



Balanced Seas

Delivering Marine Conservation Zones in the South-East

February 2011 - Issue 7

newsletter

Balanced Seas is a collaborative project working to recommend Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) around south-east England. MCZs will be set up under the Marine and Coastal Access Act of 2009 to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology, while taking into account socio-economic interests.

Site Meetings

Balanced Seas has now moved into holding meetings for single or groups of Broad Areas of Interest (BAIs) that are clustered together. BAIs are areas that have been identified as of potential interest for discussing a future MCZ. The site meetings are attended by relevant members of the RSG and Local Groups, with local experts brought in as necessary. Five such meetings have been held so far for the following sites:

- Dover BAIs and three more recently proposed BAIs off Folkestone and Hythe were discussed at a meeting held in Folkestone in January, attended by 15 participants.
- Two BAIs off Beachy Head and a more recent proposal from the wildlife sector for South-West Rocks were discussed in a meeting in Southwick, Brighton in January, attended by 20 participants.
- Selsey Bill and Pagham Harbour BAIs were discussed at a meeting in Chichester in February
- The Kingmere BAI, which resulted from a proposal by the Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee, was discussed at a meeting in Shoreham in February
- The four BAIs along the north coast of the Isle of Wight were discussed at a meeting in Cowes in February.

All these meetings captured detailed local knowledge on the ecology and socio-economic activities underway at these sites and in some cases led to proposals for revised boundaries.

Third Progress Report

The Third Progress Report of Balanced Seas will be submitted to the Science Advisory Panel on 28 February. It will be available in the RSG Resources section of the website in early March with a summary document.

Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) activities

The sixth meeting of the RSG was held 26-27/01/11 in London. Some of the sites identified as BAIs were assigned to draft MCZ status. This means that there is confidence in the features to be protected in the site, general agreement on the boundary and a willingness on the part of stakeholders to continue discussions to propose management measures. Draft MCZ status does not necessarily mean that a site will definitely go forward in the final recommendations; there is still much debate to be held for each area.

Members of the RSG concerned with inshore areas also met on 9 February to review the results of the five site meetings. The seventh meeting of the RSG is being held as we go to press and will be reported on shortly.

The reports of all meetings will shortly be on the website. The full list of current draft MCZs, and the sites still considered to be BAIs, will be made available on the website once the Third Progress Report has been completed at the end of February.

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Keeping track of Balanced Seas progress

The project is moving ahead rapidly. To keep stakeholders informed of progress, the Balanced Seas website is being regularly updated. Recent additions include new meeting reports ([RSG Resources page](#)) and the [Guidance page](#) updated with Conservation Objectives Guidance and Sensitivity Matrices Guidance. We also share project updates via other outlets – we have recently contributed to the Medway Yachting Association 2011 Yearbook (see pgs 8-9 www.balancedseas.org/page/news/42.html), the Solent Forum newsletter, and Talk of the Thames, the newsletter of the Thames Estuary Partnership. If your organisation or sector would like information about the Balanced Seas MCZ Project for your newsletter, website or any other communications outlet, please let us know – contact p.darrell.smith@kent.ac.uk

Visit www.balancedseas.org for the latest project information.

Balanced Seas Project Team comings and goings

Sally Moore, the original Balanced Seas Communications Co-ordinator returns at the end of February after her maternity leave, on a part-time two day a week basis. Phil Darrell-Smith will be staying on which will mean that we will be able to give a big boost to the communications work over the coming months. The GIS and data gathering component of the project also has an additional team member - Anna Gibson (A.J.Gibson@kent.ac.uk), who started in January and will be working with Greg Vaughan and Hannah Thomas to prepare maps and materials for the stakeholder meetings.

Kate Mills, our Recreation Liaison Officer, left at the end of January with the completion of her contract. She did a great job for the project and will be missed. With the completion of the interviews and Fisherman work, the Project has reduced to two liaison officers. Recreation sector enquiries should now be emailed to p.darrell-smith@kent.ac.uk.

Useful Links:

- Find your sector's Regional Stakeholder Group representative
- Find your sector's Local Group representative
- MCZ Project Ecological Network Guidance

Upcoming Meetings

- 30/03/11 Essex, Thames and North Kent Local Group meeting, London
- 05/04/11 Solent, Isle of Wight and Hampshire Local Group meeting, Southampton
- 07/04/11 Sussex and South Kent Local Group meeting, Brighton
- 19-20/04/11 Regional Stakeholder Group meeting, London
- 17/05/11 Regional Stakeholder Group meeting, London

Our Liaison Officers

Jules Martin

(Commercial fishing)

j.p.b.martin@kent.ac.uk 07584 020752

Amy Pryor

(Sea-angling and charter boat operators)

a.e.pryor@kent.ac.uk 07584 020771

Project contact details

Balanced Seas

Regional MCZ Project for the South-East

Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology (DICE)

University of Kent

Canterbury

Kent CT2 7NR

Tel: 01227 827839

Website: www.balancedseas.org

Email: balancedseas@kent.ac.uk

Have your say

You can comment on any of the issues raised in our newsletter by emailing balancedseas@kent.ac.uk. We value your feedback.

If you require an alternative newsletter format please contact the communications co-ordinator on 01227 827839.

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Balanced Seas is a partnership project with the University of Kent, Kent County Council, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.