

NSC MARINE RESOURCES GROUP ANNUAL REPORT – 2008

1. The aim of the report is inform the NSC General Assembly about the work of the NSC Marine Resource Group in 2007/2008.
2. Over the past year the NSCMRG has :
 - Had 2 Group meetings one in Bergen and one in Brussels
 - Had 1 Political meeting in Copenhagen
 - Had a meeting with ICES, North Sea RAC and the Baltic Sea RAC and Danish Fishermen's Association in Copenhagen
 - Presented the NSC resolution on closed areas to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee, in Brussels
 - Taken part in a political Seminar at the EU Parliament in Brussels
 - Attended the CPMR Fisheries Group
 - Attended the Aqua Marina Group
 - Attended the NSC Advisor meeting Skein
 - Jointly organised a conference on Managing Change in Coastal Communities
 - Attended the EU Maritime Stakeholders Conference on 19/20 May 2008

3. Meetings:

1) This meeting took place in Bergen on 21/22 January 2008 at the invitation of Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen. During this meeting we discussed many issues including maritime spatial planning and coastal zone management, climate change and aquaculture, air pollution by ships, maritime policy (future projects) and we updated on IUU and the Mercury issue. We also had a study visit to the Marine Institute of Bergen, where we had two very interesting and thought provoking presentations, this first by Svein Sundby on Climate Effects on Marine Resources and the second on Aquaculture in Warmer, Wetter and Wilder Weather, was given by Oivind Bergh both were equally fascinating.

2) Our next meeting was held in Scotland House, Brussels on 19 May 2008. The meeting was well attended and we were very pleased to welcome Cllr Ellen Oseth and Kjetil Helstad from Troms Region for the first time. Our agenda included future co-operation with BSC Fisheries Group, report of the CPMR Fisheries group meeting.

Carol Thomas, CPMR gave us an update on the Aquamarina group, the group voiced grave concern about this new group and feared that it could split the CPMR, we agreed that we would discuss this further at the NSC GA.

Cllr. Harry Jensen, NSCMRG EU Spokesperson, was invited to represent the NSC at a Seminar on Natura 2000, in the EU Parliament. Henrik Jensen gave feedback to the group, saying that it had been very useful and clearly highlighted that Member States differed in their interpretation of the Natura 2000, there seemed to be no common theme. The Group agreed that we would re-circulate the NSC Resolution on Closed Areas, so that it could be strengthened.

Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen is to represent the NSMARG at the NSC energy Co-operation meeting, there was some discussion about what the group wanted him to present.

Our colleagues from the Troms Region in Norway, were very pleased with the NSCMRG had handled the IUU issue, it had come to the NSCMRG, then on to the NSC executive then

the NSC General Assembly and on to the CPMR GA, where at all stage it was approved. Since then it was sent to the EU Commission to influence there paper, also to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee, the NSRAC and to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation FAO in Rome. It was also present to Commissioner Joe Borge, when he attended the NSRAC control and compliance conference.

Cllr. Nilsen was pleased to inform us about the lates on the mercury issue, The Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA) had put out tender on a salvage operation of U864. The bids were received on April 28, all from international salvage companies with a long-standing reputation in the field. The bids are now being assessed by Norwegian Veritas. They will conclude a recommendation to the NCA by the end of June this year. Cllr. Nilsen will keep us informed as to the progress.

Our next meeting will take place in Denmark in October.

4. Copenhagen political meetings:

1) Our first meetings took place at the offices of the Danish Fishermen's Association. Chairman Anders Fasth and Ann Bell attended the meeting with ICES, Baltic Sea and North Sea RAC and a representative of the Danish Fishermen's Association. This meeting looked at co-operation between scientists and fishermen could be better developed along the lines of the NSC Fisheries Partnership and how co-ordination of scientific requirement for RACs could be improved to ensure that RACs had the best possible advice available to them. It also discussed how the co-operation could be strengthened between the NSC and the NSRAC and BSRAC.

2) The NSCMRG Political meeting also took place at the same venue. At this meeting we discussed the agenda for the next meeting, including, IUU, Baltic Sea co-operation, CPMR, Aquaculture and Climate Change and Fuel efficiency in fishing boats. It was agreed that the NSCMRG would create a new political post within the Group, Contact/Spokesperson on Climate Change, Energy and the Costal Zone. This Spokesperson and an officer would be the contact persons on these issues, on behalf of the NSCMRG, both within the NSC and at EU and International level on fisheries related issues. It was also agreed that Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen was nominated. This suggestion would put to the next NSC Executive Committee for their approval. As Cllr. Sandy Clunes had resigned as our Vice Chairman, the NSCMRG had to look for another Vice Chair, Cllr. Josie Simpson, Shetland Islands Council, had put his name forward for the position, this was fully supported by the MSCMRG politicians, their recommendation would also go forward to the next Executive Committee. Both the recommendations were approved by the NSC Executive Committee.

5. Closed Areas and Natura 2000

The ongoing debate on Closed and Marine Protected Areas was discussed at an Inter-RAC Conference held at the Scottish Parliament, the EU Commission has agreed along the lines of the NSC resolution that Consultation and stakeholder involvement is vital.

Cllr. Harry Jensen, Ann Bell, Tommy Mostrup and Pim Visser presented the NSC resolution plus a Danish and Dutch case to the EU parliament Fisheries Committee. The EU Parliament Fisheries Committee congratulated the NSC on the work they were undertaking and supported our resolution.

Cllr. Jensen also represented the NSC as a speaker at a seminar on debate on “Natura 2000-an opportunity for or an obstacle to development”, organized by the EU Alde Group, in the European Parliament other speakers included Commissioner Hubner.

6. CPMR Fisheries Group

Anders Fath, Ann Bell and Anders Carlsberg attended a meeting of the CPMR Fisheries Group in Brussels, one area highlighted was the need for the CPMR to be more involved in RACs, following the line of the NSC. It was agreed that Josie Simpson, Chair of the CPMRFIG would attend the next meeting of the Inter-RAC Committee to discuss ways of better involvement in all RACs. Josie has since attended an Inter-RAC meeting. Cllr. Josie Simpson has also been elected as the Vice Chair of the NSCMRG, this will ensure even closer co-operation between both groups.

7. CPMR Aqua Marina Group

Ann Bell and Martin Brebner attend the first meeting of the CPMR aqua Marina Group in Brussels. The meeting established a working method for the group, which involves 3 plenary sessions per year, each focusing on a particular thematic area of the maritime policy (e.g. research, transport etc.). There is also the potential for thematic groups/meetings to be set up to examine issues in more detail. Martin Brebner and I were both concerned that this sectoral/thematic approach to examining the Blue Book could overlap significantly with the work of other groups in the CPMR. As the Maritime Policy covers similar policy areas to the CPMR as a whole, there is a real risk that the Aquamarina group becomes a 'mini-CPMR'. For instance:

Maritime Thematic Area Thematic Group	CPMR Working Group	NSC
Fisheries	Fisheries	Marine Resources
Transport	Transport	Transport
Spatial Planning		
Research	Research	Innovation &
Education		
Culture		Culture &
Tourism		
Employment	Employment and Training	Innovation &
Education		
Governance		
Environment	Sustainable Development	Sustainable
Development		

We both felt that was merit in continuing the Aquamarina group, as it is important to follow the implementation of the policy. However, in order to avoid duplication with the work of other CPMR working groups and the Geographical Commissions, it may be better for the Aquamarina group to focus on the co-ordination and governance of the Maritime Policy (i.e. conflicts between policy areas, cross-sectoral working across Commission DGs, co-ordination across national boundaries, regional/national/european co-operation etc.) and perhaps the planning framework (ICZM etc.). The group could also look at any gaps in the policy itself. **In short, the main issue we both had with the group is the thematic**

nature of its meetings, which tends to conflict with the idea of a cross sectoral maritime policy.

8. Managing Change in Coastal Communities conference

In June 2004 the NSC organised a conference in Peterhead, which looked at the "Changing role of Women in Fishing and Rural Communities", as a result of the conference the North Sea Women's Network was formed, the NSWN now has a seat on the Executive Committee of the NSRAC and also Chair the NSRAC Socio Economic Focus group. The main aim of the NSWN is to be the voice of the Coastal Communities on the NSRAC. It was agreed that the time was right to take a look at how Coastal Communities were managing the many changes that have taken place. The conference was jointly organised by the NSC and the NSWN and funded by the Scottish Government. Women from fishing communities in France, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, England and Scotland, attended the one day event in Edinburgh on 14th May. Delegates were welcomed by Scottish Fisheries Minister Richard Lochhead, MSP, who said: "There is huge potential in our fishing communities - from the men out at sea to the women and families back on shore. I want our coastal and rural communities to be a place where people want to live and work. From now on we will should be helping communities shape their own future by assisting them to set and achieve their own priorities at a grassroots level."

An international panel of presenters tackled key issues related to fisheries and aquaculture, including Dr Katia Frangoudes, University of Brest, who gave the keynote presentation on the role of women in coastal communities in Europe; Dr Alyne Delaney, an anthropologist working in Denmark who has been investigating the effects of cod recovery plans on fishing communities in Scotland and the Netherlands; and Lena Söderholm (NSC) a fisheries advisor with the Sogn og Fjordane county council in Norway, who spoke about a strategy and project to manage change in one of the country's most fishery dependent communities.



Lena Soderholm giving her presentation at the conference

A workshop session explored the challenges facing women due to the changing dynamics of the fishing industry, discussed initiatives to manage change and identify development priorities and funding sources, and looked at ways to regenerate communities, keep young people in them, and put back a sense of pride.



Scottish Cabinet Secretary Richard Lockhead MSP receiving a NSC Tartan Tie at the conference

9. Maritime Policy

Martine Brebner prepared a very good discussion paper for the NSC Marine Resource Group on possible North Sea Maritime Policy projects. After much debate we identified 4 possible project areas:

- Maritime Spatial Planning and integrated coastal zone management.
- Air pollution by ships.
- Safety at sea – The development of the Fish-Safe initiative, which is a good example of industries working in partnership to bring long term improvements in safety and the management of environmental risks. It also provides the opportunity to expand the capture and dissemination of data relating to hazards in the North Sea other than those in UK waters.
- Work the Marine Institute in Bergen and Sogn og Fjordane to develop a project on the marine ecosystem and climate change.

To date I have had two meeting with the EU Commission regarding the funding of the Safety at Sea project. This project would be split into two phases, one the development of the Fish-Safe equipment and two the management of spatial data on the hazards that lie beneath the North Sea. Another meeting with the EU Commission Maritime Policy team is scheduled for 17 June. Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen has been assisting with this project idea, which being carried out in collaboration with the Oil & Gas and Fishing sectors.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the NSC General Assembly note this report and continue to support the work of the NSC marine Resources Group.

It is also recommended that NSC General Assembly approve the NSC Marine Resource Group Work. Annex 1

Report Author

Ann Bell, NSC Marine Resources Advisor

On behalf of

Anders Fasth

NSC Marine Resources Group Chairman

