



 **Welcome from Colin Moffat, Friends of the Chair**

As the former Chairman of OSPAR's Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee, and having led production of the Quality Status Report (QSR 2010), I am pleased to continue to be involved with this aspect of OSPAR's work through the 'Friends of the Chair'. Victor Escobar, Chairman of OSPAR, formed this small informal advisory group at OSPAR 2011 to help steer the development of OSPAR's future assessment and monitoring activities.

At the Ministerial Meeting in 2010, OSPAR adopted the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (2010-2014). The JAMP has as its end point the establishment, by the Contracting Parties that implement the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), of monitoring programmes under that Directive – due by 15 July 2014. The period 2011-2014 is a period during which, on the basis of OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2010 and additional findings by the Contracting Parties, the monitoring components of the JAMP are under review in relation to Contracting Parties' changing needs. The ambitions of the Ecosystem Approach – underlying both OSPAR and MSFD mechanisms – imply that information is gathered for a wide, and increasing, range of marine ecosystem features (state), the human pressures on them and the consequences they have (impacts).

The holistic and thematic assessments undertaken by OSPAR over several decades are proof of the Contracting Parties' commitment to maximise the derivation of useful information from the data collected. The assessment practice is an essential part of the feedback loop that connects monitoring with marine environmental management and back again. This periodic practice is also the time to take stock of the quality of the data and the gaps in knowledge that affect the information outcomes. Monitoring and assessment are thus inextricably linked, and the quality of the assessment is strongly determined, amongst other things, by the quality of the underlying monitoring data. Weaknesses in this aspect of assessments can only be addressed through action to eliminate critical weaknesses in the underlying data.

The Coordination Group, through Friends of the Chair and in cooperation with OSPAR Committees, will develop an 'OSPAR monitoring framework' by 2013 which brings together all monitoring programmes relevant for (sub)regional assessments under the MSFD and for OSPAR strategy objectives, ensuring that monitoring is well coordinated, coherent and cost-efficient.

Data and information have a price. Marine monitoring is generally 'expensive', especially when it requires ship time, and when sampling and analysis is labour-intensive and requires very specific expertise. An explicit objective of this monitoring framework is to set out an OSPAR approach to develop options for collective cost-minimisation while maximising/optimising the output of the existing monitoring assets. Technological advances in observation and sampling capabilities – some of which are coming on-stream as a result of investments in marine research infrastructures – may result in improved efficiencies. With this 'monitoring framework' OSPAR is committed to managing its collective monitoring-related efforts so as to maximise the added value for the Contracting Parties.

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Colin Moffat

 **Challenge for EUT by Reinier Goud (Chairman of HASEC) and Gert Verreet (OSPAR Secretariat)**

Too much nutrition is not only affecting us humans (obesity!) but is also, unfortunately, a feature of many, North-East Atlantic estuarine and coastal, sea areas, mostly in and around the North Sea. If and how eutrophication effects come to light can differ according to local and regional circumstances. OSPAR has a long track record in addressing eutrophication. Despite many efforts to reduce nutrient inputs from relevant sources since the late 1980s, the QSR 2010 had to conclude that problems are not yet solved, and the political 2010 deadline of the 1998 OSPAR Objective to achieve a marine environment where eutrophication does not occur passed without easy answers. How can we reinvigorate action towards eliminating the 'eutrophication problem areas'?

OSPAR colleagues are instrumental in developing in-depth analyses of the case-by-case situation of assessed problem areas, including better estimating what will be required to

eliminate the eutrophication problem due to direct discharges, atmospheric, riverine and other transboundary inputs. Contracting Parties acknowledge in the 2010 OSPAR Strategy the need to solve marine eutrophication problems better through integrated freshwater management. The review of the EU WFD river basin management plans and the development of the MSFD programmes of measures, both due in 2015, offer an excellent opportunity to trigger further concerted action. Work has therefore started on modelling, also including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and transboundary nutrient inputs from adjacent or remote areas. For OSPAR the ecosystem based approach to the management of human activities poses a challenge to address marine eutrophication more holistically in relation to marine foodwebs and biodiversity, and effects of climate change. In addition, EU legislation requires due consideration of socio-economic aspects.



## First Regional Ecological and Biological Significant Marine Areas by Emily Corcoran (OSPAR Secretariat)

The joint OSPAR/NEAFC/CBD Scientific Workshop on the Identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in the North-East Atlantic was a global first.

On the 8 and 9 September 2011, the North-East Atlantic was the first region to take up the request by the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) to identify ecological and biological significant areas (EBSAs). The organisation and implementation of this workshop was the result of partnership between OSPAR and

NEAFC working with the Secretariat of the CBD and brought together regional scientific expertise in marine biodiversity and biogeography. The workshop was held in Hyères, France, kindly hosted by the government of France.

Held over two days, the workshop had an ambitious aim to identify EBSAs in the North-East Atlantic according to the criteria set out by the CBD in their Decision IX/20. In preparation for the workshop, experts had been asked to submit preliminary proposals for EBSAs, focusing on areas of the North-East Atlantic which fall outside of National Jurisdiction. 18 such proposals were put forward and then scrutinised by the workshop resulting in 10 candidate EBSAs being agreed by the workshop – a great success and a clear demonstration of the value of cooperation between a Regional Seas Organisation and a Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (NEAFC). This process and the lessons learned along the way will be shared with others who seek to identify EBSAs in their regions around the globe. The 10 candidate EBSAs will now be taken forward for peer review and will be subject to independent political scrutiny by both OSPAR and NEAFC, with a view to submitting candidate EBSAs to the CBD process early in 2012.



## Making strides towards effective Marine Protected Area management

Building on the impetus of OSPAR 2010, the focus of OSPAR's ICG-MPA meeting in September 2011 was the target of achieving a coherent MPA network by 2012. Once in place it is essential that this network is well-managed. Understanding effective MPA management is the aim of the 3-year 'Marine Protected Areas in the Atlantic Arc' Project (MAIA) being coordinated by the French Agence des aires marines protégées. From 26-29 September 2011 a MAIA workshop in Totnes (UK) showcased stakeholder experiences and perceptions of MPA planning and management as well as sharing developments in tools and techniques. For OSPAR's ground-breaking High Seas MPAs, a second informal meeting of representatives of competent authorities will build on the dialogue established in Madeira in 2010. In January 2012, hosted by France in Brest, delegates will further explore potential impacts of key human activities and propose how different competences could be combined to secure agreed conservation objectives.



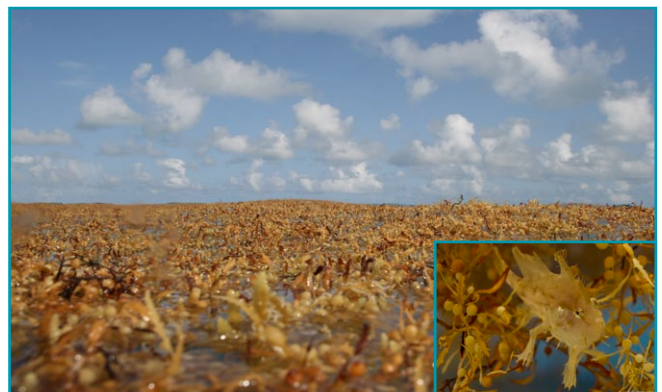
## The Sargasso Sea Alliance by Dr David Freestone

Dr. Sylvia Earle – the famous US scientist - has called the Sargasso Sea the "Golden Rainforest of the Ocean." It is the only sea without a coast, for the Sargassum weed from which it gets its name is held in place by the currents of the North Atlantic, concentrating it into large mats and windrows around the tiny islands of Bermuda. Spreading over more than 4 million square kilometres the Sargasso Sea is home to species uniquely adapted to life among the weeds but it also provides shelter and nutrition to large numbers of threatened and endangered species including turtles and also to commercially important species such as wahoo, dolphinfish, tunas and billfish. It is the only spawning place in the world for the American and the endangered European eel.

In 2010, the Government of Bermuda formed an alliance of scientists and marine conservation bodies, including IUCN, to press for protection measures for this critical ecosystem – the majority of which is in the high seas - in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Unlike the OSPAR area however these ABNJ areas are not covered by a regional environmental agreement, nor a regional fisheries management organisation. Bodies with sectoral jurisdiction include IMO, ICCAT and the ISA. With the collaboration of some 40 scientists and pre-eminent Atlantic scientific institutions, the Alliance is currently completing a comprehensive science assessment. Once finalised, this will

be used to press for conservation measures in the sectoral bodies and also to build a 'Collective Arrangement' – modelled on the OSPAR initiative - to mobilise further strategic support for protection.

For further details see [www.sargassoalliance.org](http://www.sargassoalliance.org) or contact, Dr David Freestone Executive Director, at [dfreestone@sargassoalliance.org](mailto:dfreestone@sargassoalliance.org)



Sargassum anglerfish (*Histrio histrio*) is a voracious predator in the three-dimensional maze of the Sargassum. Fortunately, the largest of these anglerfish reach only 20 cm.

## Regional Seas step up to the plate

The 13th Global meeting of Secretariats of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in Busan, Korea focused on the forthcoming Third Inter-Governmental Review (IGR-3) of the UN Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA); the UN Regular Process (Regular Process) on Reporting and Assessing the State of the Marine Environment (including socio-economic aspects); and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

The GPA was adopted in 1995 and has been subject to two reviews (Montreal 2001 and Beijing 2006). IGR-3 will take place in Manila, The Philippines in January 2012 and will be preceded by a conference of scientific and technical sessions illustrating good practice in science-policy linkages. For the Regular Process UNEP has a technical advisory role to facilitate communications, assessments and capacity building and will provide limited funding support. Regional Seas Conventions are considered to be in a strong position to help deliver the Regular Process. Rio+20 themes include a 'green economy in a blue world' (integrating natural capital into financial decision-making, enabling policies and removing barriers) and strengthening governance mechanisms. A multi-agency authored report is being developed to illustrate the benefits to coasts and oceans of decoupling growth from current intensive consumption.

In common with the other Regional Seas Conventions, OSPAR's efforts to assess, monitor and take measures to prevent pollution from land-based sources are fully in line with the GPA. The QSR 2010 provides evidence that in key GPA source areas – hazardous substances, nutrients, radioactive substances – significant improvements have been made. However, the task is not finished. Efforts are needed to maintain reductions. Other sources, such as marine litter, demand more attention. And the picture varies from Region to Region. The Regional Seas Secretariats will call on IGR-3 to support further sustained efforts by Regional Seas Conventions. The Permanent Committee for the South Pacific (CPPS) held the first Regional Workshop to facilitate the Regular Process (13-15 September 2011). In partnership with UNDOALOS, this successfully mobilised experts from across the region and prioritised an outline for input to the first Report. Finally, Regional Seas Conventions hope for a voice at Rio+20. A marine litter side event was proposed.

## The new and not so new faces of the OSPAR Secretariat

OSPAR is an amazing institution where the efforts of countries and organisations make a real difference for the North-East Atlantic marine environment, a noble cause that inspires the many individuals with whom it is such a pleasure and privilege to work. So I am thrilled to be given a third term as Deputy Secretary of the Commission, after having recovered a decade on from the delivery of the QSR 2000... and pleased to have to recognise that the QSR 2010 is even better! I hope that my work experience in Belgium, OSPAR and the European Commission can help me sufficiently in supporting OSPAR's diverse strands of work. And I promise that my Summary Record text will be simpler to understand than this paragraph!



Gert Verreet



John Mouat

My first introduction to OSPAR, as a fresh-faced recruit to KIMO International, was at the maelstrom of the OSPAR/HELOM Joint Ministerial meeting in 2003. It introduced me to an exciting new area of international work and collaboration which I was keen to become involved in. In the intervening years, in my role as KIMO Secretariat, I have been lucky to be involved with many of OSPAR's areas

of work and to make friends with many of the excellent and dedicated people that keep the OSPAR machine running. I hope to put this experience to good use in my move across the table from the Observer to the Secretariat seats. In my new role I will take up the portfolio focusing on human impacts and the work of the Bonn Agreement, OSPAR's sister organisation, as well as supporting the work on biodiversity, offshore industries and radioactive substances. I look forward to working with you

## Forthcoming workshops

2-4 November 2011	OSPAR Workshop on MSFD biodiversity descriptors: comparison of targets and associated indicators	Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2-4 November 2011	A Multi-Disciplinary Case-Study of MSP co-sponsored by HELCOM-VASAB, OSPAR and ICES	Lisbon, Portugal
10 November 2011	Workshop on environmental quality criteria and ecological quality	IAEA, Vienna
28-29 November 2011	Joint OSPAR/HELCOM workshop on the regional coordination of MSFD	Gothenburg, Sweden
17-18 January 2012	Informal meeting on collective arrangements (Madeira II)	Brest, France

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