



Press release

Contact number **Audrey Baconnais-Rosez +0044 (0)20 7430 5200**

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New Court
48 Carey Street
London WC2A 2JQ
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)20 7430 5200
f: +44 (0)20 7430 5225
e: secretariat@ospar.org
www.ospar.org

Nordic Marine National Parks: A window to the deep Atlantic

The Marine National Parks of Kosterhavet (Sweden) and Ytre Hvaler (Norway) were jointly officially opened by His Majesty the King of Sweden and the Crown Prince of Norway, supported by their respective Ministers for the Environment, on 9 September 2009. Covering a total area of approximately 80,000 hectares, the new marine parks incorporate a deep sub-marine trench in the Skagerrak rich in marine biodiversity.

'It is excellent to now have these Nordic marine national parks to complement those already established in more southerly parts of the OSPAR Maritime Area' said Professor David Johnson, Executive Secretary of the OSPAR Commission, who attended the ceremonies. He added 'but we have a considerable challenge ahead to protect and nurture marine biodiversity. In the context of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, OSPAR will publish a Quality Status Report evaluating the state of the North-East Atlantic environment. We know already that ministers will need to give urgent attention to conserving what biodiversity we still have and what we are yet to even appreciate that we have.'

Anders Tysklind, director of Kosterhavet National Park, was keen to acknowledge that this week's events are the result of a 30-year long process, starting with scientific knowledge, involving the tourism sector and local communities. Professor Kerstin Johannssen of the University of Gothenburg also highlighted a crucial influential dialogue between researchers and the local Board of Fisheries developing no take zones, management plans, use of selective gears by fishermen, education (in both directions) and trade marking marine produce quality and responsibility.

The annual EUROPARC conference is also being held in Stromstad, a gateway to the new marine parks, celebrating '100 years of National Parks in Europe, a shared inheritance and a common future'. Biodiversity protection and climate change issues are recognised as key problems and provide a sharp focus for the conference. A keynote speech by Pavan Sukhder, study leader for the Report on Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity emphasised that ecosystems are in real trouble from consumption, and marine protected areas remain very under-represented compared to progress that has been made on land. The OSPAR Commission hopes its work on deep sea areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as marine protected areas declared by national governments, can help to redress this.

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Note for editors

1. The [OSPAR Commission](http://www.ospar.org) was set up by the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, which unified and up-dated the 1972 Oslo and 1974 Paris Conventions. It brings together the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, together with the European Community.
2. More information about Kosterhavet National Park :
<http://www.swedishepa.se/en/In-English/Menu/GlobalMenu/newspuff/Kosterhavet-National-Park/>
More information on EUROPARC Conference 2009: <http://www.euoparc.org/home/>
More information on the report on Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/>
University of Gothenburg, Department of Marine ecology