

Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group Meeting
Wednesday 13th May 2009
Coastal Zone, Portrush

Attendees

Bob Davidson	(NIEA - NH – Chair)
Gary Burrows	(NIEA - NH)
Joe Breen	(NIEA - NH)
Chris Burns	(NIEA - WMU)
Ken Bradley	(PEPG)
Gerardine McEvoy	(PEPG)
Catherine Bertrand	(Mourne Heritage Trust)
Helen Nutt	(NIEA WMU)
Julia Nunn	(Ulster Museum)
Bob Brown	(NIBG)
Maxime Sizaret	(CCGHT)
Phil Davidson	(National Trust)
John Anderson	(CNCC)
Eric Bann	(NIEA – NH)
Helen Paul	(NIEA – Minute Taker)

1. Welcome

Bob D welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Eric Bann and Gerardine McEvoy as new members to the group. He explained that an awareness and outreach workshop was being held in the afternoon and everyone was welcome to stay for it.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Erwin, Andrew Cooper, Orla Maguire, Dai Roberts, Gareth Greer, Caroline Nolan, Melanie Gomes, Valerie Crozier & Paddy Boylan.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Bob reported that Richard Weyl chaired the Species Biodiversity Delivery Group and that they were still working on the species list. He explained that it was hoped the list would be agreed by the next meeting of this group and Richard would give a presentation then.

Action Point 1: Richard to give a presentation at the next meeting on the Priority Species list.

Action Point 2: Bob D agreed to resend Ian Enlander's email on Sea Bird Breeding Success to Bob B.

Ken reported that the summary report entitled 'Marine Climate Change Impacts – Exploring ecosystem linkages' was now available.

Action Point 3: Ken to circulate the link for the report to the group.

Joe reported that he had spoken to Roy Ramsey on the issue of recreating the Marine Science group and that he would continue to pursue this issue.

Action Point 4: Bob D/Joe to take forward.

Bob reported that he still needed to clarify the wording 'Target not applicable to NI' within target 3, table 5 of the paper 'Reporting on Coastal Priority Habitats'.

Action Point 5: Bob D

4. Unregulated Shellfish Harvesting Report – Joe Breen

Joe advised that the report was complete and it would hopefully be available on the web within the next few weeks. He advised that it was an independent report by Queens and that Government would have to provide a response. A discussion took place on who should be the driver to take the recommendations forward. It was agreed that it should be an advisory panel such as CNCC.

Action Point 6: John to raise the issue with CNCC on mechanism for taking forward cross departmental recommendations.

Action Point 7: Joe to inform the group when the report is available on the web.

5. Marine Mapping – Recent Developments – Joe Breen

Joe reported that NHD was commissioning through NHRP (QUERCUS) 2 contracts to utilise the JIBS data in the production of marine SAC site habitat maps (Skerries/Causeway and Shamrock Pinnacle Reef Complex to the west of Rathlin Island. A 3rd project would involve multiple beam mapping & habitat map production for the proposed maidens SAC. Joe also announced that interreg 4 open call for projects including seabed mapping would be initiated on 15th May 2009.

6. Position Statement on Sharks, Skates & Rays in NI Waters – Gary Burrows

Gary gave a brief presentation on the main aspects of the report that had been produced. He explained that actual report was very extensive and had provided good strong management recommendations. He tabled a list of the species present in NI. A discussion took place as to the best mechanism to take these recommendations forward. Bob D advised that NIEA were due to meet with Fisheries division in the next month and he would raise the issue of an action plan to take the recommendations forward.

Action Point 8: Bob D to add to agenda of NIEA/Fisheries meeting.

Action Point 9: Bob D to add Action Plan to agenda for the next meeting of this group.

Action Point 10: Gary to inform the group which **elasmobranch** (is the scientific name for a very ancient group of fishes which includes the sharks, skates and rays) species recorded in Northern Ireland waters are also UK BAP Priority Species.

7. The Economic Benefits of Marine Biodiversity in NI – Marine Task Force

Phil gave a brief update. She advised that it had been put on hold for the time being as it was felt it was duplication of work that PEPG were organising.

8. Update on Marine Nature Conservation Policy – Ken Bradley

Ken gave an update on the DEFRA Bill which is due to come into force in late summer 2009. He advised that the UK wide Marine Policy Statement was in the process of being developed, which would form the framework for the High level Marine Objectives. Amendments to the FEPA licencing and Part 2 of the CPA will also come into force in September/October, although marine planning is several years away. With regards to the NI Bill, he advised that DOE would be legislating for Marine Planning, Marine Nature Conservation, some aspects of licensing implementation and a relevant delivery mechanism(MMO) for NI. It is anticipated that Headline policy papers covering these workstreams would form discussions with the Environment Committee in June.

9. Work Programme

Eric informed the group that he had updated the work programme to include the comments he had received. He pointed out that it is a work in progress document and anyone can email comments at any time or if preferred meetings could be arranged.

Action Point 11: Eric to add Skates/Rays into the work programme.

10. AOB

Ken informed the group about an Information Seminar on the EU Life+ Programme being held on 28th May 2009 at the ECOS Centre. Anyone wishing to attend should inform Alan Hamilton.

Action Point 12: Gerardine to circulate the invite to the Seminar to the group.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 4th November 2009 and will be held at Exploris.