



## Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group and Local Groups established

Since the last newsletter, our Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) has been established and is looking forward to its first meeting on April 22nd.

The RSG is a multi-interest, stakeholder working group of 25-30 people that will meet regularly to develop the MCZ recommendations in accordance with the project aims and nationally-produced Ecological Network Guidance. The Group will interpret the charts and maps that the project team has put together on physical and ecological aspects as well as socio-economic activities. RSG meetings will be determined by a timetable that has been developed nationally to ensure harmonisation across the four Regional Projects. The RSG will be supported by the Balanced Seas Project team who will provide technical support and administration.

The South-East region is home to a highly diverse community of sea users, and establishing the RSG and Local Groups so that they fully represent all sectoral interests and yet are small enough to work effectively presented particular challenges. Membership of the RSG and the Local Groups has been decided through consensual agreement, involving an initial stakeholder analysis exercise using information and recommendations provided during the county meetings and subsequent discussions and meetings with stakeholders. Each RSG member will represent the interests of their sector. A broad range of sectors are represented including commercial interests such as fishing and shipping,

recreational interests such as diving and yachting, and conservation and policymakers.

For those who are unable to attend regular meetings of the RSG, a category of Named Consultative Stakeholders (NCSs) has been introduced. NCSs will be able to contribute to the recommendation-making process carried out by the RSG by correspondence.

Three Local Groups have also been set up and will meet shortly. The Solent/ Isle of Wight/Hampshire group will meet in Southampton on 29th April, the Essex/Thames/N. Kent group in London on 5th May and the Sussex/S. Kent group in Brighton on 11th May. The Local Groups will subsequently meet at key points in the process, to provide information and suggestions to the RSG, and to review draft MCZ options and recommendations as these are produced. The Local Groups provide a mechanism for the wider stakeholder community to contribute to the RSG's work.

The first meetings of all four groups will focus on developing working arrangements for the members, establishing roles and responsibilities, understanding the scope of the work to be carried out and reviewing the information, charts and maps that the project team has compiled. The working process will be managed by a team of independent facilitators (3KQ, based in Tunbridge Wells).

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### What makes a good stakeholder group member?

With input from participants at the county meetings in November 2009, we have drawn up the following criteria for members of the RSG and the Local Groups. They should be able to:

- represent the interests of their sector/organisation
- contribute to the work of the group in regular meetings, and between meetings when required
- work in a co-operative spirit, whilst respecting that a diversity of views may exist
- keep their sector regularly updated and act as a conduit for information flowing both ways
- and, for RSG members, must be able to take a strategic perspective across the whole project area



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## National developments

The last two months have seen several key developments at national level relevant to the MCZ:

- The Ministerial Statement on the creation of a network of Marine Protected Areas was published, clarifying the Government's commitments to delivering on its vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas'. See: [www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/about/who/ministers/statements/hid100311.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/about/who/ministers/statements/hid100311.htm)
- The UK government's MPA Strategy has been published, which among other things explains how MCZs will help to achieve the MPA targets. See: [www.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/100331e.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/100331e.htm)
- JNCC and Natural England have published drafts of the two guidance documents key to the MCZ process. The Ecological Network Guidance provides the ecological criteria for the identification of MCZs, whilst the Project Delivery Guidance details the way in which MCZ Projects will run. Both documents are available at [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2409](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2409)
- The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) came into existence on April 1st. This is the new public body for the marine environment, incorporating the work of the Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA) as well as taking on other marine roles. See: [www.marinemanagement.org.uk](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk).

## Contributing to the project

Our Liaison Officers are now out interviewing stakeholders across the region. At an interview, a stakeholder is asked a series of questions and can map the areas of sea which are important to them for their activity. If you would like to arrange an interview, please contact one of the Liaison Officers or email [balancedseas@kent.ac.uk](mailto:balancedseas@kent.ac.uk).

## Balanced Seas team update

The project has not yet produced an MCZ, but we have produced a baby! Sally Moore, our Communications Co-ordinator, gave birth to Henry in February, and we all send congratulations. While she is away on maternity leave, Bex Jefferson has joined the team to cover the communications work. Bex has studied marine biology and social science and has previously worked on understanding how different sea users value the marine environment, providing her with an excellent background for the project.

## Our Liaison Officers

**Jules Martin**

*(commercial fishing and sea-angling)*

[j.p.b.martin@kent.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.b.martin@kent.ac.uk) 07584 020752

**Amy Pryor**

*(commercial fishing, sea-angling and recreational activities)*

[a.e.pryor@kent.ac.uk](mailto:a.e.pryor@kent.ac.uk) 07584 020771

**Kate Mills** *(recreational activities)*

[k.a.mills@kent.ac.uk](mailto:k.a.mills@kent.ac.uk) 07584 020761

To read what they have been up to lately see [www.balancedseas.org](http://www.balancedseas.org)

### Project contact details

Balanced Seas

Regional MCZ Project for the South-East

Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology (DICE)

University of Kent

Canterbury,

Kent. CT2 7NR

Tel: 01227 827839

## Have your say

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

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