

Chair's Foreword

Welcome to the third edition of the SEMS Annual Newsletter. This latest edition provides a round-up of the substantial amount of SEMS related work currently taking place plus some interesting items from further afield.

I would like to draw particular attention to the article on European Marine Sites funding which details the challenge posed by ongoing public spending cuts. This situation could have been far worse had it not been for the sterling work of Karen McHugh and Carolyn Francis of the Solent Forum who have helped to convince Natural England to reverse their initial decision to cut funding from April 2015 and to continue it for another year to allow time to develop alternative funding arrangements. The breathing space provided by the year's extension is very welcome, but it places pressure on us to identify new sources of funding urgently.

We will, I am sure, be communicating with you over the next few months regarding future finances however, in the meantime, I would ask that you email any thoughts or ideas you might have regarding alternative sources of funding to myself and the SEMS secretariat.

Lindsay McCulloch, SEMS Chair



Photo courtesy of the Hants and Wight Wildlife Trust

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Local News

SEMS Management Scheme

At their annual meeting in October 2014 the SEMS Management Group (MG) identified several activities they believe are having a residual impact on SEMS, and they agreed actions to address these.

To tackle issues of access and land recreation, including from existing levels of activity, the MG agreed to develop a relationship with the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership, whose members are also managing access and land recreation, to ensure actions are complementary and do not overlap or duplicate.

Natural England's (NE) Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS) (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/4878851540779008>) Recreation Theme Plan will contribute to this issue. It will seek to improve understanding of the causes and impacts of disturbance as a result of public access for quiet enjoyment and recreation, on and around Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), particularly identifying those adverse effects which are seen on multiple sites. It will set out actions at national and multiple site level to better understand this; and to facilitate local solutions to tackle problems. The theme plan will focus on disturbance effects on habitats and species which are the features of the SPA and SAC network in England, including current and future uses.

SEMS has supported and received dissertations and literature reviews from two students on impacts and management of various types of waterborne and airborne craft. The MG proposed a number of actions to address these impacts, including the possibility of reconvening a small sub-group of the Solent Forum Recreation Group (REC), to scrutinise the results of NE's IPENS Recreation Theme Plan.

Depending on the outcome of this, either REC or the Natural Environment Group should develop monitoring tools to look at

- Disturbance levels and occurrence
- Scale of activity and frequency of craft and
- Identifying whether there are hotspots or if these activities are Solent-wide

The SEMS MG also aim to find a baseline for bird numbers prior to the Footprint Ecology Report for the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, and to devise monitoring criteria for bird disturbance.

Bait digging will be addressed by the Solent Bait Working Group which will quantify the impacts of bait digging, assess the effectiveness of different management methods and establish a site management plan, in light of its own evidence, a report to NE by Portsmouth University and assessments of the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). The report on 'Evaluating management strategies for bait collection in the Solent' is available by emailing gordon.watson@port.ac.uk.

The Solent Diffuse Water Pollution Plan (SDWPP) is addressing nutrient, sediment and pollutant load entering SEMS, particularly the harbours. Studies including the South Downs Source Apportionment study and other catchment study results will inform the actions of the SDWPP. The IPENS Theme Plan on Diffuse Water Pollution and a local NE project are also looking into this (see article below). The Environment Agency's "Seaview 2027" project will contribute as it will bring the Catchment Based Approach to the Solent estuaries and coast.

As a result of observations and a dissertation and literature review by Aniko Gaal, further evidence is being sought as to whether the risk category for airborne sports should be raised from medium to high risk.

Increased levels of plastic litter were recorded in some locations following the storms of winter 2013-14.

Evidence is mounting in the literature that microplastics can affect various forms of marine life. Substantial quantities of microplastics, which measure less than 1mm in length, have been found in deep sea sediment (<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/17/microplastic-deposits-found-deep-in-worlds-oceans-and-seas#img-1>). Further evidence and advice is needed on the effects of plastic pollutants, including the effect of microplastics on wading birds and marine fauna and flora.

SEMS online monitoring for 2015 will commence in March 2015 and the annual monitoring reports will be circulated in the summer. The next SEMS meeting is scheduled for 30 September in Portsmouth.

European Marine Sites Funding

Towards the end of 2014, SEMS received notification from Defra, the MMO and Natural England (NE) concerning their future (2015/16 onwards) withdrawal of funding for current European Marine Sites Management Schemes around the coast of England. This has an impact on SEMS as in 2014/15, our regional NE contacts who funded SEMS and Natural Environment Group, transferred this funding to this joint Defra, MMO, NE national funding source. The Solent Forum has been working hard with our NE contacts, to try and renew the local regional source of funding to replace this loss. As a result of conversations with NE in our region, we have heard that they very much recognise the value of SEMS, and have managed to find full funding for 2015/16 as a one of payment, in order to give the Management Scheme a further year to understand how to deal with this loss of funding from the government; it gives time to either lobby for government funding, look for funding elsewhere or adjust the subscription model.

The three bodies (Defra, MMO and NE) formed a Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network Project Board which has been considering future governance of overall management of MPAs, including the new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), for some time. It has become clear to them that resources at national level will continue to be more constrained. The current level of collective funding from the three organisations for EMS Management Schemes will continue until the end of this financial year (March 2015) after which it will cease. All three organisations recognise the benefits of partnership working and continue to support management groups within their respective remits. For example, Natural England area team staff will continue to provide advice, input and support to management schemes and will assess whether smaller financial contributions may be able to be made on a case by case basis. The issue of national governance of MPA management arrangements is still being considered; Defra, MMO and NE have said they will be in touch with us when there are further developments.

SEMS and the Natural Environment Group

Following review in spring 2014 the Natural Environment Group (NEG), which was previously part of the Solent Forum, is now funded by and is part of SEMS. The Terms of Reference of NEG have been updated to reflect this change and to ensure that the priority for NEG is to assist the SEMS Management Group in their implementation of the SEMS Management Scheme, and to initiate and manage further research. NEG also aims to provide a cost effective mechanism to coordinate the implementation of cross-cutting nature conservation actions by facilitating networking and communication.

All members of SEMS have been added to the emailing list for NEG and are invited to bi-annual NEG meetings. The next NEG meeting will be held on 22nd April 2015 at 10am at the Royal Lympington Yacht Club.

Conservation Advice Update

Natural England (NE) has a responsibility to provide Conservation Advice for all Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within England's inshore waters to support sites to achieve their conservation objectives and to guide effective management.

MPA designations for which they will be providing conservation advice are:

- European Marine Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs));
- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs);
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with marine components;
- Ramsar wetlands of international importance.

The conservation advice project was established in 2012 as part of NE's response to the Habitats and Wild Birds Directive Implementation Review. The project focus is on improving the structure, content and provision of NE's advice for the conservation of MPAs in England. In March 2014, the Natural England Standard 'Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas' was published with a target for all MPAs to have revised conservation advice packages published by December 2016; the Standard 'Conservation Advice for MPAs' can be found at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5490751605571584>.

New packages will contain information on:

- The designated features, their associated subfeatures and relevant supporting habitats;
- Feature condition (using a new NE methodology and risk component);
- The site Conservation Objectives along with supporting advice to explain these in detail;
- The sensitivity of the designated features and information on activities or operations that could impact or damage these features;
- Updated site maps on 'MAGIC' (including feature location and distribution, where this evidence exists).

Local NE staff from the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight area team have been working to produce the updated Portsmouth Harbour SPA advice package, which is due to be published in draft in Spring 2015. In addition, the team is working to produce updated advice packages for the Solent Maritime SAC, Poole Rocks MCZ and South Dorset MCZ, with drafts due to be published this summer. The team will be working on updating conservation advice for other MPAs in the area by the end of 2016.

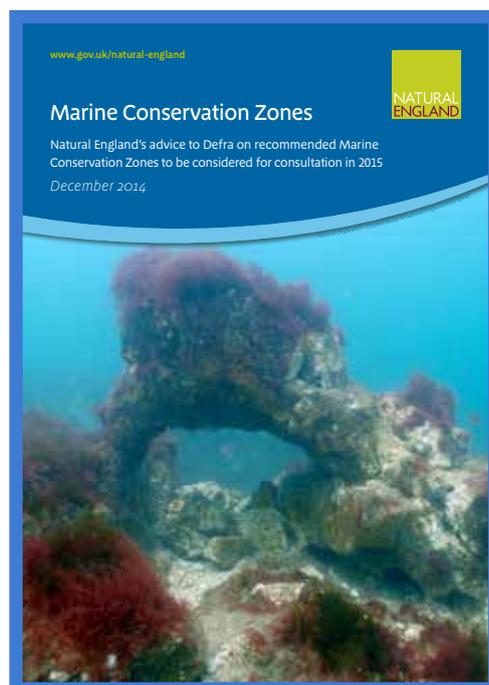
While work continues on the development of a bespoke interactive web interface for conservation advice packages, draft conservation advice will be made available on the gov.uk website and stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the new look conservation advice packages on publication.

Marine Conservation Zones – Second Tranche Announced

On 30th January 2015 Defra announced its Consultation on the Second Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones. Your views are being sought on whether it would be appropriate to designate 23 proposed MCZs, three of which are in the wider Solent region – the Needles, Utopia and Offshore Overfalls. You can read more and take part in the consultation until 24 April 2015 at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/tranche2mczs>.

Natural England's advice to Defra on recommended Marine Conservation Zones to be considered for consultation in 2015 (MCZ050), and their detailed site specific advice, can be found at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/>.

The Needles rMCZ lies at the most easterly point of the Isle of Wight and extends northwards along the coast from just south of the Needles at Scratchells Bay up to Cliff End at the south-west of Norton Village. This site has been recommended as an MCZ for a number of



rare and fragile habitats, including subtidal chalk, infralittoral rock and soft sediments that support communities of algae, sponges, sea squirts and delicate anemones. Seagrass beds occur in both Totland Bay and Colwell Bay and support species such as the colourful sea hare, a small marine mollusc that can be found in the seagrass and surrounding soft sediments. Rare and threatened species, such as the fan-shaped alga commonly known as peacock's tail (*Padina pavonica*), can be found in the intertidal areas at Colwell Bay and records of the tiny stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*) have been found at Alum Bay. The site is also important for the native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*), a species that has declined in numbers across the UK in recent years.

Utopia is an inshore site measuring 2.71 square kilometres and is located 20km off the Isle of Wight coast to the east of Bembridge. This patch of sea has been recommended as a MCZ because of the fragile coral and sponge communities found here as well as the existence of several broad-scale habitats. The Utopia reef consists of an area of bedrock and large boulders that host rich communities of sponges, anthozoans, hydroids and bryozoans. The reef is surrounded by sediment consisting mainly of gravel and sand. The communities of animals that live in Utopia are dominated by large, slow growing species such as branching sponges and Ross coral, a type of bryozoan or sea-moss that has hard, crinkly 'petals' that provide hiding places for small fish, crabs and prawns. The area was named after the tope shark as it provides a pupping ground for this species.

Offshore Overfalls is 593 square kilometres with a variety of habitats including sandstone reefs. It encompasses the Overfalls, an unusual area of mixed sediment, sands and gravels that form sand waves, which are particularly important for bony fish and elasmobranchs such as undulate ray and tope. The diversity of habitats at Overfalls encourages marine life. Commercially and ecologically important species have been recorded here including bass, cod, sandeels and sea squirts (*Molgula* species). Ross worm beds and the invasive American slipper limpet are present at several locations, while blue mussel beds are also believed to be there. This is the only site in the region recommended for the undulate ray, *Raja undulata*, which occurs in shelf waters down to about 200m in depth, although it is more common in shallow waters. The site also has an important geological feature, the English Channel Outburst. A small section of the site falls within the 6 mile limit.

A presentation by Jan MacLennan of Natural England on Marine Protected Area Management and Governance can be found on the website <http://www.coastalpartnershipnetwork.org.uk/2014/11/14/2014-annual-forum-presentations/>. Publication of management measures for MCZs is awaited.

Solent Harbours Nitrogen Management Project

Excessive macroalgal cover, when weather conditions allow, is widespread across many of the intertidal areas of the harbours in the Solent. High macroalgal coverage can cause smothering of intertidal sediments, which in turn can lead to high redox values within the sediments and a decrease in the diversity and richness of the macrobenthic infaunal community. As such, large areas of intertidal habitats within the Solent European Marine Site are failing to meet conservation objectives and hence do not adequately contribute to favourable conservation status of the interest features as provisioned by the Habitats and Birds Directives.

Local Natural England staff from the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight area team have commissioned a study to review available data and information for nutrient loads and macroalgal cover in order to determine where we are now and where we need to be, in terms of the percentage nitrogen reduction, to achieve favourable condition. The project is also reviewing the diffuse pollution measures that have already been introduced via Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) and Environmental Stewardship schemes. Findings from this work will provide the evidence base to inform future targeting and costings for measures to address diffuse water pollution. These measures will feed into the Solent Site Improvement Plan and support the implementation of future nitrogen reduction measures, including CSF and Countryside Stewardship targeting and schemes beyond 2015. Natural England expects to see the results of this study by March 2015. If you would like more information about this project please contact Hilary Crane, Solent Lead Adviser, Natural England (hilary.crane@naturalengland.org.uk).

Solent Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) was formed to facilitate joint working by local authorities and other bodies on the implementation of measures which will mitigate the impact of additional recreational activity that will result from planned housing development so that it does not have a significant effect on the three Special Protection Areas in the Solent. It follows on from, and is based on, the Solent Forum's three year Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project which commissioned extensive and comprehensive research into disturbance impact.

An Interim Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy was prepared by the local authorities in collaboration with Natural England and key stakeholders; it was published in December 2014. The document explains the mitigation measures, how they will be funded, and how their implementation will be monitored. The Project Initiation Officer is Stuart Roberts and the aim is to finalise a definitive mitigation strategy by the end of 2017.

In their 2014 Delivery Plan the SEMS MG identified possible efficiencies that could be gained by working with the SRMP. More information can be found on the SRMP web page at <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/community-and-environment/environment/solent-recreation-mitigation-strategy.aspx>.

A Possible New Marine Special Protection Area for Birds

Natural England (NE) are developing recommendations for a new Special Protection Area (SPA) within the Solent and around the east Dorset coastline for three species of tern; common, sandwich and little tern. The possible SPA takes in the nearshore marine and coastal area from west of Swanage to east of Selsey.

The factsheet attached to the email with this newsletter explains the proposals and how you can let NE know your views on the proposal and the activities that you undertake. Subject to Defra's approval of the proposal there will be a formal 12 week consultation which is currently planned to start in December 2015.

Fly Boarding in SEMS

Flyboarding is a new sport which involves a rider wearing a jet pack to fly through the air at a height of up to 15m. A flyboarding kit which includes all hoses, adaptors, the jet pack and everything else except the Personal Water Craft (jet ski) it needs for propulsion currently retails in the UK for around £4,500.

The individual pictured in this photograph operated at the entrance to Langstone Harbour on numerous occasions throughout the summer of 2014. The sport is currently a rare occurrence in the Solent area – the cost of the equipment and the volume of fuel required to power the jetski are likely to be among the reasons.

Flyboarding generates a very loud noise, as well as propelling the rider high into the air. Should this activity step outside the realm of "gimmick" and become more commonplace it has the potential to be an extremely disturbing presence which could lead to damage to the features of the SEMS.



Photo copyright Sam Cope

Predicting the future is not possible, but flyboarding is a good example of the regulatory challenges relevant authorities in SEMS are likely to face when it comes to novel activities. There are no flyboarding byelaws, and none may ever be needed, but who knows what the future will bring?

Langstone Harbour Small Fish Survey

The Langstone Harbour Small Fish Survey began in spring 2012 and is a collaboration between the Langstone Harbour Board, Southern IFCA, the University of Portsmouth and the RSPB.

The survey is modelled upon surveys carried out by the Environment Agency around many coastal parts of the UK. By using the same methodology results from the survey in Langstone Harbour can be directly compared with those from other water bodies.



Photo copyright Louise MacCallum

During the first three years of the survey more than 38,000 fish representing 38 species have been caught, identified, measured and released in Langstone Harbour. Fish are caught using a large seine net and a survey beam trawl. A variety of metadata is also recorded at each sampling site including water temperature and clarity. Over time it is hoped the data set will grow to provide increased understanding of the composition, dynamics and population trends of the small fish population within Langstone Harbour.

Data analysis is still underway for this year's (2014) survey, but several dramatic differences can be seen when comparing the catch from 2014 to previous years.

During 2012 and again in 2013 the number of sprat and herring fry caught (combined) exceeded 12,000 individuals. During 2014 just 156 of these fish were captured.

Other species were caught in much greater numbers during 2014 however. In 2014 a total of 1870 juvenile bass were caught – less than 400 were caught in each of the previous 2 years. Three times the number of sandeels were caught in 2014 compared with 2013, and the number of sand gobies caught increased by more than 1000 individuals in 2014 compared with 2013.



Photo copyright Louise MacCallum

A report on the 2014 Langstone Harbour Small Fish survey can be found together with those from previous years on the Langstone Harbour Board website: <http://www.langstoneharbour.org.uk/environment-fish-survey.php>.

Southampton Water Estuarine Fish Surveys

In Southampton Water the Environment Agency (EA) carry out juvenile fish surveys in the Spring and Autumn each year using Seine nets, Fyke nets, a small 1.5m beam trawl and a larger otter trawl at 10 different sites. The

range of methods and sites allows the EA to cover different habitats and water depths throughout the estuary. This survey programme provides them with data about the fish population present in the estuary and feeds into classification of the estuary for the Water Framework Directive.

2014 was the eighth year that the EA carried out this sampling in some form, helping them to build up a dataset that allows them to begin to look at trends over time. In 2014 they caught 33 fish species in total, with one new addition to their all time species list in the shape of a three-spined stickleback. This brings the total number of different fish species they have captured in Southampton Water up to 62. This total includes a range of different fish types, from small goby species, through to commercially important species such as bass, plaice and dover sole.



Photo courtesy of Environment Agency

2014 saw a total of nearly 4000 fish caught in spring and 6000 in the autumn. This is around average for the years they have surveyed, with warm sea temperatures over the winter and summer helping growth and survival of juvenile fish species. These figures are mostly accounted for by large numbers of juvenile bass, common and sand gobies, and small pelagic fish such as sand smelt and juvenile herring. Southampton Water continues to provide an important nursery area for juvenile sea fish, including bass, plaice and sole.

Love Where you Sail Project

There has been a great deal of work and investment over the years to help improve water quality in the Solent. Investment in water company assets has resulted waste water being treated to a higher standard. Advice and



Pump out facilities at Yarmouth Harbour.

Photo copyright The Green Blue

guidance given to land owners and farmers has meant that increasingly land is being managed to reduce the impact on the water environment. Since 2013, the “Love Where You Sail” initiative has worked to raise awareness with recreational boaters on the part they can play in safeguarding the waters they enjoy. The focus of the project has been to understand how and where boaters discharge blackwater, and to promote good practice disposal to minimise the impact on the marine environment. For more information visit www.thegreenblue.org.uk.

Solent Oyster Survey

A 2014 stock survey of the Solent oyster fishery was undertaken over five days in August using a chartered local fishing vessel ‘Angelle Marie’. Southern IFCA Officers undertook the survey with the assistance of researchers from the National Oceanography Centre, Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The survey provided data for the continued active management of the fishery following on from annual stock surveys conducted by CEFAS which were discontinued in 2011. The data revealed that oyster catches continue to be low across the Solent. Size distribution indicated low levels of small oysters which, coupled with the lack of spat found, implies that no natural recovery is likely in the next 4-5 years and that there may be issues with spat settlement or breeding in the current system.

The Blue Marine Foundation have commissioned research on oysters and believe a significant opportunity exists to develop a shared vision among local stakeholders and to deliver significant conservation wins while restoring and eventually re-configuring the management of the fishery.

You can read more at <http://www.blumarinefoundation.com/blog/solent-title-goes-here/>.

The Solent Oyster Fishery was closed for the 2014 season, but the Harbours of Portsmouth and Langstone were opened for 2 weeks from the 1st November 2014. More about fisheries in the Solent and nearby waters can be found at <http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/useful-documents>.

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) - Amber and Green Risks

Following Defra’s revised approach to the way in which European marine sites (EMS) are managed, a risk matrix was developed which categorises fishing activities as red, amber, green or blue according to the level of risk that they present to the conservation features, habitats and species of EMS. Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (SIFCA) have completed their requirements in relation to Red Risk gear/habitat combinations, and the SIFCA team is now undertaking a screening process to quantify the research and evidence requirements of the amber and green risk combinations.

Information supplied to the IFCA through the CEFAS evidence audit has been considered and an initial assessment has been made as to whether the activity:

- Can pass an initial test of Likely Significant Effect (LSE) (either through no activity, subfeature interaction or no perceived impact)
- Would be likely to have an adverse effect and as such require a more detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment, or
- Where more evidence is required to feed into the process before a judgement can be made concerning the LSE.

The process for Hampshire sites found that, due to the level of impact and intensity, the key concerns were:

- Clam dredging over the intertidal mudflats of SEMS
- Oyster dredging over intertidal and subtidal areas

- Bait digging/hand gathering over the intertidal mud of SEMS

With these gear type/habitat combinations a requirement for further information and research has been identified.

Work is ongoing and further details can be found at:

<http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/management-of-mpas#european-marine-sites>.

Risk Category	Description
RED	Where it is clear that the conservation objectives for a feature (of sub-feature) will not be achieved because of its sensitivity to a type of fishing, - irrespective of feature condition, level of pressure, or background environmental conditions in all EMSs where that feature occurs – suitable management measures will be identified and introduced as a priority to protect those features from that fishing activity or activities.
AMBER	Where there is doubt as to whether conservation objectives for a feature (or sub-feature) will be achieved because of its sensitivity to a type of fishing, in all EMSs where that feature occurs, the effect of that activity or activities on such features will need to be assessed in detail at a site specific level. Appropriate management action should then be taken based on that assessment.
GREEN	Where it is clear that the achievement of that conservation objectives for a feature is highly unlikely to be affected by a type of fishing activity or activities, in all EMSs where that feature occurs, further action is not likely to be required, unless there is the potential for in combination effects.
BLUE	For gear types where there can be no feasible interaction between the gear types and habitat features, a fourth categorisation of blue is used, and no management action should be necessary.

Dorset Coast Forum Meeting

Several of the talks given at the Dorset Coast Forum meeting on 12th November 2014 may be of interest to SEMS. For example, Dr Steve Fletcher gave a talk on the work that Plymouth University are doing on ecosystem services benefits of Marine Protected Areas, and how a value can be put on their non-monetary and less tangible benefits. A paper on this can be found at http://www.ics2011.pl/artic/SP64_378-383_S.%20Fletcher.pdf.

The presentations from the meeting can be found at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/dorset-coast-forum/events>.

National News

Marine Protected Areas: Strategic Management Table

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) produces a table which provides a high-level view for all European Marine Sites (EMS) in English waters and shows any management actions in the sites. The table shows how the MMO is working to manage the network of marine protected areas and to encourage stakeholders to input evidence and provide feedback to help them assess and review potential risks.

The strategic management table summarises information about the EMSs, including some of the statutory nature conservation advice about the impact of human activities on habitat features in the sites, and any MMO management actions to protect the sites and their features.

The strategic management table is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-protected-areas-strategic-management-table>.

A Strategic Framework for Scoping Cumulative Effects for MMO Evidence Programme

A framework for scoping potential cumulative effects at a strategic level, to be applicable across all of the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) functions was published in December 2014 as part of the MMO's evidence programme.

The report provides a review of current evidence into cumulative effects assessment processes focusing on:

- Scoping
- Results of extensive consultation undertaken as part of the project;
- Guidelines for the management of contribution to cumulative effects and mitigation; and
- A framework to identify and scope cumulative effects at a strategic level, that aims to be proportionate and achievable in practice.

In addition to the report, an evidence database was produced collating current evidence relating to potential high level pressures on environmental receptors resulting from marine activities.

The full report and a summary can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategic-framework-for-scoping-cumulative-effects-mmo-1055>.

Jet-Ski Owner Database

There is a national database that keeps a record of owners of personal watercraft, so they can be tracked down even if they do not launch from a local facility. The only issue occurs if the craft has been sold and the new owner has not registered. The tagging system is marketed as a way of deterring theft of craft, but it could be a good place to go if you need to identify an owner.

Read more about the Datatag Personal Watercraft Security & Registration Theft Deterrent System at:

<http://datatag.co.uk/pwc.php>.

BMF Watersports Participation Report 2013

An annual report commissioned by BMF, MCA, RNLI, RYA, BCU and the MMO details participation and ownership for 12 boating activities in 2013 and reports trends over twelve years. It also includes participation of wider water-based leisure activities and the summary report includes demographics, frequency, location and household boat ownership.

The executive summary can be downloaded at:

<http://britishmarine.co.uk/Publications/Free-Resources?CurrentPage=3>.

The Yacht Harbour Association Launches Improved Marina Standards

The Yacht Harbour Association's 7th Edition Code of Practice has been carefully drafted and endorsed by a range of experts in their own fields to offer a guide to best practice for any marina designer, developer or operator. It takes into consideration the needs of the Association's expanding international membership and new industry guidelines, and has an increased emphasis on the operation of marinas.

The code contains over 4,000 technical updates which have been independently reviewed by legal, health and safety experts in conjunction with a specialist marina consultancy, Marina Projects.

Social Impacts and Interactions in the Marine Sector

A report has been published on the Social impacts and interactions between marine sectors along with areas that the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) are interested in, in terms of future research.

In August 2014 the MMO published a report commissioned to provide a body of evidence on social impacts through an assessment of interactions within and between sectors listed in the government's Marine Policy Statement (MPS). The project provides a baseline of evidence and also provides a framework for using this evidence as part of the marine planning process. It gives insight into the motivations of people living in, working in or managing the marine environment. It will also be of interest to others involved in sustainable management or use of marine resources.

The report presents social interaction-impact tables for 14 MPS sectors and sub-sectors, including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-impacts-and-interactions-between-marine-sectors-mmo-1060>.

The MMO has a legal obligation to ensure conservation objectives and the MPA network are not negatively affected by marine licensable activities or activities which could be regulated through an MMO byelaw (e.g. fishing or recreational activities).

Marine Biosecurity Planning Guidance - Invasive Species

Scottish Natural Heritage have published online marine biosecurity planning guidance and an associated literature review. The guidance for producing site and operation-based plans for preventing the introduction of non-native species can be found at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1294630.pdf>.

This document is intended to guide the owners and operators of small harbours, visitor moorings, mooring associations, boatyards, marinas and slipways in developing a site-based biosecurity plan for marine species that have been introduced to waters outside their natural range by human action (also referred to as 'non-native species'). The guidance also covers the development of a biosecurity plan for a time-limited operation in the

inshore environment, such as the repairs to a jetty or a major recreation event. The guidance has not been designed to cover larger facilities such as ports or oil terminals although the principles set out in it also apply to these larger sites.

It could be useful in developing any actions SEMs may have in future around biosecurity and invasive species.

A review which provides an overview of biosecurity planning for the marine environment, including current legislative background, pathway identification and risk assessment processes can be found at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=2126>.

Review of Evidence of Potting Impacts on Designated Features

To ensure compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, ABPmer have been contracted by Defra's Marine Biodiversity Impacts Evidence Group to collate and evaluate all available evidence on the impacts of potting on benthic features. The evidence will be assessed and synthesised, to develop a tool that can support the assessments of potting activity in Marine Protected Areas.

It is important that all available relevant evidence is incorporated into the review and submissions of any sources of evidence are invited by the project team, including previous studies, reviews and ongoing research.

The project runs from January to March 2015 and a workshop will be held in London on 25th February to present the draft review of evidence sources, assess evidence gaps and consider how management decisions can best be taken forward for the 2016 deadline. There is more information at: http://www.abpmer.co.uk/Buzz/Potting_Impacts_on_Designated_Features_/.

Robot Fleet Observes Marine Life in the Open Ocean

A fleet of seven robotic vehicles was launched into the ocean off southwest England in October 2014, in the most ambitious project of its kind in Europe. The vehicles aimed to travel up to 300 miles over 20 days. Co-ordinated by the National Oceanography Centre, robots set out to collect scientific data about ocean processes and marine life. You can find more about the project at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/press/releases/2014/26-oceanrobots/>.

15 Year Review of Marine Aggregate Dredging

The British Marine Aggregate Producers Association (BMAPA) and The Crown Estate have published a 'Fifteen-Year Review' which provides a unique overview of the changes in the area of seabed licensed and dredged between 1998 and 2012, enabling greater understanding of the nation's marine mineral dredging activity and more sustainable management over the long term.

The report can be downloaded from The Crown Estate website at: <http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/news-and-media/news/2014/fifteen-year-review-of-marine-aggregate-dredging-published/>.

ABPmer Extends Coastal Realignment Database

Recognising that there are many ways to work with natural processes at the coast, ABPmer have extended their coastal realignment Online Marine Registry (OMReg) to include a wider range of practical shoreline adaptation techniques. It now includes shoreline restorations, "unmanaged" realignments and projects involving the beneficial use of dredged sediment. OMReg can be accessed from this link <http://www.omreg.net/>.

State of Natural Capital Report

The Natural Capital Committee published its third State of Natural Capital report on 27 January 2015. It recommends that Government, working closely with the private sector and NGOs should develop a comprehensive strategy to protect and improve natural capital.

The report presents a series of potential environmental investments that offer good economic returns such as protecting intertidal habitats. It also sets out an innovative framework for corporations to take account of their natural capital.

ABPmer prepared evidence reviews on fisheries management and measures to protect/restore saltmarsh which informed the case for investing in natural marine capital. Both of these were deemed to have sufficient evidence to be recommended as investment options. The report can be found at <https://www.naturalcapitalcommittee.org/state-of-natural-capital-reports.html>.

Living with Change - our Shifting Shores

Through their Shifting Shores work the National Trust is putting into practice adaptive approaches to management. Read more and find their report at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/article-1355823320656/>.

Capturing our Coast: Marine Citizen Science Making a Difference (CoCoast)

Newcastle University has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £1.7m proposal for a national marine citizen science project that aims to collect data by engaging around 3000 volunteers in the collection of robust data that will inform science, policy, management and conservation.

An EMS officer who worked on a similar project, The Big Sea Survey, said "It has been a huge success. There was a focus from the start on ensuring that the data is robust. I was a volunteer myself so I can speak from a volunteer's perspective and also as someone who wants to use the data."

"All volunteers had classroom training on rocky shore ecology and survey techniques and they were only allowed to pick up to 5 species at the very most. Once you picked your species you attended further sessions to learn how to identify them. There was a full time project officer who was available to come out with you when you needed to offer help, and she ran at least one shore survey day a month herself where volunteers could go along and carry out their surveys with the support of an 'expert' on hand. Throughout the project the officer would tag along with volunteers and test their knowledge and identify skills so that robustness could be measured. The results were surprisingly accurate. There were various other things done to ensure robustness of data too, but generally having a full-time project officer to offer continuous support was key. Because this was a local project, the support for volunteers was much greater than for projects which cover a much wider area.

Find more about Capturing our Coast at:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/item/capturing-our-coast> or see the presentation from the recent Coastal Partnerships Network Forum at <http://www.coastalpartnershipsnetwork.org.uk/2014/11/14/2014-annual-forum-presentations/>. Refer to presentation nine.

Coastal Partnerships Network Forum

Those who did not attend the Coastal Partnerships Network Forum in Cumbria in November 2014 may be interested in the presentations which are available at:

<http://www.coastalpartnershipsnetwork.org.uk/2014/11/14/2014-annual-forum-presentations/>.

The topics included:

- Marine Planning Progress & Social Value Hannah Marriot, Marine Management Organisation
- River Basin Management & Flood Risk Management Plans, Paul Parker, Environment Agency
- Marine Protected Area Conservation Advice, Jamie Davies, Natural England
- Marine Litter Action Network, Emma Cunningham, Marine Conservation Society
- ICZM, Steve Collins, Defra

Protecting and Sustainably Using the Marine Environment

Defra have a web page with updates on government documents relating to protecting and sustainably using the marine environment. It can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-and-sustainably-using-the-marine-environment/activity>.

International News

Natura 2000 Newsletter January 2015

Published twice a year, the Natura 2000 newsletter provides up to date information on activities, events and initiatives on the EU's biodiversity policy and the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives. The newsletter is free and you can subscribe or download it at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/natura2000nl_en.htm. The January 2015 issue features the marine environment and the July 2014 edition includes funding opportunities.

EU LIFE Programme Helps Protect the Marine Environment

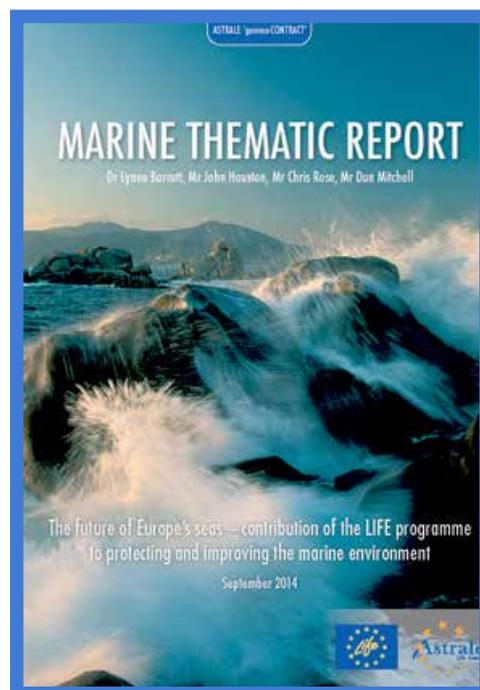
The EU LIFE programme has made important contributions to protecting and improving the marine environment, as well as helping to implement EU marine policy. The recently published Marine Thematic Report investigates the programme's impact on the marine environment and can be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/features/2014/marine1.htm>.

PANACHE

PANACHE is an INTERREG IV programme between France and England which began in July 2012 and will end in June 2015. The acronym stands for Protected Area Network Across the Channel Ecosystem. The main aim of PANACHE is to develop a stronger and more coherent approach to the management, monitoring and involvement of stakeholders for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the English Channel. There are five main project goals:

- Assess ecological coherence across the MPA network;
- Pool and share experience in monitoring these areas;
- Strengthen coherence and foster interaction for improved MPA management;
- Heighten awareness of MPAs: create a sense of ownership and shared expectations through citizen science programmes;



- Establish a public GIS database.

Partners include the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT), Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Plymouth University, RSPB and WWF. PANACHE is helping to fund HIWWT's Seasearch and Shoresearch work.

Information about, and outputs from PANACHE can be found at http://www.panache.eu.com/home_panache.

VALMER

VALMER is an eleven partner, €4.7 million project co-funded by the INTERREG IVa Channel programme through the European Regional Development Fund, which aims to examine how improved marine ecosystem services assessment can support effective and informed marine management and planning.

The project aims to test different methods of valuing marine ecosystem services, in order to quantify and communicate these values (economic, social and environmental) to inform future marine management and policy. The project involves a number of work packages and case studies and is specifically looking at six coastal case study sites in the Western English Channel area. The Dorset Coast Forum are leading on one of the case study areas, Poole Harbour, and investigating the economic value of recreation as an ecosystem service.

Partners include, among others, Plymouth University, Dorset County Council / Dorset Coast Forum and the Marine Biological Association of the UK

A final VALMER and PANACHE Conference entitled 'Valuing and protecting our shared sea' will be held on 17-18 March 2015 in Torquay. The final VALMER report was due to be published in December 2014 and will be available on the project's web site at <http://www.valmer.eu/>.

PEGASEAS

PEGASEAS is an INTERREG IVa cross Channel project and its aim is to promote the efficient governance of the Channel ecosystem. The Centre for Marine and Coastal Policy Research at Plymouth University is the lead partner; other partners include Devon County Council, the Marine Biological Association, Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science and the University of Portsmouth.

Actions are divided into 6 themes with one Report for each.

- Marine ecosystems dynamics and management
- Management and use of information and data
- Pressure and activity in the marine environment
- Governance at multiple scales in the Channel
- Partnerships
- Communication and stakeholder involvement

All the project outputs can be found at <http://www.pegaseas.eu/file-downloads/project-outputs-en/>. The most recent are from the 3rd Cross Channel Forum: Future challenges for effective governance of the Channel which took place on the 13th and 14th November 2014 in Le Havre. A 28 page report which gives a summary of Integrated Maritime Policy can be found on the web page by scrolling down and clicking on the button 'PEGASEAS - Pathways for Effective Governance of the English Channel - Final Online Version'.

European Marine Training Portal

The European Marine Biological Resource Centre has launched the European Marine Training Portal. The portal is a centralised access point for education and training in the field of marine sciences and contains a collection of tools related to marine training, aimed at students, training organisers and organisations. Read more at <http://www.marinetraining.eu/>.

EC Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Newsletter

The February 2015 newsletter of the EC Maritime Affairs and Fisheries can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/mare/newsletter-specific-archive.cfm?serviceId=114.

Consultations

South East River Basin Management Plan Consultation

The Environment Agency (EA) is consulting on the draft update to the South East River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). The updated plan is due to be published in December 2015, together with the EA's flood risk management plans. The plans set out long term objectives for the quality of the water environment. They identify the condition of rivers, lakes and coastal waters and the pressures on them and will help those with an interest in the water environment to agree where improvements can be made. The RBMP will guide the EA in directing considerable investment and action to look after the water environment from 2016 to 2021 and beyond.

The EA is helping stakeholders to understand the RBMP and is encouraging consultation responses. EA catchment coordinators are linked into the external partnerships in each hydrological catchment across Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. These coordinators will help each catchment partnership through the consultation.

Consultation documents and response forms can be found at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal>. The consultation ends on 10 April 2015.

Marine Strategy Framework Directive – Programme of Measures Proposals

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) requires member states to achieve 'good environmental status' (GES) in Europe's seas by 2020. The directive describes GES in 11 main points which cover all the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and the main human pressures on them.

To achieve a 'good' environmental status means:

- Protecting the marine environment
- Preventing its deterioration and restoring it where practical
- Using marine resources sustainably

The second stage of the MSFD establishes and implements a monitoring programme to measure progress towards GES. Key messages are:

This is the first time that a comprehensive description of the UK's marine monitoring programmes has been set out in one consolidated document. It will provide an invaluable tool to support assessment of the marine environment and will help to identify pressures and impacts and how they might be addressed.

The UK approach, where possible, is to rely on existing monitoring programmes to check progress towards achieving GES. For example, those required to comply with the Water Framework Directive, Wild Birds and Habitats Directive, the Common Fisheries Policy and commitments under the OSPAR Convention.

Work is underway to address any gaps in understanding of specific pressures on the marine environment. If necessary, new monitoring programmes will be developed to provide evidence to address these gaps. Funding for any new monitoring will come from existing resources.

The next step is to establish a programme of measures in order to achieve GES. Defra invites your views on their plans to implement the MSFD in the UK. Details of the consultation, which is open until 24th April 2015, and the proposals for a UK programme of measures for achieving GES by going to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/>. Search for 'contains' Marine Strategy.

MMO Annual Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

The MMO has launched its fifth annual customer and stakeholder satisfaction survey which is open until 8 March 2015. Find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/customer-and-stakeholder-satisfaction-survey>.

Marine Licensing - Recovery of Cases For Secretary of State Determination

Government is seeking views on its proposals to change marine licensing so that the Secretary of State can make certain licence decisions.

The proposal would enable the Secretary of State to recover certain marine licence decisions for her own determination. The aim is to strengthen the ability of locally accountable bodies (i.e. local planning authorities (LPAs), Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)) to seek an independent public inquiry into certain complex marine licensing cases, with the final decision taken by Ministers directly accountable to Parliament.

The Secretary of State may recover a marine licence application for her own determination where she is satisfied that the application falls into either of the following categories:

- 1) the application is one where the MMO has received a formal representation from an LPA or IFCA affected by the proposal seeking determination by the Secretary of State, or
- 2) the application includes a novel activity that raises wider issues of national significance not covered by the UK Marine Policy Statement or other relevant marine planning documents, and could benefit from examination in public.

The consultation period ended on 25 February 2015.

Funding

Marine stewardship fund – Crown Estate

The Marine Stewardship Programme supports community initiatives and scientific research that help to promote the long-term sustainable management of Crown Estate marine and coastal assets. Find out more at: <http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/coastal/marine-stewardship-fund>.

Coastal Communities Fund

The Coastal Communities Fund is a government mechanism for determining and providing support to coastal communities, and is administered by the Big Lottery's Big Fund. More details can be found at: <http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/coastal/coastal-communities-fund/>.

LIFE Funding

The Solent Forum Manager, Karen McHugh, attended an external funding workshop run by Natural England in February 2015. As part of the training provided, an early draft application for LIFE funding was prepared for a project to take forward work on the effects of recreational disturbance on birds at a national level, using the Solent as a best practice example and taking forward an access strategy for the Solent to positively direct recreational use.

Events

Free monthly talks on Marine Life at University of Southampton

Marine Life Talks are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton. For details see <http://noc.ac.uk/news/marine-life-talks>.

Porcupine Marine Natural History Society Conference

The Porcupine MNH Society Conference 2015 will be held at the Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Portsmouth from the 27th-29th March 2015. The theme will be 'Species: home and away' and details are available at <http://pmnhs.co.uk/notification-of-the-pmnhs-annual-meeting-2015-at-the-university-of-portsmouth>. The deadline for registration is Friday 13th March 2015 and entry for non-members is £60.

If you are not familiar with the Porcupine MNH Society, it is named after HMS "Porcupine" which first discovered that life existed at the deep ocean floor. See <http://pmnhs.co.uk/>.

Estuarine Coastal Sciences Association

The Estuarine Coastal Sciences Association (ECSA) is an international organisation dedicated to the promotion and advancement of multidisciplinary research into all aspects of estuaries and coasts, and the application of science and technology for their sustainable environmental management. ECSA holds a number of events throughout the year and details of these can be found at <http://www.ecsa-news.org/> (click on Conferences and Events). Members receive a bulletin with articles, news and views and information on scientific research, conferences, workshops, publications and websites of relevance to estuaries and other coastal environments.

ECSA 55 Unbounded Boundaries and Shifting Baselines

The ECSA 55 conference on 'Unbounded boundaries and shifting baselines - Estuaries and coastal seas in a rapidly changing world' will take place in London on 6-9 Sept 2015. Details can be found at: <http://www.estuarinecoastalconference.com/>.

ICE Coastal Management 2015

The Institute of Civil Engineers Coastal Management conference on Changing Coast, Changing Climate, Changing Minds will take place in September 2015 in Amsterdam on 7-9 September 2015, with a technical visit on 7 September. ICE's Coastal Management conferences are recognised for a focus on current issues, research and practical application. They are a notable forum for forthright discussion, highlighting advances and solutions as well as identifying key areas of debate. The conference is seeking papers on top international coastal projects that offer practical learning, innovative and integrated solutions. There is more information at <http://www.ice-conferences.com/coastal-management/>.

Ocean and Earth Day at NOC

This free annual event showcases the work undertaken by members of the scientific and engineering teams at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton. You can visit the aquarium displays, operate an underwater vehicle, take a close look at fossils and sea life, watch short informative talks and take part in a range of exciting hands-on activities. The event takes place on Saturday 25th April 2015 from 10.30 am - 4.00 pm (last entries 3.30pm). Details can be found at <http://noc.ac.uk/news/ocean-earth-day-2015-0>.

European Marine Biology Symposium

The 50th EMBS Symposium will be held from 21-25 September 2015 at the Biological Station on Helgoland. The overarching theme of the symposium will be marine and coastal time series, both long-term changes in the marine environment and also the challenges of maintaining and visualising time series, new technologies and socioeconomic aspects of time series research. Details can be found at <http://www.awi.de/EMBS50>.

European Maritime Day Conference 2015

The European Maritime Day Conference will be held in the Peace and Friendship Stadium in Piraeus, Greece on 28 and 29 May 2015. The Conference will focus on ports and coasts as engines for Blue Growth. See: <http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/en/home>.

Useful Web Sites

More about what SEMS members are doing can be found on their web sites. Send any links to web pages that you would like included to info@solentems.org.uk.

- Downs and Harbours Clean Water Partnership - <http://www.cleanwaterpartnership.co.uk/>.
- Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve - <http://www.lymebayreserve.co.uk/>.
- Seabed User and Development Group - <http://www.sudg.org.uk/index.php>.

Current University Research

You can read about some of the research being undertaken at local universities on their web pages.

- University of Portsmouth research can be found at:
- <http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-biological-sciences/research/lab-pages/dr-gordon-j-watson/>.

- University of Southampton research can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/oes/research/index.page>
- National Oceanography Centre research can be found at <http://noc.ac.uk/>.
- Southampton Solent University research can be found here <http://www.solent.ac.uk/research/clusters-and-groups/maritime-and-technology/maritime-and-technology.aspx>.

More Information

More information about the Solent European Marine Sites can be found at www.solentems.org.uk.

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