



Welcome

Welcome to this first OSPAR e-newsletter. The intention of promoting a communication of this type is to provide additional updated information on specific topics two times each year. The Winter e-newsletter will explain key developments since the summer Commission meeting. The Summer e-newsletter is a chance to summarise and widely circulate details of decisions reached by OSPAR, topics of interest and immediate challenges lying ahead. As far as possible we also hope to include links to other relevant work. Your feedback concerning the usefulness of this communication will be much appreciated as will any suggestions for additional information you would like to see included.

Pr David Johnson, Executive Secretary

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Atle Fretheim, OSPAR's new chairman



Atle Fretheim is a lawyer who became involved with marine issues during his first appointment in the Norwegian administration. He was elected as Chairman of OSPAR last June, for a period of two years, during the annual meeting of the OSPAR Commission in Brest. Atle has a wealth of experience in both the public and private sectors, and at various levels (national and international). He was involved with OSPAR until 1995 and the North Sea Conferences process until 2002. He is currently the Deputy Head of the Norwegian Pollution Control and Climate Department, dealing with climate change, long-range transport, chemicals, shipping and SO₂ emissions.

He is also involved in intense international activity; responsible within Norway for all international conventions on chemicals and waste. Of particular note he is the Vice-President of the Stockholm Bureau Convention. With such experience Atle is well placed to chair OSPAR during a time of change and transition. He explains: "Since I left OSPAR in the 90s, there have been many changes, especially in terms of defining the need for a comprehensive approach to marine issues. For biodiversity protection, threatened species and habitats and marine protected areas still need more concrete work. OSPAR, through its important pioneering work in cooperation with other relevant organisations, is in a position to identify important challenges and emerging issues, such as climate change, carbon capture and storage and ocean acidification OSPAR will also have a key role in implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive."



QSR critical steps towards preparation

OSPAR is preparing a major holistic assessment of the quality status of the North-East Atlantic - the Quality Status Report 2010. This assessment will inform the 2010 OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Bergen on the environmental status and future actions for the protection and conservation of the North-East Atlantic.

During the 2008/2009 cycle of committees, draft texts for the QSR prepared by the different groups will be looked at by all the Committees. The Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO) and the Management Group for the QSR (MAQ) are playing a central role in the management of this process. In particular, the next meeting of the two bodies have specific goals. MAQ (1) 09 (24-25 March 2009), and ASMO (1) 09 (20-24 April 2009) will compile the first draft of the QSR. MAQ (2) 09 (8-11 June 2009), and ASMO (2) 09 (15-18 September 2009) will bring the process towards the second draft. This work is supported by various Intersessional Correspondence Groups (ICG) and workshops, such as ICG Publication which is working on the finalisation of the design of the QSR – its style presentation and layout. Dr Kees Kramer will work as Technical Editor with an overview to ensure consistency. Task managers who need further technical editing support should seek information on how to work with Kees through the Secretariat.

In December 2008 the Secretariat welcomed a special voluntary donation from Norway, which will be used to enhance GIS capabilities, improve the photography library, support map production about offshore oil and gas installation, and upgrade design tools within the Secretariat, all of which will boost the QSR production.



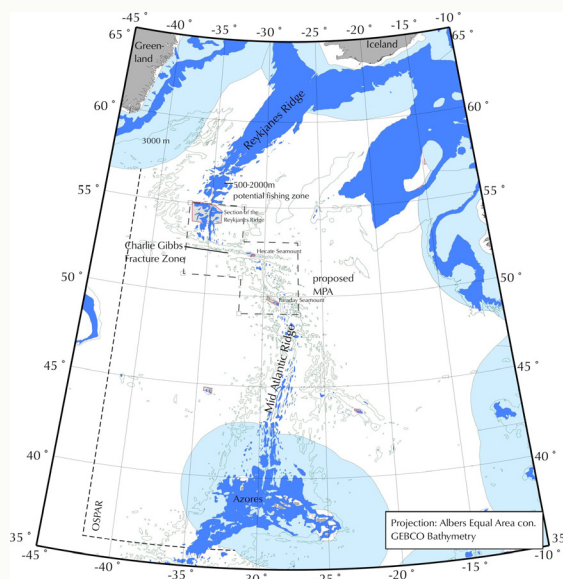
ABNJ: progress against the 2008/2009 road map

Following the last annual meeting, OSPAR has taken forward ground-breaking work by considering a section of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge including the Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone (CGFZ) as a potential OSPAR Marine Protected Area (MPA). An initial exchange of information has been made with other competent authorities including the International Seabed Authority, the International Maritime Organisation and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.

One of the first significant achievements since June has been the preparation of conservation objectives, by the Working Group on Marine Protected Areas Species and Habitats (MASH) who met 21-24 October 2008. These have been included in the proforma nomination document that has now been circulated to relevant competent authorities.

At the same time the Group of Jurists/Linguists who met initially 16-17 October 2008, have been drafting advice concerning the mandate of OSPAR to establish MPAs in areas beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). This advice will inform the meeting of the Biodiversity Committee in February 2009.

Location of the proposed MPA on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.



During the French Symposium [“2012 Marine Targets”: European Marine Strategy and Issues in the High Seas](#) in Brest 9-11 December 2008, a significant information exchange on High Seas interests was achieved. A principal intended outcome of this successful event is to generate a series of maps to ‘visualise’ bathymetry, science and human uses in these deep and relatively unexplored areas. A side event on the CGFZ was led by the Netherlands to raise awareness and begin an early exchange between stakeholders.

An opportunity to reflect on information presented during the Symposium, comments from competent authorities and more details on the wider network of possible MPAs in ABNJ will be available to the ICG-MPA when they next meet in February 2009.



International developments

The [10th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans](#) was held in Guayaquil, Ecuador 25-27th November 2008. The UNEP LME Report was launched during the meeting, and gives a perspective on Changing Conditions in Large Marine Ecosystems of the World’s Regional Seas.

The [UNEP LME Report](#) is the result of a collaborative effort with NOAA’s Large Marine Ecosystems Program and five UN Agencies (UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, IOC-UNESCO, and FAO) to promote a global view of baseline ecological conditions of the World’s 64 LMEs. It was coordinated by UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme in Nairobi, Kenya. The report contains important messages for OSPAR and information that will be relevant and useful for the QSR 2010. For example, fishery biomass yield trends in fast warming clusters (the North-East Atlantic is identified specifically as a super-warming global area) show increasing trends in the Norwegian Sea LME, the Faroe Plateau LME and the Iceland Shelf LME countered by decreasing trends in the North Sea LME, Celtic Biscay LME and the Iberian Coastal LME.

The [London Convention](#), in its resolution on the regulation of ocean fertilization adopted on 31 October 2008, stated that ocean fertilization activities, other than legitimate scientific research, should not be allowed. Ocean fertilization consists of stimulating primary productivity in the oceans.

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