

Protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic and its resources

Annual Report 2016-2017

Contents

3 OSPAR acthievements 2016 -17
4 OSPAR and the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14
5 International cooperation
6 Intermediate Assessment 2017 and OSPAR's work for the MSFD
8 Biological Diversity
16 Environmental Impacts of Human Activities
18 Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication
21 Offshore Oil and Gas Industry
23 Radioactive Substances
25 Arctic (OSPAR Region I)
26 Data and Information
27 OSPAR representation at International Events
32 Secretariat Staff
33 OSPAR Publications

OSPAR Achievements 2016-17 From our outgoing Executive Secretary Darius Campbell

Welcome to the latest review of OSPAR's activities, which covers 2016-17.

This review focuses on OSPAR's 2017 Intermediate Assessment (IA 2017) of the state of the marine environment. This assessment of the North-East Atlantic involved major effort by the vast network of professionals supporting the OSPAR Commission as it produced an online assessment including a wealth of information, research and data, attractive printable summaries and infographics. The report is another product in keeping with the ambitious programme of work under OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES).

This year's report also sets out how OSPAR continues to support Contracting Parties' national, regional and global aspirations with regard to the protection and conservation of the marine environment. This Annual Report highlights the work of OSPAR's thematic Committees which respond to the issues raised by the Assessments (on Biological Diversity, Environmental Impacts of Human Activities, Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication, the Offshore Industry and Radioactive Substances).

While OSPAR has focused a lot of effort on the production of IA 2017, this has not stopped its engagement with the global agenda, for instance regional level support to national implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

> This is my final review as Executive Secretary. I am very thankful for a highly enjoyable and fulfilling tenure at OSPAR, I wish my colleagues, including new Executive Secretary Susana Salvador, all success in their important endeavours for the marine environment.

From our new Chair Laura Piriz

2016-2017 was a hectic but productive one for all experts and policy makers around the North-East Atlantic engaged in the implementation of the Convention. Working on IA 2017 has given us good experience and a solid foundation on which to build OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2023. OSPAR (working in 15 countries and the EU) has tested common indicators, made methodological progress with the monitoring of underwater noise, implemented agreed measures on marine litter and settled a process for how we will work collectively on the protection of species and habitats.

In this period, important inter-sectoral cooperation, aimed at efficiency and knowledge sharing, also took place with a number of organisations. These included the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the Helsinki Commission, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the Arctic Council, and the International Maritime Organization.

2016-2017 was a productive year and we need to thank all those involved! This certainly includes the former Chair of OSPAR, Carien van Zwol, from the Netherlands, who has taken new responsibilities in a more freshwater environment. Indeed, fresh and marine waters are intrinsically linked and her contribution to the marine environment will continue through her new role. Sw Marin Water N



OSPAR and the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14

The Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) on oceans under the United Nations Agenda 2030 has provided an international focus for oceans issues. While much of the delivery of Agenda 2030 is under national responsibility, in the marine environment regional cooperation provides ecosystem-scale perspectives to support national activity. The goals also provide further impetus to region-to-region and cross-sectoral cooperation. OSPAR responded to the call for commitments at the UN SDG14 Ocean Conference, with a new commitment to explore cooperation between the secretariats of OSPAR and the Cartagena Convention (Caribbean Environment Programme). OSPAR is also continuing to highlight the value of the regional level of activity in the preparatory discussions on an instrument regarding biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction at the United Nations.





International cooperation

nter-sectoral international cooperation has been highlighted not only by the continuing meetings between OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) under the Collective Arrangement, but in the wider context of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue. The Global Dialogue, sponsored by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Republic of Korea was held in Korea in September 2016. The meeting brought together 15 Regional Seas Organisations with 15 regional fisheries management bodies to discuss their shared objectives on biodiversity, including those related to the strategies under the CBD. OSPAR-NEAFC cooperation was held up as an exemplar of such inter-sectoral engagement, but it was great to see the development of understanding happening more globally, especially in the light of the future challenge of delivering the UN Agenda 2030.



Intermediate Assessment 2017 and OSPAR's work for the MSFD

OSPAR's 2017 Intermediate Assessment of the State of the North-East Atlantic marine environment (IA 2017) is published on the OSPAR website. The IA uses a suite of indicators to describe both status and trends in the marine environment across the North-East Atlantic, presenting a picture of the current state of this important marine area. It includes consideration of biological diversity, eutrophication, hazardous substances, radioactive substances, offshore oil and gas industries, a range of other human pressures, ocean acidification and the impact of a changing ocean climate. Attention is also given to socio-economic analysis and a methodology to undertake a full ecosystem assessment. Finally, IA 2017 presents key messages and headline information that will set the foundation for progress and development. IA 2017 is a stepping stone for all Contracting Parties towards developing OSPAR's more comprehensive Quality Status Report in 2023.

For those OSPAR Parties in the European Union, IA 2017 supports developing regional coherence in assessing the status of the sea. EU Member States can use it in national 2018 updates to their initial assessments of their marine areas for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

In the coming year OSPAR will conduct other collaborative work in relation to the MSFD. For example the new Commission Decision on criteria and methodological standards on Good Environmental Status (GES) will be addressed. OSPAR's common indicators will inform work towards regionally coherent and coordinated determinations of GES in the North-East Atlantic, to address the requirements of the new Commission Decision. Work will also be undertaken to develop a risk-based approach in OSPAR for the MSFD.

Grey seal in zostera marina Olle Akesson



Biological Diversity



t was an extremely busy period for OSPAR's Biodiversity Committee (BDC) where work was finalised to deliver 16 indicators for OSPAR's Intermediate Assessment in 2017, covering birds, mammals, fish, pelagic habitats, benthic habitats and food webs. The EU co-financing for the "EcApRHA" (Applying an Ecosystem Approach to (sub) Regional Habitat Assessment) project was an essential element in supporting this work. More details of the project can be found on the website.

Work has continued on the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with a total of 25 new MPAs nominated by the UK and Spain. As of 1 October 2016, the OSPAR Network of MPAs comprised 448 MPAs, including 438 MPAs situated within national waters of CPs and 10 MPAs situated in areas beyond the limits of national Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). Collectively, these sites had a total surface area of 806,472 km2 covering 5.9 % of the OSPAR Maritime Area.

OSPAR has also adopted a roadmap for the implementation of the Recommendations agreed for OSPAR's list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats. This will allow specific regional action to be taken on these species and habitats in the coming years and marks a new implementation phase in the work of BDC in close collaboration with the Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee.

BDC is chaired by John Clorley of the United Kingdom.

Phytoplankton

Chaetoceros

Atlantic grey seal

2016-17

Northern gannet

Alan D Wilson

Grey seal pup Arran Bee

Key biodiversity messages from OSPAR's Intermediate Assessment 2017

onsiderable progress has been made in developing
 OSPAR's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network.

Since the last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010), a further 289 MPAs have been added to the network, bringing the total number to 448. MPAs now cover 5.9% of the OSPAR Maritime Area compared with a total coverage of only 1.1% in 2010.

OSPAR is undertaking further work to understand what constitutes an ecologically-coherent and well-managed MPA network, and additional efforts are needed to implement the management measures necessary to achieve the conservation objectives of the protected features of OSPAR MPAs.

Successful ecosystem-based management of the OSPAR MPAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) requires coordination between the organisations responsible for regulating human activities in these areas. As a start, OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) have an ongoing arrangement in place to take into account each other's objectives and activities.



The network of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas is expanding



Benthic habitats affected by bottom fisheries

SPAR is committed to protecting and conserving ecosystems and biodiversity through the management of human activities and is guided by an ecosystem-based approach. Benthic habitats play a key role in marine ecosystems because marine species rely directly or indirectly on the seafloor to feed, hide, rest or reproduce.

The last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010) highlighted a range of human activities with physical impacts on benthic habitats. Focus was given to the impact of benthic fishing on seabed habitats and associated benthic communities, especially on the continental shelf and in vulnerable marine ecosystems in the deep seas.

The development of a regional-scale assessment on physical disturbance from bottom contacting fishing since the QSR 2010 is a major step forward in assessing the scale of this impact. An important initial step towards this assessment was a first region-wide mapping of fishing pressure in 2013, which has since been updated annually. These data have now been combined with region-wide information on the distribution and sensitivity of benthic habitats. A first OSPAR assessment of physical disturbance from bottom trawling is now presented, which shows that 86% of the assessed areas in the Greater North Sea and the Celtic Seas are physically disturbed, of which 58% is highly disturbed. Consistent fishing pressure occurs in 74% of all assessed areas, which is very likely to affect the ability of habitats to recover.

Atlantic wolffish Jim Ellis

Bottom fishing pressure is one of several pressures that need to be taken into consideration in assessing the cumulative effects of human activity on benthic habitats. In future, this indicator will be developed to include pressures other than bottom fishing.

Alongside this assessment, a new multi-metric approach has been developed to assess the condition of benthic habitats in relation to the full range of pressures, including from other human activities. First assessments under this approach examine the condition of coastal habitats in response to nutrient and organic enrichment and species diversity in subtidal sediments in the southern North Sea in response to physical disturbance caused by fishing.



>> Benthic habitats affected by bottom fisheries



Benthic habitats affected by bottom fisheries

2010

2017

OSPAR's 2010 **Quality Status** Report highlighted a range of human activities with

The development of an assessment on physical disturbance from bottom contacting fishing is a major step forward in assessing impact on benthic habitats



Consistent fishing pressure occurs in 74% of assessed areas, which is very likely to affect the ability of habitats to recover

Habitats



Benthic habitats play a key role in marine ecosystems because marine species rely directly or indirectly on the seafloor to feed, hide, rest or reproduce

Results

Disturbance maps



86% of the assessed areas in the Greater North Sea and the Celtic Seas are physically disturbed

Disturbance by habitat and sub-





Confidence maps



Future

In future other pressures, in addition to pressure, will be

Marine birds in trouble

For more than a quarter of the marine bird species assessed, abundance has dropped considerably since 1992 Marine birds are sensitive to a variety of pressures including those from fishing, predation, loss of habitat and changes in water quality

Marine birds are valuable indicators of ecosystem condition. OSPAR assesses the abundance and breeding success of marine birds.

In the Norwegian Arctic, the Greater North Sea and the Celtic Seas, there has been a considerable (>20%) drop in abundance compared to the levels observed 25 years ago, for more than a quarter of the marine bird species assessed. Frequent and widespread breeding failure has been observed for many species, especially those feeding on small fish in the surface waters of the Greater North Sea and Celtic Seas. Prey availability is likely to be driven by ecosystem-specific changes, possibly impacted by commercial fisheries and climate change.

In the last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010), OSPAR highlighted the occurrence of breeding failure in parts of the Greater North Sea and the Arctic, and stressed the need for research into links between environmental factors and the long-term health of marine bird populations.



Kittiwakes Parsons 25 bird species assessed

Diving birds that feed on fish within the water column are faring much better than those that feed at the surface

44% Norwegian Arctic Waters

eltic S

Percentage of species experiencing widespread breeding failure

35% Greater North Sea



Fish communities

show signs of recovery in some areas

F ish communities form a major element of marine biodiversity and are a key feature in marine foodwebs. Fisheries can thus have a major impact on marine biodiversity.

The last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010) highlighted, among other issues, that depletion of key predator and prey species and disruption of the marine foodweb were worrying ecosystem effects of fishing. The current indicators look at changes in population abundance of sensitive species, size composition, species composition, and the average trophic level of predators.

The current assessments indicate that fisheries management is beginning to have a positive impact on fish communities but show different responses at smaller geographic scales. The assessments indicate that deterioration has been halted and, in some areas, that fish communities are showing signs of recovery.

Trends in the proportion of large fish in the demersal fish community suggest recovery may continue in most of the areas assessed as long as current pressures do not increase.

OSPAR recognises the competence of national, international and European Union authorities to regulate fisheries and informs these fisheries authorities on any issue of concern it may have with respect to fisheries and the ecosystem.



Mixed signals for marine mammals



The abundance and condition of marine mammals, as top predators, can help indicate the state of the marine ecosystem.

As was also the case at the time of the last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010), harbour seal and grey seal populations are generally stable or increasing in most assessed areas although some harbour seal populations are declining in specific regions. In contrast, populations of coastal bottlenose dolphin declined during the 19th and 20th centuries, and numbers have remained low but stable into the 21st century in some areas.

By-catch of harbour porpoise is considered one of the main human pressures on this species. However, there are high levels of uncertainty in estimates of harbour porpoise by-catch rates.

As relatively long-lived species, understanding trends in cetacean populations requires long time series on a large scale. In the future, OSPAR aims to combine pressure assessments (e.g. noise and contaminants) with impacts on marine mammals. Harbour and grey seal populations generally stable or increasing

Uncertainty in estimates of harbour porpoise bycatch rates

Some harbour seals declining in specific regions

Populations of coastal bottlenose dolphins declined during the 20th century; numbers remain low



Bottlenose dolphin mother and calf PGH Evans

New developments in the way biodiversity is assessed

SPAR is committed to protecting and conserving ecosystems and biodiversity through the management of human activities, guided by an ecosystem-based approach to management.

The development of internationally coordinated biodiversity indicators is a relatively new field for OSPAR. In the Quality Status Report 2010, OSPAR assessed ten ecological quality objectives developed for the North Sea which focused mainly on the interactions between mobile species and human pressures. However, they lacked agreed tools to make a fuller assessment of the health of the key structural and functional building blocks of the ecosystem: the habitats of the seafloor and the water column, their biological communities and the foodweb processes that connect them.

Since 2010, OSPAR scientists and policymakers have developed indicators that can help to assess pelagic and benthic habitats and their communities, and foodwebs. These indicators are assessed for the first time in the Intermediate Assessment 2017 (IA 2017), moving OSPAR towards a more robust regional-scale assessment of ecosystem status. These indicators identify significant changes occurring in plankton communities, which inhabit the water column and are the base of the marine foodweb and have the potential to track food-web structure and function in the ecosystem.

Progress has been significantly boosted through the European Commission's funding of the EcApRHA (Applying an Ecosystem Approach to



(sub) Regional Habitat Assessment) project which has fed into the assessments presented in IA 2017. EcApRHA created opportunities for policy and science representatives to interact and so ensure that project results are fit for OSPAR purposes.

EcApRHA has delivered an action plan to address knowledge gaps which can be built into further indicator development across the OSPAR Maritime Area and so support further indicator development potential. As OSPAR continues to develop its approaches and assessment methods with each additional assessment cycle, understanding of natural and human-induced change in the complex and dynamic marine environment will further improve.

2016-1

Environmental Impact of Human Activities

n 2016/17 the Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) focused on a number of issues including the further development of indicators, implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) on Marine Litter, development of the roadmap on the implementation of measures agreed for habitats and species on the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (in close collaboration with the BDC Committee) and the development of cumulative effect assessment methodologies.

Work was started to develop new indicators on microplastics in sediments, in conjunction with the Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee, and on the impacts of impulsive underwater noise based on the successful development of the OSPAR impulsive noise register. There has also been a focus on some specific human activities, such as the revision of the Guidelines on Best Environmental Practice for Cable Laying, particularly in relation to power cables, and consideration of the need for OSPAR Guidance on the deep sea disposal of mine tailings.

The Marine Litter RAP continued to be a major focus for the committee with the development of several products, such as an assessment of land-based sources of microplastics, and events, such as the workshop on riverine litter. In order to ensure that the implementation of the RAP stays on schedule, OSPAR 2017 agreed to establish a new project coordinator post to support the lead countries in the implementation of the RAP actions.

EIHA is chaired by Lex Oosterbaan of The Netherlands.

Underwater noise bubble curtain mitigation Trianel/Lang





Marine litter is a problem

SPAR has assessed the occurrence of marine litter in all regions within its Maritime Area, except for the Wider Atlantic where there is poor data availability.

Marine litter, in particular plastic, is abundant on beaches, in the water column and on the seafloor. Marine litter also affects biota, as indicated by the levels in North Sea fulmar stomachs. The amount of marine plastics being ingested by this seabird species indicates that floating litter in the OSPAR Maritime Area is not decreasing. In addition, OSPAR's first assessment of seabed litter has shown that litter is widespread on the seafloor across the area assessed, with plastic the predominant material encountered.

There has been no significant change in the amount of plastic recorded on beaches or in fulmar stomachs over the past 10 years. The goal, as stated in the OSPAR Strategy, has therefore not yet been achieved.

The OSPAR Quality Status Report 2010 reported extensive litter problems. OSPAR has since extended marine litter monitoring within its Maritime Area in line with the OSPAR Strategy.

OSPAR's 2014 Regional Action Plan for the Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic sets out the policy context for OSPAR's work on marine litter. It also describes the various types of action that OSPAR will undertake over the coming years, and provides a timetable to guide the achievement of these actions.









Litter is widespread on the seafloor, predominately plastic

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication

t was a busy period for the Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC). Experts produced a suite of common indicator assessments for the Intermediate Assessment (IA) 2017. Although this work was a heavy burden on top of the Committee's usual business, there were benefits beyond the generation of the common indicator assessments. For example, HASEC's three subsidiary bodies worked more closely together to share experiences and expertise. The CEMP online tool for assessing contaminants was significantly extended, making future assessments of contaminants more streamlined and automated.

A task group of the Intersessional Group on Eutrophication (ICG-EUT) completed a significant piece of work to produce the Third Common Procedure Integrated Report on Eutrophication Status in the OSPAR Maritime Area (OSPAR publication 694). The report shows that, whilst eutrophication status has improved since 1990, problems are still observed in 7% of the assessed area. The report represents another important HASEC contribution to IA 2017. The Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) has been collaborating more closely with the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). During 2017/18 MIME and AMAP will work together on: assessment procedures; data extraction and compilation; optimisation of work to better support other (global) initiatives such as the Minamata Convention, and; a potential method and process for including AMAP's Region I data in OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2023.

The Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT) undertook work on flow-normalisation of Riverine and Direct Discharges data. Flow-normalisation is an optimal way of analysing riverine input data, as it reduces the weather driven impact on the inputs, and consequently makes it easier to detect changes in pressures e.g. due to land-based mitigating measures. However, it is a time consuming process. INPUT will be taking forward this work in 2017/18.

HASEC is chaired by Stephen Malcolm of the United Kingdom.

°2016-

Eutrophication is still a problem in some areas



Eutrophication is the result of excessive enrichment of water with nutrients. This can cause accelerated growth of algae (phytoplankton) and plants. This may result in an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms present and ultimately to a decline in the overall water quality.

Eutrophication is not always a local problem. Water masses continuously move and interact, and the associated transport of nutrients can lead to eutrophication effects away from the source.

Owing to the adverse environmental impacts of eutrophication, OSPAR conducts periodic assessments of the eutrophication status across the OSPAR Maritime Area.

The results of the latest eutrophication assessment (for the period 2006–2014) indicate that eutrophication still occurs in the OSPAR Maritime Area, particularly in areas sensitive to nutrient inputs, such as estuaries, fjords and bights, and in areas affected by river plumes. In particular, there is high eutrophication pressure on the south eastern coast of the Greater North Sea and some localised areas of the Celtic Seas. This is despite the reduced input of nutrients and lower concentrations of nutrients observed in the marine environment.

Although the extent of eutrophication in the OSPAR Maritime Area has continued to improve since 1990, concerns about atmospheric and riverine inputs of nutrients identified in OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2010 still remain.

OSPAR's latest assessment (2006 -14) shows...

- ... the extent of eutrophication in the OSPAR Area has continued to improve since 1990
- ... concerns about atmospheric and riverine inputs of nutrients identified in OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2010 remain
- ... high eutrophication pressure on the south eastern coast of the Greater North Sea and some localised areas of the
- Celtic Seas despite reduced input of nutrients





Contaminant concentrations are decreasing,

SPAR countries have made significant efforts to reduce discharges, emissions, and losses of contaminants to both air and water. The effect of these efforts is clearly visible in reduced inputs to the Greater North Sea. The observed decreases in contaminant release from land-based sources and the offshore oil and gas industry show the continued progress since the last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010). However, no changes have been detected in the amounts of dumped dredged material and associated contaminant loads to the OSPAR Maritime Area since the QSR 2010.

To assess progress towards the objectives of the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, OSPAR countries routinely measure levels of contaminants in the OSPAR Maritime Area: heavy metals (mercury, cadmium, and lead), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), organotins and synthetic substances such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). The selected contaminants are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic, and will remain in the environment for many decades. Measurements focus on marine sediments and on organisms in which these contaminants tend to accumulate or through which they biomagnify up the food chain.

Since the QSR 2010, contaminant concentrations have continued to decrease in the majority of areas assessed, especially for PCBs. Although concentrations are generally below levels likely to harm marine species in the areas assessed, they mostly have not yet reduced to background levels (where these are specified). Concerns remain in some localised areas with respect to high levels of mercury, lead, and CB118 (one of the most toxic PCB congeners) and locally increasing concentrations of PAHs and cadmium in open waters.

but concerns remain



Most OSPAR countries have opted to monitor the biological effects of organotin pollution, rather than tributyltin itself. The harmful effects of tributyltin on marine snails have continued to decrease markedly due to global action taken to ban or restrict its use in antifouling paints for ships.

Measures taken under the various European Union legislation are helping to reduce contaminant pollution.



Offshore Oil and Gas Industry

The Offshore Industry Committee (OIC), focused on collecting data and information for the commitments under OSPAR's Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme. On the advice of OIC, OSPAR 2017 adopted a revised Recommendation (OSPAR Recommendation 2017/01) to give effect to amendments made to the pre-screening scheme for offshore chemicals in order to harmonise the OSPAR Recommendation with the European Union Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

OIC established a group to consider a wider review of OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the disposal of disused offshore installations. The review will take into account experience gained in relation to the development and execution of decommissioning and derogation proposals and feedback received from statutory nature conservation bodies, academic institutions and other independent bodies OIC continued to work on the use and discharge of plastic materials contained in offshore chemicals. Planning ahead, OIC is continuing the cooperation with the Abidjan Convention and the Arctic Council Working Group on Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).

OIC has started its review of OSPAR OIC Decisions, Recommendations and Other Agreements with a view to concluding whether the OIC measures are still applicable or have become obsolete due to scientific and technological developments or because measures have been fully implemented or need to be amended or supplemented.

OIC is chaired by Saravanan Marappan of the United Kingdom.





Discharges from offshore oil and gas installations have decreased due to OSPAR measures

OsPAR has developed programmes and measures in respect of all phases of offshore oil and gas activities and undertakes annual assessments of discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations.

Hydrocarbons and 'chemicals' are routinely discharged to the marine environment during offshore oil and gas operations. Assessment of the data for the period 2009–2014 shows a decrease in the discharge of both hydrocarbons and the most hazardous offshore chemicals. This is a continuation of the trend reported in the last OSPAR Quality Status Report (QSR 2010).

Many of the downward trends observed can be directly attributed to measures adopted by OSPAR and their subsequent implementation by the offshore oil and gas industry.



Radioactive Substances

The Radioactive Substance Committee (RSC) focused on the work of its intersessional correspondence groups, which contribute to the committee's obligations under the OSPAR Radioactive Substances Strategy. RSC is continuing its work on concentrations in the marine environment for artificial radioactive substances to be close to zero. RSC also agreed to review the reporting requirements for PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on applying Best Available Techniques to minimise and, as appropriate, eliminate any pollution caused by radioactive discharges into the marine environment from all nuclear industries, including research reactors and reprocessing plants.

RSC started its review of RSC OSPAR Decisions, Recommendations and Agreements with a view to concluding on whether the RSC measures are still applicable or have become obsolete due to scientific and technological developments or because measures have been fully implemented.

As the OSPAR North-East Atlantic Strategy is due to be reviewed by 2020, RSC also started to identify possible topics for future work by OSPAR. For RSC 2018 a detailed list of international, regional and national instruments for the safe transport of radioactive material within the North-East Atlantic region will be prepared.

And the second s

RSC is chaired by Justin Gwynn of Norway

2016-17



Radioactive discharges from the nuclear sector have decreased

Radioactive Substances messages Key2017

Ospar collects data on authorised discharges and environmental activity concentrations for several radionuclides. For the purpose of evaluation, OSPAR distinguishes those radionuclides that emit alpha radiation (total alpha activity) and those that emit beta radiation (total beta activity).

Discharges from fuel reprocessing plants are much reduced but remain the dominant source of discharges from the nuclear sector, contributing approximately 90% of the total alpha activity and approximately 80% of the total beta activity (excluding tritium), in discharges over the assessment period (2007–2013).

The latest evaluation shows continued progress by OSPAR Countries towards the OSPAR objectives in the nuclear sector (fuel reprocessing plants, nuclear power plants, research and development facilities, and nuclear fuel production and enrichment). For 35 out of 53 (66%) of the assessments for the nuclear sector, there is evidence of substantial reductions in radioactive discharges since the baseline period (1995–2001). None of the assessments showed evidence of an increase in discharges.

Radioactive discharges from the nuclear sector have decreased

53
Total number of assessments of discharges from the nuclear sector conducted

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1

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Assessment Period 2007-2013 compared against the Baseline Period 1995-2001





25

Arctic (OSPAR Region I)

SPAR was granted observer status for the Arctic Council in May 2017. This was an important objective for OSPAR as OSPAR Region I includes Arctic Council waters. OSPAR's work complements the work in the Arctic Council Working Groups aiming for the two organisations to share information, experience and practices in the future. The OSPAR Secretariat has shared the work of OSPAR with the Arctic Council Working Group "Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment" (PAME) and Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Working Group, and representatives from these two groups presented their work at OSPAR's Offshore Industry and Radioactive Substance Committees.

Data and Information

he new OSPAR Data and Information Management Strategy was signed in 2017. The new strategy continues the current pace of development of data and information in OSPAR whilst ensuring that an archive of historic data continue to be supplemented and maintained.

The new strategy will see steps forward in data policy and citation, metadata, data and information accessibility, and the use of data standards. Work will be undertaken to increase the visibility of OSPAR assessments and their products, and ensure important connections to the underpinning data and metadata are maintained, ensuring ease of reuse. The strategy has a strong emphasis on data and information accessibility including the development of data sharing protocol and making use of web services.

The next three years will be exciting ones for OSPAR data!

OSPAR data are accessible via www.ospar.org/data and OSPAR assessments will soon be available via www.ospar.org/assessments

Background image, this page: the most viewed dataset on ODIMS; OSPAR Inventory of Offshore Installations – 2015, available to view and download <u>here</u>. 2016-17



Forum	Development	OSPAR Attendance
ICES Data and Information Group (DIG), 23-25 May 2016	The Data and Information group provides ICES with advice on all aspects of data management including data policy, data strategy, data quality, technical issues and user-oriented guidance	Attended by the Data Administrator, Chris Moulton; feedback to ICES regarding OSPAR requirements, sharing of lessons learnt regarding data matters
17th meeting of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, New York 14-16 June, 2016	The meeting was focusing on marine litter and feeds into the agenda for the General Assembly	Attended by Deputy Secretary John Mouat
European Cosmetics Association Regulatory Affairs Conference, Brussels, 15-16 June 2016	The European Cosmetics meeting to discuss regulation, including the voluntary approach to ban on microbeads in wash-off products	Attended by the Executive Secretary, presenting OSPAR work on marine litter, in particular microbeads in cosmetics
Arctic Council International Science and Policy Conference - The Ecosystem Approach to Management: Status of Implementation in the Arctic, Fairbanks 23-25 August 2016	Developing Ecosystem Science	Attended by the Deputy Secretary Charlotte Mogensen, Presenting OSPAR's work on ecosystem approach
International River Commissions' Secretariats' Meeting, Maastricht, 25-26 August 2016	Regular meeting of the Secretariats to discuss issues of common interest	
Arctic Council Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group; Portland, Maine 19-21 September 2016	Improving contact with the Arctic Council (PAME and the Arctic Council Secretariat) as set out in OSPAR's engagement remit	Attended by Deputy Secretary Charlotte Mogensen; Presenting the work of OSPAR relevant for PAME



Forum	Development	OSPAR Attendance
Sustainable Oceans Initiative, Ocean Dialogue, Seoul, 26-29 September 2016	Sponsored by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) this meeting brought together 15 regional seas organisations and 15 regional fisheries management organisations for joint discussion on taking forward global biodiversity objectives	Attended by the Executive Secretary, presenting OSPAR work under the collective arrangement
United Nations Environment (UNEP); meeting of Regional Seas Convention Secretariats, Seoul (Incheon), 30 September–1 October 2016	Annual meeting to coordinate between the secretariats. Focus this year Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	Attended by the Executive Secretary, presenting OSPAR work/ Coordination, including on SDG
NEAFC PECMAS session, London, 4-5 October 2016	Participated in a special session during the meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest and raise questions relating to science and management, as per the MoU. Including collective arrangement, species and habitats and microplastics	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran; Presenting developments within OSPAR and discussion of other issues raised on the PECMAS agenda
MIDAS Project Final Conference, Gent, 5-7 October 2016	Final conference presenting the results of the project, which was a multidisciplinary research programme investigating the environmental impacts of extracting mineral and energy resources from the deep-sea environment	Attended by Deputy Secretary John Mouat. The project has resulted in a number of science outcomes and policy recommendations that could inform future OSPAR work
DEVOTES final conference (Brussels) 17-19 October 2016:	Participated in the advisory board. Particular interest in tools for biodiversity assessment / integration	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran. This work has helped progress OSPAR food web indicators
EMODnet	Engage in the conference to discuss how EMODnet could better meet the needs of Regional Seas Conventions, and contribute to discussions relating to the development of the next phase of work up to 2020	Attended by the Data Administrator, Chris Moulton; Engagement in discussions on the future and direction of EMODnet from a Regional Seas Convention perspective
INSPIRE Marine Pilot Final Project Meeting 24-25 October 2016	Invited as an expert for development in the application of INSPIRE in EU Member States and Regional Seas Conventions	Attended by the Data Administrator, Chris Moulton; Feedback on documentation and provision of example data for INSPIRE compliance checking



Forum	Development	OSPAR Attendance
SEMPIA II Workshop, Sintra, Portugal, 2-4 November, 2016	The workshop was developing the scientific case for an Environmental Management Plan for deep sea mining in the Atlantic	Attended by Deputy Secretary John Mouat to provide input on the regional perspective and OSPAR work
North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation, International Year of the Salmon, planning meeting. London 2 November 2016	A planning committee meeting for the International Year of the Salmon 2019	Attended by the Executive Secretary to input with perspectives/experience from OSPAR
NEAFC Annual Meeting: London, 14-18 November 2016	Part of the ongoing cooperation and dialogue with NEAFC on issues of mutual interest	Attended by the Executive Secretary; Interventions to floor and discussions with NEAFC contracting party representatives and the Secretariat
EIONET meeting, Copenhagen 16-17 November	Marine assessments and data flows: Information on the EIONET links to regional data management processes	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran and Data Administrator Chris Moulton; To understand implications of future developments for OSPAR
EEA-RSC WISE Marine meeting, Copenhagen 15 November 2016	Explanation of what WISE Marine will look like and what it is to do, timescale	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran and Data Administrator Chris Moulton. To understand how OSPAR can feed into WISE marine/ Article 8 reporting for EU MSFD
Communications, Bruges, 5-8 December 2016		Attended by Communications Lead, Lucy Ritchie
Arctic Council Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group, 6-8 December 2016	This group focuses on Arctic Council work on preparedness – eg oil spills etc.	Attended by Deputy Secretary Charlotte Mogensen, presenting the work of the Bonn Agreement
EMODnet Checkpoints Stakeholder Conference 14-16 February 2017	Participated in the coordination meeting as a member of the MSFD advisory group. Invited to participate in the EMODnet steering group to provide feedback on the current challenges with using EMODnet portals for Regional Seas and identify possible ways to address this	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran and Data Administrator, Chris Moulton as members of the MSFD advisory group to EMODnet



Forum	Development	OSPAR Attendance
EMODnet, Brussels - 7–8 December 2016	Atlantic check point meeting	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran – Links to data developments between EMODnet and OSPAR
EU Plastics Conference, Rotterdam 8-9 December 2016	To take forward the European Union's development of a strategy to reduce plastic waste	Attended by the Executive Secretary and Deputy Secretary John Mouat. To facilitate roundtable discussion on use of plastic beads in cosmetics, as well as broader marine litter issues
International Council for Exploration of the Sea. Copenhagen, 12-13 December 2016	Bilateral meeting	Attended by the Executive Secretary and Deputy Secretaries Emily Corcoran and Jo Foden. Discuss strategic and operational issues on joint activities and advice
ActionMed Venice, 11-12 January 2017		Attended by EcapRHA coordinator Bernardas Padegimas
International Council for Exploration of the Sea MIRIA (Advice Users) meeting, Copenhagen, 17–18 January 2017	Annual meeting of ICES with recipients of ICES advice. Provided feedback on advice received by OSPAR and discussed how to address challenges encountered	Attended by Deputy Secretary Emily Corcoran as focal point in the Secretariat for matters relating to ICES
Meeting of Secretariats of OSPAR, HELCOM, Barcelona, and Black Sea Convention with International Council for Exploration of the Sea and the European Environment Agency. London, 2 February 2017	To discuss strategic coordination on the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Attended by the Executive Secretary, Deputy Secretary Jo Foden and Data Administrator, Chris Moulton. Discuss strategic and operational issues
Arctic Council Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group, Copenhagen 30 January – 2 February 2017	Further development of links related to the work of OIC on offshore related work and EIHA for renewable energy	Attended by Deputy Secretary Charlotte Mogensen. Presenting the work of OIC and EIHA



Forum	Development	OSPAR Attendance
United Nations Preparatory Conference for Sustainable Development Goal 14 Oceans Conference. New York 14-16 February 2017	Preparatory conference for the SDG 14 Oceans Conference being hosted by Sweden and Fiji 5-9 June in New York	Attended by the Executive Secretary to present at a UNEP side event and to intervene at plenary on OSPAR experience
EMODnet Checkpoints Stakeholder Conference 14-16 February 2017		Attended by Data Administrator, Chris Moulton
JERICO-NEXT (improve and innovate the cooperation in coastal observatories in Europe) General Assembly. Helsinki 13-15 March 2017	Chair of User Engagement Panel	Attended by Deputy Secretary Jo Foden, Chair of the User Engagement Panel. The Panel helps guide the project outcomes for users; useful for Contracting Parties' CEMP monitoring
EU/International Oceanographic Commission Marine Spatial Planning Conference, Paris, 17 March 2017	International Marine Spatial Planning developments	Attended by the Executive Secretary to present OSPAR's experience on cross-sectoral activity
United Nations Preparatory Conference on an instrument on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction under the UN Law of the Sea. New York 27-31 March 2017	Attendance as observer organisation	Attended by the Executive Secretary; useful to provide input on OSPAR's experience in ABNJ via a CBD sponsored side event and plenary
G7 Marine Litter Workshop Meeting, Rome 20-21 April 2017	Arranged under G7 Italian presidency to take forward work strand on marine litter	Attended by Stefanie Werner, DE, on behalf of OSPAR. Sharing OSPAR approach and coordinating with other European regional seas
Arctic Marine Shipping Forum	A forum on implementing the Polar Code under the Arctic Council	Attended by Deputy Secretary Charlotte Mogensen
Sustainable Development Goal 14 The Ocean Conference, New York, 5-9 June 2017	Underlining the role of SDG 14 in providing impetus to sustainable development in the oceans	Attended by the Executive Secretary to highlight OSPAR's role in supporting delivery of the SDG by Contracting Parties

Secretariat Staff

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2016/17 marked a period of great change at the OSPAR Secretariat, with the retirement of two members of staff, assistants Sylvie Ashe and Kati Rowson, and the sad passing away of Paula Creedon. In addition Emily Corcoran left in 2017 at the end of her tenure as Deputy Secretary (biodiversity). Our project officer Bernardas Padegimas also moved on following the completion of the EcApRHA project, as did Fifi Badat who helped us in the run up to the Intermediate Assessment 2017. And, last but not least, our Executive Secretary, Darius Campbell moved on to join NEAFC and was replaced by Susana Salvador.

New members of staff joining the Secretariat are project lead and committee assistant, Olle Akesson, and data assistant Eleanor Dening. Lena Avellan has joined us to take over as Deputy Secretary supporting the Biodiversity Committee.

OSPAR Publications



Annual Report 2016/2017	Case study on normalisation and trend analyses for OSPAR RID data	
Coordination Group	Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP) –2015 data report	
Intermediate Assessment 2017	Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID)	
Biodiversity Committee	– 2015 data report	
Report on the Status of the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas in 2016	Atmospheric Deposition of Nitrogen to OSPAR Convention Waters in 1995-2014	
Environmental Impact of Human Activities	Copper concentrations in sediments and biota fact sheet	
Annual report on dumping and placement ¹ of wastes or other matter – 2015 data	Offshore Industry Committee	
Annual update of the OSPAR datastream on offshore	OSPAR report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas	
renewable energy developments*	installations in 2015	
Encounters with chemical and conventional munitions*	Assessment of the report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations 2013-2015	
Fishing for Litter*		
Assessment of Land-based sources of microplastics	Radioactive Substances Committee	
	Annual report and assessment on liquid discharges from nuclear installations	
Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee	in 2015	
Third Common Procedure Integrated Eutrophication Report	Annual report and assessment on discharges of Radionuclides from the	
CEMP Rollover assessment (CEMP)	Non-nuclear Sectors in 2015	

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

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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