

Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group

Work Programme

2009- 2012

Last updated March 13th 2009

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Introduction

The Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group (BDG) is one of five BDGs established to help deliver the commitments for priority habitats and species within the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. Each BDG is a partnership of key stakeholders working together towards the biodiversity targets for habitats and species. Further details for this and other BDGs can be found on the NIEA website.

The Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group addresses the following priority habitats in Northern Ireland which are the subject of Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) or for which HAPs are being prepared;

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Tide Swept Channels, Seagrass Beds, Maerl Beds, Saline Lagoons, Intertidal Mudflats, Sheltered Muddy Gravels, Mud habitats in Deep Water, Sabellaria alveolata reefs, Sabellaria spinulosa Reefs, Subtidal Sands and Gravels, Horse Mussel Beds, Intertidal Chalk, Tidal Chalk, Maritime Cliff and Slopes, Coastal Sand Dunes, Coastal Saltmarsh, Vegetated Shingle, Serpulid Reefs, Coldwater Reefs, Reedbeds.

The following are new habitats specified by JNCC:

Intertidal Boulder Communities, Peat and Clay Exposures, Fragile Sponge and Anthozoan Communities on sub-tidal Rocky Habitats, Estuarine Rocky Habitats, Seamount Communities, Carbonate Mounds, Deep Sea Sponge Communities, File Shell Beds, Blue Mussel Beds. This work programme sets out work that the Coastal and Marine BDG members will carry out over the next three years. It is reviewed annually.

Work Programme structure

The 'key tasks' have been derived from a collation exercise carried out in 2006 to bring together 'actions' from individual habitat action plans into this higher level, integrated, work programme for the BDG. Many of these key tasks are ongoing, such as 2.1.3 *Monitoring and report on the condition of site selection features of designated SACs/ASSIs* or 2.1.4 *Monitor and control the impact of invasive species...* These are included in the work programme because they are important but are not always given a SMART timeframe because there are other systems in place to take these forward. Other key tasks are very broadly expressed for example 3.1.8. *Ensure that recreational activities... take into account coastal and marine habitats or species* or 3.2.1. *Develop an inventory of extent, location and condition of coastal and marine habitats*. In some cases sub-tasks have been added in the second column where there is a measurable output. Some of the sub-tasks draw together elements of a range of key tasks. A 'comment' has been added to some key tasks to outline the context or state of progress.

Site designation

Objective 1: Ensure that all priority coastal and marine habitats that meet the scientific criteria required for ASSI designation are designated by 2012 and that all locally important sites are identified and protected.

Key Action 1.1: Designate all priority coastal and marine habitats that meet the scientific criteria required for ASSI designation, by 2012.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
1.1.1	Review the coverage of coastal and marine habitats within the SAC/ASSI/NNR series and initiate a programme for designating additional coastal and marine sites. This will include new priority habitats and species as described by JNCC	NIEA DARD	Ongoing	
1.1.2	Submit Red Bay SAC to EU	NIEA	2010	
1.1.3	Submit a further 3 SACs to EU	NIEA	2012	
1.1.4	Finalise seaward colony extensions for existing seabird SPAs	NIEA	2012	
1.1.2	Produce conservation objectives for all designated sites.	NIEA	Ongoing	

Key Action 1.2: Protect locally important sites by identifying them in Area Plans and in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
1.2.1	Identify coastal SLNCIs and a coastal zone in Area Plans and in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.	Planning Service NIEA NGOs District Councils	Ongoing in line with Area Plans	
1.2.2	Develop a Local Wildlife Sites Database	NIEA	2011	
1.2.3	Identify how biodiversity can be protected via AONB Management Plans	NIEA		
1.2.4	Consider the possibility of a NICS extension to identify the gaps in the inventory of coastal habitats?	NIEA	2012	

Special Management of designated sites

Objective 2: Work to maintain favourable condition or improve the conservation condition towards favourable, of 95% of the features underlying the designation of internationally important wildlife sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest by 2013.

Key Action 2.1: Monitor and report on the condition of designated coastal and marine sites and associated species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
2.1.1	Monitor and report on the condition of coastal and marine SACs/ASSIs	NIEA , DCAL, Loughs Agency, Rivers Agency.	Ongoing	
2.1.2	Publish an ASSI condition report	NIEA	2012	
2.1.3	Regulate adverse activities within ASSIs and N2Ks as appropriate	NIEA + all competent authorities	Ongoing	
2.1.4.	Monitor and control the impact of invasive species	NIEA + all competent authorities	Ongoing	
2.1.5	Produce a management Plan for Rathlin SAC	NIEA	2012	

Key Action 2.2: Identify ASSI/SAC in unfavourable condition and initiate and implement site management plans for restoration for identified sites by 2012.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
2.2.1	Identify and Initiate a programme to restore coastal and marine SACs/ASSIs which are not in favourable condition.	NIEA , FCB, Loughs Agency, Rivers Agency, Water Service, DCAL		
	2.2.1.1. Produce a restoration plan for saltmarsh and dune systems.	NIEA	2010	
	2.2.1.2. Investigate the feasibility of using a 'Remedies' type approach as used by Natural England	NIEA	2010	

Management of designated sites, priority habitats and species.

Objective 3: Maintain the current extent and overall distribution of coastal and marine habitats and species currently in favourable condition and improve the condition of those areas, which are degraded but readily restorable by 2010 and introduce management regimes to improve the condition of the remaining areas by 2015.

Key Action 3.1: Maintain the extent and condition of coastal and marine sites and the distribution and population of key species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.1.1	Collectively ensure that PPS2 adequately protects and promotes coastal and marine biodiversity.	ALL	2009	
3.1.2	At the review of PPS 15 ensure that it is adequate for climate change scenarios.	ALL	As review timetable	
3.1.3	Through Invasive Species Ireland carry out risk assessments and prepare further contingency plans, management plans and Codes of Good Practice for high risk species.	NIEA	2012	
	3.1.3.1. – Let a new three year All-Ireland invasive species contract	NIEA, NPWS	2010	
3.1.4	Ensure that coastal and marine management and restoration plans are incorporated into Local Biodiversity Action Plans.	NIEA, District Councils	2011	
3.1.5	Ensure that the agricultural related grant schemes are used effectively to positively deliver integrated	DARD, NIEA		

	coastal zone management.			
3.1.6	Ensure that recreational activities, for example, boating, fishing or water sports take account of coastal and marine habitats or species.	DCAL, NIEA, Waterways Ireland, District Councils, Loughs Agency, SLMAC, Causeway Coast and Glens, Mournes Heritage Trust, NT etc.	Ongoing	
3.1.7	Ensure that the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity is included in the review of inshore fisheries.	NIEA, DARD	Ongoing	
3.1.8	Develop appropriate mechanisms to manage sand and gravel extraction	DOE	Ongoing	
3.1.9	Consider the implications of climate change	ALL	Ongoing	
3.1.10	Site managers to manage and maintain the extent/condition of coastal/marine habitats		Ongoing	
3.1.11	Cordinate the seal and cretacean monitoring prorammes	NIEA	Ongoing	
3.1.12	Manage Modiolus restoration project in Strangford Lough	NIEA	Ongoing	

Key Action 3.2: Compile an inventory of coastal and marine habitats in Northern Ireland.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.2.1	Develop an inventory of the extent, location and condition of coastal and marine habitats.	NIEA	2010	
3.2.2	Contribute to the revision of habitat classifications, definitions and indicators for coastal and marine habitats	NIEA	Ongoing	
3.2.3	Review the current extent and condition of coastal and marine habitats and identify gaps	DCAL	Ongoing	
3.2.4	Further develop a monitoring programme to assess the condition of coastal and marine habitats	NIEA	2012	

Key Action 3.3: Monitor the condition and distribution of coastal and marine species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.3.1	Monitor the distribution, population and condition of coastal and marine species.	NIEA, DARD,	2010	
	3.3.1.1 Produce a 'gap analysis' through the 2010 Biodiversity Report contract		2011	

Key Action 3.4: Carry out a strategic review of restoration opportunities for coastal and marine habitats.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.4.1	Produce a Restoration Strategy for the prioritisation of coastal and marine restoration in Northern Ireland.	NIEA , DARD, NGOs, Rivers Agency, DCAL	2010	
3.4.2	Promote and develop demonstration sites for the management and restoration of coastal and marine habitats. Including the production of a list with details.	NIEA DARD Rivers Agency, NGOs	2010	
3.4.3	Initiate restoration of the priority sites identified in the Restoration Strategy.	NIEA , DARD, District Councils, Rivers Agency, NGOs	2011	
3.4.4	Ensure an integrated and effective approach to funding for the restoration and management of coastal and marine habitats.	NIEA DARD District Councils, NGOs	2010	

Coastal and Marine Management Planning

Objective 4: Ensure that all coastal and marine sites are fully incorporated into River Basin Management Plans as well as in the upcoming Coastal and Marine Access Bill and the Marine Bill.

Key Action 4.1: Ensure that coastal and marine sites are properly recognised and managed through River Basin Management Plans as well as in the upcoming Coastal and Marine Access Bill and the Marine Bill.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
4.1.1	Ensure that all marine and coastal Natura 2000 sites are included in River Basin Management Plans and the WFD protected areas register.	NIEA	Ongoing	
	4.1.1.1 Ensure that Programmes of Measures to protect N2K sites are identified and in place. 4.1.1.2 Consider initiating a Seascape Character Assessment similar to LCAs to aid the siting of offshore windfarms	NIEA, DARD, Rivers Agency	2012	
4.1.2	Review how coastal and marine habitats are dealt with in River Basin Management Plans and make recommendations for consideration in the second round of River Basin Management Plans due in 2015.	ALL	2012	

Research

Objective 5: Initiate and support research to advance the implementation of this work programme.

Key Action 5.1: Continue to carry out research as necessary to improve our understanding of coastal and marine habitats distribution, function, management and associated species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
5.1	Continue to carry out and support research to help develop our understanding and management of coastal and marine environments.	DARD NIEA DCAL	Ongoing	

Education and Awareness

Objective 6: Encourage active participation and increase the awareness and understanding of coastal and marine issues amongst the public, landowners and stakeholders.

Key Action 6.1: Promote appropriate access to coastal and marine habitats and raise awareness of coastal and marine habitats and species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
6.1.1	Develop a coastal and marine habitat and species awareness programme for politicians, senior civil servants and decision makers.	NIEA , DENI DARD, L.A,	Ongoing	
	6.1.1.1 – Co-ordinate a Marine Day programme.	NIEA, ALL	Annually	
6.1.2	Provide appropriate access, interpretation and educational provision on key coastal and marine sites.	NIEA , DARD District Councils, Loughs Agency	Ongoing	
6.1.3	Make locally relevant information available on coastal and marine habitats and species to the public schools and universities	NIEA , ELBs, Universities, DARD, Loughs Agency	Ongoing	
6.1.4	Develop links with organisations and programmes to promote the exchange of information and experience in management techniques and conservation strategies	ALL	Ongoing	

6.1.5	Arrange an annual seminar for the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Group	NIEA	Annually	
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Key Action 6.2: Develop good practice for coastal and marine management.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
6.2.1.	Review relevant guidelines and materials on coastal and marine management and produce a directory of best examples.	NIEA DARD Rivers Agency, LAs, NGOs, Crown Estate	Ongoing	
6.2.2	Ensure that those providing coastal and marine management advice to landowners are consistent and fully informed.	ALL	Ongoing	
6.2.3	Encourage people to participate in active management of coastal and marine habitats	NIEA , DARD, Rivers Agency, DCAL, MCS, Crown Estate, NGOs	Ongoing	

Implementation

Objective 7: Ensure that this work programme is implemented and review progress by 2010.

Key Action 7.1: A Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group, led by NIEA including Government, NGOs and businesses, will help implement this work programme.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
7.1.1	Review work programme and progress on an annual basis.	ALL	Annually	
7.1.2	Publish work programme report	NIEA	2011	
7.1.3	Review terms of reference on an annual basis.	ALL	Annually	
7.1.4	Record specific actions that have been taken	NIEA	Annually	
7.1.5	Ensure that within any fish conservation officer's remit are marine species	NIEA, AFBI	2010	

Key Action 7.2: Further develop links with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
7.2.1	Further develop links with the UK, the Republic of Ireland and International organisations on coastal and marine habitats and species management.	ALL	Ongoing	
7.2.2	Maintain links on N2K site management through the Cross Border Liaison Group	NIEA	Ongoing	
7.2.3	Provide representation on all relevant UK and Ireland habitat and species groups such as UK Coastal Habitat Group, and UK Marine Habitat Group	NIEA	Ongoing	

Key Action 7.3: Incorporate new Habitat Action Plans and priority species to this work programme.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in bold	Timeframe	Comments/Update
7.3.1.	Incorporate new Habitat Action Plans to this work programme	NIEA	2010	
7.3.2.	Incorporate relevant priority species to this work programme	NIEA	2010	
	7.3.2.1 – Complete the priority species signposting exercise.	NIEA	2010	
	7.3.2.2. – Add priority species to this work programme	NIEA	2010	