



**OSPAR  
COMMISSION**

*Protecting and conserving the  
North-East Atlantic and its resources*

OSPAR Annual Report **2014/15**



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OSPAR is the mechanism by which 15 Governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North East Atlantic.

OSPAR started in 1972 with the Oslo Convention against dumping and was broadened to cover land-based sources and the offshore industry by the Paris Convention of 1974. These two conventions were unified, updated and extended by the 1992 OSPAR Convention. The new annex on biodiversity and ecosystems was adopted in 1998 to cover non-polluting human activities that can adversely affect the sea.

The fifteen Governments are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

OSPAR is so named because of the original Oslo and Paris Conventions ("OS" for Oslo and "PAR" for Paris).

# OSPAR 2014–2015

OSPAR Executive Secretary  
Darius Campbell



OSPAR Chair  
Victor Escobar



Welcome to the OSPAR report of our activities over 2014 to 2015. We hope that you will find interesting information in this document, highlighting OSPAR's unique Contracting Party-driven process to protect the marine environment of the North East Atlantic. The report will highlight some of the things we have been doing in coordination, monitoring and assessment and on emerging issues of importance to the marine environment.

While Committees have focused on taking forward their thematic work (see the relevant sections), OSPAR has also progressed important strategic activities such as preparing for an Intermediate Assessment (page 14) of the marine environment in 2017 (IA2017) and developing its work on climate change and ocean acidification. At the same time OSPAR has tried to improve join-up between its themes (see cross cutting section on page 11). A major step forward in this process is the creation of maps of bottom fishing intensity for the North East Atlantic (page 6). This is the first time that this kind of information has been available in Europe at this scale. It will enable OSPAR to start to assess pressures from all human activities on sea floor integrity and to understand their impact on benthic habitats.

This year OSPAR also reviewed its work to see how well it was covering issues related to OSPAR Region 1 (the Arctic). Through the work of its Committees, the Commission identified particular priorities and areas that needed to be addressed in further work. OSPAR concluded that collaboration with the Arctic Council should be prioritised by OSPAR, taking into consideration their respective mandates and objectives. This conclusion is especially pertinent given the current developments in the Arctic Council on the marine environment; improved engagement has already started. Collaboration with other international partners is set out on page 12.

OSPAR is currently renewing its online presence through a recent overhaul of its website. This is to modernise its appearance and usability to ensure users can access documents, agreements and data more easily. We hope you will enjoy the experience at **[www.ospar.org](http://www.ospar.org)**.



# Protection of species and habitats

OSPAR countries have agreed a List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-6) and committed to actions to address threats and improve the status of these species and habitats through a series of Recommendations.

In 2015 OSPAR adopted a further four Recommendations for three species and one habitat bringing the total number of such Recommendations to 52.

The **Azorean limpet** (*Patella aspera*), locally known as “lapa brava”, is a species endemic to Macaronesia (Region V). Its popularity on the dinner table resulted in economic extinction in the mid-late 1980s and a subsequent ban on harvesting in 1989. It was listed because of this decline and its important ecological role as a grazer in the subtidal zone.

The **Allis shad** (*Alosa alosa*) is an anadromous fish, that is, one that migrates from the sea into rivers to spawn. The species was listed because of the decline in its populations and continued threat from habitat alteration in Regions II, III and IV.

The **sea lamprey** (*Petromyzon marinus*) is rather a special fish. Like the shad it is anadromous, breeding in rivers and living its adult life in the sea as an ectoparasite to large fish such as shad, salmon, cod and sharks. Modification of river habitats including obstacles in rivers are a particular threat to this species as is water quality. The Recommendation applies to Regions I, II, III and IV. Ironically, while endangered in the North East Atlantic, the lamprey is considered an invasive species in the Great Lakes of the USA.

**Intertidal mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) beds occurring on mixed and sandy sediments:**

these habitats play an important role in coastal sediment dynamics, enabling adaptation to changes in sea level as well as providing hard substrate for all sorts of other organisms and a rich food source for birds. The habitat occurs widely, but it is in Regions II and III that it is under particular threat, for example from overfishing, invasive species and poor water quality.





Understanding the North East Atlantic's biodiversity and how its ecosystems function and respond to the pressures from human activities – or the management measures implemented - remains an exciting challenge for the Biodiversity Committee (BDC) chaired by John Clorley. The progress in two of the strands of work – Recommendations and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is featured on pages 4 and 15 respectively. The following strands of work however deserve particular attention, signalling a shift from development to implementation.

#### ***Implementation of the Recommendations on species and habitats***

The preparation, negotiation and adoption of measures for the protection and conservation of the OSPAR species and habitats of concern has formed a major component of BDC's work over the past four years. This year we saw the kick-off of a new intersessional group – ICG-POSH. This group was established under BDC, but because of the scope of actions articulated in the Recommendations, the expertise is cross cutting and draws in particular on the expertise of OSPAR's Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA). ICG-POSH reports into both BDC and EIHA. This group will have oversight to manage the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (2008-6) and coordinate the implementation of the Recommendations across thematic Committees. It will also ensure that the necessary monitoring and assessment procedures are in place to be able to understand the changes in the status of the relevant species and habitats in response to the measures that have been taken in order to manage human activities and pressures identified as posing a threat.

#### ***Implementing biodiversity indicators***

There has been a tremendous rate of progress in the development of common biodiversity indicators in 2014/2015 – drawing on a network of over 100 experts from across the OSPAR Contracting Parties. The recent focus had been to test the indicators that were expected to contribute to the IA2017 to demonstrate their suitability for application at a regional scale and to test some of the practical issues such as data availability and reporting structure. The process led to two more indicators being nominated as common, with assessments from 19 biodiversity indicators expected to contribute to the IA2017.

# Biodiversity



# OSPAR maps bottom fishing intensity

One of the main human activities that impacts upon the marine environment is fisheries. Whilst OSPAR does not have a mandate for fisheries management it does have a responsibility to assess the environmental effects of fisheries on the marine ecosystem.

In 2013 OSPAR decided for the first time to map the bottom fishing intensity in the North East Atlantic. The purpose was to provide an input, to the assessment of seafloor integrity and physical damage, and also to assess the extent of fisheries impacts so they could be included in cumulative effects assessments.

To do this, OSPAR asked International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to prepare the first OSPAR-wide mapping of the spatial and temporal intensity of fishing activities with mobile bottom contacting gears. To develop the maps, ICES issued a data call to all Contracting Parties for national Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and log book data.

Fishing effort is clearly not uniformly distributed in the OSPAR area. The otter trawl is the most widely used towed gear

but high-intensity use is confined to a small proportion of the area with highest use in areas where Nephrops or Pandalus are targeted. Beam trawls are used in shallower waters (< 100 m depth) with beam trawling for shrimp, for example, taking place in nearshore waters less than 20 m in depth. Demersal seine nets are less widely used than otter trawls or beam trawls and dredges are used offshore solely for scallops with nearshore use of dredges for blue mussels and oysters seen in some years. The overall pattern of fishing was relatively consistent over the period, particularly in relation to the areas of higher fishing effort.

Although maps of the fishing intensity will reveal the seabed areas that are most heavily fished these maps do not necessarily show which areas are impacted most heavily. Trawling impact is a combination of trawling intensity (frequency at which the seabed is being trawled by year), the depth of penetration and the sensitivity of the seabed habitat. Further work is required to provide a consistent classification of the sensitivity of seabed habitats to overlay with the trawling intensity maps by gear type.



*This output map here shows fishing intensity for 2009-2012 combined for otter trawls, beam trawls and dredges. The colour in each  $0.05 \times 0.05$  degree grid cell corresponds to the swept area ratio (average number of times fished per year).*

The full report can be found here;  
[http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2014/Special%20Requests/OSPAR\\_mapping\\_bottom\\_fishing\\_intensity.pdf](http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2014/Special%20Requests/OSPAR_mapping_bottom_fishing_intensity.pdf)



The role of OSPAR's Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA), under the chairmanship of Lex Oosterbaan, is to track changes in the uses of the marine environment and new human activities in the North East Atlantic. Currently there are significant developments in marine renewable energy with new types of tidal and wave energy devices being developed to help tackle climate change and improve energy security. As some of these are now moving from single experimental installations to commercial arrays, OSPAR has extended its windfarm database to cover all marine renewables developments so their extent and impact can be assessed over time.

The effect of human activities on the status of OSPAR's threatened and declining species and habitats is also a key action over the next year for EIHA as is its contribution to the work of ICG-POSH. EIHA will provide information on the extent and effect of human activities in order to support the implementation of the 52 Recommendations on species and habitats. Also, for the first time, this will include the environmental effects of fisheries given that OSPAR has carried out a ground breaking assessment of pressure on the seabed from bottom trawling, as featured on page 6 of this report.

In preparation for the Intermediate Assessment 2017 EIHA has been working on the development of common indicators on marine litter and underwater noise to assess the impact on the marine environment. One of the key marine litter indicators is beach litter and for the first time OSPAR has developed a statistical tool, that allows trends in the top litter items identified in the beach surveys to be analysed at the beach, national, regional and OSPAR-wide level. This innovative tool will be essential for assessing the indicator and will also help with the implementation of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter which was adopted in 2014. EIHA has also published an inventory of measures to mitigate the emission and environmental impact of underwater noise in this first phase focusing on pile-driving.

# Human activities



# Hazardous substances and eutrophication

This year the Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC) guided by the Chair, Reinier Goud, focused on developing OSPAR common indicators. These are common for the OSPAR North East Atlantic Environment Strategy and the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive. In the coming year HASEC experts will be refining assessments of the indicators. The process started in earnest in May with experts participating in a workshop in Hamburg. They have continued to work hard intersessionally, sharing expertise on details such as methods for data analysis, presentation and reporting. By the end of 2015 the HASEC experts will have produced pilot assessment products to help inform their ongoing discussions and work.

The work of the INPUT group in monitoring the deposition of pollutants from the atmosphere and rivers to the North East Atlantic continues under the chairmanship of Lars Sonesten. Such information is an essential component to underpin the assessment of the common indicators.

Uli Claussen's long-term leadership of the eutrophication group now has the new support of Hans Ruiter to help jointly chair. Together they coordinate national

experts who are beginning their third application of the Common Procedure for the Identification of the Eutrophication Status of the Maritime Area. The group agreed new guidance on the form of the national reports and arrangements for the work in preparing a draft of the 2017 OSPAR Integrated Report on Eutrophication Status.

Thomas Maes chaired a busy week for the working group MIME (Monitoring and on trends and effects of substances in the marine environment). Once again Rob Fryer's invaluable work provided the online assessment of levels and trends in marine contaminants and their biological effects.

All OSPAR Contracting Parties are now gearing up for the IA2017. The common indicators and thematic assessments produced under HASEC's theme will contribute an important part of the report which will also help EU Member States meet their MSFD reporting commitments.



The Offshore Industry Committee (OIC), chaired by Hanne-Grete Nilsen, concluded that fire-fighting foams should not fall under the category of chemicals covered under the Harmonised Mandatory Control System. Looking ahead OIC put in place arrangements to review OSPAR Recommendation 2010/4 on a Harmonised Pre-screening Scheme for Offshore Chemicals. Work concerning the use and reduction of the discharge of offshore chemicals is at the heart of the OIC Agenda and reflects OIC's pro-active approach to developments under the EU REACH Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.

OIC adopted Guidelines to reduce the impact of offshore installations lighting on birds in the OSPAR maritime area (Agreement 2015-08). This is

an example of OIC's action towards the protection of the OSPAR maritime area against the adverse effects of human activities other than pollution.

Work continued within the OIC Expert Assessment Panel which delivers the annual OIC reports on discharges, spills, and emissions from offshore installations, country-specific assessments.

Planning ahead OIC made arrangements to deliver a series of assessments including an overall assessment of discharges, spills and emissions of offshore installations, which would contribute to the IA2017.

OIC continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Abidjan Convention by supporting the development of an Offshore Protocol for the area.

# Offshore industry



There has been a lot of focus this year on preparing for the “Fourth Periodic Evaluation” (4PE) which represents a significant strand of work for the Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC), chaired by Justin Gwynn.

The 4PE will check progress made in implementing the Radioactive Substances Strategy and in achieving its objectives in regard to discharges of radionuclides from the nuclear and non-nuclear sectors. The Evaluation will also feed into IA 2017 which exemplifies the collective effort of the OSPAR Commission to support OSPAR Contracting Parties in their national marine status and human pressure assessments within the framework of the MSFD and the OSPAR North East Atlantic Environment Strategy.

RSC continued its active and committed expert-level work on a variety of issues. These range from the definition of “historic levels” and “close to zero” in the Radioactive Substances Strategy, to the modelling of additional concentrations of Natural Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) in seawater, and from

discharges of produced water to the definition of Environmental Assessment Criteria (EACs) to be used in future OSPAR assessments. Work in the year ahead will focus on the development of an OSPAR Agreement on the use of a methodology for radiological EACs.

The RSC Expert Assessment Panel finalised its work on the establishment of a baseline period for assessing trends in discharges from the oil and gas sub-sector with the adoption of a baseline for Pb-210, “total-alpha” and “total-beta” discharges based on the reported data for the years 2005-2011. This adds to the baselines previously agreed for the oil and gas sub-sector for Ra-226 and Ra-228.

RSC concluded the sixth-round of implementation reporting on PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on radioactive substances and the one-off round of C-14 reporting from the nuclear sector.

# Radioactive substances



# Cross cutting activity

We often describe OSPAR's activities under the parent Committee title but we are also always trying to join up work to reflect the indivisible nature of the ocean and its ecosystems. OSPAR has recently been concentrating efforts on the practical implementation of Recommendations and action plans agreed over the past few years. By focusing on the rationalisation of measures needed, Contracting Parties have started to implement the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR's list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats. It underlines the need for cross-cutting expertise to deliver the Biological Diversity and Ecosystems theme of the North East Atlantic Environment Strategy and is therefore a key joint activity between EIHA and BDC. Such joint action will become more common as further evidence and conclusions become available at regional scale from the 35 OSPAR biodiversity indicators. A focus on implementation is also being applied to the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, working with industry and non-governmental organisations.


A declared principle for OSPAR over the years is to apply the Ecosystem Approach to the management of human activities in the marine environment. An essential element of this is being able to assess the cumulative effects of

various activities occurring in the marine environment and their interaction with the ecosystem. Following a review of the three methodologies currently being applied by Contracting Parties to assess cumulative effects, EIHA has endorsed a rationalised approach to be applied in a trial. Such a method should deal with the inevitable complexity of the interactions but display results in a transparent and clear way and detect key pressures to support identification of management measures. The trial will use the OSPAR common indicators and link up to developments on biodiversity monitoring. Initial results will be reported in the IA2017 and developed further for the Quality Status Report in 2021.


The OSPAR Commission is committed to monitoring and assessing the nature, rate and extent of the effects of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment and to considering appropriate ways of responding to those developments. Over the last year the OSPAR Commission and its Committees have developed a list of activities to re-examine the issues of relevance to their themes, including Blue Carbon. On ocean acidification, a joint OSPAR-ICES expert group produced a final report in 2014 (<http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/SGOA.aspx>). OSPAR is now actively exploring how to implement the monitoring and assessment strategy recommended by the report.



# International cooperation



OSPAR continues to be active, not only in Contracting Parties' national waters, but also in thinking how to cooperate with regard to international waters and working with partner organisations. This year we held the first meeting under the collective arrangement between OSPAR and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) on cooperation on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and closed areas for bottom fishing in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The meeting included Secretariat, Contracting Parties and observers. It underlined the real benefits of the arrangement by helping us to develop far better understanding of the priorities and the ways of working/decision making in each organisation that needed to be taken into account.



OSPAR is continuing and deepening its fruitful cooperation with other Regional Seas Conventions. This cooperation is close with the Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) and with the Barcelona Convention, for instance on marine litter action and on marine assessments to support the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Cooperation has also intensified during the last year under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Abidjan Convention, which covers the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa. The OSPAR Secretariat and the Offshore Industry Committee provided their active support to the Abidjan Convention in its development of a Protocol regulating offshore oil and gas activities in the convention area.



Of strategic importance to OSPAR is the European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The MSFD aligns with the North East Atlantic Environment Strategy, giving a common focus on an ecosystem approach based on ocean and sea regions and sub-regions. OSPAR is acting as a regional platform for coordinated implementation of the Directive for its Contracting Parties which are Member States of the EU, both a requirement of the Directive and as a way of sharing the considerable workload that the Directive creates. In response to the first of the European Commission's assessments of the progress on implementation of the MSFD, OSPAR produced its regional plan to improve adequacy and coherence of the MSFD implementation 2014-2018

([http://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/33141/ospar\\_regional\\_plan\\_action\\_msfd\\_imp-1.pdf](http://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/33141/ospar_regional_plan_action_msfd_imp-1.pdf)). This plan sets out OSPAR's priorities on: common indicators, assessment and determination of Good Environmental Status; environmental targets; monitoring, and programmes of measures. In addition OSPAR's actions to address knowledge gaps and align with other Regional Seas Conventions are set out. OSPAR has already made good progress this year in delivering its MSFD implementation plan in particular towards the Intermediate Assessment in 2017.

# EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive



# Intermediate Assessment 2017

A major consideration this year has been consolidating plans for the delivery of the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment of the marine environment in OSPAR's waters due in 2017. This is a stepping stone towards the next OSPAR Quality Status Report in 2021 but the main goal of the Intermediate Assessment 2017 (IA2017) is to provide (sub) regional assessments based on commonly agreed indicators of status and pressures. Contracting Parties who are Member States of the EU can use this assessment in their national reporting under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive in 2018. The IA2017 brings together a huge amount of work under OSPAR's monitoring and assessment activities.

In order to move forward with the IA2017 the 2015 OSPAR Commission adopted a final list of 61 common and candidate indicators of marine status and pressures. This included new indicators, on biodiversity and on noise for instance. Reporting on these indicators, in the form of 2-page assessment sheets, will be the basis of the IA2017. The planned online format for the IA2017 will allow access

to detailed background documents for the assessment as well as links to the relevant data. OSPAR will make the IA2017 available as a common regional report for relevant EU Member States to use in their national reporting on the state of the marine environment in their waters under the MSFD.

OSPAR has set up a specific working group, chaired by Colin Moffat, to plan and deliver the IA2017. This group has now developed a structure for the IA2017 as well as a geographical nesting system for reporting the various assessments, working from the smallest relevant geographical scale (segments of coastal waters) up through the OSPAR regions to the whole of the OSPAR Maritime Area.

The work entails the coordination of many different sub-committees and thematic Committees within OSPAR, each preparing individual indicator assessments or other supporting information for the IA2017. This work is closely aligned to the ongoing development of OSPAR's Data and Information Management System (featured on page 16) which supports access to OSPAR's data.

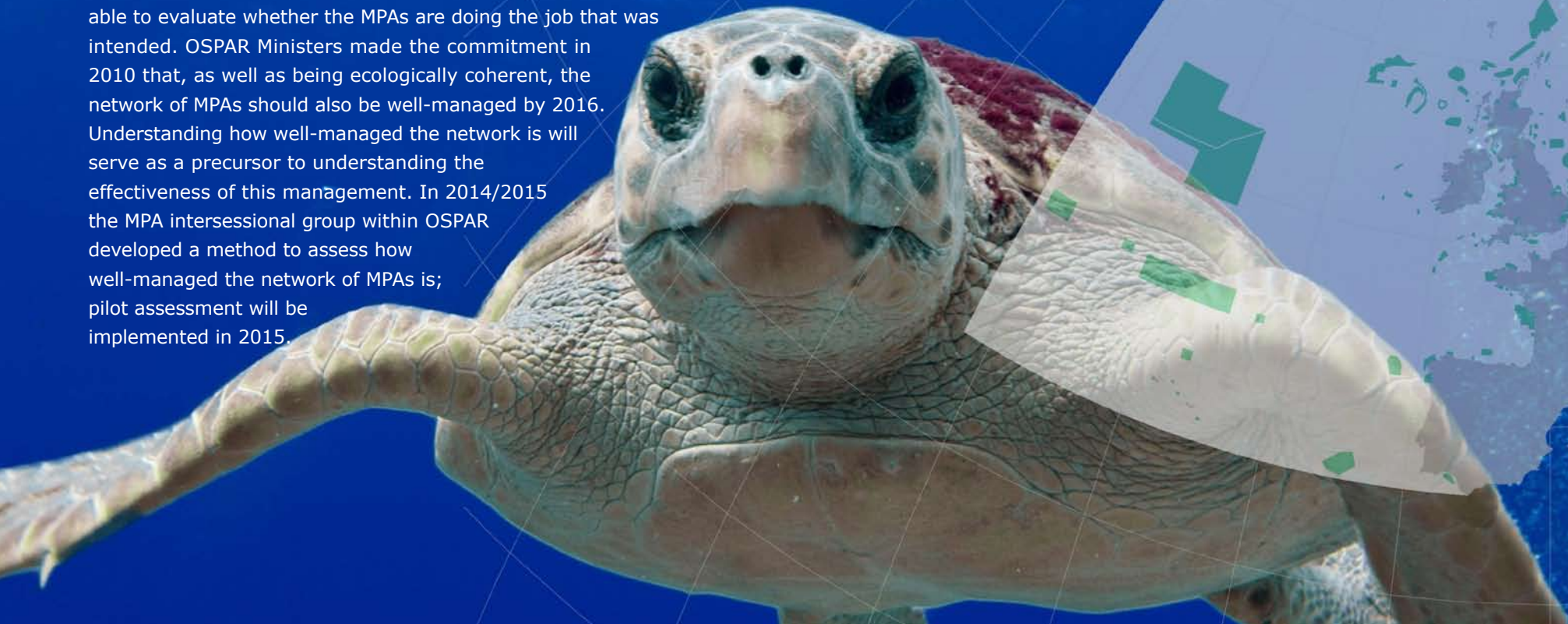


# Marine Protected Areas

Good progress was made in 2014 with the further expansion of the OSPAR network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Additional MPAs covering almost 90,000km<sup>2</sup> were nominated by the UK, Spain and Iceland, bringing the total area of the OSPAR maritime area under protection to just under 6%, far higher than the global average. The highest MPA coverage is within territorial waters (24%) and, whilst the latest nominations have helped to improve coverage further offshore, this is still only just over 3%. Beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones of Contracting Parties, 6% is protected.

However, while the increase in MPA numbers and covered marine area represents important progress, the objective to protect OSPAR waters by establishing an ecologically coherent MPA network is far from being accomplished. This is especially true of Region I (Arctic Waters) where more MPAs should be designated to take adequate account of OSPAR's commitment to marine conservation.

Designation however is only the beginning of the story. MPAs are area-based management tools which are implemented to achieve certain conservation objectives and manage human activities. It is important to be able to evaluate whether the MPAs are doing the job that was intended. OSPAR Ministers made the commitment in 2010 that, as well as being ecologically coherent, the network of MPAs should also be well-managed by 2016. Understanding how well-managed the network is will serve as a precursor to understanding the effectiveness of this management. In 2014/2015 the MPA intersessional group within OSPAR developed a method to assess how well-managed the network of MPAs is; pilot assessment will be implemented in 2015.





# Data and information management

The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric scene featuring a perspective grid that recedes into the distance. Numerous translucent, three-dimensional cubes are scattered throughout the space, appearing to float or be suspended. These cubes vary in color, including shades of blue, cyan, yellow, and orange. Some of the cubes contain internal patterns, such as a globe or a network of lines, suggesting data or information. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and digital.

May 2014 saw the start of a major project that will revolutionise OSPAR data and information management. ODIMS is an online tool to facilitate access to all data and information gathered through OSPAR's Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme across the different thematic work areas. It will help ensure that data is readily accessible for OSPAR assessments, but also help users find out what data we have, facilitate access to it and make use of it.

We are all aware how much the data management landscape in Europe is evolving so it has been critically important over this past year to remain engaged with Contracting Parties, fellow Regional Seas Conventions, data centres (e.g. ICES), and European Union processes and projects to ensure we remain on track. We are now more than halfway through the ODIMS project and the testing of elements of the tool has begun. The project is currently on schedule for completion by OSPAR 2016 and to be put straight to the test in support of the IA 2017.



# External Meetings - Year in Brief

## July 2014

Executive Secretary, Darius Campbell chaired sessions at the UNEP Regional Seas meeting on visioning in Geneva helping to set the vision and strategic direction for the UNEP Regional Seas Programme on its 40th anniversary.

OSPAR Deputy Secretary Gert Verreet acted as Vice Chair at JPI Oceans Strategic Advisory Board. JPI Oceans is a forum of cooperation between its Member States which aims to increase critical mass and provides a forum for articulating OSPAR Science needs.

Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran gave a presentation on the progress in cooperation with other competent organisations for improved governance of the North East Atlantic at a meeting sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Norway. Her presentation focused on sharing OSPAR's experience on its cooperation with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). The theme of the meeting was 'joining fisheries and environment perspectives in West Africa'.

## August

Emily attended the 25th anniversary Grid Arendal seminar and workshop entitled 'Cold Regions - Hot Topics: Inputs from Arendal to the Sustainable Development Goals'.

## September

Gert provided expert input and experience on developing EcoQOs as a guest at a North West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) workshop at the Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center in South Korea.

OSPAR's data expert, Chris Moulton attended International Atomic Energy Authority Database Technical Expert Meeting to provide input to data development for radioactive substances.

Iceland, as the chair of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2014, hosted a conference on plastics in the marine environment. Emily provided expert input on OSPAR experiences and gave a presentation of the OSPAR Marine Litter Regional Action Plan (RAP).

The UNEP Regional Seas annual meeting, 'Setting strategic direction for the Regional Seas Conventions at 40', was attended by Darius along with OSPAR's Chair, Victor Escobar, who presented OSPAR's strategic perspectives.

## October

In October, Darius was invited to present OSPAR's work to the EuroOCEAN 2014 strategic conference on European marine science; the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Marine Environment Policy Committee; and the 2014 Potsdam Ocean Governance Workshop at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies.

## November

Deputy Secretary Luisa Rodriguez-Lucas attended the IMO 36th Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties London Convention and London Protocol. Luisa's attendance continued the work of the Memorandum of Understanding between the IMO and the OSPAR Commission.

Emily travelled to Nairobi in Kenya to attend a project stakeholder meeting entitled 'Securing the Foundations for Fish Food Security in a Changing Ocean' organised by UNEP, FAO and Norway.

Deputy Secretary John Mouat gave a presentation of OSPAR's Marine Litter RAP at the Nordic Ministers conference on marine litter in Nordic waters.

In November, Emily also attended the NEAFC annual meeting as part of the on-going cooperation and dialogue with NEAFC on issues of mutual interest. She also visited France for the VECTORS meeting – and EU FP7 project that had potential benefit for the work of OSPAR with respect to ecosystem approach and socio-economic aspects.

Darius travelled to Copenhagen for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea WK RISCO meeting on the Development of integrated overviews to support Regional Seas Conventions and integrate better with fisheries and other advice in the ICES system.



## December

In December, Darius attended a UK forum on marine litter whilst John travelled to Brussels for a Litter Coalition meeting linking OSPAR action on marine litter to complementary actions on land based litter.

## January 2015

Darius represented OSPAR at a United Nations Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

## February

John attended a North Sea NOx Emission Control Area (NECA) stakeholder meeting as a follow up on the development of the NECA in line with the Bergen Statement.

Luisa travelled to Senegal for the Abidjan Convention; 2nd Meeting of Panel of Experts of the Abidjan Convention on the Elaboration of a Protocol on Regional Environmental Standards for the exploration and offshore oil and gas development in West, Central and Southern Africa. She advised on the OSPAR approach to offshore industry regulation.

Also in February, Darius travelled to Rome for the Global Environment Facility Workshop on Linking Global and Regional Levels in the Management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. The aim

of this workshop was to highlight work between regional fisheries and regional seas organisations, building on lessons from the UN BBNJ process.

Deputy Secretary Jo Foden went to the Joint Research Council expert meeting to review European Commission Decision on MSFD descriptors D8 & D9.

## March

In March Jo travelled to Brussels for the Joint Monitoring Programme North Sea/Celtic Sea meeting to give a presentation on the OSPAR experience of developing a joint monitoring programme.

## April

Jo and Darius attended a European Environment Agency Regional Seas Meeting in Copenhagen to discuss coordination on state of the seas reports.

John presented the Marine Litter RAP at a stakeholder conference in Brussels entitled Eliminating Plastic and Microplastic Pollution - an urgent need.

## June

In June, Emily attended an experts' seminar on coastal blue carbon to link to identified OSPAR climate change priority on understanding the role of Blue Carbon.

Luisa gave a keynote speech at the UN Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre industry partnership Proteus focusing on OSPAR's work in the oil and gas sector.



# Observers



The OSPAR Commission may, by unanimous vote of the Contracting Parties, admit as an observer, any state which is not a Contracting Party to the Convention and any international governmental or non-governmental organisations whose activities are related to the Convention. These observers are entitled to participate in meetings of the Commission, its main Committees and its Working Groups. Observer organisations provide vital expertise, draw attention to specific issues and facilitate networking with stakeholders.

Two new observers were welcomed to OSPAR this year: International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions and World Animal Protection. Full details of all other observers can be found on the OSPAR website.

# OSPAR Secretariat

A professional Secretariat of 12 staff based in London.

## Committee Chairs in 2014/15

### Vice-chairs of the OSPAR Commission

Laura Piriz (Sweden)

Richard Moxon (United Kingdom)

## The following individuals chaired OSPAR Strategy Committees and Working Groups during the period 2014/15

### Biodiversity Committee (BDC)

John Clorley (United Kingdom)

### Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA)

Lex W A Oosterbaan (The Netherlands)

### Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC)

Reinier Goud (The Netherlands)

### Offshore Industry Committee (OIC)

Hanne-Grete Nilsen (Norway)

### Radioactive Substances Committee

Justin Gwynn (Norway)

### Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT)

Lars Sonesten (Sweden)

### Working Group on Monitoring and Trends and Effects of Substances on the Marine Environment (MIME)

Thomas Maes (United Kingdom)

### North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors

Ann Jakobsen (Denmark)



# Best wishes and warm welcomes

October 2014 saw the departure of Deputy Secretary Gert Verreet who OSPAR had to say goodbye to for a 2nd time following his previous 6 year tenure. Gert was our extremely intelligent, diligent and thorough polyglot with an incredible memory. As well as his invaluable experience of the EU and Marine Strategy Framework Directive, we'll miss his wit and dry sense of humour. We wish Gert all the best in his new role at the Flanders Department of Economy, Science and Innovation.

In June 2015 OSPAR lost another of its stalwarts, Reinier Goud of the Netherlands. Reinier worked in the Secretariat as Deputy Secretary for 6 years and went on to sit as Chair of the Hazardous Substances & Eutrophication Committee whilst working for the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment in the Netherlands. Reinier's grace and good humour will be sorely missed. OSPAR would like to wish him a wonderful retirement.

In October 2014, the Secretariat welcomed Jo Foden as a new Deputy Secretary. Jo joined us from the UK Government's marine science agency – the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) - where she worked as a chartered marine scientist. Jo has taken over Gert Verreet's role in the Secretariat and will be focusing on hazardous substances and eutrophication in addition to OSPAR's coordination of the EU's MSFD and the preparation for OSPAR's Intermediate Assessment in 2017.





# Reports adopted by OSPAR 2015 for publication

Annual Report 2014/2015

Update of the background document on Basking Shark

Update of the background document on Loggerhead Turtle

Background document on Mytilus edulis beds

Status report on the Network of MPAs

OSPAR report on Dumping of wastes or other matters at sea in 2013

OSPAR database on offshore wind-farms – yearly update

Annual OSPAR Report on Mercury Losses from the Chlor-alkali Industry

Levels and trends of contaminants and associated biological effects – 2014 assessment of data of the Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP)

Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP) –2013 data report

Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) – 2012 and 2013 data report

Inventory of Offshore Installations

UK report on implementation of OSPAR Recommendation 2006/3 to be published as an Addendum to publication 2013/594 (Overview assessment of implementation of Recommendation 2006/3)

OSPAR report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations in 2013

UK assessment of the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas operations on their respective Continental Shelf 2009-2013

Annual report on liquid discharges from nuclear installations in 2013

Annual report on discharges of radioactive substances from the non-nuclear sector in 2013.

Norway assessment of the discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas operations on their respective Continental Shelf 2009-2013

National implementation reports of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive Discharges from Belgium

National implementation reports of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive Discharges from Spain

Rapport Annuel 2014-15



**The 1992 OSPAR Convention is the current instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North East Atlantic.**

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*OSPAR's vision is of a healthy and diverse North East Atlantic ecosystem, used sustainably*