



Berwickshire & Northumberland
Marine Nature Partnership

Steering Group Meeting 1pm 4th November 2025 via Teams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

Nick Brodin (notes)	NB	Berwickshire and Northumberland MNP
Anne Brown	AB	NatureScot
Raffaella Diesel	RD	Scottish Borders Council
David Feige (Chair)	DF	Northumberland County Council
Rhiannon Lamb	RL	MMO
Sarah Richardson	SR	NIFCA
Natalie Stanford-Wallace	NW	Environment Agency
Catherine Scott	CS	Natural England

Apologies:

Ruairidh Anderson	RA	Scottish Marine Directorate
-------------------	----	-----------------------------

2. Minutes of the last meetings

The notes from the April 2025 Steering Group were agreed and the actions reviewed. All actions from the meeting have been discharged. Recruitment has taken place for an additional offer to support the partnership. Amy Hopley has been appointed to the post and will start in December.

3. Partnership Officer Update

A full written update was provided with the papers for the meeting. Topics covered included:

Championing Coastal Collaboration (3Cs): The draft coastal habitats restoration framework for the North East and Berwickshire -produced jointly with the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership - is now out for consultation with stakeholders. The work done on this document has helped to inform the text of the North of Tyne LNRS.

The Coastal Partnerships Network has submitted an Expression of Interest for further 3Cs funding for this financial year. The budget for this included a contribution to the partnership for further regional and transboundary work.

Review of Delivery Plan for the Management Scheme: No comments were received about the updated Delivery Plan for the Management Scheme. The updated document has been placed on the Marine Nature Partnership's website.

New Story Map for the Coquet to St Mary's MCZ: A Story Map about the wildlife of the Coquet to St Mary's MCZ has been created as one of the outputs from the Protected Sites Strategy project we carried out with Natural England earlier in 2025. This is intended to provide a non-technical introduction to the site for the public, provide information about its importance and the pressures which it is under.

Marine INNS Strategy: NB attended the July meeting for the North East INNS Strategy to give a presentation about marine INNS. The partnership funded a summer intern, Tabitha Carr, who worked with Newcastle University/Dr Heather Sugden monitor settlement panels in Berwickshire and the North East and to work with the University on the development of a rapid response toolkit for when marine INNS are detected.

Citizen Science and Outreach Projects: A survey project was trialled with the RSPB, the Northumberland Coast National Landscape and Space for Shorebirds to gather additional data about changing distributions of Eider in the area surrounding Coquet Island and about the dispersal of eider creches once they leave the Coquet estuary. A meeting is being held on the 6th November to review what data have been collected and to agree next steps. We have continued to work with volunteers from the Northumberland Coast National Landscape on monitoring of rocky shores. Three surveys were carried out: two at Low Newton and one at Lady's Skerrs (Berwick).

Student Bursary Scheme: Three bursaries were awarded through our Student Bursary Scheme to support the costs of student dissertation fieldwork:

- Rosemary Adams (University of Edinburgh) - Nature-based Solutions to Estuarine Eutrophication: The effectiveness of multi-cell constructed wetlands in mitigating nutrient enrichment at Budle Bay, Lindisfarne.
- Mariana Bui (University of Edinburgh) - Nutrient Impacts on Zostera Meadows and Adjacent Bare Sediments: Implications for Blue Carbon Accounting
- Rachel Dalton (Newcastle University): The effects of anthropogenic disturbance on grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) spatial behaviour at Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve.

4. Recent staff recruitment and priority work areas for new staff member

The Marine Nature Partnership advertised for an Assistant Partnership Officer on an initial 18-month contract. We received 59 applications including many more strong candidates than we could interview. Four candidates were interviewed in September by a panel consisting of David Feige (NCC), Sarah Richardson (NIFCA) and Nick Brodin

(MNP). The successful candidate, Amy Hopley, will start work on the 15th December. The new post will help to deliver the overall work programme of the partnership with a particular focus on supporting and growing our citizen science and communications work.

5. Partner Updates

Northumberland IFCA: SR reported that MPA Assessments for commercial fish and for hand gathering had been carried out and will go on the NIFCA website soon. Nephrops surveys and fish surveys of the Aln estuary have been carried out. The NIFCA v-notching scheme is continuing with 1000 lobsters now having been notched. The Berwick to St Mary's MCZ assessment is ongoing.

Scottish Borders Council: RD has been working on an outline gull management plan for Eyemouth. A project from the Berwickshire Marine Reserve on gulls is also in development. There are also discussions ongoing about what to do with the seawall in Eyemouth. A consultant is working on a proposal.

Environment Agency: TRAC surveys of the Tweed estuary have now completed. Surveys of seagrass at Budle Bay and the Coquet estuary have been carried out.

Marine Management Organisation: There have been reports of increases in the levels and frequency of disturbance to marine wildlife this summer, particularly around the Farne Islands. RL reported that the MMO has held workshops with stakeholders to discuss this.

National Trust: the National Trust have been working with Natural England on a research project to look at the behaviour of large gulls on the Farne Islands and the impacts of predation on Tern and Eider numbers. NT are also partners in a bid to the Species Recovery Fund which is in development to look at shorebird protection along the coast. JP also reported that he is in discussion with stakeholders about how to address anti-social behaviour at Druridge Bay.

Natural England: CS was having difficulties with audio and was unable to provide an update.

Northumberland County Council: The County Council's Highways Department are currently looking into work needed to secure a road on the coast at Cresswell which is imperilled by coastal erosion. In the longer-term it seems likely that the road will need to be moved. DF also fed back on the work of the Space for Shorebirds project. An increase in levels of gull predation on ringed plover chicks was reported during the nest season. The North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy (which includes sub-tidal areas on a non-statutory basis) has been drafted and has been passed by the Defra family QA panel. A public consultation will commence later in the year.

6. AoB

None

7. Table of actions from meeting and rolled over actions from previous meeting

No actions were identified during the meeting.