

# Annual Report 2007/08



**OSPAR  
COMMISSION**

Protecting and conserving the  
North-East Atlantic and its resources



## From the Chairman

This year the OSPAR Commission has combined 'business as usual' with a process of planning for the future. Significant progress has been made in terms of implementing our six strategies, with consolidation of contributions to the Quality Status Report 2010. At the same time, prompted by finalisation of the European Community's Marine Strategy Framework Directive, a reappraisal of OSPAR's role and the added value our Regional Convention can deliver has been started.

This hard work was drawn together at a successful meeting of the Commission in June 2008 in Brest, France. Highlights included: progress towards the protection of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge; an agreed Code of Conduct for Deep Sea Marine Science; evidence that within the OSPAR maritime area as a whole, targets to reduce produced water from offshore operations have been met; agreement to formalise a Memorandum of Understanding with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission; and further recognition of the dramatic impact of climate change.

I would like to acknowledge the constructive dialogue between Contracting Parties, the hard work of task managers and intersessional groups, the enthusiasm and drive provided by observer organisations and the professional support of the OSPAR Secretariat. It is clear to me that OSPAR, working together with the other European regional conventions, has a crucial role to play at a time when we increasingly appreciate the value of healthy and diverse oceans and seas.



Knut Kroepelien,  
Acting Chairman

Knut Kroepelien is a lawyer and currently Deputy Director General in the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment. In December 2008 he takes up a new position as Environmental Counsellor at the Mission of Norway to the European Union in Brussels.

## From the Executive Secretary

I am also pleased to endorse a summary of the very positive contribution made by the OSPAR Commission during 2007/08. As an intergovernmental organisation, we are breaking new ground with respect to High Seas governance; in terms of building solid partnerships with other competent authorities and through identifying specific pollutants to be tackled, methodologies to be employed and ways to present technical and scientific information about the marine environment that is meaningful to decision-makers.

Production of the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 has continued to provide a core focus of the Commission's energy and effort. In 2000, to fulfil obligations under Annex IV to the OSPAR Convention, the OSPAR Commission published the first comprehensive Quality Status Report on the quality of the marine environment of the OSPAR maritime area of the North-East Atlantic. We are now compiling the results of a subsequent decade of monitoring and assessment that will determine where progress has been made, where problem hot spots still remain and where new priorities must now be recognised. In this way OSPAR continues to apply an ecosystem approach as demanded by the 2003 Ministerial Declaration. It is our firm intention that the QSR 2010 should provide information required for national Initial Assessments under European Community legislation, and more specifically the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Another important development has been a redesign of the OSPAR Commission website and brand identity. As explained in this report we are investing in making sure that our stakeholders know who we are and what we do. I should like to pay tribute to all those people who have put so much effort into our activities during the year. As we build momentum towards another Ministerial Meeting in 2010 the achievements and foundations laid this year will ensure OSPAR remains at the forefront of sustainable ocean governance.



Professor David Johnson,  
Executive Secretary

David Johnson is a geographer and ecologist. He has an international track record in coastal and ocean management including academic research, publications, consultancy and advocacy. He has been Executive Secretary since 2006.

## Organisation

### Contracting Parties

The work under the OSPAR Convention is managed by the OSPAR Commission, made up of 16 Contracting Parties. These are: the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark, the European Community (represented by the European Commission), the Republic of Finland, the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Iceland, the Republic of Ireland, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Portuguese Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### 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 valuable expertise, draw attention to specific issues and facilitate networking with stakeholders. Full details of all these observers can be found on the OSPAR website.

The Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with the Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances 1983 (the Bonn Agreement) and the OSPAR Commission are formally observers at each other's meetings. This extends to the Bonn Agreement's Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA). Since all Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties are OSPAR Contracting Parties and since the two organisations share a common secretariat, there has always been close cooperation.

### OSPAR Secretariat

A professional secretariat of 12 staff is based in London. During the year, Mr Sebastian Unger took over as Deputy Secretary from Ms Amparo Agrait.

OSPAR Secretariat:  
From left to right: back row - Hanne Grete Nilsen, Sebastian Unger, Amparo Agrait, Richard Emmerson.  
Middle row: Kati Rowson, Barbara Middleton, Sylvie Ashe, Andrea Weiss.  
Front row: Corinne Michel, Lise Rossi, Paula Creedon

## Committee Chairs

The following individuals chaired OSPAR Strategy Committees and Working Groups during the period 2007/08

### Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO)

Professor Colin Moffat (United Kingdom)

### Biodiversity Committee (BDC)

Dr Chris Vivian (United Kingdom)

### Eutrophication Committee (EUC)

Mr Gert Verreet (European Commission)

### Hazardous Substances Committee (HSC)

Ms Jeannette Plokker (The Netherlands)

### Offshore Industries Committee (OIC)

Mr Aart Tacoma (The Netherlands)

### Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC)

Mr Leif Moberg (Sweden)

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

Mr Jon L. Fuglestad (Norway)

### Working Group on Monitoring (MON)

Dr Ian M Davies (United Kingdom)

### Working Group on Concentrations, Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (SIME)

Mr Martin Mørk Larsen (Denmark)

### Management Group for the Quality Status Report 2010 (MAQ)

Dr Kees J M Kramer (The Netherlands)

### Working Group on Marine Protected Areas, Species and Habitats (MASH)

Mr Jan Haelters (Belgium) and Dr Liz Sides (Ireland)

### Working Group on the Environmental Impact of Human Activities (EIHA)

Ms Brigitte Lauwaert (Belgium)

### Informal Group of DYNAMEC Experts (IGE)

Mr Loek Knijff (The Netherlands)

### North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)

Captain Jeremy Smart (United Kingdom)



The OSPAR Commission adopted six strategies that govern its work, aimed at bringing the North-East Atlantic to a healthy and sustainable condition. Progress on each of the strategies during 2007/08 is set out below.



Angel Shark © Simon Rogerson, Dive Magazine

## Biodiversity Strategy

Aims to protect and conserve the ecosystems and the biological diversity of the maritime area which are, or could be, affected as a result of human activities, and to restore, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, including Annex V and Appendix 3.

The implementation of the Strategy has two approaches: (1) protecting identified species and habitats and establishing marine protected areas; (2) consideration of the impact of a set of identified human activities.

This year OSPAR agreed to add a set of further species and habitats whose future is of immediate concern to the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats including several shark and ray species, seabird species, deep water coral gardens and meadows of the seagrass *Cymodocea nodosa*.

Major achievements have been the preparation of an Assessment of Impacts of Dumped Conventional and Chemical Munitions and of Guidance on Environmental Considerations for Offshore Wind-Farm Development. A whole suite of other important assessments of impacts of human activities has also been finalised.

Another milestone was the joint adoption with the Helsinki Commission of general guidance for the shipping sector on the exchange of ballast water in the North-East Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, including a joint notice to shipping and instructions for surveyors via the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Further ongoing work focused on marine spatial planning and assessments of underwater noise, marine litter and fisheries.

## Monitoring and Assessment Strategy

The Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) underpins the implementation of the five OSPAR thematic Strategies and provides the framework for evaluating progress, assessing the overall quality status of the marine environment and identifying priorities for renewed or new action. In this way the OSPAR framework acts to provide management measures consistent with an ecosystem approach.

The Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee is responsible for the management of the JAMP and the preparation of the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 as a comprehensive general assessment of the status of the OSPAR maritime area. The QSR 2010 will draw upon the monitoring and assessment work of the thematic Committees and other relevant national and international organizations, including scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.



Sampling seawater for analysis of heavy metals, © Hartmut Nies

## Radioactive Substances Strategy

Aims to prevent pollution of the maritime area from ionising radiation through progressive and substantial reductions of discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for artificial radioactive substances.

In achieving this objective, the following issues should, *inter alia*, be taken into account: legitimate uses of the sea, technical feasibility and radiological impacts on man and biota.

This year, the Radioactive Substances Committee continued to develop statistical techniques to be used in future OSPAR periodic evaluation reports. The Committee finalised an assessment of the impact on marine biota of anthropogenic sources of radioactive substances and the assessment of implementation of OSPAR Recommendation 91/4 on discharges of radioactive substances.

## Hazardous Substances Strategy

Seeks to prevent pollution of the maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances, with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances. Its timeframe requires the OSPAR Commission to implement the Strategy progressively by making every endeavour to move towards the target of the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by 2020.

To implement this strategy, the Hazardous Substances Committee continued to screen the substances on the List of Substances of Possible Concern with the aim of identifying which substances should be the focus of further attention by OSPAR, considering that much of the work on chemicals is now covered by various EC instruments.

Another major achievement this year was the preparation of the first assessment of emissions, discharges and losses of chemicals identified by OSPAR for priority action.



## Offshore Oil & Gas Industry Strategy

Sets the objective of preventing and eliminating pollution and taking the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of offshore activities so as to safeguard human health, and of conserving marine ecosystems and, when practicable, restoring marine areas which have been adversely affected.

The work of the Offshore Industry Committee (OIC) on offshore chemicals focused on revisions of the Harmonised Mandatory Control System for the use and reduction of discharges of offshore chemicals.

The aim was to simplify and harmonise the implementation of the system and to harmonise it as far as possible with the requirements of the EC regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

On discharges of oil, OIC assessed achievements on the 15% reduction target of oil discharged with produced water and noted that most Contracting Parties had reached the target.

OIC also started to prepare an assessment of impacts of offshore oil and gas activities other than pollution.

## Eutrophication Strategy

Aims to combat eutrophication in order to achieve and maintain a healthy marine environment where eutrophication does not occur.

For the purpose of the Strategy, eutrophication is defined as the anthropogenic enrichment of water by nutrients causing an accelerated growth of algae and higher forms of plant life to produce an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms present in the water and to the quality of the water concerned.

In 2007/08, the Eutrophication Committee (EUC) undertook a second evaluation of the status of the OSPAR maritime area, concluding that eutrophication problems still persist in 106 defined areas of the North-East Atlantic. This is supported by a further assessment undertaken by EUC of progress made by Contracting Parties in implementing measures to achieve a reduction of 50% in nutrient inputs compared to the input levels in 1985.

To help direct future actions, EUC continued modelling activities to investigate nutrient reduction scenarios and transboundary transport of nutrients.

EUC continued work on an improved design of monitoring programmes to support future eutrophication assessments and to address needs of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. This work includes investigation into how climate change can be incorporated in the eutrophication monitoring and assessment work.



Dunbar Field, © Total-Communications Department



Foam by *Phaeocystis* © Peter Heslenfeld, Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, The Netherlands

# Areas beyond national jurisdiction

## Mid Atlantic Ridge Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone

Currently no Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have been established in the North-East Atlantic in areas that are outside the national jurisdiction of coastal states, so called areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Netherlands, Portugal, France and WWF sponsored a formal proposal to OSPAR 2008 to take forward work on developing a potential MPA for a section of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge including the Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone.

The Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone is a section of the North-East Atlantic Mid-Atlantic Ridge for which a comprehensive scientific case as a potential OSPAR MPA has been established. Much information has been gathered and collated by MarEco, an international research project co-ordinated by the Institute of Marine Research in Bergen, Norway. The Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone has been described as 'the Alps of the deep ocean' as it includes 3,500m peaks rising from the abyssal plains, deep trenches and a meandering sub-polar front where cool Labrador Current water meets warmer water creating a meeting point for northern and southern species. Important features of the biodiversity include whales, sharks, turtles, seabirds, cold water corals, deepwater sponge fields and vulnerable stocks of long-lived, slow growing deep-water fish species.

OSPAR 2008 established substantial political support for further work to safeguard this biodiversity and defined a critical path of considerations and steps to be taken including the need to liaise with all competent authorities, scientists and other stakeholders. The immediate tasks are now to develop conservation objectives and to clarify with other competent authorities how these should be achieved.

"In 2003 the OSPAR Commission put cold water corals on the world agenda. The International Year of the Reef 2008 is drawing attention to the serious plight of this critical habitat in both tropical and temperate seas".

Mr Stefan Hain, Head of the United Nations Environment Programme Coral Reef Unit

## Suite of possible Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

A study by the University of York (UK), commissioned by Germany on behalf of an informal group on Marine Protected Areas has identified seven further sites within the Wider Atlantic (OSPAR Region V) where a strong scientific case can be developed for additional protective measures to protect high seas biodiversity.

This extensive area of ocean could represent a valuable addition to the OSPAR network of MPAs. The onus is now on OSPAR to work with other competent authorities to collectively determine whether in each case additional protective measures are needed, what these might be and who should take responsibility.

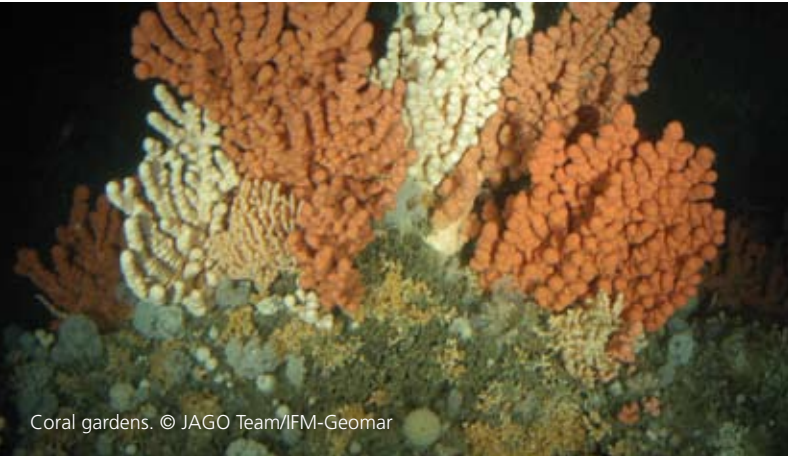
As a first step the OSPAR Commission has requested an opinion from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on the scientific validity of these seven further sites.



Courtesy of BERR, Crown Copyright, All Rights Reserved  
*Seamount*, Photograph provided by Bhavani Narayanaswamy



Turtleback © PGH Evans, Sea Watch Foundation



Coral gardens. © JAGO Team/IFM-Geomar



## Code of Conduct for Responsible Marine Research in the Deep Seas and High Seas of the OSPAR Maritime Area

Based on work within the Biodiversity Committee and further consultation with international scientific bodies, OSPAR 2008 agreed to adopt a Code of Conduct for Responsible Marine Research in the Deep Seas and High Seas of the OSPAR Maritime Area. This is based on the InterRidge Statement of Commitment to responsible Research Practices at Deep-Sea Hydrothermal Vents and associated work by Germany. In particular it relates to an acknowledgement that species and habitats on the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats, especially those occurring in high and deep sea areas, are vulnerable to different actual or potential human activities, including marine scientific research.

The potential impact of many scientific activities on the marine environment is low in comparison to the potential for disturbance by natural processes or human activities. Nonetheless, there remains the possibility that some scientific activities could have unwanted negative side effects on biodiversity if research activities are not carefully planned and executed.

In addition, because only a limited number of sites are currently known, and scientists from a wide variety of disciplines frequently work at these single locations, there is the potential for multiple impacts, particularly where scientific activity is intense. Amongst other things the Code promotes appropriate planning, environmentally-friendly study methods and maximum sharing of data.

## MoU with NEAFC

A key partner for the OSPAR Commission, particularly in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, is the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). As a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, NEAFC is pioneering actions to prevent illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, by blacklisting IUU vessels and effectively banning them from entering all ports in Europe.

In addition Port State Control of landing or transshipment (in ports of NEAFC's Contracting Parties) of frozen fish, caught in the NEAFC Convention Area by foreign vessels is helping to enforce fisheries management measures. Clear synergies can be drawn between NEAFC's actions and OSPAR Annex V commitments. (For more information see: [www.neafc.org](http://www.neafc.org))

During 2007/08 the Secretariats of both organisations in consultation with their Heads of Delegation have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU recognises that the two organisations have complementary competences for environmental protection and fisheries management respectively in the North-East Atlantic and joint obligations to use best available scientific evidence and to apply the precautionary principle.

The MoU, which will be formally jointly signed in the autumn of 2008, promotes mutual cooperation particularly in terms of information exchange, dialogue, and common understanding. Importantly it will include future work on marine spatial planning and area management as well as potential cooperation on specific projects through ICES.

## Celebrating Corals

At OSPAR 2008, as part of the International Year of the Coral Reef 2008, a side event was organised to draw attention to the need to conserve coral ecosystems. The event organised by the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas, was staged in Oceanopolis, a world class aquarium facility in Brest, that boasts a living coral reef exhibit <http://www.oceanopolis.com/chauds-les-coraux/index.html>

Presentations were given by:

- Bernard Salvat (ICRI) – explaining the pressure on corals worldwide;
- Karine Olu-Le Roy (IFREMER) – considering cold water corals, mostly on the continental slope growing in areas with high velocity currents and high turbidity, with a focus on the latest research in deep water canyons off the French coast;
- Phil Weaver (HERMES) – highlighting European contributions to deep sea science, showing high resolution ROV images and oceanographic processes; and
- Stefan Lutter (WWF Germany) – entitled 'Cold water corals: high on the agenda – still in deep trouble', setting out a recent history of efforts to protect cold water coral ecosystems and advocating continued efforts.

During 2007/08 the deep water habitat 'coral gardens' was added to the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats. ([www.ospar.org/eng/doc/eng\\_coral\\_gardens\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ospar.org/eng/doc/eng_coral_gardens_2008.pdf))

## OSPAR Commission 2008

The 2008 meeting of the OSPAR Commission was held at the kind invitation of the French Government in Brest from 23 to 27 June 2008. Brest has been chosen by France as the location for their national agency for Marine Protected Areas (Agence des aires marines protégées) and delegations had an opportunity to visit La Mer d'Iroise, the first national marine park in France. Mr Xavier de la Gorce, French General Secretary to the Sea, stressed the important role of OSPAR in the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and highlighted the four maritime priorities for the French Presidency of the European Council (July to December 2008): maritime governance, maritime surveillance, marine research and protection of the marine environment. He also announced a technical international conference, '2012 Marine targets: Strategy for the marine environment and the high seas', to be held in December 2008 in Brest.

The OSPAR Commission meeting is the culmination of the yearly meeting cycle. At the meeting invited presentations were delivered on marine spatial planning from UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission and on global work on dumped conventional and chemical munitions from Mr Terrance Long (Canada). Throughout the year the OSPAR Commission held a total of 70 meeting days. Technical workshops were held on eutrophication modelling and on Marine Protected Areas Stakeholder Involvement. A productive joint workshop was held between representatives of the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors and representatives of the Bonn Agreement ([www.bonnagreement.org](http://www.bonnagreement.org)).

In May 2008 a Strategic Planning Workshop, sponsored by the Netherlands, was held in Haslemere (UK) at which Heads of Delegation, Chairs of main OSPAR Committees and invited guests considered the new factors, emerging trends and changing circumstances facing OSPAR and implications to OSPAR's role and way of working. The next Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission will be hosted by Norway from 20 – 24 September 2010 in Bergen.

## Developing strategic directions

Initial work began at the Haslemere workshop to develop strategic directions for the period 2010-2020. Key points that emerged included the need to:

- Further develop and implement the ecosystem approach: this still requires a better understanding of marine ecosystem functioning to enable effective monitoring. It also requires OSPAR to develop expertise in, for example, social and economic analysis, to fill information gaps and ensure holistic assessments. Serious consideration will be given to refining and refocusing the OSPAR Strategies and to defining broad Ecological Objectives;
- Take a more strategic view to identify those areas of work where progress is needed and where additional resources should be allocated: whilst at the same time ensuring swifter feedback from scientific research into policy by establishing a better interface with scientists;
- Be proactive in raising awareness, stimulating dialogue and communicating with stakeholders this should ensure transfer of knowledge and make sure OSPAR's work is visible to external audiences;
- Identify and deal with emerging issues: including climate change, protection of the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction, partnerships with other sectors, and better interplay with Directives and policies of the European Community.

The task ahead is to make sure that OSPAR has the necessary structures and mechanisms to cope with these demands.



## OSPAR Strengths

In planning for change, this year OSPAR has recognised a set of strengths to be retained and built upon. These include:

- Use of sound science to pioneer and deliver the ecosystem approach, drawing on wide expertise to confirm environmental change, recognise trends, consider transboundary issues, and assess the effectiveness of measures;
- Application of international law combining legally binding decisions and a flexible soft law framework;
- Transparency and stakeholder participation allowing observer organisations to influence the agenda and contribute to debates;
- The ability to coordinate and facilitate, as a network achieving a collective voice, through a consensus based approach;
- Empowering lead countries to work on issues, with the support of an enthusiastic and committed Secretariat; and
- A track record of influential decisions, guiding policy development in other regions, including countries outside the European Union, often taking a proactive and pioneering stand.

OSPAR has an influence at a variety of levels and Contracting Parties see the need for OSPAR to continue to act as a regional focal point (centre of excellence) for developing marine policy, technical skills and monitoring expertise to achieve good environmental status for the North-East Atlantic as well as co-ordinating national efforts, identifying synergies and promoting collective action. In support of this, OSPAR should also respond to and help to implement European legislation, work together with other sectors and support the family of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

## Implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union during the week of the OSPAR Commission meeting and entered into force on 15 July 2008. There is a general wish for OSPAR to be the common implementing body for the MSFD in its maritime area, rather than being only a platform for sharing information. Future cooperation and coordination will be considered in terms of a Regional Implementation Framework.

A dialogue with the European Commission throughout the year has confirmed OSPAR as an important platform for the parties that will be bound to implement the Directive. Co-ordinated activity is foreseen on some key start-up aspects of the Directive, such as the provisions on good environmental status and on transmission and processing of data and information. Cross-linkages between OSPAR processes and MSFD requirements include the policy and organisation discussions preceding the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in 2010, the work on Ecological Quality Objectives, the Marine Protected Areas network and the determination of 'good environmental status' in a sub-regional context. In this respect OSPAR is keen to work with and mutually support other Regional Sea Conventions around Europe and provide inspiration to Member States from other regions.



## Communications, the Media and Public Engagement

### OSPAR Communications Strategy

Aims to raise the Commission's profile in the media and with other stakeholders. In May OSPAR appointed a full-time Information Assistant. Trained as a hydrographic surveyor, Audrey Baconnais-Rosez joined the Secretariat from a position in the French Admiralty for the Atlantic, where she was in charge of protection of the marine environment.



Audrey Baconnais-Rosez

She is coordinating the re-branding process, which will take effect in September 2008. More communication products will be implemented during 2008/09, including regular press releases and e-newsletters. In order to make OSPAR more visible in exhibitions and conferences, Audrey will also develop display materials and graphic products and maps for OSPAR publications.

### Redesigned website

Throughout the year the OSPAR website has been redesigned to be a focus for external as well as internal communications. Improved functionality has been combined with the new OSPAR style and high quality images. Currently the OSPAR website receives about 14 000 monthly visits or 550 daily visits during working days, questions are largely technical and mostly driven by policy researchers.

In future OSPAR will provide access for a wider audience to a comprehensive set of links explaining how the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic functions and who is responsible for its protection.

The new website will contain: an updated attractive design, a clickable map of the North-East Atlantic and a page for Regions I – V; new work areas; updated interfaces for downloading meeting documents, publications and measures; the following new sections: "press office", "international cooperation"; a new "links" page and a forum where intersessional groups can share documents and messages; easier navigation and access by specialist users to frequently requested material.

A key challenge is to capture information relevant to the whole of the OSPAR Maritime Area from the mid-Atlantic to the North Sea, from the North Pole to the Azores.



The Azores; Southern boundary of the OSPAR Maritime Area © Richard Emmerson, OSPAR Commission

## Internships

During 2007/08 OSPAR has hosted three student internships undertaking relevant professional placements on projects related to current work programmes:

**Ms Kathryn Dawson**  
(Bournemouth University UK)  
April-May 2008



MPA developments within OSPAR – barriers to their designation and associated management

**Ms Hilary Cartwright-Taylor**  
(Kings College London, UK)  
June-Aug 2008



Resolution of spatial conflicts and differences between the OSPAR sub-regions to inform marine spatial management

**Mr Maximillien Simon**  
(National School of Forestry and Water Science, France)  
July 2008



Prioritising alien organisms in ballast water in support of the General Guidance on the Voluntary Interim application of the D1 Ballast Water Exchange Standard in the NE Atlantic and the Baltic Sea

## Presentations by OSPAR

During the year OSPAR made presentations at the following events:

Date	Where	Title
25-26 Oct. 2007	London, National Maritime Museum	OSPAR Commission: 35 years young – what now?
29-31 Oct. 2007	Jeddah UNEP	9th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans: Carbon Capture and Storage
20-23 Nov. 2007	London ICES Symposium	Environmental Indicators: Utility in meeting regulatory needs – An introduction
28-29 Nov. 2007	London Inaugural European Carbon Capture & Storage Summit	Recent amendments to the OSPAR Convention to permit carbon capture and storage
7-11 April 2008	Hanoi Global Oceans Forum	Opportunities for enhancing integrated governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction: Regional Perspectives
28 April - 2 May 2008	New York UN Ad Hoc WG ABNJ	OSPAR statement and interventions
21-22 May 2008	Bonn CBD COP9	OSPAR statement
2-4 June 2008	Malmo World Maritime University	CCS: Implications of Recent Amendments to the OSPAR Convention
18-19 June 2008	Aberdeen IBC Energy Conferences	Decommissioning in oil and gas

## Year in brief

**August 2007:** A memorandum of understanding is established between OSPAR and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to work on marine litter.

**September 2007:** Bob Dekker (The Netherlands) hands over chairmanship to acting chairman Knut Kroepelien (Norway). An OSPAR workshop on involving stakeholders in establishing and managing marine protected areas (MPA) is hosted by Spain.

**October 2007:** An OSPAR workshop to develop further OSPAR initiatives on marine spatial management is hosted by Spain in conjunction with the meeting of the Working Group on the Environmental Impact of Human Activities.

**November 2007:** The nomination of a section of the Mid Atlantic Ridge/Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone as an OSPAR MPA in areas beyond national jurisdiction is considered by Contracting Parties at the Marine Protected Areas, Species and Habitats Working Group and advice is requested from ICES. A third joint meeting between the Heads of Delegation of the OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission agrees to work towards a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations.

**January 2008:** The Radioactive Substances Committee agrees to publish an assessment of impacts on marine biota of anthropogenic sources of radioactive substances.

**February 2008:** The Hazardous Substances Committee undertakes a first assessment of emissions, discharges and losses of chemicals for priority action. The Biodiversity Committee agrees a Code of Conduct for Responsible Marine Research in the Deep Seas and High Seas of the OSPAR Maritime Area.

**March 2008:** The Offshore Industry Committee recommends the adoption of the revised OSPAR Recommendation 2000/4 on a Harmonised Pre-screening Scheme for Offshore Chemicals and the revised OSPAR Recommendation 2000/5 on a Harmonised Offshore Chemical Notification Format. The Eutrophication Committee undertakes a second assessment of the eutrophication status of the North-East Atlantic

**April 2008:** The Assessment and Monitoring Committee ensures arrangements are in place for the preparation of the QSR 2010. A meeting of the intersessional correspondence group on marine protected areas brings together deep seas scientists.

**May 2008:** OSPAR holds a Strategic Planning Workshop for Heads of Delegation to elaborate a corporate plan and suggest initial targets for the 2010 Ministerial Meeting.

**June 2008:** The annual meeting of the OSPAR Commission pioneers the protection of the high seas. OSPAR is on track to meet the new EU marine directive. OSPAR agrees to add further species and habitats, including coral gardens and several shark species to the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats.



Oystercatchers in the Wadden Sea area © Peter Heslenfeld, Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, The Netherlands

## Reports adopted by OSPAR 2008 for publication

The OSPAR reports will be downloadable from the OSPAR website at [www.ospar.org](http://www.ospar.org) when they are published.

### Implementation Reporting

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on PARCOM Recommendations 88/2 and 89/4 on reduction of nutrients inputs

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on non-ferrous metals – aluminium production

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on PARCOM Recommendation 98/1 on other non-ferrous metals

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on PARCOM Decision 90/3 on mercury from chlor-alkali plants

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on OSPAR Recommendation 2005/2 on environmental goals for the discharge by the offshore industry of chemicals that are, or contain added substances, listed in the OSPAR 2004 List of chemicals for priority action

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on radioactive discharges

### Biodiversity

Background Document on the EcoQO on plastic particles in seabirds' stomachs

Background Document on the EcoQO on proportion of large fish in fish communities

Marine Biodiversity Monitoring and Assessment: Activities to improve synergies between EU directives and international conventions

Update of the justification report for the Initial OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats

2007 Report on the development of the OSPAR network of marine protected areas

Outline of the three initial spatial tests used to assess the ecological coherence of the OSPAR MPA network

Dumping of wastes at sea in 2006

Literature review on the impacts of dredged sediment disposal at sea

National actions levels for dredged material

Assessment of impacts of dumped conventional and chemical munitions

Assessment of the environmental impacts on the marine environment of dredging for navigational purposes

Assessment of the environmental impacts of offshore wind farms

Assessment of the environmental impacts of the construction or placement of structures other than oil

and gas and wind farms and including artificial islands

Assessment of the environmental impact of land reclamation

Assessment of impacts of tourism and recreational activities

Background document on potential problems associated with power cables other than those for oil and gas activities

Progress report ICG cumulative impacts of activities in the Maritime Area

OSPAR database on wind-farms

### Eutrophication

Integrated report on the eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area

Update on overview of the state of the art of models

Report on nutrient reduction scenarios

### Hazardous Substances

Review statements of the Background Documents for endosulfan, HCH, PCBs, dicofol, methoxychlor

Losses of mercury from the chlor-alkali industry

Assessment of emissions, discharges and losses of chemicals for priority action

### Monitoring and assessment

Report on emissions and atmospheric deposition of heavy metals and POPs in the OSPAR maritime area

RID 2006 data report and analysis of the reliability, accuracy, comparability and completeness of the data

2006 CAMP data report

Revised draft CEMP assessment report

CEMP assessment manual

### Offshore Oil and Gas

Discharges, Spills and Emissions from offshore oil and gas installations in 2006

### Radioactive Substances

Assessment on impact of anthropogenic sources of radioactive substances on marine biota

Annual report on liquid discharges from nuclear installations

### General

Annual Report of the OSPAR Commission 2007/08

Rapport annuel de la Commission OSPAR 2007/08

The 1992 OSPAR Convention is the current instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. It combined and up-dated the 1972 Oslo Convention on dumping waste at sea and the 1974 Paris Convention on land-based sources of marine pollution.

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OSPAR's vision is of a healthy and diverse North-East Atlantic ecosystem



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