

Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Delivery Group Meeting
4th November 2009
Exploris, Portaferry

Attendees

Joanne Gaffney	CBAIT
James Strong	AFBI
Matt Service	AFBI
Ciaran McGonigle	Loughs Agency
Catherine Bertrand	Mourne Heritage Trust
John Anderson	CNCC
Phil Davidson	National Trust
Bob Davidson	NIEA (NH – Chair)
Gary Burrows	NIEA (NH)
Chris Burns	NIEA (WMU)
Ken Bradley	PEPG
Joe Breen	NIEA (NH)
Eric Bann	NIEA (NH)
Orla Maguire	NILGA
Melanie Gomes	NI Marine Taskforce
Helen Nutt	NIEA (WMU)
Helen Paul	NIEA (NH – Minute Taker)

1. Welcome

Bob welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed everyone that Helena Challinor, manager of Exploris would be attending part of the meeting to provide an update on the future of the centre.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Elizabeth Sides, Maxime Sizaret; Valerie Crozier, Gareth Greer, Julia Nunn & Paddy Boylan.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Joe reported that work on recreating the Marine Science Group was progressing.

Gary gave an update on the Position Statement on Sharks, Skates & Rays in NI Waters. He advised that the next step would be to find a way to take forward the recommendations. Bob suggested that a core group be set up initially to deal with the issues and then a workshop could be held possibly in February to involve the wider stakeholder group. A discussion took place as to the groups that should be involved at the 1st stage. It was agreed that the following people should be contacted – Ian Hume & Mark McCaughan (DARD), Marcus McAuley (DCAL), Walter Crozier (AFBI) and Stephen Beggs (Loughs Agency). Gary Burrows & Ciaran McGonigle wanted to be involved

and it was felt that Barbara Small (DETI) should be copied in to any correspondence.

Action Point 1: Bob to set up group to take forward the recommendations from the Position Statement on Sharks, Skates & Rays.

It was also suggested that the Position Statement should be added to the agenda for the NIEA/Fisheries meeting.

Action Point 2: Eric to add Position Statement on Sharks, Skates & Rays to the agenda for the NIEA/Fisheries meeting.

Melanie advised the group that the NI Marine Task Force had commissioned Dr Sue Gubbay to write a report providing specific advice on the delivery of the MPA network in NI. She agreed to forward this report to the group.

Action Point 3: Melanie to circulate the report to the group.

Helena Challinor joined the meeting at this point to provide the group with an update on the future of Exploris. She informed the group of the various grants they had applied for and the plans they had for refurbishment.

4. Priority Species Update

Bob advised that the Priority Species list for NI was still being worked on. He informed the group that a draft list and process had been passed to CNCC on 29th September and it would then be passed to NIBG to be signed off. Richard Weyl will attend the next meeting of this group as by that stage the list will be cleared and the group can then look at the marine species.

Action Point 4: Bob to email the Priority Species list to the group.

Action Point 5: Bob to invite Richard Weyl to the next meeting and to add Priority Species to the agenda.

5. Unregulated Shellfish Harvesting Update & Action Plan

Joe informed the group that NIEA had commissioned a report using QUERCUS entitled 'Unregulated harvesting of intertidal shellfish in Strangford Lough'. He gave a presentation on the report and advised that the full report was available on the NIEA website. A copy of his presentation is attached at Annex 1. He advised that internally NIEA would have to meet and devise a position statement. The main contact within NIEA is still to be decided but it was agreed that Loughs Agency, CNCC, Aquaculture (Paul Moore) & Heather Moore should all be involved in the initial stages.

Action Point 6: Melanie agreed to send details of 2 intertidal harvesting reports to the group.

6. Report on Communication Workshop

Eric tabled a paper showing the outcome of the Communications workshop held at the Coastal Zone, Portrush on 13th May 2009. He asked for anyone to send any comments to him and he would issue a revised report before Christmas.

Action Point 7: Everyone to send comments to Eric.

Eric also informed the group that NIEA hoped to hold marine themed days on 7th & 8th August 2010 and he suggested the possibility of similar events throughout the province. It was suggested that the AFBI ship could possibly be made available as part of the marine days.

Action Point 8: Eric to email details of the marine days to the group.

Action Point 9: Eric to liaise with Matt on the availability of the ship.

7. Marine Climate Change Impact Report

Ken reported that the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership had been set up to form an overview on the impacts of Climate Change on the Marine Environment. The MCCIP developed annual report cards and the report contains 5 topics and he reported that there have been a number of working/steering groups set up. Ken tabled a brochure and Matt agreed to produce a briefing note on the Climate Change Impact report which he would circulate to the group.

Action Point 10: Matt to circulate briefing note to the group.

Action Point 11: Melanie to circulate the link to seaweb to the group.

8. Red Bay SAC

Joe gave a presentation on the Red Bay SAC, copy of which is attached at Annex 2.

Joanne enquired about how she could be included on the list of consultees.

Action Point 12: Joe to provide Joanne with contact name for inclusion on the consultation list.

9. Update on Marine Bill and Marine Strategy Directive

Ken gave an update on the Marine Bill. He informed the group that the Minister had agreed the work structure on Licensing, Marine Planning & MNC. He advised that as yet there is no decision on the delivery mechanism but he advised that they are on track to go to full consultation in the spring.

He also updated the group on the Marine Strategy Directive advising that the consultation period was running from 30th October to 22nd January 2010.

10. AOB

Catherine gave a brief update on the position of the contracts for the Biodiversity Officers.

Ken gave a brief update on the position of the Wildlife Order.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The date and venue of the next meeting is to be arranged.

ANNEX 1

Unregulated harvesting of inter-tidal shellfish in Strangford Lough



Joe Breen
Natural Heritage Directorate

4th July 2007







Project issues

- Current level of harvesting activity
- Affect of activity on exploited stocks
- Potential impacts on other species
- Options for regulation of fishery
- Recommendations for management

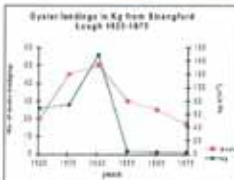


Species commonly harvested

- Cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*) 
- Winkles (*Littorina littorea*) 
- Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) 



Harvesting Levels



Oyster landings in kg from Strangford Lough 1822-1875

Figure 2. Strangford Lough oyster landings in kg over a 50 year period during the 1800s in correlation with dredging activity (Gill and McElhiney, 1997; McElhiney et al., 2002).







Figure 3. Distribution of oyster harvest sites in Strangford Lough 2004, based on dredging for shellfish in the lough. Shellfish harvesting is concentrated around the coast.



ANNEX 2



Red Bay Maerl Bed
pSAC

Joe Breen
Presentation to CNCC 26th August 2009

NIEA The Environment Agency
DOE

Maerl, (Concrete Seaweed)

- HD Annex I Habitat (Sandbank covered at all times sub feature Maerl)
- HD Annex IVb Species (along with a requirement that impact assessment should...)
- UKBAP-HAP



Site safeguard and management

Include in all new extraction licenses criteria for the continued existence of maerl beds. (ACTION: CEC, Duchy of Cornwall, MAFF, SE)

Re-negotiate existing extraction licenses to ensure the continued existence of maerl beds and their associated species. (ACTION: CEC, Duchy of Cornwall, MAFF, SE)

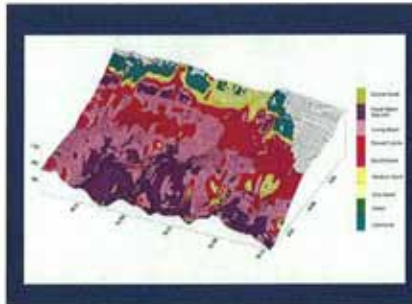
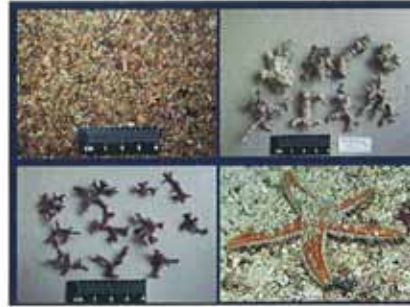
Include by 2005 provision for the maintenance of the extent and health of maerl bed communities in management plans for SACs where these include maerl beds. (ACTION: All relevant authorities)

Ensure that planning for aquaculture and other operations, which may cause siltation and smothering does not adversely affect the conservation requirements of important maerl beds. (ACTION: CEC, DETR, EA, EHS, LAA, NRW, SE, SPSA)

Ensure that road, bridge, energy and other construction schemes which might affect maerl beds do not risk damage to their conservation interest. (ACTION: CCW, DETR, DTI, EHS, HE, LAA, SE, SHH)

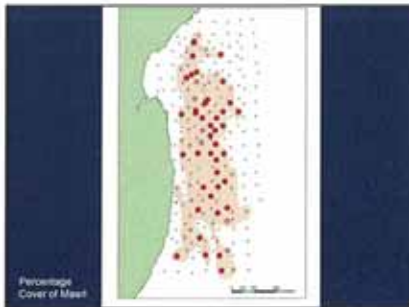
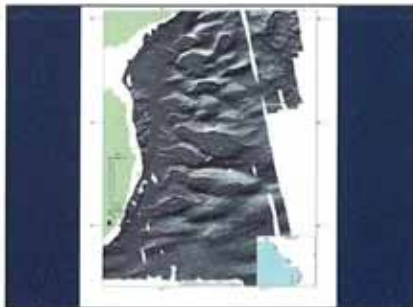
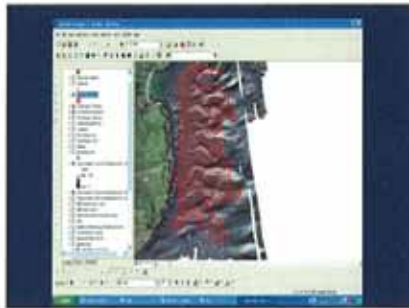
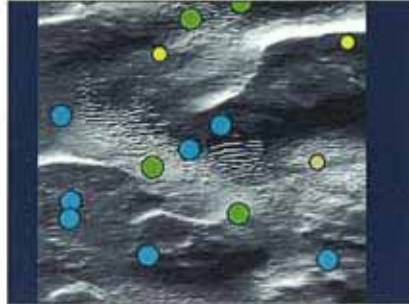
Take account of the conservation requirements for maerl bed communities in the development and implementation of coastal zone management plans and ensure they are not managed in isolation from other habitats and communities in these areas. (ACTION: All relevant authorities)

Ensure that fishing operations do not adversely affect the conservation interests of maerl beds within designated sites. (ACTION: CCW, DMR, DETR, HE, MAFF, LAA, SE, SFCs, SPSA)



Methodologies

- Interferometric Multibeam Survey
- Biodiversity/epibiota
- Biodiversity/infauna
- Additional baseline data
- Grab sampling
- Specialist Id of maerl
- Drop Video
- % live/dead maerl
- PSA
- Morphological analysis of thalli
- Radiocarbon dating
- Data analysis
- Comparison with other Irish & UK sites
- GIS





- ### Threats
- Dredging & Dredge spoil disposal
 - Aggregate extraction
 - Smothering
 - Bottom trawl/dredge fisheries
 - Coastal construction (plume and current disruption)
 - Wet Renewables
 - Anchoring



RED BAY MARINE SAC - DESIGNATION PROCESS/TIMETABLE

	Action by	
1. Preparatory work CE - provide Designation document/summary of science for inclusion in submission CDP - draft submission	11/1/08	
2. Submission to SO/Minister for comment on SAC (2 wk) CDP - letter submission to Minister CDP - interim consultation/pre-consultation documentation	20/08	
3. Approval from SO/Minister to proceed on SAC (1 wk)	30/08	
4. Consultation starts (over JACC meeting on 24/8) (2 wk) CDP - issue consultation documentation	20/09	
5. Consultation ends (2 wk) CDP - collect responses and forward to CE CE - consider inputs/inputs and provide final report CDP - issue responses	20/10/08	

6. Consider/prepare responses (completed) (1 wk)		04/12/08
7. Submission to SO/Minister to submit SAC (2 wk) CDP - draft submission and press release		11/12/08
8. Approval from SO/Minister to submit SAC (2 wk)		13/12/08
9. Refer to JACC/CE CE - submit final documentation to JACC CDP - ask Delta to submit SAC to EC		14/01/09
10. Notify consultees re referral to EC CDP - final press release		

NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency

DOE Department of the Environment

