



Berwickshire & Northumberland  
Marine Nature Partnership

## **Management Group Meeting**

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 (via Zoom)**

### **Present:**

Jane Delany (Newcastle University and MNP Chair), Nick Brodin (Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership), Clare McCarty (MMO), Malcolm Frasier (NatureScot), Sophie Wild (Northumbrian Water) Catherine Scott (Natural England), Anthony Crook (EA), Edwin Dick (Port of Blyth), Lea-Anne Henry (Edinburgh University), Blair Easton (St Abbs Marine Station), Richard Willis (Space for Shorebirds), Joe Richards (Blue Marine Foundation), Gwen Potter (National Trust), Bex Lynam (The Wildlife Trusts), Erica Chapman (St Abbs Marine Reserve), Alex Aitken (NIFCA), Ann Brown (NatureScot), Jamie Stewart (River Tweed Commission), Andrew Boon (NIFCA), Beth Harvey (NIFCA), Heather Harrison (EA), Louise Hopkins (MMO), David Feige (Northumberland County Council), Zahra Ravenscroft (EA)

**Apologies:** Andy Tharme (Scottish Borders Council), Andrew Craggs (NE), Patrick Gray (MMO), Duncan Hutt (Northumberland Wildlife Trust), Alice Fisher (Berwickshire Marine Reserve)

### **1. Welcome and Introductions (Jane Delany)**

JD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attendees introduced themselves and NB announced apologies.

### **2. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

Previous minutes from December 2019 were accepted. Any matters arising were dealt with as part of the main agenda.

Action	Who	Status
Let NB have any feedback on the new online toolkit or suggestions for improvements	All	Ongoing
Anyone interested in further training or with a topic that they would like training on to let NB know	All	Ongoing
Let NB know if you would like to join the new Data, Monitoring and Research group	All	Ongoing

### 3. Project Officer Update and launch of Management Scheme consultation (Nick Brodin)

NB gave a presentation to update the group on progress since the last meeting. A copy of this is attached to the minutes.

COVID has had a big impact this year on our ability to deliver, our ways of working and on organisational finances and staff employment. However, 2020 has still seen a lot happening both locally and nationally. This has included publication of the draft North East Marine Plan, progress with the publication of Conservation Advice for marine protected areas by Natural England and NatureScot, and a new Fisheries Act for England.

Work of the Marine Nature Partnership this year has included:

- Review of the Management Scheme for our inshore marine protected areas
- Setting up of the Data, Monitoring and Research Group
- Launch of the Eider Aware North East Project with funding from Northumbrian Water and the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Unfortunately, most of the main project activity for Eider Aware was due to start in March so has been delayed due to COVID restrictions. A recording app has been produced with ERIC North East and currently has over 50 records submitted, despite a lack of heavy promotion because of the travel restrictions in place for most of 2020. A short film on eider ducks has been commissioned from local film maker Cain Scrimgeour and will be available next year. Planned public events have been cancelled but will be replaced by online events focused around 20<sup>th</sup> March (Feast Day of St Cuthbert).

Work planned for 2021 includes:

- The launch of CoastSnap, a citizen science project to monitor coastal change using photographs from mobile phones submitted by the public
- Creation of a Biosecurity Plan for the partnership area to help us take a more proactive approach to the threat from marine invasive non-native species

- Improved communications with the public about the pressures that our local marine sites are under, especially from recreation
- An updating of our Northumberland Wildlife Watching Boating Code of Conduct

2021 will see the continuation of the Scottish Year of Coasts and Waters (carried over from 2020) and the English Year of the Coast (which will run for three years). I will also see the end of the transition period and the UK's exit from the EU.

NB also reported on progress with delivering against measures of a well-managed network of marine protected areas. Overall, good progress is being made with an increased number of the outcomes being met. The main area where no progress is being made is understanding of site condition, where few of the designated features of marine protected areas have any published condition assessment.

MF asked for the outcomes assessed as red to be put on the agenda for the next MNP Steering Group meeting **ACTION NB**

A revision of the Management is currently underway and will go out soon for comment to the MNP membership plus some additional stakeholders. It was originally hoped that NB would meet with all our members face-to-face to discuss this but COVID made this impossible. The Management Scheme now covers all the eleven inshore marine protected areas which the partnership covers. The document has been shortened as much of the technical and background information now exists on our website. The 5-year Action Plan which was present in the last iteration of the Scheme has been removed and is replaced by a stand-alone Delivery Plan. This is focused on management of specific activities and a small number of overarching themes. The actions in the Delivery Plan will be reviewed each year at this Management Group meeting and the document revised as necessary. The current consultation on the revised Management Scheme and Delivery Plan will last until the end of February and it is hoped to publish the final version in April.

#### **4. Work of the Blue Marine Foundation in Berwickshire (Joe Richards)**

JR gave a presentation about the work being done by the Blue Marine Foundation on the Berwickshire coast. A copy of the presentation will be circulated with these notes.

Blue have been working in the area for over two years on fisheries and conservation projects in collaboration with the Berwickshire Marine Reserve and the St Abbs Marine Station. The work has a number of goals including sustainable fisheries and research and management. Work undertaken to date is:

- Identifying the gaps in data.
- Initial habitat mapping.
- Research with fishermen (interviews, workshops, surveys)

- Questionnaires with 3 main marine user groups
- Spatial and pressure mapping of marine users in Berwickshire
- Crustacean research
- Cross border brown crab maturity project

Future planned work includes:

- Setting up of a Berwickshire Shellfish Working Group
- Fisher led science
- Towed video and BRUV work
- Diver surveys
- Blue is also open to new opportunities, ideas and collaborations

If anyone has any ideas of locations that they would find useful to include in dive surveys then please let JR know **ACTION All**

JR also provided an update from the Berwickshire Marine Reserve, who were unable to make the meeting.

Work has taken place to consult aon and revise the BRM Codes of Conduct. The Reserve have also launched a new website (<https://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.uk/>) and are looking for feedback. There have been changes in personnel with a new coordinator (Alice Fisher) and new Board members. A Citizen Science project officer will be recruited in the new year. Main focus of the BMR next year will be Codes of conduct, citizen science & engagement. The LEADER project has now come to an end.

## **5. Space for Shorebirds (Richard Willis)**

RW gave a presentation on the work of Space for Shorebirds. A copy of this will be circulated with the meeting notes.

The Space for Shorebirds project operates on the Northumberland coast. It was set up in response to the Local Plan for Northumberland, whose Habitats Regulations Assessment identified the need to put measures in place to mitigate the impacts of increased recreational pressures on coastal SPAs and SACs resulting from new housing.

Funding for the project comes from a contribution from developers for all new housing with 7km of the coast, and for larger housing developments 7-10km of the coast.

Space for Shorebirds employs two Rangers and aims to engage with all coastal users through publications, social media, and personal interaction. Regular monitoring of bird disturbance is carried out at six focus areas along the coast. Breeding shorebird protection

work will take place during the summer. Mapping of the invasive piri-piri burr is being undertaken on dune SACs and work will take place to remove this using volunteers from Coast Care.

A 'Dog Ranger' scheme has been set up with participating dogs, who pledge not to chase birds, highlighted on social media.

A voluntary approach is being taken to control bird disturbance issues but Space for Shorebird staff do have enforcement powers to deal with dogs off leads through fixed penalty notices.

Future work will include more public engagement, such as holding dog training classes.

## **6. Short presentations from members**

The meeting heard a series of 5-minute presentations.

### Brown crab maturity project (Andrew Boon/Blair Easton)

AB and BE presented on this project which is being carried out by the St Abbs Marine Station, Northumberland IFCA and Blue Marine. A copy of the presentation can be found at [this link](#)

This project will assess and estimate the current size of maturity for edible crab in Berwickshire and Northumberland. This will inform vital stock assessment work in the Northumberland IFCA district and provide an assessment of the appropriateness of the existing Minimum Catch Reference Sizes in both regions.

### Edinburgh University- St Abbs Marine Station collaborative working (Lea-Anne Henry)

LAH introduced the partnership agreement which Edinburgh University have signed with the St Abbs Marine Station. The Ocean Change Research Group at Edinburgh is looking for new opportunities (particularly at Berwickshire) to work with partners around ocean governance and marine protected areas. A brief about the work and opportunities can be found at [this link](#). Anyone with ideas for potential collaborations can contact LAH **ACTION ALL**

### Environment Agency (Zahra Ravenscroft)

ZR provided a brief update on some of the marine work being undertaken by the Environment Agency. A separate meeting to provide a longer update for everyone will be arranged by the EA later in 2021.

Work is being carried with Northumberland Rivers Trust to reduce nutrient inputs into coastal streams. Opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement are being pursued on

the Coquet estuary. A study into the feasibility of managing the Wansbeck barrage to improve tidal flow is taking place and habitat creation opportunities are being identified on the Blyth estuary.

#### NatureScot (Malcolm Fraser)

NatureScot is the new name for Scottish Natural Heritage and has the tagline “A nature rich future for Scotland”.

A new West of Scotland marine SPA has been designated (outside of our area) and other marine SPAs are proposed but as of the date of the meeting there is no news about when these will be designated [NB: since the meeting the Outer Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA has been designated with includes part of the Berwickshire coast]. The ‘Plunge In’ fund which was created as part of the Scottish Year of Coasts and Waters has ended but a new Scottish Marine Environment Enhancement Fund is being developed.

#### North East Marine Plan (Clare McCarty)

CMc gave an update on progress with the North East Marine Plan. A copy of the presentation can be found at [this link](#)

The draft North East Marine Plan was published earlier in 2020. The Plan aims to ensure that the right actions take place in the right way in the right place. The Draft north east marine plan contains 56 policies across the 3 themes of Environment, social and economy. A summary of the consultation responses is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-north-east-north-west-south-east-and-south-west-marine-plans-consultation-summary-2020>

The MMO is aiming for plan adoption by Spring 2021. In the meantime, the consultation draft plan is a material consideration material consideration for decision-makers and applicants for marine licences. A monitoring survey into use of the Plan is underway and closes on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **7. AoB**

No other business was raised.

#### **8. Summing up (Jane Delany)**

JD thanked everyone for their attendance and noted the range of activity that has taken place this year despite the problems caused by COVID.

## Summary of Actions

Action	Who	Status
Include issues arising out of the progress report on delivering a well-managed network of marine protected areas on the agenda for discussion at the next MNP Steering Group meeting	NB	
Let JR know if have any ideas of locations that they would find useful to include in dive surveys	All	
Contact LAH if you have any ideas for suitable collaborations with University of Edinburgh	All	