this enable better stakeholder engagement?
- Incentivises voluntary approach. These are a safety net.
- Education and raising awareness important to implement
- Best way of publicising is doing one effectively, that is relevant and works
- Something is needed over byelaws to ensure integration of management measures for the site
- What test do you need to put them in place/decide to use them? Develop a framework for identifying when something needs to be done.

WFD River Basin Management Plans, opportunities and implications

Michael Coyle, Senior Specialist Marine Water Quality, Natural England

Breakout group summary

The implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is reaching a critical stage, where the first draft river basin plans are being developed. This session was designed to facilitate discussion on the relevance of WFD river basin planning to conservation agency staff and relevant authorities.

A brief was provided which outlined the key requirements of the WFD, how it is being implemented in the UK, early outputs of plans, and key issues.

Key issues discussed by the group were as follows:

- The main opportunities for nature conservation are to use the WFD as an additional driver to secure favourable condition in marine SACs, SPAs and SSSIs. An important aspect of this is that the WFD includes a time line for N2K to achieve conservation objectives (by 2015).
- There will be considerable overlap between the WFD and MSD in terms of monitoring, reporting, and setting objectives. The requirements of the two directives will need to be clearly delineated in the future.
- The group discussed the technical differences between the WFD's "good ecological status" (GES) and "favourable conservation status", how these will be reported, and what takes precedent. Reporting of FCS and GES will be separate, and the WFD requires that both objectives should be met.
- Significant amounts of technical work has been undertaken to inform judgements of GES in marine waters, and the group agreed that the applicability of this to CSM monitoring should be reviewed, with monitoring being harmonised and integrated where possible.
- The main concern was that stakeholder involvement in river basin planning could be considerably improved, as most conservation based staff had not been involved. Stakeholder groups only discussed high level issues, and did not facilitate detailed discussion on measures. There was also concern that marine content of draft plans was currently "light". Relevant authorities (including sea fishery committee reps) also indicated that involvement in WFD had been limited.

Working with the aggregate and oil and gas industries

Zoe Crutchfield, JNCC

No abstract provided.

Meeting the renewable energy and MPA targets - challenges and opportunities

Alexandra Fawcett, Marine Renewables Advisor, Natural England
Victoria Copley, Senior Specialist Marine Operations, Natural England

The UK government currently has an aspiration of generating 20% of electricity from renewables by 2020. The recently announced third round of offshore wind farms are intended to make a major contribution to this, raising the total power generated by offshore wind to 33GW by 2020. The timescale for achieving these targets is tight and coincident with the timings for the designation of marine SACs and SPAs as well as the forthcoming MCZs. Two case studies are presented, from the London Array and Thanet windfarms, as examples of where working closely with developers, and adopting a risk and adaptive management approach has led to consent of sustainable developments alongside protection for features of interest. Opportunities to secure better outcomes from offshore wind farm developments for the natural environment, and the people who rely on it, may be available through the benefits associated with the entire footprint of a development. The potential for exclusion of other activities from that footprint, and the possibility of windfarms being designated as MPAs in areas where the development is considered to be compatible with nature conservation, could lead to multiple benefits from the same area of sea and reduce displacement elsewhere.

Useful websites are:

www.offshorewind.co.uk

www.crownstate.co.uk

Questions and comments

- Location of windfarms
 - Were 3 areas of search – how do you identify the Wash instead of the Severn or Northumberland?
 - Where the developers first showed interest – near connection it's now covering all of the UK
- Landscape / seascape issues
 - What about AONB + wind farms?
 - Agreed there is a need for renewable energy but no seascape characterisation at the moment
 - NE landscape specialists comment on strategic environmental documents
 - landscape/seascape is an equal issue
 - Seascape not really an issue offshore. Inshore issues- different whereas offshore is just about biology.
 - CCW has done an assessment of seascape/ Landscape
- Other research
 - Not enough research into the effects of offshore wind sites and the effects on elasmobranchs. Elasmobranchs use electricity to navigate and find their prey. Magnetic fluxes are changed by the wind farm structures and cabling. There needs to be more research to look at potential impacts.
 - Exploration in small developments – planning premium for having to go ahead – could trade for some base line monitoring.
 - COWRIE CEC already under taking research.
- Scale? 100's & 1000's wind turbines planned

The Role of the UK MPA Centre

Emma Jackson, UK MPA Centre

The United Kingdom Marine Protected Areas Centre (www.ukmpas.org.uk) is an electronic resource for information and news on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the UK (including the Crown Dependencies of the Channel Isles and Isle of Man). The website holds factual information about MPAs in the United Kingdom, their designations, habitats, species, and activities. It provides current news, research and activities on MPAs in addition to linking to existing websites of individual European Marine Sites (a type of MPA), other MPAs in the UK and to partner websites. The website also draws together v practitioners and facilitates sharing information, good practice and learning. This presentation presents a quick tour of the website to illustrate its functionality and usefulness, for those involved in the management, designation or monitoring of UK marine protected areas.

New global tools and resources – Protect Planet Ocean

Jen Ashworth, Marine Protected Areas Specialist, Natural England

At the recent World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Google in partnership with IUCN launched a Marine Protected Areas layer with Google Earth <http://earth.google.com/outreach/showcase.html>. All the MPAs of the world are now visible to anyone with Google Earth software. This creates huge opportunities for raising awareness of MPAs, marine life and nature conservation. Natural England and the other SNCBs have been inputting information, stories, images and film for MPAs in our areas. Other exciting content includes clips showing the effects of marine reserves on species created by PISCO (authors of the Science of Marine Reserves).

Protect Planet Ocean www.protectplanetoocean.org is a new global MPA portal. It was developed by IUCN WCPA, NOAA, WWF, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, PISCO, MPA News and Natural England. It is directly linked with the Google Earth MPA layer. It is aimed at the general public and MPA practitioners. For the former there is basic information about MPAs, photos of the day, news, a get involved page, notes from the field and links to National Geographic's Belize Wildcam. MPA practitioners can read latest MPA news from around the world, browse the resources section and find out about initiatives within their region and country commitments to MPAs, link with other MPA experts and search for information about specific sites.

The portal and MPA layer will be a valuable resource for the UK especially in public engagement and will complement the UK MPA Centre. More photos, stories and videos for UK are welcome and can be uploaded onto the portal.

Questions

- Which MPAs are on the site?
 - The data are drawn from the World Database on Protected Areas and are what is listed under the IUCN protected area definition. However there are inaccuracies in the data base and people are encouraged to check the details of their sites on the website.

Discussion - How can industry, nature conservation and existing site managers work better together?

Key points and comments

- Economics of biodiversity
 - It's a job to try and explain the value of biodiversity.
 - NW Natural Economy project – Promote economic & social value of the project. It might be worth looking at this project see if it can be translated to the marine environment. Development Agency keen it has put in a good position to help understand the value of the natural environment.
 - Global economic model is growth & development. Economists & developers depend on the environment for their existence. Competitively they have to think globally not locally.
 - Valuation of the natural environment going on Defra – agricultural landscapes. www.....
 - Fighting fire with fire you can value it
 - Defra looking at ways you use economic tools
 - Explaining environment to exploiters valuation difficult
 - Fishing industry is coming under different economic drivers ie. Marine Stewardship Council Scheme –The Dutch are only going to source from accredited schemes.
 - Darwin Mounds low overall gain no tourist benefits, its esoteric nice to have it. Need to explain Dogger Bank is not just a pile of sand, impact assessments on mud (important but dull) how do we value it? We need to get the story straight.
 - Nutrient recycling / Waste absorption – valuation to population particularly near shore? 1.5 X the global economy per annum – you couldn't buy it.
- Links between industry and Nature Conservation
 - These do exist e.g. renewables & Fisheries

- Co locating is this coming from the renewables industry or the fishing industry?
- Industry happy to keep fisheries out of the London Array. Others deal with it differently
- MZC difficult to police. Maybe different types of fisheries can be located within the turbines?
- Careful about selling win-wins. Sometimes there cannot be a win-win situation and we have to be prepared for times when this happens.
- We are going to have to say no.
- With squeezes on the economy how will this affect the MPA network?
 - The network is for the long term - beyond 2012. We don't know how the balance between the socio economic and nature conservation will pan out.

Key workshop conclusions

- We need a more structured and strategic approach to site management
- We need to make the most of opportunities for joined up working e.g. with landscape designations to better manage sites
- The use of good multimedia – videos, pictures, animations is invaluable in engaging people and in assisting statutory work
- Good communications is not just an external issue but an internal one.
- EMS project officers can bring a lot of added value. This needs to be recognised.
- A risk-based approach to management is pragmatic.
- There is a lot of positive work going on in EMSs and new sites can learn from this.

Annex 1

Feedback

How Good was the venue (33 respondents)

All votes were in the adequate to excellent range

One person complained venue good, food not so good, shower bad

How was the length of the workshop (33 respondents)

Most voted just right to too long

How useful did you find this work shop (33 respondents)

21 stating very useful

8 Useful

How well organised was the workshop? (33 respondents)

33 said very well organised

How could we improve the workshop?

- Need to go outside England (+ Wales) – to better draw in Scottish / N Irish + wider British Isles participation
- Delegate list at the workshop would have been invaluable
- Break out sessions were well done
- Need more RAs present to widen discussions (Still important to have SNCs & EMS Officer session before hand)
- More projectors
- Proper breakout rooms
- More international speakers
- More interactive session on the longest day
- Enforcement critical [*editor note – presumably a session on enforcement not enforcing the workshop!*]
- More site related presentations x2
- Maintain the site officer component
- Allow more time for discussions
- There were too many presentations one after the other with no time for proper discussion.
- There was very little time for discussing issues in detail and sharing ideas
- Allow for more small group discussions – open floor discussion sessions are useful to a point, but some times discussions stop before they get to the useful point of getting into the detail.
- Have more themed sessions with short presentations to get the idea going, followed by discussion sessions in small working groups
- Continue to have an EMS/CA Officer session
- A range of speakers from other NE teams across NE remit with an interest in marine.

What topics would you like to see next time?

- Approaches to marine stakeholder analysis & Advocacy
- Impact Assessment
- Socio Economic Aspects involving the environmental tools
- Some wider thinking/ reality checks
- MPA's are one tool in marine nature conservation. We need to remember this and get things into a wider perspective or make the links between MPA's and wider issues more obvious
- Would delegates appreciate a media session at the next MPA workshop? It could summarise media coverage to date of everyone's hard work and effort, and could high light future media plans.
- Re the "marine" it would be good to look at all NE interests
- Bit more on the on going monitoring programme
- More on the joined up approach (inter agency + inter region) approach to monitoring
- More training on the habitat types listed under the habs regs i.e. what qualifies, when is it favourable.
- Functions which our sites provide for example the role of oceans in climate regulation.
- Need to joined up liaison with landscape / seascape + Nat. designated landscapes including Heritage Coasts

- Tackling site issues and examples of dealing with them
- Developing a network of project officers within the workshop
- More examples of casework site/specific examples
 - Good practice
 - What when wrong
 - Guidance
 - Losses
 - Gains etc

How can we get more Project Officers and Relevant Authorities to Attend?

- Impetus on local officers to invite their relevant authorities
- Earlier warning
- Better Communications
- Provide funding for travel and accommodation
- Clarity of outcomes – They can influence
- Increased communication & promotion on a country basis
- Enthusiasm from government level for Relevant Authorities, from Central Government for Project Officers
- Revise contact list – check that it is up to date again next year
- Perhaps a two page summary of why it would be of interest to Project Officers and Relevant Authorities
- Need for proactive selling locally to RA's by Local Officers
- By focusing part of the workshop on specific responsibilities e.g. Local Authorities on Sea Fisheries etc.
- I don't think it was made clear to Local Officers that the impetus was on them to invite their local Relevant Authorities and that nationally the invites was mainly to the SFCs.
- Letter of invitation rather than e-mails which don't get read
- Sometimes a telephone is better than e-mail to flag up these events
- Under stand their priorities – i.e. habs duties may not be top of their list
- Have some talk's specific to them – Case examples "AA made it easy" etc
- Alternate to a physical meeting e.g. virtual meeting w/ forum to be facilitated@ a management meeting by EMS Officer using presentations and workshop notes to stimulate them.
- More Project Officers attending – may be we need a virtual conference.
- Get them to give some presentations
- Cheaper Accommodation

Annex 2

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