

Wales Marine Strategic Advisory Group Meeting 14 September 2015

Key Messages

The Wales Marine Strategic Advisory Group met on the 14 September 2015, with 29 attendees across four locations (Cardiff, Llandudno Junction, Swansea and London).

The next meeting will take place on the **23 February 2016** in **Rhodfa Padarn Aberystwyth**.

Wales Coastal Directory

The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and Severn Estuary Partnership presented the 2015 Wales Coastal Directory to WMSAG. The directory is now available in PDF format on the internet, with an interactive data layer accessible through the Marine Evidence Portal. Group Members were asked to promote the WCD 2015 and its uses to their stakeholder networks.

Work on the 2016 WCD has now commenced and will be looking to build upon the 2015 version. PCF and SEP would welcome comments on the usability of the 2015 version to feed into this work. If you have any comments please don't hesitate to contact the WCD team on 01646 405694.

Working towards Good Environmental Status in Welsh Seas

WMSAG members discussed a number of projects and initiatives that aim to improve ecosystems in Welsh Seas. Many of these activities had an element which focused on matters such as reducing Marine litter and will support Wales to realise its ambitions against MSFD descriptors to improve GES.

The projects and initiatives include:

- **Marine Ecosystems Project** This is a pilot project located in Pen Llŷn, which is an evolution of the work of the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- **Marine Code Marinas** Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum is working with local marinas to introduce awards, either Gold, Silver and Bronze for Marinas who meet specific standards.
- **National – Pan Wales Marine Code** PCF are also looking to build on their considerable experience with the Pembrokeshire Marine Code, and will be submitting a funding proposal to develop a National – Pan Wales Marine Code.
- **Lost Gear Study** Cardigan Bay Fisheries Local Action Group, has recently undertaken a lost gear study, the findings of which will be fed back to WMSAG.

- **Great British Beach Clean** The Marine Conservation Society's annual Great British Beach Clean is taking place on the 18th - 21st September 2015.
- **The Green Blue** is a Royal Yachting Association and British Marine joint environment programme to help boat users, boating businesses, sailing clubs and training centres reduce their impact on coastal and inland waters. The Green Blue helps to shape and deliver the environmental criteria required for the TYHA Gold Anchor marina awards scheme.

Marine Protected Areas Project: Ecologically Coherent Networks

There are currently 128 Marine Protected Areas in Wales. WMSAG members received a presentation on the network assessment and the gap analysis work being undertaken to determine our progress towards an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas across the UK. Within their presentation the Project Manager described the approach and criteria being used in assessing Wales' contribution.

These are as follows:

1. Range and Resilience
 - 2 examples of each feature protected
 - 3 examples if threatened or declining
2. Proportion
 - For broad scale habitats a minimum of 10% protected by area
3. Connectivity
 - MPAs with similar habitat <80 km apart

WMSAG members will consider the findings of this work at our next meeting in 2016 and agree a way forward. Click here for more information on the progress of this work.

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/marineandfisheries/marine-conservation-and-biodiversity/network-statement-progress-report/?lang=en>

Welsh National Marine Plan Public Drop in Sessions

WMSAG members received an update on the progress made on the development of the first Welsh National Marine Plan. The DRAFT plan for comment will be shared informally in the coming months, in preparation for more formal consultation in 2016.

Public drop in sessions will be held in November 2015, where visitors will have an opportunity to see the draft structure and content of the plan and to submit their views.

At these sessions there will be an opportunity to review the evidence that has been considered in the development of the plan. Members of the Marine and Fisheries Team will be on hand to answer questions on Marine Planning.

There are 6 sessions all taking place between 3-7pm, dates are as follows:

2 November	-	Cardiff World of Boats
6 November	-	Flint Library
9 November	-	Fishguard Bay Hotel
12 November	-	Swansea Grand Theatre
16 November	-	Bellevue Hotel in Aberystwyth
19 November	-	Penrhyn Room, Reichel Building, Bangor University

Better Fisheries Project

The group received an update on the activities and priorities of the Better Fisheries Project. Since WMSAG last met a Fisheries Management Board has been established to support the delivery of the Better Fisheries Project. The Board, which compliments the existing fisheries focused stakeholder groups (IFG and WMFAG) it has agreed the projects priorities, and set out a delivery plan through too 2020.

The main priority projects are as follows:

- Sea Bass
- Whelks
- Scallops (Cardigan Bay)
- Information to restaurants
- Crustaceans
- Recreational fisheries
- Cockles
- Implementation of new Common Fisheries Policy

Next Phase:

- Skates & Rays
- Aquaculture
- Buyers & Sellers legislation

Additional Forthcoming events

Severn Estuary Partnership Forum 2015: Tuesday 29th September

Wales Environment Link stakeholder workshop (focus Marine Planning) October 2015.