

EUCC Coastal News

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EUCC Coastal News is the international newsletter of the Coastal Union (EUCC) for its members and for the press. We have ca. 4000 readers.

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Contributions to the next issue: EUCC-members are invited to send their contributions until 19 June **2007** to: news@eucc.net (click, with apologies for anti-spam code).

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1. CoPraNet moves ahead: QualityCoast pilot programme open for coastal towns and islands

The Coastal Practice Network – CoPraNet – aimed, during the past three years, to help the establishment of a practitioners network of coastal stakeholders to exchange information and best practice on coastal management. This network has been the origin of the QualityCoast programme which has recently opened for coastal towns and islands (non-CoPraNet partners) located in countries where pilots are currently running, i.e.: UK, Ireland, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Portugal respectively to participate in the QualityCoast programme and to implement a pilot activity. Upon successful completion of the pilot a QualityCoast Pilot Award and the QualityCoast flag can be obtained. QualityCoast is the first and thus far only programme aimed at an international quality label for coastal towns and islands. It is an addition to the Blue Flag, a quality label for beaches and marinas. The QualityCoast partnership contains municipalities, regions and knowledge institutions from 11 countries and is led by the Coastal Union (EUCC). The Coastal Union is a member of the International Jury of the Blue Flag. A maximum of 10 towns or islands can be admitted as new participants in the 2007 pilot programme and another ten in 2008.

www.qualitycoast.info

2. Data Harmonisation – Why it matters to coastal managers?

We are sure this has happened to you more than once: You or your staff needed to combine geographical data sets from different sources, but they did not match, because they were based e.g. on different standards, time scales, or geographical units. The data sets were not “interoperable”, they were not harmonised. In order to counteract this phenomenon, the European Commission has initiated INSPIRE (INfrastructure for SPatial InfoRmation in Europe). If you want to refresh your memory about what INSPIRE exactly wants to achieve, please have a look at summary information online (www.eucc.net/en/motive/index.htm). On 12th February, the Directive text was approved by the European Parliament and has been officially published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 25th April 2007, so things are moving ahead.

EUCC – The Coastal Union, representing coastal stakeholders, lead the production of a position paper to shape the implementation of this legislation and to ensure the aspirations of coastal managers are met. The first results of this exercise have been presented and discussed at the recent ICCCM'07 Conference, Hammamet, Tunisia.

We believe harmonisation offers great benefits in terms of cost-savings and efficiency. We have captured key coastal and marine stakeholders practices and aspirations and would like to share with you. We also would like to learn if these are the same as yours and would like to receive your feedback on our Executive Summary paper "Data Harmonisation - why does it matter to coastal managers". Your professional experiences and practices are welcome! We are glad to receive your comments, please mail to Maria Ferreira at m.ferreira@eucc.net

3. New research initiative - CONSCIENCE for sustainable coastal erosion management

A European consortium under the lead of WL -Delft Hydraulics, The Netherlands, has recently started a new three-year research project CONSCIENCE - Concepts and Science for Coastal erosion Management. The project is being funded under the 6th Research and Development Framework Programme of the European Commission and aims to develop and test concepts, guidelines and tools for the sustainable management of erosion along the European coastline, based on best available scientific knowledge and on existing practical experience.

In order to reach its aim, CONSCIENCE will define and validate, through pilot areas applications, a methodology to support the implementation of the key concepts for policy making for the European coasts, formulated by the EUROSION project (EC 2004) (www.euroasion.org).

EUCC-Mediterranean Centre is the partner responsible for dissemination and communication activities. For more information please visit the public website at www.conscience-eu.net. Here you will find project related information, links to the project partners, information about the End-users Advisory Group and how to get involved.

For more information, contact Maria Ferreira at m.ferreira@eucc.net

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– Coastal & Climate Change – Trends & Impacts –

2. UN IPCC: Impacts of climate change

Following are impacts of global warming outlined in the draft UN IPCC climate report due to be released in Brussels on April 6. Here is a summary of the risks faced by coastal areas on all continents:

AFRICA

- Major delta regions with large populations, such as the Nile and Niger rivers, are threatened by sea level rises.

EUROPE

- Under scenarios of a fast rise in global temperatures, an extra 2.5 million people a year will be affected by coastal flooding by the 2080s.

- Tourism to the Mediterranean might fall in summer and increase in spring and autumn.

- A rapid shutdown of the Gulf Stream bringing warm waters northwards across the Atlantic to Europe - viewed as a low probability - could have severe impacts such as cutting crop production, more cold-related deaths, and a shift in populations south.

NORTH AMERICA

- Population growth, rising property values and continued investment increase the vulnerability of coastal regions. Any rise in destructiveness of coastal storms is very likely to bring "dramatic increases" in losses from severe weather and storm surges.

- Sea level rises and tidal surges and flooding have the "potential to severely affect transportation and infrastructure along the Gulf, Atlantic and northern coasts."

LATIN AMERICA

- A rise in sea level, weather and climatic variability are very likely to have impacts on low-lying areas, buildings and tourism, mangroves, coral reefs and the location of fish stocks off Peru and Chile.

- The frequency and intensity of hurricanes in the Caribbean might increase.

POLAR REGIONS

- The extent of annually averaged Arctic sea-ice is projected to contract by between 22 to 33 percent by 2100. In Antarctica, projections range from a slight increase to an almost complete loss of summer sea ice.

- There will be "important reductions" in the thickness and extent of Arctic glaciers and ice caps, and the Greenland ice sheet this century. Losses from glaciers on the Antarctic Peninsula will continue, along with a thinning in part of the West Antarctic ice sheet. The melt will raise sea levels.

- In both Polar Regions, climate change will mean decreases in habitat for migratory birds and mammals, with "major implications" for predators such as seals and polar bears.

- Reductions in lake and river ice cover are expected in both Polar Regions. Warming will affect distribution of fish stocks.

- "The resilience of indigenous populations is being severely challenged," because of climate changes, along with economic and social shifts.

SMALL ISLAND STATES

- "Sea level rise and increased sea water temperature are projected to accelerate beach erosion, and cause degradation of natural coastal defences such as mangroves and coral reefs".

- That could curb tourism. Studies in some islands indicate that up to 80 percent of tourists would be unwilling to return for the same price if corals and beaches were damaged.

- Ports, as well as roads and international airports which are also often by the coast, are likely to be at risk from rising seas.

- Reductions in rainfall would have a big impact in cutting the size of underground freshwater stocks in islands such as Tarawa Atoll, Kiribati. Some small islands states are investing in desalination to offset projected water shortages.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

- Many ecosystems are likely to be altered by 2020. Among the most vulnerable is the Great Barrier Reef

- Development of coastal regions could lead to property coming under threat from rising sea levels. By 2050 there is likely to be loss of high-value land, faster road deterioration and degraded beaches.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41184/newsDate/2-Apr-2007/story.htm

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41197/newsDate/2-Apr-2007/story.htm

Prospects for the Indian coast

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41512/newsDate/23-Apr-2007/story.htm

3. Many large cities at risk of rising seas

More than two-thirds of the world's large cities are in areas vulnerable to global warming and rising sea levels, and millions of people are at risk of being swamped by flooding and intense storms, according to a new study released on April 4. In all, 634 million people live in the threatened coastal areas worldwide - defined as those lying at less than 33 feet above sea level - and the number is growing, said the study

published in the journal Environment and Urbanization. More than 180 countries have populations in low-elevation coastal zones, and about 70 percent of those have urban areas of more than 5 million people that are under threat. Among them: Tokyo; New York; Mumbai, India; Shanghai, China; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Dhaka, Bangladesh. The peer-reviewed scientific study said it is the first to identify the world's low-lying coastal areas that are vulnerable to global warming and rising sea levels. It said 75 percent of all people living in vulnerable areas are in Asia, with poorer nations most at risk.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070329/ap_on_sc/climate_change_rising_seas;_ylt=An6..lmdII4bFDaE81NOzrDMWMOF

www.iied.org/mediaroom/releases/070328coastal.html

Asian countries don't seem to take much precautions

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41733/newsDate/7-May-2007/story.htm

4. 1 Billion people under threat of sudden sea level surges

More than 1 billion people live in low-lying areas where a sudden surge in sea level could prove as disastrous as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, according to new research presented on April 19. New mapping techniques show how much land would be lost and how many people affected by rapid sea level rises that are often triggered by storms and earthquakes, a US Geological Survey-led team determined. E. Lynn Usery, who led the team, said nearly one-quarter of the world's population lives 100 feet (30 meters) below sea level - the size of the biggest surge during the 2004 tsunami that pulverized villages along the Indian Ocean and killed 230,000 people. The new mapping technique provides detail that was previously unavailable and gives policymakers better tools to prepare for potential disasters. With just a mouse click on the computer, researchers can gauge how much land would be lost at various sea levels, and where. The impetus for the project came after the 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 underlined the devastating impact sudden sea level surges can have on those living in coastal areas, Usery said. Even though people know low-lying areas like the Netherlands or many parts of Asia are at risk of flooding, many do not realize just how big a risk they are facing.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41485/story.htm

5. Scientist says sea level rise could accelerate

Data from satellites is showing that sea level rises and polar ice melting might be worse than earlier thought, a leading oceanographer said on March 12. Eric Lindstrom, head of oceanography at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) stated this at the sidelines of a global oceans conference in Hobart. "All indications are that it's going to get faster." Rapid advances in science in the past five years on polar ice-sheet dynamics had yet to filter through into scientific models, Lindstrom said. He also pointed to huge splits in Antarctic ice shelves in 2002, then seen as once-in-100-year events that created icebergs bigger than some small countries. The mega icebergs were first thought not to affect global sea levels because the ice broke off from shelves already floating on the surface of the ocean. But the disintegration of ice shelves that had blocked the flow of ice from the Antarctic continent could allow sudden flows by glaciers into the ocean, raising sea levels. What we're learning is that ice isn't slow. Things can happen fast," Lindstrom said. "If the (polar) ice sheets really get involved, then we're talking tens of metres of sea level - that could really start to swamp low-lying countries," he said.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/40821/newsDate/13-Mar-2007/story.htm

6. Acidic oceans threatening sea life

Rising carbon dioxide emissions are making the world's oceans more acidic, particularly closer to the poles, heralding disaster for marine life. This is one of the conclusions of the April IPCC UN report. Harvey Marchant, Australian lead author on Polar Regions for the report, said research showed a high take-up of carbon dioxide by polar oceans was producing marked changes in several species. Marchant, a former head of biology at the Australian Antarctic Division, said that Southern Ocean species were more susceptible because cold waters absorb more carbon dioxide than warmer waters. The more carbon dioxide taken up by the ocean the more acidic it becomes, inhibiting calcium carbonate formation and leaving many important planktonic species such as pteropods, or sea snails, and some algae and single-celled animals which rely on calcium carbonate for their shells to develop vulnerable. Changes could also affect the chemistry of dissolved nutrients, potentially causing large-scale changes in marine ecosystems with a knock-on effect to other larger species, such as fish and squid that rely on these organisms to survive. Other recent reports say corals and molluscs are also being affected by increasingly acidic oceans, disrupting the processing of calcium carbonate for their skeletons and shells. Marchant said that it was not known how long it would take for these effects to be reversed.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41282/story.htm

7. Reefs pass the acid test

Corals exposed to ocean acidity lost their skeletal homes but eventually regenerated them. Israeli scientists have stated this in an article in Science. To get a better idea of how corals respond to rising acidity, marine biologist Maoz Kline and biochemist Dan Tchernov of the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Science in Eilat, Israel, fast-forwarded to the year 2300, when oceanic acid is projected to be 10 times greater than it is now. They collected samples of a major reef-building group called scleractinian corals from the Red Sea and, back in the lab, bubbled carbon dioxide into their tank water. Within a month, the corals' skeletons completely dissolved. To the researchers' surprise, however, the now-naked coral polyps stuck around, eventually doubled in size, and were still alive a year later. When regular ocean water-lacking the high acid levels-was pumped back into their tanks, the polyps rebuilt their protective homes, the team reports. Coral has to worry about global warming for two reasons. Not only does carbon dioxide in the atmosphere make the oceans uncomfortably warm, it also enters the water and becomes carbonic acid, where it can dissolve a coral's external skeleton yet new research shows the soft-bodied polyps can survive and regenerate their skeletons after a "naked" year. The finding suggests corals are more resilient than thought, but experts caution that this is still no insurance policy for the world's coral reef ecosystems. Many species of coral polyps build protective skeletons throughout their lives by secreting aragonite, a mineralised form of calcium carbonate. Researchers had assumed that these polyps wouldn't last long in the harsh ocean environment without their armor.

<http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2007/329/2>

8. Global warming driving Australian fish south

Global warming is starting to have a significant impact on Australian marine life, driving fish and seabirds south and threatening coral reefs, Australia's premier science organisation said on April 4. In particular, warmer oceans, changes in currents, disruption of reproductive cycles and mass migration of species would affect Australia's marine life, particularly in the southeast. Already, nesting sea turtles, yellow-fin tuna, dugongs and stinging jellyfish are examples of marine life moving south as seas warm, said the report by the government-backed Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. The report, "Impacts of Climate Change on Australian Marine Life", is the first major study in the Australian region to combine the research of climate modellers, ecologists and fisheries and aquaculture scientists.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41256/story.htm

The report on

www.greenhouse.gov.au/impacts/publications/marinelife.html

9. Climate change sees fish grow faster in warmer water

Climate change is affecting the growth of fish, with those living in warmer, shallow waters growing faster and species in cooling deep ocean waters growing slower, according to an Australian study. The research by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) found fish were growing faster in waters above a depth of 250 metres (825 feet) and had slower growth rates below 1,000 metres (3,300 feet).

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41606/newsDate/30-Apr-2007/story.htm

www.csiro.au/csiro/channel/pchba.html

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10. Southern ocean current faces slowdown threat

The impact of global warming on the vast Southern Ocean around Antarctica is starting to pose a threat to ocean currents that distribute heat around the world, Australian scientists say, citing new deep-water data. Melting ice-sheets and glaciers in Antarctica are releasing fresh water, interfering with the formation of dense "bottom water", which sinks 4-5 kilometres to the ocean floor and helps drive the world's ocean circulation system. A slowdown in the system known as "overturning circulation" would affect the way the ocean, which absorbs 85 percent of atmospheric heat, carries heat around the globe. "If the water gets fresh enough ... then it won't matter how much ice we form, we won't be able to make this water cold and salty enough to sink," said Steve Rintoul, a senior scientist at the Australian government-funded CSIRO Marine Science. "Changes would be felt ... around the globe," said Rintoul, who recently led a multinational team of scientists on an expedition to sample deep-basin water south of Western Australia to the Antarctic. Water dense enough to sink to the ocean floor is formed in Polar Regions by surface water freezing, which concentrates salt in very cold water beneath the ice. The dense water then sinks.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41021/story.htm

www.cmar.csiro.au/

11. Northern Gulf Stream not weakening

Regarding the North Atlantic Gulf Stream however, there is rather different news. The Kiel based German marine institute IFM-Geomar announced on March 23 it had found no evidence that the Gulf Stream was

slowing down. The feared effect of global warming on the Gulf Stream, that it will slow down or even disappear, threaten to significantly *cool down* the European climate, is not [not yet, Eucc CN] taking place, IFM-Geomar scientists say. Professor Willebrand of the institute rules out any short or long 'ice-age' for Europe in the coming decades.

www.ifm-geomar.de/index.php?id=3583 (only in German)

12. Antarctic ice sheet is thinning

A Texas-sized piece of the Antarctic ice sheet is thinning, possibly due to global warming, and could cause the world's oceans to rise significantly, polar ice experts said on March 28. They said "surprisingly rapid changes" were occurring in Antarctica's Amundsen Sea Embayment, which faces the southern Pacific Ocean, but that more study was needed to know how fast it was melting and how much it could cause the sea level to rise. The warning came in a joint statement issued at the end of a conference of US and European polar ice experts at the University of Texas in Austin.

The scientists blamed the melting ice on changing winds around Antarctica that they said were causing warmer waters to flow beneath ice shelves. The wind change, they said, appeared to be the result of several factors, including global warming, ozone depletion in the atmosphere and natural variability. Other parts of the continent are also losing ice but generally not as quickly.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41175/story.htm

13. Winter Arctic sea ice near record low

Winter Arctic sea ice this year was the second smallest area on record in a sign of greenhouse warming, US climate scientists said on April 4. Sea ice extent, or the area of ocean that is covered by at least 15 percent ice, was 14.7 million sq km in March, the Colorado-based National Sea and Ice Data Center said. March usually marks the end of winter in the Arctic, a period when sea ice recovers from the summertime minimum. This March's ice level represented a slight recovery from the record low during the same month last year when the ice extent was 5.6 million square miles (14.5 million sq km). But low sea ice levels this winter - the world's warmest on record, according to the US government - are part of a trend toward less ice. March 2007 Arctic sea ice extent was about 7 percent smaller than the average from 1979, the first full year satellites recorded it, to 2000.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41290/story.htm

14. Arctic ice cap melting 30 years ahead of forecast

The Arctic ice cap is melting much faster than expected and is now about 30 years ahead of predictions made by IPCC, a US ice expert said on May 1. This means the ocean at the top of the world could be free or nearly free of summer ice by 2020, three decades sooner than the global panel's gloomiest forecast of 2050. No ice on the Arctic Ocean during summer would be a major spur to global warming, said Ted Scambos, a glaciologist at the National Snow and Ice Center in Colorado. Because the ice reflects light and heat; when it is gone, the much darker land or sea will absorb more light and heat, making it more difficult for the planet to cool down, even in winter. The 30-year time span for melting of the Arctic ice cap indicated by the IPCC is thought to be cautious.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41657/newsDate/2-May-2007/story.htm

15. Global warming may spur wind shear, sap hurricanes

Global warming could increase a climate phenomenon known as wind shear that inhibits Atlantic hurricanes, a potentially positive result of climate change, according to new research released on April 17. The study, to be published in *Geophysical Research Letters*, found that climate model simulations show a "robust increase" in wind shear in the tropical Atlantic during the 21st century from global warming. Wind shear, a difference in wind speed or direction at different altitudes, tends to tear apart tropical cyclones, preventing nascent ones from growing and already-formed hurricanes from becoming the monster storms that cause the most damage. The effect of global warming on wind shear is similar to the impact of El Niño, the periodic eastern Pacific warm-water phenomenon that tends to put a damper on Atlantic storms. The sudden development of El Niño was credited for an unexpectedly mild Atlantic season last year, when only 10 storms formed.

Researchers in the new study said increased wind shear could counter the effect of warming waters in the Atlantic. "The environmental changes found in the study do not suggest a big increase in tropical Atlantic hurricane activity during the 21st century," said Brian Soden, a co-author of the report.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41434/newsDate/18-Apr-2007/story.htm

www.agu.org/journals/gl/

16. UNEP CMS: Migratory birds and whales confused by warming

Birds, whales and other migratory creatures are suffering from global warming that puts them in the wrong place at the wrong time, a UN official told 166-nation climate talks on May 7. A warmer climate

disrupts the biological clocks of migratory species including bats, dolphins, antelopes or turtles, said Lahcen el Kabiri, deputy head of the UN's Bonn-based Convention on Migratory Species. Many creatures are mistiming their migrations, or failing to bother as changes between seasons become less clear. The shifts make them vulnerable to heat waves, droughts or cold snaps.

Among birds, for instance, cranes are starting to spend the winter in Germany rather than fly south to Spain or Portugal. Whales are sometimes in the wrong place to feed on fish and plankton which were thriving closer to the poles because of warmer oceans.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41760/story.htm

17. Climate change sceptics say humans not to blame – the counterclaims

Some scientists continue to challenge mainstream opinion that humans are causing climate change. Here are some of the arguments of those who cast doubt on mankind's responsibility for climate change, and beneath each a response by the Hadley Centre of Britain's Meteorological Office, its official centre for climate change research:

1. Temperatures dropped for several decades after 1945, despite rising carbon dioxide emissions

HCBMO: Along with carbon dioxide, fossil fuels also release particles called aerosols, which cool the climate by reflecting sunlight. Aerosols dominated the warming effect of CO₂ prior to clean-air acts of the 1960s and 1970s.

2. Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere lag temperature rises in an ice core record dating back 600,000 years.

HCBMO: Over the past several hundred thousand years, changes in the earth's orbit around the sun led to temperature changes, which in turn affected CO₂ levels. Concentrations of CO₂ are higher than they had been during the past 600,000 years. The counter-effect is that human-induced increases of CO₂, such as factory emissions, have enhanced the greenhouse effect and led to warming.

3. Changes in solar activity also produce good correlations with temperature change.

HCBMO: There are many factors, which may contribute to climate change. Satellite measurements showed no big change in solar heating in the last three decades of the 20th century. CO₂ has been shown to cause most warming in the past 50 years.

4. Rising temperatures in the second half of the last century have plateaued in the past 10 years.

HCBMO: 1998 was extremely warm due to the weather anomaly El Nino warming the Pacific Ocean, and subsequent years were colder. Ten years is too short a period to see long-term trends. While the World Meteorological Organization says 1998 was the warmest year since records began 150 years ago, NASA says 2005 was warmer.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41227/story.htm

Some of the world's leading meteorologists gathered in Madrid on March 21 also said they had no doubt that humans were responsible for global warming. For their arguments see

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41001/newsDate/22-Mar-2007/story.htm

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– Coastal & Climate Change – Responses –

18. EU agrees on ambitious climate and energy policy

The European Council has agreed on the urgency of a new drastic climate and energy policy. On March 9 an agreement was reached which aims to increase security of supply, The Energy Policy for Europe (EPE). It aims at ensuring the competitiveness of European economies and the availability of affordable energy; promoting environmental sustainability and combating climate change. Regarding carbon dioxide emissions, developed countries should continue to take the lead by committing to collectively reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases in the order of 30% by 2020 compared to 1990. They should do so also with a view to collectively reducing their emissions by 60% to 80% by 2050 compared to 1990. In this context, the European Council endorses an EU objective of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 as its contribution to a global and comprehensive agreement for the period beyond 2012, provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and economically more advanced developing countries to contributing adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities. It invites these countries to come forward with proposals for their contributions to the post-2012 agreement.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=DOC/07/1&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

19. Britain looks to boost wind, wave and tidal power

Britain published new plans on March 15 to streamline the development of offshore wind, wave and tidal power projects, while still protecting wildlife, as part of the fight against global warming. While onshore

wind farms are sprouting up all over Britain in the race to develop clean sources of power, offshore wind - which is much more expensive - is only now starting to develop. Wave and tidal are even further behind. The white paper policy document, which is open for public consultation until June, proposes a strategic marine planning system to set national objectives and priorities for offshore developments. It also aims to speed up the marine licensing process and creates a new oversight body, the Marine Management Organisation, to ensure that proposals for wind and wave power developments are in the right place and do not threaten wildlife. Carbon-free energy resources along the coast involve hazards for wildlife - large barrages for harnessing tidal power can affect fish and wind turbines have been blamed for killing migrating birds.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/40891/story.htm

20. US Supreme Court rules against Bush in global warming case

In a defeat for the Bush administration, the Supreme Court ruled on April 2 that a US government agency has the power under the clean air law to regulate greenhouse gas emissions that spur global warming. The nation's highest court by a 5-4 vote said the US Environmental Protection Agency "has offered no reasoned explanation" for its refusal to regulate carbon dioxide and other emissions from new cars and trucks that contribute to climate change. The ruling came in one of the most important environmental cases to reach the Supreme Court in decades. It marked the first high court decision in a case involving global warming.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41224/story.htm

President Bush however sticks to his viewpoint, see

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41240/newsDate/4-Apr-2007/story.htm

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- Nature and Conservation -

21. Noise scanner could save whales

Hundreds of whales and dolphins could be saved thanks to a new listening system designed by Plymouth University. The equipment, which is towed behind a ship, scans for calls and songs to pinpoint their exact location. Scientists, presenting a prototype on April 24, hope that the equipment will become integral to seismic survey equipment. Conservationists think underwater explosions used in surveying could be behind the beaching of whales. The system uses marine microphones, or hydrophones, to scan the seabed, listening for whale and dolphin sounds which are then recorded on to a computer. These sounds are then analysed to tell seismic operators if there are whales and dolphins in the area.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/devon/6587761.stm

22. Iceland undecided on commercial whale hunts

The fate of Iceland's commercial whale hunts, target of criticism from anti-whaling nations across the globe, may hinge on 100 tonnes of meat now lying in cold storage. In October 2006, Iceland broke a 1986 ban by giving whalers permission to catch 30 minke whales and nine larger and rarer fin whales. The step drew formal protests from two dozen anti-whaling nations from the United States to Australia. Iceland's prime minister says his government, which faces an election on May 12, has not decided if it will let the commercial hunts continue. Calling the hunt an 'experiment' he says "a lot will depend on whether or not there is a market for these products, and that is for the company involved to find out." "The company involved" - Iceland's largest whaling firm Hvalur, which caught all seven fin whales - is playing a waiting game. The 100 tons fin whale meat shot last year were not enough to cover the expenses. The company hopes on higher quota's from the government *should* it decide to resume the hunt again.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41382/newsDate/16-Apr-2007/story.htm

23. Illegal oil discharges in the Baltic increase slightly, but still near record lows

The number of illegal oil discharges from ships annually observed by surveillance planes in the Baltic Sea area increased slightly in 2006, but still remains near record lows, according to a HELCOM study. According to the latest annual reports provided by the Member States to HELCOM, there were 236 illicit oil spills detected during a total of 5,128 hours of surveillance flights conducted by the coastal countries over the Baltic Sea during 2006, compared to 224 discharges observed during 5,637 air patrol hours in 2005.

www.helcom.fi/press_office/news_helcom/en_GB/Illegal_discharges_2006/

24. Recommendations First MEDA WATER Partners Conference published

The conference orientations have been defined by the participants who considered that Integrated Water Resources Management at local level has been analyzed following 3 main axes: 1. Institutional issues 2. Social and economic issues and 3. Review of technical/technological concepts adapted to local water management in MEDA countries. The conclusions and recommendations of the 4 working groups created during the conference highlighted the analysis of the present situation and needs, and the main recommendations for a sustainable water management. Based on these recommendations, the conference participants strongly requested to make all efforts to identify administrative and financial solutions, such as identification of specific budget allocations, taking into consideration the foreseen inter alia:

- European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), expected to become one of the major instruments contributing to the sustainable development of the countries of the region, could help to realize the potential of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Athens conclusions – November 2006) and
- 'Horizon 2020' Initiative for De-Polluting the Mediterranean Sea by year 2020.

www.emwis.net/thematicdirs/news/snews929786

25. UK – Seawater cleaner, beaches dirtier than ever

Water quality along British shorelines is as good as it has ever been, but the beaches have never been dirtier, according to the Marine Conservation Society (MCS). The number of beaches recommended for their water quality by the MCS, has almost quadrupled in the past 10 years. At the same time, beaches are dirtier than ever, littered with rubbish like bottles, cigarettes and cotton buds.

www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/main.jhtml?xml=/travel/2007/05/19/etbeaches119.xml

26. Chinese hunger for reef fish emptying Asian seas

Turquoise fish with red dots stare at hungry tourists from a tank at a restaurant in Hong Kong, the capital of the world's live reef fish industry, a lucrative trade devastating reefs across the Pacific Ocean. China is where the demand for live reef fish is particularly heavy, and where it is also expected to grow. A lot of the reef fish that come into Hong Kong are re-exported into China. Considered a delicacy, demand for coral fish has exploded in line with China's booming economy and some species such as the hump head wrasse are already endangered. Restaurant fish tanks in Hong Kong are filled with exotic fish species gathered from all around Southeast Asia, Australia and even remote Pacific islands, such as Fiji and Vanuatu. With the marine stock already exhausted in nearby waters, Hong Kong traders are reaching far and wide for increasingly rare fish such as groupers, snappers and hump head wrasse, spreading the unsustainable fishing habit across the Pacific. Large parts of reefs in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia are becoming void of marine life as a result of over fishing and the use of cyanide to catch fish alive.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41079/story.htm

27. 'Lost world' below North Sea uncovered

Archaeologists are uncovering a huge prehistoric "lost country" hidden below the North Sea. This lost landscape, where hunter-gatherer communities once lived, was swallowed by rising water levels at the end of the last ice age. University of Birmingham researchers are heralding "stunning" findings as they map the "best-preserved prehistoric landscape in Europe". This large plain disappeared below the water more than 8,000 years ago. The Birmingham researchers have been using oil exploration technology to build a map of the once-inhabited area that now lies below the North Sea - stretching from the east coast of Britain up to the Shetland Islands and across to Scandinavia. The researchers stress that it serves as a warning what could be lost by rising sea levels.



http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/6584011.stm

28. Pacific whale decline 'a mystery'

Grey whales in the eastern Pacific appear to be in some trouble, with the cause far from clear, scientists say. Researchers with the conservation group Earthwatch found that whales are arriving in their breeding grounds off the Mexican coast malnourished. The same thing happened just after the 1997/8 El Nino event, which warmed the waters and depleted food stocks. Scientists are not sure whether the current decline is climate related or part of a natural predator-prey cycle. There are thought to be between 15,000 and 18,000 grey whales in the eastern Pacific, a population that has been in generally good health since pulling back from the brink of extinction when hunting stopped in the 1940s. Numbers may be higher now than before the hunting era.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6599805.stm>

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– Aquaculture and Fisheries –

29. EU launches crackdown on dumping unwanted fish

Fishermen across the European Union could be banned from dumping unwanted fish and other sea life overboard, the bloc's fisheries chief said on March 28 as part of a strategy to help preserve the industry. Under the proposals, included in a paper put forward by EU Fisheries Commissioner Joe Borg, fishing areas could also be closed if it is found that over 20 percent of the fish caught are too young for use. According to EU figures, 1.33 million tonnes, or 13 percent of fish and other species caught, are discarded in the North Atlantic every year. The figure for the North Sea is in the region of 500,000 to 800,000 tonnes per year. A full proposal aimed at tackling the problem will be put before EU fisheries ministers for approval early next year. By forcing fishermen to carry unwanted fish back to land - which will take up much-needed space and take time to sort - Borg hopes it will encourage them to change the way they fish and the equipment they use.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41140/newsDate/29-Mar-2007/story.htm

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/429&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

30. EU runs aground on how to save threatened eels

EU ministers again failed to reach a deal to impose strict limits on catching eels to stop the depleted species from disappearing from European waters. Eel numbers have sunk to the lowest since 1980 and could take two decades to rise again. EU governments have struggled to agree with the Commission as how a ban on eel fishing should be implemented. The most controversial area is an obligation for countries that fish transparent juveniles called glass eels - mainly France and Spain, but also Britain and Portugal - to reserve a percentage of their catch to restock Europe's river systems. That percentage figure is especially important since it effectively prevents those countries from exporting much of their juvenile eel catch to the lucrative Asian market, where prices can reach as high as 1,000 euros per kg.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41406/story.htm

31. Overfishing of big sharks threatens entire ecosystem and fishing itself

Overfishing of big sharks in the North-Atlantic has cut stocks by 99 percent, dooming North Carolina's bay scallop fishery and threatening other species including shrimp and crabs, researchers reported on March 29. With most of the great predatory sharks - bull, great white, dusky and hammerhead - gone from Atlantic waters, the rays and skates the sharks normally feed on had a population explosion, the scientists said in the journal Science. Bull, dusky and hammerhead sharks have declined by more than 99 percent between 1970 and 2005. This coincided with a rise in Asian demand for shark fins for medicinal uses and for food. Shark fins currently sell for about US\$ 22 a pound. Local fishermen said. Now that the ravenous rays and skates have feasted on bay scallops, they are likely to look for food in protected areas along the coast where other fish and shellfish shelter in their early months of life. If rays and skates prey on these shellfish and some of the young grouper and snapper fish that begin their lives in the seagrass, these species could also be threatened, Peterson said. The overfishing of sharks may be a consequence of a previous overfishing of cod. When fishing agencies looked for an unexploited resource to replace cod as a mainstay, they settled on shark about 25 years ago.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41158/story.htm

www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/315/5820/1846?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFOR MAT=&fulltext=%2Bscallops+%2Bsharks&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT (abstract, article not freely available)

Canadian filmmaker Rob Stewart wants to take a bite out of the global shark fin industry that is wiping the big fish from the seas in his film "Sharkwater", see

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41186/newsDate/2-Apr-2007/story.htm

32. Court stops US government in easing 'dolphin-safe' tuna rules

The US government has arbitrarily and capriciously sought to ease rules for foreign fisherman on "dolphin-safe" tuna, a US federal appeals court ruled on April 27 in upholding current standards. The decision by the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals was the latest in a long dispute on what tuna sold in the United States can be labelled "dolphin safe" - a designation that means tuna is fished using practices that protect dolphins. The dispute involves the use of huge "purse seine" nets, which fisherman have used since the late 1950s to boost their capture of tuna swimming beneath dolphins. The nets get their name as they can be closed like a drawstring purse. As decades of such fishing dramatically lowered the numbers of certain species of dolphins, the US Congress enacted a law in 1990 that said companies could not market tuna as "dolphin-safe" if they caught the fish by purposely surrounding dolphins with the nets. Worrying they could be shut out of the US tuna market, officials in Latin America have since lobbied for a less stringent rule that would allow the "dolphin-safe" label if observers on the foreign boats had not seen dolphins killed or seriously injured. The US secretary of commerce has backed the rule change, but the 9th Circuit, reaffirming its 2001 ruling on the issue, said the US effort was not based on proper scientific analysis on the impact to dolphins and was politically influenced.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41601/newsDate/30-Apr-2007/story.htm

33. UK: action urged on illegal fishing

The British government is to call for a Europe-wide system for tracking fish to help cut down on illegal fishing. Fisheries Minister Ben Bradshaw and Overseas Development Minister Gareth Thomas say it will make it harder for illegal catches to enter the EU. The plan, including electronic records of vessels and catches, will be backed by supermarkets and environmental groups at a meeting on April 30. The tracking system would help regulate fishing by allowing fish to be traced "from the moment they are caught to when they are served on a customer's plate" - says the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). This would include keeping electronic records of vessels, skippers and fishing grounds, including details of catches, time at sea and onward shipping and of delivery to buyers.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6602639.stm>

34. Environment groups want fish protected in WTO deal

State subsidies that encourage overfishing should be banned under any World Trade Organisation (WTO) free trade pact, environmental groups said on May 1. WWF and Oceana urged countries negotiating a new WTO deal to back a US proposal on ending incentives that have vastly expanded the size of the world's fishing industry, pressuring stocks worldwide and threatening extinction for many species. The US proposal includes a broad ban on subsidies that encourage overcapacity and overfishing, including for the buying of fishing vessels and their running costs. It also sets limits on remaining subsidies and requires countries to disclose the assistance they give to the industry. Any agreement on fisheries would be included in the WTO's long-stalled Doha free trade round, which is bogged down in differences over agricultural and industrial tariffs.

www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41656/newsDate/2-May-2007/story.htm

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— Publications and Websites —

The Nature Guide to the Andalusian Sierras from Malaga to Gibraltar – Spain

The Alcornocales, Grazalema and Sierra de las Nieves are superb nature parks in the Mountains of western Andalusia. Not far away from some of the classic beach resorts of the Costa del Sol, they boast an unexpected natural wealth. Western winds provide the Mediterranean landscape with enough rain to create green valleys with murmuring creeks and dense, evergreen forests. The upper regions are barren and rocky with dramatic cliffs and deep caves. These mountain slopes host a flora that ranks among the richest of entire Europe. It is also the land of the Iberian ibex, the griffon vulture and a twice-a-year tidal wave of migratory birds flying back and forth between Europe and Africa. Numerous mountain trails depart from picturesque towns and villages. They will lead you through vast forests, desert-like rock slopes, dramatic canyons and flowery orchards. With this guidebook, you can explore these routes and enjoy the nature of the Western Andalusian Sierras to the fullest.

By Dirk Hilbers & John Cantelo, (2007, 208 pp.) Crossbill Guides Foundation, Nijmegen, The Netherlands www.crossbillguides.org & KNNV Publishing Utrecht, The Netherlands, www.knnvpublishing.nl, ISBN 978 90 5011 251 2

Managing Coastal Vulnerability.

Review by Alan Pickaver

The vulnerability of our coastlines to destructive weather events has been brought into sharp relief recently with recent storms and flooding. Although improved management can decrease damage, our complex, coastal areas will never be risk-free. With an increased focus being brought to bear on human-induced impacts of climate change, this book is a timely publication.

The editors have brought together engineers, geographers, geo-morphologists, economists, sociologists, ecologists, geologists and geo-physicists from eight countries with the laudable goal of moving towards toleration of vulnerability. The objective of the collective ideas is to move towards coping with the impacts of natural events rather than being surprised by them and being unable to adequately respond. The intent is to explore the challenges and opportunities when managing coastal systems in the light of their vulnerability.

The opening five chapters deal with the primary concepts of vulnerability whilst the following five give examples from Spain, UK, Thailand, USA and India. The final four chapters examine how vulnerability can be reduced and sustainably increased with a final, concluding chapter looking into the future.

The book is thorough in the material it covers and, although eminently readable is, not surprising the contributors, academic in nature. If I had one reservation it would be that reference to policy and policy-makers and how some of the ideas might be practically implemented is missing. It is clear that the ideas are present, that innovation is being discussed in our higher education institutes but the age-old problem of how to bring this erudition forward in a language that local and regional policy-makers and stakeholders can appreciate has not been resolved. Neither should it be a surprise that pp253-258 are dedicated to an urgent call for more research. Still, at least the first step has been taken in a commendable publication.

MANAGING COASTAL VULNERABILITY

By Loraine McFadden (ed.), (2006, 282 p.) Flood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University, UK; Robert Nicholls, Civil Environment Engineering, University of Southampton, UK; and Edmund Penning-Rowsell, Flood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University, UK. ELSEVIER Paperback, (USD 87.95, GBP 49.99, EUR 72.95)

Sustainable Use of Water Resources in Coastal Areas

A recent paper by Spanish researchers illustrates how an inappropriately planned coastal development can lead to increasing water consumption to unsustainable levels. The results highlight the importance of focusing on the environmental impacts of resource use in order to achieve sustainable development. The paper can be viewed integral on

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/61na2.pdf>

Goodbye to Marleen Smallegange

After five years of working for EUCC The Coastal Union, CN editor Marleen Smallegange has left us to work at the Dutch Social Affairs Ministry. We want to thank her for all the work she has done.

The Coastal News Editors

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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.**

13/06/2007 London, UK

CIWEM and CMS Conference Water Climate & Environment. Solutions and the Bottom Line.

Aim of the conference is to explore the views of a wide range of organisations involved with the water sector in relation to their responses to climate, climate change and the developing environmental sustainability agenda to showcase developing good practice not least where this leads to demonstrable resource, energy and cost saving.

Contact Bob Earll, CMS, Candle Cottage, Kempey, Glos. GL 18 2BU Phone/Fax 01531890415, e-mail bob.earl@coastms.co.uk

www.coastms.co.uk for conference programme

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– Colophon –

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EUCC Coastal News Editorial Team: Albert Salman, Alan Pickaver, René Beckerschmidt, Ben Spaans.
Special Editor: Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir (EUCC Advisory Board Member): Climate Change.

Deadline for submitting contributions to EUCC Coastal News No 2007/04:19/07.....2007.

Established in 1989, EUCC - The Coastal Union is an association involving the largest coastal network in Europe with 2750 members and member organisations in 40 countries. For more information please contact EUCC International Secretariat, POBox 11232, NL-2301 EE Leiden, the Netherlands

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