

**Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Group Meeting  
Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008  
Crawfordsburn Country Park**

**Attendees**

Bob Davidson (EHS - Chair)  
 Catherine Bertrand (Mourne Heritage Trust)  
 Emma McLaughlin (Coleraine LBAP Officer)  
 Melanie Gomes (NI Marine Task Force)  
 Kenny Parker (DARDNI)  
 Matt Service (AFBI)  
 Julia Nunn (CEDaR)  
 Dai Roberts (QUB)  
 Bob Brown (NIBG)  
 Renny McKeown (EHS)  
 Robert Beggs (EHS)  
 Joe Breen (EHS)  
 Gary Burrows (EHS)  
 Maxime Sizaret (CCGHT)  
 Phil Davidson (National Trust)  
 Paddy Boylan (Loughs Agency)  
 Ken Bradley (PEPG, DOE)

**1. Welcome**

Bob D thanked everyone for attending.

**2. Apologies**

Michael Meharg, Caroline Nolan, Roisin Stewart, Orla Maguire, Joanne Gaffney, Roslyn Stewart & Phil Elliott.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

<b>Action Points from meeting held 28/02/07</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Bob D to produce flow chart detailing relationship between various coastal/marine groups	List to be emailed along with the minutes. Anyone wishing to add anything to let Renny know.
Joe to arrange meeting with appropriate stakeholders to discuss seabed mapping issues	Abandoned - PEPG to let contract to review the current status of marine data in Northern Ireland and make recommendations on how best to manage and make this data available

Phil Davidson to send management reports for National Trust coastal sites to Renny	Action carried forward
Paddy to send Lough's Agency comments on Work Programme to Renny	Action carried forward
Richard to present a list of species affected by HAPs to the next meeting	Renny to check position with Richard Weyl

Action Points from meeting held 12/09/07	Progress
<b>Matt</b> to circulate minutes from meeting of Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership	Action complete
<b>Gary</b> to investigate a method of incorporating maps on the coast website	Action complete
<b>Gary</b> to consider web links to appropriate organisations on coast website	Action complete
<b>Bob Davidson</b> to discuss with Mike Meharg how to include details of the other Biodiversity Delivery Groups	Action complete
<b>Gary</b> to include details of the Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Group on the Coast section of the EHS website	Action complete
<b>Bob Davidson</b> to provide Ken and Bob Brown with memo on need for integrated marine data management in NI Note: Bob Brown requested that this memo be prepared for submission to NIBG on 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2007	This action will be progressed following completion of the contract that PEPG intends to let to University of Ulster to consider the best way to manage/distribute marine data in Northern Ireland
<b>Bob Brown</b> via the NIBG to raise issue of marine data management with Heads of Government Departments	This action will be progressed following completion of the contract that PEPG intends to let to University of Ulster to consider the best way to manage/distribute marine data in Northern Ireland
<b>Ken Bradley</b> to raise issue of marine data management with NI Coastal Forum	Action complete
<b>Joe, Julia and Matt</b> to critically analyse the GIS/Database and propose opportunities for improvement, detail gaps in information, propose opportunities for updating data etc.	This action will be progressed following completion of the contract that PEPG intends to let to University of Ulster to consider the best way to manage/distribute marine data in Northern Ireland
<b>Bob Davidson</b> to convene a Working Group to produce a paper on Marine Biodiversity Data Management in NI.	This action will be progressed following completion of the contract that PEPG intends to let to University of Ulster to consider the best way to manage/distribute marine data in Northern Ireland
<b>Renny</b> to update Work Programme to identify more fully who has responsibility for progressing Key Tasks	Action complete

<b>Gary</b> to arrange workshop for late 2007/early 2008	Action complete
<b>Matt and Joe</b> to give presentation to the Group on Seabed Mapping Project/MESH/JIBS	Action complete

### **Matters arising**

Melanie Gomes pointed out that she now represented the Marine Task Force.

### **4. Presentations**

#### **‘Joint Irish Bathymetric Survey’**

Joe gave a presentation on the Joint Irish Bathymetric Survey and included a number of images of the unique under sea landscape off the North Coast which were produced as a result of this survey. He stressed the need for 100% coverage of high resolution seabed mapping data as an essential baseline for all marine monitoring and special planning requirements. He emphasised that such surveys should be carried out to the highest quality such as IHO order 1 standard. This will enable all agencies to use the data for a multitude of applications such as navigational chart production, marine habitat mapping, appropriate siting of renewable energy technology and identification of fishing habitats. Joe explained that EHS would use this data for the identification and designation of marine SACs. The ethos of such an integrated mapping approach is ‘survey once use often’.

Joe explained that the JIBS project had been particularly important in bringing together a wide range of experts from both within UK and Ireland. It had identified common methodology and standards and would assist in the ultimate goal of 100% coverage of the seabed for the whole of the island. Joe also indicated that other technologies such as airborne LIDAR would be required in our unique sea lough environment.

#### **‘Seabed Habitat Mapping Initiatives’**

The AFBI presentation reviewed the work conducted by AFBI over the last 10 years including participation in the Mapping Inshore Coral Habitats (MINCH) and MESH Projects (<http://www.searchmesh.net>).

AFBI conducted the first multi-beam surveys in NI waters in 2003 and are investing in the development of this technology through the core project, “The Sensitivity of Benthic Habitats in NW Irish Sea and Malin Shelf”, with the aim of mapping sensitive habitats and providing information on the potential development of Marine Protected Areas. Examples from recent work included mapping the Beaufort Dyke and the N E Antrim Maerl beds. Examples were given of the use a seabed mapping data in the management of sea disposal sites and aggregate extraction.

Following both presentations, a discussion on identifying priority areas for survey work took place and it was agreed a group should be set up to discuss the priorities for marine species and habitats, and also linkages to fisheries and other aspects. Bob Brown agreed to chair the group which would include Joe, Matt, a representative from WMU and a representative from Loughs Agency

**Action Point 1: Bob Brown to chair group to discuss survey priorities for marine species & habitats.**

#### **5. Feedback from 'Raising Public Understanding of the Marine Environment' Workshop**

Gary reported that the workshop was held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008 at Crawfordsburn Country Park and tabled the agenda and a list of organisations who attended. He informed the group that the findings from the workshop are being written up at present and would be circulated as soon as possible. He also informed the group of the World Oceans day taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

#### **6. Progress with Work Programme**

Renny informed the group that she had slightly amended the layout of the Work Programme to allow for each Partner Organisation to add comments and detail progress with actions contained in the Work Programme. She advised that the intention was for the work programme to be contained within BARS and that each Partner Organisation would be responsible for updating progress with their actions directly. In the meantime, Renny will update on everyone's behalf. She informed the group that she will be contacting everyone periodically to obtain an update.

**Action Point 2: Bob D/Renny to consider how best to present progress with actions contained in the Work Programme**

#### **7. 08/09 Biodiversity Group Workshop – Habitat Reporting**

Bob D informed the group that it was proposed the next workshop would be based on 'Habitat Reporting' and the Group agreed to this proposal. Phil advised that from a National Trust point of view it would be very useful and they would be happy to contribute.

Ken enquired if the other delivery groups were holding similar workshops. Renny advised that the other groups intend to run workshops but they may not be covering the same topic.

## **8. Priorities for next meeting**

Bob D asked if anyone had anything specific they would like covered at the next meeting.

Bob B informed the Group that the NIBG had to prepare a 2009 progress report on the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS) and he wanted input from all the delivery groups. He asked that this group consider what they would like to contribute.

Melanie proposed 'Marine Protected Areas' as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Ken advised the Group that PEPG intended to let a contract to University of Ulster to review the current status of marine data in Northern Ireland and make recommendations on how best to manage and make this data available. He may be in a position to discuss the outcome of the UU report at the next meeting.

Matt proposed that he would update the Group on the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership.

**Action Point 3: Renny to include the NIBG 2009 NIBS Progress Report, Marine Protected Areas, Progress with the UU Marine Data Management Contract and an update from the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership on the agenda for the next meeting**

## **9. AOB**

Phil tabled a copy of the National Trust report 'Shifting shores - living with a changing coastline'. She reported that it was a very successful document and there had been a lot of media coverage which had raised the profile of the implications of Climate Change in Northern Ireland.

Ken informed the group that the next meeting of the Coastal & Marine Forum would be held from 9 - 11 April 2008. The Environment Minister is due to open the meeting.

Gary informed the group of the WiSe (Wildlife safe) scheme which offers training to boat operators interested in the development of sustainable marine ecotourism. He had several copies of a DVD which covered the WiSe scheme and offered to distribute them to anyone interested in a copy.

Bob Brown expressed his concern about the breeding success of sea birds. He reported that there had been a dramatic loss of colonies which appears to have been caused by changes in the distribution of food. He reported that this issue had been raised with Howard Platt through CNCC.

**Action Point 4: Bob D to raise the issue of decreasing Sea Bird breeding success with Howard Platt.**

Maxime informed the group of a study which was due to be carried out by Europarc (Atlantic Isles Section) on the connection between land and sea in Protected Area Management Plans. He advised that EHS did not appear to have been involved therefore NI would not be included in this study. He undertook to email the brief for this study to Bob D.

**Action Point 5: Maxime to email the brief for the Europarc study on the connection between land and sea in Protected Area Management Plans to Bob D.**

**10 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

**Action Points**

Action Point 1	<b>Bob Brown</b> to chair group to discuss survey priorities for marine species & habitats.
Action Point 2	<b>Bob D/Renny</b> to consider how best to present progress with actions contained in the Work Programme.
Action Point 3	<b>Renny</b> to include the NIBG 2009 NIBS Progress Report, Marine Protected Areas, Progress with the UU Marine Data Management Contract and an update from the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership on the agenda for the next meeting
Action point 4	<b>Bob D</b> to raise the issue of decreasing Sea Bird breeding success with Howard Platt.
Action Point 5	<b>Maxime</b> to email the brief for the Europarc study on the connection between land and sea in Protected Area Management Plans to Bob D.