

EUCC Coastal News

No 12 December 2004

EUCC Coastal News is a monthly newsletter published by EUCC - The Coastal Union for its members and for the press. Readers and Network members (only entitled to newsletters) are encouraged to join the EUCC as a Private or Professional member. Members are entitled to a variety of services and discounts: check in www.eucc.net/en/members. For free subscriptions, comments or contributions, please contact: news at coastalguide.org (apologies for anti-spam code).

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**The EUCC Coastal News Editors wish you all
a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year!**

– Fishery and Aquaculture–

1. “Turning the Tide”: British Royal Commission Report sees in huge No-Fishing Zones only hope to save fish-stocks from disaster

One-third of the world’s oceans should be declared protected areas to stop the wholesale slaughter of fish species. Britain’s Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution states this in a report on the marine environment called “Turning the Tide”. It declares that whole marine ecosystems are on the verge of collapse. The creating of Marine Reserves –areas where fishing is not allowed - ocean wide might however offer a solution. Evidence suggests that creating such reserves leads to a several fold increase in the size and number of fish, shellfish and other animals. The commission suggests that 30 percent of the world’s oceans should be closed off. Regarding Britain, the commission also suggests such a target for its coastal waters and the North Sea in general - the most drastic call ever made to scale back fishing in Britain or Europe. “The presumption in favour of fishing” should be reversed. Particular mention is made of the fate of cod in the European waters. It threatens to go extinct, as earlier happened with the once huge cod stocks of the grand banks for New Foundland.

The Royal Commission is an independent body providing non-binding advice on environmental issues to the UK government. It represents an influential group of scientists. Four years ago it called for a 60 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. To laughed at then, it is now a British government target. The European Commission is already proposing similar marine protected zones, especially regarding cod. The report (420 pages) and a summary (30 pages) are available at:

<http://www.rcep.org.uk/fishreport.htm>

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2. EU agrees fishing quotas for 2005

Fisheries ministers of the European Union met end of December to set the following year’s fishing quota in EU waters. The European Commission wanted to put in place further limitations on fishing, several cod fishing areas are to be closed in 2005, based upon repeated warnings from ICES, several governmental agencies and scientists that the species may be on the verge of disappearing from EU waters. EU members with a North Sea coast had opposed this plan. Under the compromise deal, the Commission agreed to allow more fish to be caught by fishing fleets next year than it had originally envisaged. The ministers agreed to gentler quota cuts provided the reductions continue for several years. Environmentalists say the agreed measures, such as reducing the numbers of days fishing boats can spend at sea every month, do not go far enough to prevent irreversible destruction of cod in Europe.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4116887.stm>

3. Population of wildlife in West Africa declines due to overfishing the oceans

Collapsing fish populations off the west coast of Africa have forced the people to take ever larger amounts of meat to add protein to their diets. In years when catches are weak, fish are unavailable or too expensive for most people, so these people turn to wildlife hunting. A study highlighting this problem, published recently (Science, vol 306, p 1180) showed that populations of 41 species of wild mammals in six nature reserves tended to decline more steeply in years of poor fish harvest. The knowledge that overfishing the oceans can imperil wildlife on land adds urgency to the crisis that has hit global fish stocks. A quick remedy may be to cut back on the quantity of fish caught by foreign factory trawlers operating off West Africa, many of which come from the European Union.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=mq18424741.000>

4. EU sabotages protection of deep sea coral with high seas bottom trawl fishery

Recently, the UN General Assembly was confronted with evidence of high seas bottom trawl fishery within the European Union. This form of fishing, in which giant nets armed with steel plates and heavy rollers are dragged across the sea bed, scooping up almost everything in their path and destroying most of whatever is left, is highly destructive. According to the report, any possible UN steps to take decisive action were cynically sabotaged by the countries of the European Union. Many European countries had been among the most forceful advocates of a drift nets ban but now evidently view the future of two-thirds of the planet’s surface as secondary to their short-term self-interests. Although the deep sea was once considered all but devoid of life, it is now reckoned that as many as 10 million species may live in, on, or just above the sea bed. But many of these species grow and mature slowly, and many are highly limited in their distribution, leaving their populations almost uniquely vulnerable to the effects of such damaging human activities.

http://www.eurocbc.org/eu_saboyages_deep_sea_coral_protection_22nov2004page1804.html

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5. Aquaculture not sustainable for marine environment

Fish farming is still causing damage to the marine environment and has a long way to go before it can be described as sustainable, according to Robin Harper Member of the Scottish Parliament. Mass escapes of salmon and sea trout – perhaps a quarter of a million this year in Scotland – sea lice, inappropriately sited farms, and the ever present risk of pollution from veterinary medicines and the spread of diseases through over-stocking all adds up to an unsustainable picture for our marine environment. Scotlands rivers are losing the wild salmon and sea trout for which they have been renowned for centuries. Wild salmon and sea trout catches remain at historically low levels in the West, while on the East coast, where there are no salmon farms, conditions are not nearly so bad. No action on locational guidelines and little action on environmental impact assessment, diversifying medical treatments and fish escapes are all causes for the decreasing wild salmon and trout stocks year after year. Aquaculture is one of the main causes of overfishing in the world. A third of the total fish catches in the world are claimed by aquaculture and cattle farms to produce cattle- and fish food. The demand of the aquaculture is growing rapidly.

http://www.eurocbc.org/scottish_greens_aquaculture_not_environmentally_sustainable_03dec2004page1817.html

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6. Eel on your Christmas toast?

The eel stock is dangerously close to collapse. In the mid-1980s, the situation changed dramatically. The number of new glass eels entering rivers has now dropped to 1%. The crash happened over the whole European continent. Possible causes are over-exploitation, inland habitat loss, climate and ocean current change, disease and pollution. In early 2005 the EUCC and EECNET Alliance will pay due attention to the eel to get the message across to fishermen, managers, and politicians.

The life cycle and fisheries: once the leaf-like larvae arrive in coastal waters from their way from the Sargasso Sea, they transform into transparent juveniles called glass eels. These glass eels gather in river estuaries and wait for the river water to reach 10-12°C, before swimming upstream and migrating into inland waters. While they are waiting for the rivers to warm they first become a target for fishermen. Most of the catch is exported for aquaculture in eastern Asia with some going to European eel farms. Only a small percentage of the glass eels get into the rivers. During their time in the river they are heavily targeted by fisheries. On their way out of the rivers they are trapped and netted in a variety of traditional small-scale fisheries. The escapees then leave the rivers and disappear into the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean, heading back to the as yet unknown spawning area.

The highest consumption of eel occurs around Christmas and in several countries environmental groups are campaigning against eel consumption. The consumer can contribute to saving the eel by not eating it on their Christmas toast.

<http://www.ices.dk/marineworld/eel.asp>

7. Recommendations for the Christmas menu: alternatives to endangered fish

Famous chef Rick Stein, who has placed fish at the forefront of the revolution in British eating habits in the past two decades, has now issued recommendations how consumers can respond to the fish stocks crisis. The editors of EUCC Coastal News recommend not to buy eel, as stipulated in the item above. And we support Ricks view:

Cod Once one of the world's prime food sources, prized for its good flavour and pearly white flesh. Now at dangerously low levels in the North Atlantic and North Sea. An alternative is the **hoki**, found around New Zealand. Now recognised as a prime white fish, hoki spawn easily and grow fast, so are sustainable.

Skate Skate and rays are vulnerable to exploitation as they are slow to mature, as are other popular but endangered fish such as bluefin tuna or swordfish. Good alternatives are abundant fish like **herring** or **mackerel**.

Plaice The current North Sea stock is about 190,000 tons; the minimum level is 230,000. A 55 per cent cut in fishing next year is advocated. Plaice can be replaced by **megrin sole** which, until recently, was not fished for because there were enough plaice to go around.

Sea bass Until it became a staple of fashionable restaurants and gastro-pubs, sea bass was not targeted for large-scale fishing. But soaring demand has led to trawling for spawning and pre-spawning fish, which threatens sustainability and also kills dolphins caught in nets. **Grey mullet**, another big, meaty, firm-fleshed fish, is a good alternative for the sea bass.

Haddock Levels are higher in the North Atlantic than the North Sea, but cod are often netted with them. Another firm white fish, **pollock**, is found in our coastal waters and is a favourite of harbour-wall anglers.

Monkfish This fish was originally used for cheap "scampi" and became massively popular when the potential of its meaty flesh was discovered – and more expensive, resulting in stocks being seriously threatened. A nice alternative is **tilapia**.

http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/food_and_drink/news/story.jsp?story=590823

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– EU News and Initiatives –

8. Nature protection: Commission establishes largest ever list of protected areas in the EU

The European Commission has taken another major step forward in establishing NATURA 2000, the network of protected nature sites in the EU. It has decided to include more than 7,000 nature sites in the Atlantic and Continental regions of the EU in the network. The 197 animal species, 89 plant species and 205 habitats covered are scientifically considered of European importance. This means that their protection must be enhanced to preserve valuable bio-diversity in Europe. Species such as the Wolf, the Otter, the Salmon as well as certain coastal lagoons and river systems are part of the lists, which cover most of the EU's territory (France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, UK, Sweden, Austria and Denmark).

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "By establishing Natura 2000, the EU strives towards reaching its objective of halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010. After a slow start to Natura 2000 in the late 1990s, we have been able to pick up speed in the last five years. With the adoption of the lists in the Atlantic and Continental regions, the Natura 2000 network becomes the largest coherent network of protected areas in the world and the EU's most efficient operational tool to protect its fauna and flora."

The Natura 2000 network is set up under the EU Birds and Habitats Directive. Being part of Natura 2000 means that the selected areas benefit from legal protection as set out in the Directives. Member states must take all necessary measures to guarantee their conservation and avoid their deterioration. Not all economic activity in the sites is excluded, but Member States must ensure that such activities are carried out in a way which is compatible with the conservation of the habitats and species living there.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/home.htm>

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1449&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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9. Maritime Safety Traffic: Commission takes 8 Member States to EU Court of Justice

The Commission has decided to take Belgium, Greece, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom to the Court of Justice. They failed to implement key EU legislation on vessel traffic monitoring and information systems which was adopted by the EU in the wake of the Erika accident. The aim of the infringed legislation is to enhance the safety of maritime traffic by improving the response of authorities to incidents, accidents and potentially dangerous situations at sea, therefore contributing to better prevention and detection of pollution by ships. "Five years after the wreck of the Erika and three years after that of the Prestige, I am appalled that Member States delay the implementation of key measures to improve maritime safety. Countries need to define places of refuge in case of emergency and ensure the installation of black boxes on all ships", said Jacques Barrot, Vice President responsible for Transport.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1488&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

10. Marine Research Theme to be included in EU 7th Framework Programme.

The European Commission has recently issued an invitation to stakeholders to identify Research Themes to be included in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) to secure a meaningful role for ocean science. Submissions are invited on-line and must be input on or before 31 December 2004 at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/themes/comments_en.cfm

The statistics generated from this exercise will be used by the Commission in its negotiations with Member States to select / discard Themes to be included in FP7. The sustainable development of Europe's marine resources, encompassing some 50% of the European territorial space, represents a continuing and outstanding challenge for the European Union and its Member States. Marine research can and must play a critical role in the sustainable development of European marine resources and in supporting European development policies as they pertain to the marine sector. It must therefore be included as one of the strategic orientations of European Science Policy and implemented through the 7th Framework Programme.

More information: <http://www.eurocean.org/contents.php?id=316>

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– International news in brief –

11. 10th UN Climate Conference announce to help threatened countries

The tenth-anniversary UN Conference on Climate Change concluded 18 December after adopting a package of measures aimed at helping countries to prepare for climate change. In the face of growing evidence that climate change impacts can already be detected, the conference adopted the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures. Several new countries joined the Protocol bringing the total Kyoto membership up to 132 Parties. Several others announced that their ratification was underway. Other highlights of the conference included the much-anticipated submissions by Brazil and China of their first national communications outlining their strategies for addressing climate change. WWF presented the report "Extreme Weather, does nature keep up?" which goes one step further than previous studies by analysing the impact of increased extreme weather events on nature. The combination of an increase in temperature, and increased variability of severe weather events, will place species and ecosystems at an even greater risk than was previously feared. The first regional assessment under IPCC, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Scientific Report, also supports this increased risk for species and ecosystems. The conference also asked the Convention secretariat to convene a seminar of governmental experts next May in Bonn. The US first resisted, but later agreed in return for an investigation on the current climate policy. James Connaughton, president of the Environmental Commission of the White House, recently said that the Kyoto Protocol sets impossible standards by only offering long-term solutions. He argues that short-term solutions are more needed. The US approach is to invest in research and development, and let the market decide which technologies are profitable, e.g. the US now invests two billion dollars in research about clean-coal technology. However, this does not result in US carbon reductions given the absence of environmental regulation and obligations to reduce carbon emissions. According to Friends of the Earth the Netherlands, the statements of James Connaughton show that the US still do not take serious the climate change problem, and this is incomprehensible for a country that is responsible for a quarter of the global emissions.

http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_10/items/2944.php

http://panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/climate_change/news/news.cfm?uNewsID=17191

<http://www.amap.no/>

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12. Improved IMO Ballast Water Convention

Currently, under both the 1997 IMO (International Maritime Organisation) ballast water management Guidelines A.868(20) and the recently adopted IMO ballast water Convention, the main management practice available to ships to reduce the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water and sediments, is for the ship to exchange its ballast water in the open ocean during the voyage (killing freshwater organisms and flushing out coastal organisms taken on at the source port). Ballast water exchange at sea is however, subject to several serious limitations, including inapplicability on short voyages or when the voyage is mainly in coastal waters, ship safety and stability limitations in rough seas, and highly variable biological effectiveness. The new IMO ballast water Convention therefor sets performance criteria and phase-in deadlines for new and improved ballast water treatment systems.

<http://globallast.imo.org/BallastWaterNews17.pdf>

13. Green Light for Oil Platforms

It has been known for some time that migratory birds are much hindered by the lighting of oil platforms. They lose their ability of orientation, fly towards the light, fly circles around the platform or rest on it until dawn. This takes energy from them which they need for their journey for their migration. Recent research by Hanneke Poot, at the request of the NAM (Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij, biggest producer of oil and natural gas in the Netherlands), shows the difference it makes in the use of light colours. Red and white light are very disadvantageous for the birds. Blue light hardly disturbs the migration, but with blue light humans on the platforms can not work properly. Green light is the best option: 80 % of the birds fly on undisturbed. Dimming the lights can further increase this percentage.

For more information please mail to joop.marquenie@shell.com

See also <http://www.platformlichthinder.nl/nieuws.html#161004> (in Dutch)

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– Publications –

Coastline Report 2004-4

The new issue of EUCC-Coastline Reports, published by EUCC-Germany, is available online: G. Schernewski & M. Wielgat (2004): Baltic Sea Typology Coastline Reports 3 (2004); 1-118
http://www.eucc-d.de/coastline_reports4.php

Free copy: The printed version is freely available for EUCC Full Member Organisations and can be requested per email: admin at eucc.net (apologies for anti-spam code)

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La lettre de EUCC-France

The second newsletter from EUCC France has been issued in French. If you wish to receive a copy please send an email to: Jean.favennec@onf.fr.

Extreme Weather, does nature keep up?

The report "Extreme Weather, does nature keep up?" reveals that nature is struggling against the impacts of extreme weather and that many species and ecosystems will die out, as their natural responses to global warming will be inadequate. The report goes one step further than previous studies by analysing the impact of increased extreme weather events on nature. The report can be downloaded at:

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/climate_change/index.cfm

Hydrologie des écosystèmes marins, Paramètres et analyses

Edited by Alain Aminot and Roger Kérouel (2004, 336 pp). Ifremer Brest, direction de l'Environnement et de l'Aménagement littoral, ISBN 2-84433-133-5.

This French publication aims to acquaint those concerned by marine environmental studies, especially involving the coastal environment and water quality monitoring, with hydrological descriptors.

– Newsletters and new websites –

New EU website: Environment

The EU supports research activities aimed at recommending practical ideas and technologies to help solve environmental problems. This website explains how the Commission's Environment research programme is tackling the research challenge.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/environment/index_en.htm

Stockholm World Water Week website

A homepage for the World Water Week in Stockholm, the leading annual global meeting place for the world's diverse water community, was created. It contains the information on the Stockholm Water Symposium, topical plenary sessions and panel debates, scientific workshops, independently organised seminars and side events, exhibitions and festive prize ceremonies.

<http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>

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– Events and training, 1st Announcements –

This list only includes the 1st Announcements of conferences and training courses.

**For a complete overview of conferences please visit: <http://www.coastalguide.org/meetings>
 EUCC related conferences are added in boxes.**

February 1-4, 2005 - Fuerteventura, Canary Isles, Spain

Sustainable Tourism and Marine Protected Areas

This CoPraNet workshop is especially devoted to the preparation of a quality label for tourism destinations, highlighting environmental and sustainability milestones (or benchmarks). The workshop will also discuss options to improve information provision on sustainability issues to visitors.

<http://www.coastalpractice.net/>, contact: Ms. Yaiza Fernández Palacios yaizafv@iccm.rcanaria.es

March 1-3, 2004 - Ringkøbing, Denmark

The North Sea - Today and Tomorrow, International Conference on ICZM

<http://www.northsea.org>

March 10-12, 2005 - Zandvoort, the Netherlands

Sustainable Beach Management

During this CoPraNet workshop delegates will experience the various ways in which local, regional, national government(s), governmental and non-governmental organisations work together on various fields concerning sustainable beach management and sustainable tourism.

<http://www.coastalpractice.net/>, contact: Ms. Simone Bezuijen s.bezuijen@zandvoort.nl

March 15, 2005 - Ghent, Belgium

Coastal Spatial Strategies, CoPraNet Conference

www.coastnet.org.uk

April 11-15, 2005 - Barcelona, Spain

5th International Conference on Coastal Dynamics 2005

<http://www.coastaldynamics.org/>

April 25-28, 2005 - Munich, Germany

A Growing Europe - A Clean Environment - 13th European Water, Wastewater and Waste Symposium

<http://www.ifat.de/>

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April 17-20, 2005 - Vilamoura, Algarve, Portugal

International CoPraNet Conference: Coastal Conservation and Management in the Atlantic and Mediterranean (ICCCM)

Info : ICCCM2005 Secretariat, Tel: 351 966055637, E-mail: icccm2005_as@aeiou.pt

Internet: <http://icccm2005.tripod.com>

May 17-19, 2005 - Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Green Shipping World

<http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/greenshippingworld/index.htm>

August 5-9, 2005 - Trondheim, Norway

Aquaculture Europe 2005 on "Lessons from the Past to Optimise the Future"

<http://www.easonline.org/agenda/en/AquaEuro2005/default.asp>

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- Colophon -

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**Deadline for submitting contributions to EUCC Coastal News No 2005/01 :
21 January 2005.**

Established in 1989, EUCC - the Coastal Union is an association involving the largest coastal network in Europe with 2500 members and member organisations in 40 countries. For more information please contact EUCC International Secretariat, POB 11232, NL-2301 EE Leiden, the Netherlands, tel.: +31-71-5122900, internet: <http://www.eucc.net>



The European
Commission

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