

JNCC MARINE NATURA 2000 PROJECT GROUP MINUTES

TWENTY FIRST MEETING 13TH MAY 2009

JNCC, MONKSTONE HOUSE

FINAL MINUTES

Present (around table):

John Goold (JG) – JNCC (Chair)

Therese Cope (TC) (Secretary) – JNCC

Charlotte Johnston (CJ) – JNCC

Amy Ridgeway (AR) – JNCC

Neil Golding (NG) – JNCC

Beth Stoker (BS) - JNCC

Annabelle Aish (AA) – JNCC

Sophie Elliot (SE) – JNCC

Jamie Davies (JD) – JNCC

Sonia Mendes (SM) – JNCC

Andy Webb (AW) – JNCC

Linda Wilson (LJW) – JNCC (items 1-11)

Carol Daniels (CD) – SNH

Nigel Buxton (NB) – SNH

By teleconference:

Natasha Lough (NL) - CCW

Apologies:

Lynda Warren (LW)

Jim Reid (JNCC)

Peter Clements (NE)

Mark Tasker (JNCC)

Matthew Murphy (CCW)

Sian Whitehead (CCW)

Kate Bull (NE)

Katie Gilham (SNH)

Leigh Jones (NE)

Sarah Wood (CCW)

Paul Gililand (NE)

Kirsten Kober (JNCC)

Hugh Edwards (NIEA)

Adam Cole-King (CCW)

Howard Platt (NIEA)

Cathy Tilbrook (SNH)

Chris Davis (NE)

Eleanor Hill (NE)

Evanthia Karpouzli (SG)

Ian Bainbridge (SG)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

JG chaired the meeting in the absence of LW and welcomed the attendees. Brief introductions were made. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Minutes of the 20th Marine Natura Project Group Meetings and matters arising

Additional comments on the minutes from the 20th meeting were provided by NB and CH and approval reached. These will be incorporated and the final minutes will be placed on the MN2KPG webpage. A summary of action points from the previous meetings and outcomes is provided below.

AP 21.1 CH to get clarification who authorizes consultation to begin on Scottish sites, i.e. UK or Scottish ministers

AP 21.2 JG and CJ to raise above question of who has authority to begin consultation on Scottish sites at the next UK MPA Policy Group meeting on June 26.

Action Point Number	Action	Outcome
20.1	HP to send details of additional NI sites to NG and TC.	Carried forward
20.1	NG to give AR PDF of presentation to place on secure webpage, and to send out to CCW and SNH.	Completed
20.3	Raise issue of inter-agency communication at Committee and get a high level steer. LW will discuss with the Chairman and JG about inter-	Completed

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	agency SAC progression and consultation.	
20.4	CCW and SNH to provide concerns in writing. Following a replacement for Paolo a meeting is to be arranged between key people within the next 6 months (by August, 2009) with LW as chair, with a resulting paper to be considered by the Project Group.	Ongoing; CH to provide comment to AA
20.5	If anyone has comments then email EV: (emma.verling@jncc.gov.uk) by end of February.	Completed
20.6	EV to discuss with CH and KG in further detail what the Scottish concerns are.	Ongoing
20.7	JNCC to speak to CCW about additional funds and forward plans. Any updates to MN2KPG20_1_MN2KPlan to be provided to Therese Cope.	Completed
20.8	Committee is 25 th March. Would like comments on MN2KPG20_X_N2KProc paper before then so LW can inform the Chairman.	Completed
20.9	AA to clarify whether ecological coherence paper has been distributed more widely than just N2K groups.	Completed

3. EU and UK Marine working groups

3.1 Update on European marine Natura

CJ attended the Atlantic Bio-geographic moderation seminar in Galway at the end of March. A list of habitats and species which the Commission felt were not met within the N2K network was circulated and as expected included sandbanks, reefs, submarine structures, sea caves, Common Seal, Grey seal, Bottlenose dolphin and Harbour porpoise. Two lamprey species and two shad species were also included which was not expected as it was felt that there were sufficient sites in 2004. A summary of conclusions for the UK was as follows;

- Sea caves – possible gaps in the sea cave sites of inshore Scotland. Scientific reserve was discussed. Insufficient moderation G (additional sites required in specific regions) identified as SW England.
- Two lamprey species - insufficient but minimal. Require a freshwater site that does not have a marine equivalent. Possibly the Tay estuary.
- Two shad species - sufficient
- Bottlenose dolphin – insufficient/moderate for inshore. Scientific reserve for offshore. SAC boundaries may need revisiting due to considerable movement by the dolphins between sites.
- Harbour porpoise – Insufficient/moderate overall as there are no sites graded C or above. Highlighted the difficulty in identifying sites for life and reproduction but this was questioned.
- Grey seal - scientific reserve overall for inshore/offshore feeding areas.
- Common seal – Insufficient/moderate overall but Sound of Barra SAC will make up sufficiency inshore. Scientific reserve for feeding areas inshore and offshore.

The group discussed whose responsibility it will be to progress work to address the above insufficiencies. No guidance has yet been issued by Defra. SNH feel they will take their guidance from Scottish Government but whether Defra is consulted in that process is unclear. All agreed that this project group is necessary to keep each other informed as questions will concern the UK network as a whole.

CJ described the procedure at the meeting: The European Topic Centre reported on where they felt each country was insufficient and relied heavily on Article 17 reports. These reports were compiled by submitted data from each country. Countries were subjected to criticism where there were gaps between the Article 17 reports and the present network. In addition to the Commission, two scientific advisors, Peter Evans (cetaceans) and Jason Hall Spencer (habitats) and various NGO groups including WWF, Greenpeace and Birdlife commented. The UK received a lot of comment on scientific reserve which was felt by the UK to be inaccurate but were given no chance to refute.

The UK could face infraction if we do not progress sites for Harbour porpoise. The Commission did not accept that there is not sufficient data for identifying life and reproduction sites for Bottlenose dolphin. It was agreed that there was not enough evidence from the SCANS photo data but they felt that other data indicating presence would be sufficient. They felt that Dogger Bank, the Minches and Celtic Deepes

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would provide sites for Harbour Porpoise and for Bottlenose dolphin it was proposed that Cardigan Bay and Moray Forth would provide inshore sites with the southwest providing offshore sites.

It was asked how it is that they are finding suitable sites if we do not have enough data to progress sites. Their proposed sites are based on Peter Evan's hotspot analysis of Seawatch data which is not publicly available at present.

Concerning the progressing of sites, there was some discussion regarding present cetacean work. There is some regional cetacean work being conducted. Wales, in particular is producing a cetacean atlas that shows aggregations of Harbour Porpoise and will be made available. The present problem with DECC and Crown Estate blocking consultation on Dogger Bank mainly due to its Harbour porpoise grading was explained to the group. It was suggested that a review of marine mammal data may be required at this time.

In conclusion, if the UK can bring forward all sites that are in the pipeline, we will be sufficient.

AP 21.3 NB to ask Scottish Government how progression of sites to address the insufficiencies highlighted at the Atlantic Bio-geographic Moderation seminar will work in detail at their next SNH/SG liason meeting.

AP 21.4 CJ to distribute a table of conclusions from the Atlantic Bio-geographic moderation seminar

3.2 Update on activity of UK Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group and UK MPA Policy Group

There has not been a UK Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group meeting.

The last UK MPA Policy Group meeting was held on 3rd April, 2009. It was the first meeting in 6 months and gave an update on the Marine and Coastal Access Bill led by Defra, the Scottish Marine Bill provisions led by Scottish Government; Highly Protected Marine Conservation Project by Welsh Assembly Government and a brief update by Northern Ireland on future plans. The Atlantic Bio-geographic moderation seminar was discussed, as was forthcoming SPAs in English territorial waters. Outputs from the meeting included terms of reference for the UK MPA Policy group and its relation to other groups. There is an action on Defra to develop an organogram structure for all the different groups and their interactions. JNCC put two papers to the group for discussion and comment, regarding;

- a marine stakeholder engagement group to operate at the national level
- consideration of other spatial protection mechanisms, such as fisheries closures, at a UK level which could be considered as MPAs in the future.

4. Timetable of work for marine SPAs

4.1 General update on marine SPA work and forward timetable

A presentation was given covering inshore Scottish SPA work, tern work, Balearic shearwater work and shag work. There are regular update meetings between JNCC (Aberdeen office), SNH and Scottish Government, mostly with regard to their inshore SPA work. The most recent meeting was in April. There is at least three years worth of data for most inshore sites and so spatial analysis on key species has begun. Outputs so far include a continuous density surface map from aerial survey data for wintering red throated diver, with the largest populations in the Firth of Tay and Moray Firth. The numbers are substantially lower than for English sites such as Thames Estuary and Liverpool Bay but are the two most important sites (numerically) for Scotland. Moray Firth and Firth of Forth are important as multi species sites. There is primarily an east coast distribution for wintering red throated divers while for great northern divers their distribution is more on the north and west coasts. Key sites for the great northern diver are on the Outer Hebrides, Gigha and Orkney.

Future work plans will involve;

- continuing with phase 1 reporting which assesses whether the sites qualify as SPAs and further spatial analysis work, incorporating 08/09 data which hasn't yet been analysed
- conducting an assessment of the relative importance of Scotland for each species, in terms of the proportion of the national population

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- a progress meeting with Scottish Government, possibly in Autumn,
- possibly more data collection, in 09/10 winter for sites with less than three years of data, if deemed necessary.

In November, 2008, there was a tern workshop to discuss how to obtain information to enable hotspot identification. In February/March, 2009, a proposal was put to the country agencies regarding collecting foraging location and environmental data at sites around the UK to build a model to identify key foraging habitats. Depending on the quality of the data obtained, the aim would be to produce a model usable at a regional level. Preliminary data has shown that about 30% of variability can be accounted for with breeding red throated divers, which is high compared to 5-10% for cetacean modelling work.

There are four key sites which will be targeted by fieldwork in summer, 2009 for terns. They are Leith (Firth of Forth), Coquet (Northumberland), Cemlyn Bay / the Skerries (Anglesey, Wales) and Copeland and Larne (Northern Ireland). There are also three little tern sites (Forvie, Longnanny and Gronant). Further existing data will be obtained from other sites (notably North Norfolk coast). It may be possible to survey additional or different sites in later years. Visual tracking and shore-based observations of foraging birds will be the techniques used.

Balearic Shearwaters are critically endangered. There are only 2000-2400 pairs worldwide, and becoming an increasingly regular visitor to UK waters, particularly off the south coast of England. It is thought that they are not just passing through but actually using the area for foraging. Work plans involve boat surveys of two key sites, Portland Bill and Lyme Bay to assess their use of the areas and to identify potential hotspot areas.

The foraging distribution of breeding shags will be assessed. There is a plan to analyse the considerable data that has been collected from the Isle of May using data loggers via a contract. This will allow an analysis of the technique before taking the risk of using this costly surveying technique in other areas. Also plan to assess feasibility of carrying out data logger work in other areas around the UK, should the Isle of May analysis prove to be successful.

4.2 Update on offshore SPA work

AW presented a summary of the work by Kerstin Kober on offshore SPAs. This work is referred to as the third strand of the SPA work to compliment the inshore and colony extension SPA work. The methods were presented at the 19th MN2KPG and comments were invited. A final report is just completed and will be available soon on the project group secure webpage. There remains one aspect, to be completed (possibly by June, more likely September), regarding recommendations on draft SPA boundaries.

The study involved analyses, using the latest version of the European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) database. The ESAS database is the best source of distribution data for offshore seabirds. Once the data was cleaned, density surfaces were created showing distribution in the key seasons using Poisson Kriging statistics. The next stage was to identify the most important hotspots using Getis Ord G_i^* statistics. Finally, each identified hotspot was assessed using the SPA selection guidelines, to see if it hosted qualifying numbers of any particular species and if so, assessment was made of its regularity of occurrence.

The methods have been altered since the 19th meeting as problems were encountered with the Getis Ord G_i^* statistics. Main issue is that tests of significance using 95% confidence that were being used are no longer valid. A paper published in 2008 highlighted that data used in Getis Ord G_i^* statistics needs to be normally distributed however, ESAS data is skewed. It is also recommended when carrying out multiple comparisons, significance tests need to be more rigorous than 95% confidence levels. So, it was decided to use Getis Ord G_i^* statistics, and to identify hotspots based on the top 1% and top 5% of Getis-Ord G_i^* instead of using a significance test.

Some hotspots were lost with the new analysis. As expected, there were fewer hotspots found with the 1% threshold than with the 5%. In summary, the 5% threshold produced 6000 hotspots for all species for all times of the year while the 1% threshold produced 2000 hotspots. Once these hotspots were assessed to see if they held qualifying numbers of any species, we were left with 128 hotspots at the 5% threshold and 63 hotspots with the 1% threshold. Assessment of regularity of occurrence reduced those figures to 28 and 8 respectively.

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Four regions were identified as particularly important as multi-species hotspots; Outer Forth, Inner Forth, Moray Firth and the waters North and West of Shetland. These areas are potentially very important for applying stage two of the SPA selection guidance regarding multiple species sites.

Some of the hotspots were discarded during analyses either because they were anomalies or they were based on too little data. There are likely to be differing opinions from stakeholders in evaluating the choice of one qualifying site over another site.

Project group members are asked to look at the report and aid judgement on these sites. A steer is now required from SNH, CCW, WAG, SG and in particular Defra as there are no English sites. Some of the hotspots identified cross over into inshore areas and so need to ensure the offshore element of inshore sites is equally included in the progression of sites. A recommendations paper for these sites will possibly be finalised in June or September, depending on discussions.

Comments and questions were as follows, regarding;

- representativity of these discrete sites – although using the top 1% or 5% of hotspots seems reasonable, there needs to be a check on what is filtered out and to assess provision for each species in relation to other offshore sites, as well as other types of SPAs. It was explained that there would be an element of this when they are looked at in conjunction with colony extensions.
- establishing a suite of multi-species sites - for single species hotspots, assess what other species occur, but not necessarily in qualifying numbers, i.e. using the site or suite to encompass more species thus making it more valuable. AW agrees wholeheartedly and a list of primary species and associated 'near qualifying' species are in the paper.
- the need for conservation objectives in these SPAs. There is no requirement under the Birds Directive, but they will be included as it is essential for future management. The point was made that a level of importance of the site must be clear in the COs. It is likely that the primary hotspot species would be the target or benchmark used

AP 21.5 All relevant project group members are encouraged to read the Offshore Seabirds Paper and return comment to Andy Web and Kerstin Kober

4.3 Updates on English/Welsh aspect of the SPA work programme

4.4 Agency updates on SPA work programmes

There have been recent meetings between JNCC, SNH, SG and Defra to get a steer on the SPA process and to coordinate a UK timetable on SPA work. There has been an intermediate steer from SG and Defra and the proposal is that the various SPA teams will put together timetables for their work programmes, factoring in reactive work that continually occurs, especially with regard to renewables. These will be discussed and JG will bring this timetable to the UK MPA Policy Group and aim for an agreement between the agencies. SNH agrees that with most of the data gathered, as outlined by LJW and AW, and with AW and JR working towards targets, it is the opportune time to establish a timetable. They need this to inform SG as to what is achievable as the 2012 deadline is fast approaching.

There was a question regarding the progress of the 31 SPA colonies. The consultation reports have not yet gone to SG. At the request of SG they have been divided into two tranches. The North Caithness cliffs site, which received most comment is completed and is with senior management waiting for endorsement to submit to SG. The draft for the other sites should be finalised shortly. The aim is to submit all 31 sites to SG by the end of May. The minister then decides whether SNH needs to classify. This could take until July before sending to Europe.

JNCC maintains a shapefile of SPAs with marine components and needs to update with the Scottish sites once they are confirmed by the Minister.

AP 21.6 NB to inform AR when the Scottish SPA sites have been authorised by SG minister to enable the updating of a shapefile of all the UK SPA sites, maintained at JNCC.

4.5 Papers regarding SPAs to Project Group and JNCC Committee/Agency Councils

There are no papers. The aim is to get the Offshore SPA paper to June/September Committee, following comments and reaching a cross-agency agreement.

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4.6 Proposal for a new methodology for defining SPA boundaries for common scoter and red throated diver

AW presented a methods paper to the group for information and for approval by the group. Due to the recent acceleration in progressing the SPA boundaries for Liverpool Bay and the Outer Thames, the paper has already been approved intersessionally by CSG, Natural England's Board and Committee. So, it is slightly back to front to be presenting it here now. At present, informal consultations on those sites have been put on hold until mid-late June with formal consultation beginning in November, due to holding off on all SACs and SPAs progression in the Thames area for now.

This paper is an update on the methods and aims to progress red throated diver sites for the entire UK based on density thresholds. Need to move away from arbitrary judgements. Objectives include a trade-off between bird numbers and site area; methods need to be robust, easy to explain and to be applicable more generically.

The methods have gone to CSG who wanted to see more sensitivity testing. They asked to get the report peer reviewed which AW hopes to do. Wales wants to test the methods against the boundary finalised for Carmarthen Bay for common scoter. In summary this paper describes methods that are applicable across sites and species and has cross agency and CSG agreement at this point. Although could be used generically for all inshore bird species, it could prove difficult for species with low abundance. It is possible it could also be applied in the offshore but there hasn't been a chance yet to test that. Offshore species are perhaps too widely dispersed for interpretable boundaries.

In summary, the boundaries for Liverpool Bay and the Outer Thames been approved by Joint Committee, Natural England and CCW, with Liverpool Bay being a trans boundary site and the Thames site having an offshore component.

AP 21.7 All relevant group members to send comments to Andy Webb on the SPA boundaries for common scoter and red-throated diver methodology paper

5. Marine Protected Areas: non-Natura work

5.1 Update on MCZ process

An update on the Welsh MCZ programme was given by Natasha Lough. Kirsty Lindenbaum is covering Mary Lewis who was leading on the UK Marine Bill and the MCZ work. CCW advised WAG on the MCZ process in September, 2008 who mainly supported it but thought it was too resource heavy. Following further work by CCW, WAG is now happy with the process at this point but it is yet to be signed off by the minister. They have informally been given the go ahead. WAG has produced an MPA strategy which will be circulated next week. CCW and WAG have developed draft terms of reference for the MPA project board. A stakeholder group will be formed by the Wales Maritime Partnership which is a forum that advises WAG on sustainable use of the marine environment. The intention is to launch this in summer. Also developing ideas on scientific criteria but don't want that known widely yet. John Hamer is meeting with JNCC and NE soon to work towards integrating the Welsh MCZ work with the Irish Sea Project.

The Scottish Marine Bill went to Parliament on the 30th April. JNCC, SNH and SG, are developing selection guidance for inshore and offshore MPAs. A project initiation document of staffing, timelines etc is being produced by Katie Gillham. A project manager is to be hired as soon as possible. They will be managing inshore and offshore waters. SNH will have a product team which is similar to the MCZ regional team which will contain an MPA planner, a liaison officer and a communications officer. The exact complement is yet to be decided as has who will be employing them. It will be split between JNCC and SNH.

In English territorial waters and in English and Welsh offshore waters work is progressing well. An MCZ strategy was released by Defra. They have also released Guidance Notes 1. This is out for comment and provides an overview of how MCZs will be selected. More detailed, specific guidance for regional areas has been developed by JNCC, NE and Defra to enable identification of sites that can conform to network objectives as a whole. They will be formally consulted on after the Marine Bill is passed. The timeline is hopefully for autumn. There will be an independent scientific panel approved by Defra to

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advise on the regional projects fulfilling the network obligations and will return formal advice back to the regional projects if gaps are noted. To underpin the delivery of the network recommendations by October 2011 JNCC, NE and Defra are working on a network framework guidance, i.e. the process for recommending sites. At a national level communication materials are being developed. AR produced a document of standard text for communications materials, e.g. leaflet, website material with a view to it being signed off at the next project board meeting. Also, have been collating frequently asked questions to develop standard answers that can be used across the four regions. They will be signed off in due course and the system for that will be signed off at the next project board meeting.

Finding Sanctuary has been running since 2007 and now needs to conform to national guidance. Have to change terms of reference as they are now not working independently. They have increased their stakeholder group from 15 to 34 members with new national and regional sectors represented on that board. There may still be new members. In the Irish Sea, Envirolink is expected to have a full product team by mid June. With the North Sea group there are more challenges as in getting the final wording for an MOU with their partner, Yorkshire and Humber Sea Food group. They have a lot to lose and gain so must get it right but they must deliver what we need. There is staff ready to go there. The Eastern Channel project has moved to the University of Kent (DICE) as Kent county council couldn't accommodate them all. Also the University can give more support. There have been some initial stakeholder meetings for information.

Discussion at the UK MPA Policy group meeting discussed the value of a UK stakeholder group. Advantages include streamlining the Scottish, Welsh and English MCZ project areas at a UK level. JNCC will study an initial proposal on existing groups and whether it is beneficial to propose a new group and will advise at next policy meeting on the 26th June. JNCC are keen as it will cross over sites. It needs to be as rational and sensible as possible.

6. Selection of SACs for Annex I habitats

6.1 UK SAC work programme for forthcoming sites

There are no major updates at this point.

AP 21.8 For all agencies to update their plans when the document is circulated by TC as this is used to advise Committee.

6.2 Update on JNCC survey plans

The Anton Dohrn survey planning is progressing well. The survey will mobilise on the 1st July. There will be 14 days on site, 5 days at Anton Dohrn and 9 days at Rockall.

With regard to survey plans to assess *Modiolus* reef off Anglesey, JNCC had a meeting with Eirgrid, who have conducted an east-west interconnector project in the Irish Sea where they found *Modiolus* reef. They are also having a meeting with CCW and have received advice from JNCC regarding cable laying. JNCC and Cefas are collaborating on a survey in the area as CEFAS are doing multibeam work there. This will be followed by a ground-truthing survey with CCW. The SEA 6 survey of the Irish sea will focus effort.

6.3 Pisces Reef proposal for dSAC boundary

A brief presentation was given on a draft SAC boundary for Pisces Reef. Multibeam, video and stills data have been collated from SEA 6 surveys and AFBI and the draft boundary will be further refined with some additional data from NIEA and BGS. Pisces Reef is being progressed over North West Irish Sea Mounds, both of which are in the Irish Sea and potentially provide similar features. The NW Irish Sea Mounds crosses over into inshore and as Northern Ireland are not keen to progress this site, it does not make sense for JNCC to progress it alone, especially as the boundary would split a pinnacle feature. Pisces Reef contains stony and bedrock reef. A SAC selection document will be produced and provided to Project group for comment either intersessionally with an aim to go to Committee in September or at the September Project Group meeting.

The importance of ground-truthing as much as possible rather than just inferring was discussed as it has become ever more important to have strong scientific justification for when sites come under scrutiny.

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AP21.9 JNCC to provide inter-sessional/sessional information on Pisces Reef to the MN2KPG group for comment, according to SAC consultation timetable; probably early 2010.

6.4 Update on progress of draft marine SACs: East Mingulay and Sound of Barra

The site selection documents are with SNH senior management and are ready for SG. JNCC are concerned that they have not seen these documents. SG receives advice for sites within 12nm of the Scottish coast rather than these being submitted to Defra. JNCC feels this goes against the UK network ethos. CH answered by saying that historically the sites did not come through this group (i.e. for all the other sites proposed by Scotland for marine SACs). CH also stated that the group was fully aware of the sites and that she had given a presentation on these (19th MN2KPG meeting, 23rd September 2009), with details of the features and boundaries at a previous MN2KPG meeting. This had been a chance for the group to make comments on the sites. SNH have also provided information to JNCC on extent of reefs and sandbanks when requested for a UK summary of the SAC suite (which included Areas of Search).

There was a request from JNCC to have access to the shapefiles of the draft SACs once they are advised to SG. JNCC maintains a shapefile of the UK network sites, from dSAC to SAC. As soon as sites are advised to Defra they become a dSAC and are put in the shapefile which is publicly available on the JNCC website. SNH feel SG will be very unlikely to agree to have them made public at this dSAC stage. SNH feels that this approach has the potential to create a lot of work without much gain to anyone. This was shown by the Sound of Barra draft boundary (which affects the Western Isles) for which SNH and SG were open with the considerations of the site. As a result they have received many FOIs. JNCC feels that to be able to advise industry making areas of search publicly available is very important. Government needs to understand that industry needs to know where potential sites are so as to be able to avoid them.

AP 21.10 JG to speak to Scottish Government regarding the SAC progression process

AP 21.11 CH to ask about permission for JNCC to have the dSAC boundaries information.

7. Selection of SACs for Annex II species

7.1 Update on seals at sea contract

The bio-geographic moderation seminar has highlighted the need for this work which was pre-empted by this seal contract. CJ stated that at the Galway meeting David Mallon said that SG had already looked at seals. However, the Marine mammal group didn't know about seal work and CJ then asked CH and NB whether they were aware of this area of work. Neither CH nor NB were aware of such work so could not confirm this statement and said they would check with David Mallon. CJ will follow this up as need to know if a review has happened is it sufficient or does it need to be incorporated into a larger review. The plan is to conduct a UK analysis of tracking data to identify sites important for life and reproduction in addition to the breeding/haul-out sites already in the network. This work needs to look at feeding areas in both inshore and offshore and overlay this onto the existing site series to assess the needs for additional sites or the extension of existing sites. The proposal for work needs to be circulated to take on board the new information and/or direction needed.

AP21.12 CH to seek clarification of the statement made by David Mallon about seals at the moderation meeting.

8. Consultation, Advice and Management of SACs with marine components

8.1 Update on offshore SAC consultation plans

It is still hoped to begin consultation on Dogger Bank and northwest Rockall. There has not been much update on progress. JNCC has cabinet clearance for Rockall but doesn't want to split the two. Currently, the plan is to begin formal consultation in November 2009 with Dogger Bank, Rockall, Bassurelle, the two joint sites, six NE inshore SACs and two SPAs. All is subject to ministerial approval. Submission to Europe would be August 2010. A *Purdah* before upcoming elections has postponed announcing new consultations until June. Consultation on Hatton, Wight-Barfleur, and Pisces Reef is planned to begin by November 2010. It is too far apart on timescales to do a consultation on northwest and east Rockall together.

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8.2 Update from each of the agencies on consultation plans

For the two Scottish sites, SNH advises SG and they make the decision concerning consultation and inform Defra. At the last project group meeting the possibility of joint consultations was discussed but SNH feels that SG would want to go consult separately. It was agreed by all present that it is essential to maintain good communications, e.g. JNCC is having a meeting with SFF on NW Rockall to establish what data they have. SNH have had interaction with them before and NB will pass on a letter from them to CJ for information. David Donnan is an appropriate SNH contact for fisheries discussions and liaising with SFF. A discussion followed on the various experiences JNCC and SNH had with various groups and the data available.

9. Any other business

9.1 Freedom of Information/ requests

JNCC has received three FOI requests recently. SNH has also received three FOI requests plus a number of letters. A discussion followed on procedures undertaken when answering these requests by JNCC and SNH. There was an agreement to exchange experience and/or guidance between the two agencies via the experienced personnel in house.

AP 21.13 Liaison between Sue McQueen (JNCC) and Jennifer Ryles (SNH) on FOI requests to produce some guidance to be discussed at the next meeting.

There was a question regarding further discussion on the paper on the Conservation Objectives guidance presented at the last meeting. There will be but as yet there is not a replacement for Paolo to complete the work. The plan is for AA to complete the production of the conservation objectives model with the new post then continuing this work in relation to actual sites. CH to send comments to CJ and AA.

AP 21.14 CH to send comments to CJ and AA

A similar question was asked regarding the Ecological Coherence paper, again from the last meeting and further discussion on it. This has not progressed since the last meeting but is not forgotten. CH to discuss comments with AA.

AP 21.15 CH to contact AA for discussion at a later date

Summary of action points

Action point number	Action	Action by	Action on
21.1	Carol Hume to get clarification on who authorizes consultation to begin on Scottish sites, i.e. UK or Scottish ministers	26 th June, 2009	Carol Hume
21.2	John Goold and Charlotte Johnston to raise above question of who has authority to begin consultation on Scottish sites at the next UK MPA Policy Group meeting on June 26.	26 th June, 2009	John Goold/Charlotte Johnston
21.3	Nigel Buxton to ask Scottish Government how progression of sites to address the insufficiencies highlighted at the Atlantic Bio-geographic Moderation seminar will work in detail at their next SNH/SG liaison meeting.	Next SNH/SG liaison meeting	Nigel Buxton
21.4	Charlotte Johnston to distribute a table of conclusions from the Atlantic Bio-geographic moderation seminar	30 th June, 2009	Charlotte Johnston
21.5	All relevant project group members are encouraged to read the Offshore SPAs Paper and return comment to Andy Webb, Jim Reid and Kirsten Kober	September, 2009	All

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Action point number	Action	Action by	Action on
21.6	Nigel Buxton to inform Amy Ridgeway when the Scottish SPA sites have been authorised by the SG minister for sending to Europe to enable the updating of a shapefile of all the UK SPA sites, maintained at JNCC.	June/July, 2009	Nigel Buxton
21.7	All relevant group members to send comments to Andy Webb on the SPA boundaries for common scoter and red-throated diver methodology paper	30 th June, 2009	All
21.8	All agencies to update their plans when the MN2KPG_Plan document is circulated by Therese Cope. The document is circulated 1 month before a meeting. Updated documents to be returned to TC. This document is used to advise Committee	13 th September, 2009	All, followed up by Therese Cope
21.9	JNCC to provide inter-sessional/sessional information on Pisces Reef to the MN2KPG group for comment	2010	JNCC
21.10	John Goold to speak to Scottish Executive regarding the SAC progression process, i.e. clarification on whether Scottish sites are advised to SG or to Defra	Next meeting	John Goold
21.11	Carol Hume to request permission for JNCC to have the dSAC boundaries information for a shapefile of all UK SAC sites which JNCC maintains and is publicly available	30 th June, 2009	Carol Hume
21.12	Carol Hume to seek clarification of the statement made by David Mallon about seals at the moderation meeting.	26 th June 2009	Carol Hume
21.13	Charlotte Johnston and Carol Hume to organise a liaison between Sue McQueen (JNCC) and Jennifer Ryles (SNH) on FOI requests to produce some guidance to be discussed at the next meeting.	13 th September, 2009	Charlotte Johnston/Carol Hume
21.14	Carol Hume to send comments on the Conservation Objectives to Charlotte Johnston and Annabelle Aish	August, 2009	Carol Hume
21.15	Carol Hume to contact Annabelle Aish for discussion on the Ecological Coherence methodology paper at a later date	June, 2009	Carol Hume