



# OSPAR COMMISSION

*Protecting and conserving the  
North-East Atlantic and its resources*



## From the Chairman and the Executive Secretary

In the nine months since the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen a key focus for the OSPAR Commission has been the implementation and dissemination of the successful outcomes achieved in September 2010. The Bergen Statement and the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy provided the formal political commitment for OSPAR to consolidate engagement with regional implementation of the European Union (EU) Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). This has been the responsibility of the newly formed Coordination Group (CoG) and a dedicated expert-level intersessional correspondence group (ICG-MSFD) under CoG. Efforts to facilitate the coordination and integrate Contracting Parties' approaches to the MSFD have been complemented by continued engagement with EU Working Groups and Technical Sub-Groups. The timeframe of the MSFD presents a particular challenge and relevant OSPAR expert groups have made every effort to deliver appropriate and timely advice.

The Coordination Group has also taken responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2010-2014 and specific cross-cutting issues. The Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 was always intended to provide an evidence base for national Initial Assessments as required by the MSFD; it also contains recommendations for future action by OSPAR and main Committees have given consideration to these conclusions. As the new working structure takes forward OSPAR's vision of a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, used sustainably, the active and supportive involvement of Committee Chairs has been important. The established advisory bodies, Jurists and Linguists (JL), Chairman and Vice-Chairmen (CVC) and Heads of Delegation (HOD) have also reflected constructively on their respective roles and remit.

The Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) has taken forward the portfolio that it formerly considered as a Working Group.

EIHA continues therefore to focus on the assessment of human activities in the context of both Annex II and Annex V to the Convention. For the former, evaluations of annual dumping of wastes, for the latter, pollution caused by dredged material, sand and gravel extraction and conventional and chemical munitions are long-standing core areas of work. Attention has been given to OSPAR Guidelines and to consistency of reporting. Understanding human activities in the context of biodiversity and ecosystems has involved ongoing assessment and management considerations in the context of the MSFD. A specific challenge within EIHA is the objective integration of management actions, taking account of cumulative impacts, exploring marine spatial planning for human activities and giving attention to economic and social issues.

This year the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Committee (OIC) tackled the development of a risk-based approach to the management of produced water as a major task on its agenda. Following discussion at OSPAR 2010 an expert group (ICG-DRILLEX) considered the results of investigations into drilling in extreme conditions and their relevance to potential environmental impacts. This is work in progress, linked to ongoing global responses to the Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

The Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC) has given further consideration to the handling of radioactive substances data. Information needed to inform a Fourth Periodic Evaluation of Progress against the Radioactive Substances Strategy (RSS) in 2014 must be accessible and complete. A partnership between OSPAR and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) started work on radiological environmental quality criteria, which will be taken forward during 2011/12. RSC confirmed progress against the RSS but implications and lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant accident will merit attention by RSC 2012.

A major change to the working structure of the OSPAR Commission, as agreed at OSPAR 2010, was to draw together work on hazardous substances and eutrophication within one Committee. The Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC) therefore continued to examine hazardous substances identified for priority action, the currency of relevant background documents and review of selected measures and their implementation. The Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) continued to provide detailed advice on OSPAR's monitoring and assessment of hazardous substances. An important work strand is the development of environmental assessment criteria and equivalent effects levels linked to the MSFD. For eutrophication, HASEC also draws on the output of the Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT) including annual consideration of depositions of air pollutants and riverine inputs and direct discharges. Expert eutrophication groups reporting to HASEC have considered preparations to review the Common Procedure (ICG-EUT) and eutrophication modelling (ICG-EMO). Further consideration will be given to the establishment of a possible North Sea NOx Emission Control Area. Continuity of long-term datasets, consolidation of reporting and review of component coverage represent important ongoing topics.

The Biodiversity Committee (BDC) has taken forward the portfolio of the former Working Group MASH. In addition to work on species and habitats together with marine protected areas, BDC is charged with the development of marine biodiversity assessment and monitoring. Species and habitats work has moved forward, based on the success at OSPAR 2010, and new Recommendations for measures to protect selected seabird species were agreed by OSPAR 2011 (see pages 8-9 of this report). Coverage and coherence of the OSPAR marine protected area (MPA)

network to meet both the aspirations of the Bergen Statement and associated global targets is another major challenge. OSPAR has a key role to play in terms of contribution to relevant international processes concerning MPA development. The expert group (ICG-COBAM) has taken forward work on biodiversity monitoring and assessment closely aligned to the relevant MSFD Good Environmental Status (GES) Descriptors. International work in this area is currently less well coordinated than national and sub-regional efforts. The new emphasis on biodiversity work within OSPAR, linking state and pressure indicators, making best use of the investment by OSPAR in Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) and determining appropriate assessment scales, is well placed.

External perception of OSPAR's achievements by other international organisations continues to recognise OSPAR as a leading regional convention in many areas. In terms of delivering the Communications Strategy, this year the Secretariat has concentrated on disseminating the results of OSPAR 2010. The QSR 2010 has been widely distributed and promoted using a poster. Effort has continued to strengthen ties with relevant competent authorities and, where appropriate, to transfer knowledge and skills.

Finally, OSPAR has continued to work in partnership: on the basis of Memoranda of Understanding with other competent authorities, in tandem with the Bonn Agreement, as a partner within the UNEP Regional Seas Conventions family and on the basis of targeted requests for scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). As Chairman and Executive Secretary, we are proud to work with the OSPAR community, to take forward these achievements and to actively engage in regional and global partnerships.

**Mr Victor Escobar**  
Chairman

Mr Victor Escobar Paredes is a senior adviser within the Marine Protection Division at the Spanish Ministry for the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs. He is an experienced negotiator at international level and is personally devoted to the protection of the marine environment. He was elected chairman in 2010.



**Professor David Johnson**  
Executive Secretary

Professor David Johnson is a geographer and ecologist. He has an international track record in coastal and ocean management including academic research, publications, consultancy and advocacy.

He has been Executive Secretary since 2006.



During 2010/2011, the focus of each OSPAR Committee has been to implement the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen, in line with the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy.

## Implementing the Ecosystem Approach

The North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (OSPAR Agreement 2010-3) applies the Ecosystem Approach to the management of all human activities that have an impact on the marine environment, confirming this as an overarching principle in OSPAR's work, in order to achieve sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and to safeguard ecosystem integrity.

With the Ecosystem Approach as an overall goal, and acting as the main platform for coordination of work to implement the EU MSFD in the North-East Atlantic, OSPAR has committed itself to both strategic objectives and specific operational objectives for each of its thematic strategies.

Implementing the Ecosystem Approach is seen as a continuous cycle of steps:

- setting and coordinating ecological objectives and associated targets and indicators;

- ongoing management; and
- regular updating of ecosystem knowledge, research and advice.

Monitoring and assessment, as well as adaptive management, are essential to this process. OSPAR uses its Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme to develop the means to review progress achieved through the Strategy. OSPAR 2011 considered the results of an ecosystem approach audit undertaken by OSPAR Committees as trialled by the Coordination Group for 2010/11. The launch of a major socio-economic analysis, work to integrate marine protected areas within marine spatial planning, continued engagement with other competent authorities and overcoming gaps in sectoral approaches were all highlighted as important. In the longer-term OSPAR will aim to develop an impact index, building on the OSPAR EcoQOs and accepted MSFD indicators.

## Radioactive Substances Progress

During 2010/11, the Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC) confirmed that in general there has been a clear decreasing trend in the discharges of total alpha, total beta and tritium from nuclear installations in the OSPAR maritime area during the last decade, although discharges are likely to fluctuate over the years.

Work continued on the development of a method for dealing with exceptional discharges and variability and arrangements to devise a way forward to tackle these challenging issues were put in place. RSC also continued work to explore means to further improve its current data management arrangements to better support data assessment work.

Major progress was recorded in the development of environmental quality criteria with arrangements made for a workshop to take this work forward in the light of progress made in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Following concerns over the Fukushima accident information exchange between OSPAR and IAEA was endorsed by OSPAR 2011.

## Radioactive Substances Strategy

Seeks to prevent pollution from ionising radiation through taking the appropriate actions and measures to ensure that by the year 2020 discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances are reduced to levels where the additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels, resulting from such discharges, emissions and losses, are close to zero.



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## Biodiversity and ecosystems Progress

After a defining year in 2010, with the designation of significant marine protected areas (MPAs) in the OSPAR Maritime Area, both within and beyond national jurisdiction, 2010/11 has been a year of preparation, with BDC setting in motion work to ensure the achievement of the next set of regional and global targets, including further developing the relationships between the competent authorities to address the challenges of managing the marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The OSPAR Commission has taken another step towards protecting species on the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats. Agreement was reached on a series of Recommendations for actions to better understand and protect seven species of seabirds: the ivory gull, lesser black-backed gull, little shearwater, Balearic shearwater, black-legged kittiwake, roseate tern and thick-billed murre. These Recommendations came into force on 24 June 2011 (see pages 8-9).

The expert group working on biodiversity assessment and monitoring has made considerable advances during the year, in particular in the development of an advice manual on approaches to determining good environmental status, setting of environmental targets and selection of indicators for the biodiversity components of the EU MSFD. OSPAR has agreed that this living document should be made available more widely to other EU Member States to share these developments.

The OSPAR Commission also started work to undertake a regional study on the use of marine waters and costs of degradation. This study will be prepared as part of a two-year project that will draw the attention of the public and decision-makers to the economic benefits provided by the marine environment, to highlight the growing costs of ecosystem degradation, and to draw together expertise from the fields of science, economics and policy to support an ecosystem approach to management of human activities. The aim is to improve the understanding of the benefits of a good environmental status of our marine waters by linking changes in ecosystem services with changes in human welfare. The analysis is co-funded by several OSPAR Contracting Parties, including France, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Assessing and managing the environmental impact of human activities has involved reports in the context of authorised dumping of dredged material together with further consideration of ocean acidification and climate change. OSPAR continues to monitor and evaluate the potential impact of a wide range of human pressures including underwater noise, offshore energy generation, cables, transportation and artificial reefs. Expert groups have considered cumulative impacts, aspects of marine spatial planning and marine litter.

### *Biodiversity and Ecosystems Strategy*

Seeks to protect and conserve the ecosystems and the biological diversity of the maritime area which are, or could be, affected as a result of human activities. It also aims to restore, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected. The implementation of the Strategy has a two-fold approach (1) under the Biodiversity Committee, protecting identified species and habitats and establishing marine protected areas; and (2) under the Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee, assessing human activities that take place in the marine environment and the impact they might have.



## Eutrophication Progress

Work of the newly established Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee and its expert groups concentrated in 2010/11 on the review of the OSPAR eutrophication assessment framework, the 'Common Procedure', as the basis for the next assessment by Contracting Parties in 2013, which is intended also as a contribution to inform the development by Contracting Parties of programmes of measures under the EU Water Framework Directive and the MSFD. Work also continued to develop nutrient reduction targets for eutrophication problem areas with a view to moving those areas to a status of no eutrophication problems. Progress was also made in developing means for the efficient monitoring of nutrient sources and their link with pathways and environmental concentrations and effects.



### *Eutrophication Strategy*

Aims to combat eutrophication in order to achieve and maintain a healthy marine environment where eutrophication does not occur. For the purpose of the Strategy, eutrophication is defined as the anthropogenic enrichment of water by nutrients causing an accelerated growth of algae and higher forms of plant life to produce an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms present in the water and to the quality of the water concerned.

## Offshore Oil & Gas Industry Progress

This year major progress was made in the further development of an OSPAR Recommendation on a risk-based approach to the management of produced water discharged from offshore installations and associated Guidelines. The aim is to complement OSPAR's existing Recommendation 2001/1 for the management of produced water from offshore installations (as amended) with a holistic risk-based approach that will help to achieve OSPAR's strategic target of a continuous reduction in discharges of hazardous substances via produced water with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.

Following concerns over the Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico, OSPAR Contracting Parties have carried out national reviews of drilling operations and evaluated relevant international reports. The OSPAR Commission also cooperated with the Bonn Agreement for cooperation in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances on a North Sea-wide risk assessment, including the risk for pollution from offshore oil and gas activities. The processes to assess if additional OSPAR action is needed will continue.



### *Offshore Oil & Gas Industry Strategy*

Sets the objective of preventing and eliminating pollution and taking the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of offshore activities so as to safeguard human health, conserve marine ecosystems and, when practicable, restore marine areas which have been adversely affected.

## Hazardous Substances Progress

A focus of the newly established Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee and its expert groups in 2010/11 was to review monitoring and assessment tools for contaminants. The web-based assessment tool for automated assessment of data collected under the OSPAR Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP) was further improved and provides a model for the future development by OSPAR of means to produce and present regular updates of regional indicators for the status and trend of the health of the marine environment. Work to review the Comprehensive Study of Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) and the Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP) has started to give strategic directions to the further development of those two OSPAR monitoring programmes. Good progress was made on developing environmental assessment criteria to judge whether concentrations of contaminants pose a risk of pollution effects and on assessment tools for biological effects of contaminants and their integration with concentrations observed in the marine environment. This work closely links with OSPAR's work to facilitate regional coordination by Contracting Parties in determining 'good environmental status', setting targets and identifying indicators and developing associated monitoring programmes under the EU MSFD.

The work relating to the identification, selection and prioritisation of substances requiring action

by OSPAR and implementation control of OSPAR measures also continued. With the adoption of the Background Document for vinyl neodecanoate, an ester mainly used in the polymerisation into latex process, the OSPAR Commission has completed the development of Background Documents for the 26 chemicals for priority action considered to reach the marine environment. The Background Documents for organotin compounds, PFOS and TBBPA were reviewed and revised to update the actions needed to achieve OSPAR's Strategy objectives in light of new information on the substances' intrinsic properties, risks for the marine environment and progress on their regulation and management.



### *Hazardous Substances Strategy*

Seeks to prevent pollution of the maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances, with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances. Its timeframe requires the OSPAR Commission to implement the Strategy progressively by making every endeavour to move towards the target of the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by 2020.



## Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia*:

*Uria lomvia* is almost completely restricted to the high and low Arctic zones with open water and an adequate summer food supply, feeding mainly on fish, squid, and crustaceans. It is an exclusively marine species, occurring offshore and along sea coasts. It winters mostly offshore, to the edge of the continental shelf, and along seacoasts and in bays where suitable concentrations of fish and invertebrates occur. During the winter, this species is found in flocks at sea, most likely related to non-random distribution of winter prey.



## Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*:

*S. dougallii* in north-west Europe spend only a few months of the year at their breeding grounds, fledging their chicks in July. After breeding, these birds migrate south along the Atlantic seaboard to spend the early non-breeding season in the Gulf of Guinea, along a relatively short stretch of coastline off Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast.



## Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis baroli*:

*Puffinus* feed from the surface of the sea possibly on small fish, cephalopod and crustaceans and spend more time on water than other shearwaters. They breed in rocky ground, caves, cliffs, and stone walls. The rough nest is generally a tunnel in soft soil or a hole between rocks or under fallen boulders and they also use old tunnels of other species. Little is known about breeding habits, as they are winter breeders, laying eggs in January or February with chicks fledging in May and June. The birds frequently visit breeding sites outside breeding season.

## New measures to protect

OSPAR 2011 took another important step towards conserving biodiversity which depends on the North-East Atlantic Ocean by agreeing Recommendations for actions to better understand and protect seven species of seabirds that range from the Azores in the south, to the Arctic Circle in the north. These seven seabirds are ivory gull, lesser black-backed gull, little shearwater, Balearic shearwater, black-legged kittiwake, roseate tern and thick-billed murre.

The birds feed at sea, often travelling far offshore to forage for their prey. With longer lifespans than many land-dwelling birds and producing fewer young, later in life, seabirds are vulnerable to the threats posed by the many competing human uses of the sea. Increases in threats such as accidentally being caught in fishing gears, and the impacts of pollution, together with the vulnerability of these seabirds make a powerful and urgent case for intervention to safeguard their survival. For example, the ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) is particularly sensitive to climate change, as well as heavy metal contamination.

All seven species, which are on the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats (OSPAR Agreement 2008-6), supported by Case Studies and Background Documents (providing peer reviewed scientific information), have suffered marked declines in their populations.



## Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*:

*Rissa tridactyla* is a pelagic surface-feeding species and excellent flyer. It roams over large areas in the search for sparsely distributed patches of food. *R. tridactyla* eats mainly marine invertebrates and small fish; however it will also feed on discarded offal and/or fish behind fishing boats and in harbours. The species breeds on coasts as far north as open water occurs, preferring high steep cliffs with narrow ledges very close to the sea on islands or the mainland. The species winters south to the Sargasso Sea and West Africa, being highly pelagic in the non-breeding season.



## Declining seabirds

The Recommendations, which came into effect on 24 June 2011 and also support the regional implementation of the MSFD, strengthen the protection at all life stages of the seabirds. Programmes and measures are specifically tailored to individual species but in general they encourage strengthening of data-gathering and development of a better knowledge base, support national action to protect these species, promote and/or develop priority actions and recovery strategies as part of international action plans, and raise awareness.

The Recommendations were co-sponsored and promoted by the UK and BirdLife International. In a press release issued following OSPAR 2011 BirdLife International, an Observer to OSPAR said, "We are delighted that the Recommendations for better protection and conservation of these seven seabird species have been agreed today. We now urge the OSPAR Contracting Parties to put the actions into practice as soon as possible to give these seabirds the protection they so urgently need, and allow continued enjoyment of these seabirds by people along the Atlantic coasts of Europe."

Photos: Wikipedia with the exception of Little shearwater © Beneharo Rodriguez and Balearic shearwater © José Manuel Arco. A Background Document can be downloaded from the OSPAR Publication website on each of the seabirds.



## Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*:

Although the species' breeding colonies and main wintering grounds are in the Mediterranean, the majority of the global population disperses into the OSPAR Maritime Area during the post-breeding period, mostly along the coasts of Portugal, south-western and north-western Spain, western France and southern/western Britain and Ireland. This species feeds on small pelagic fish such as pilchard *Sardina pilchardus* and anchovy *Engraulis encrasicolus*.



## Lesser Black Backed Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*:

*Larus fuscus fuscus* is a migratory species, leaving the breeding areas from August to fly south to the Black Sea and the eastern part of the Mediterranean and Africa. Breeding colonies are often situated many kilometres inland, often on bogs or other flat areas or on small islands nearly always with rich dense vegetation. *L. fuscus* is a surface predator and feeds mainly on Atlanto-Scandic herring, *Clupea harengus* and sprat, *Sprattus sprattus*.

## Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*:

The species breeds mainly on inaccessible cliffs, and low rocks or flat shorelines, foraging on broken ice fields. Outside the breeding season, it normally avoids ice-free waters, being closely associated with pack-ice, and favouring areas with 70– 90% ice cover near the ice edge. It feeds mainly on fish, shrimps, shellfish, algae, carrion, offal and animal faeces.



## Developing monitoring and assessment capacity for climate change and ocean acidification

The Quality Status Report 2010 identified ocean acidification and climate change as major threats to the marine ecosystems in the OSPAR maritime area. OSPAR Ministers responded through the Bergen Statement and the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, committing the OSPAR Commission to monitor and assess, in cooperation with relevant international organisations, the nature, rate and extent of climate change and ocean acidification and its effects on the marine environment and to consider appropriate ways of responding to those developments.

The Coordination Group considered advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on methodologies for monitoring ocean acidification and invited Committees in the 2010/11 meeting cycle to develop proposals for the climate change and ocean acidification parameters relevant for their work and explore opportunities for building them into existing OSPAR monitoring programmes. The responses of Committees highlighted that a phased approach with initial spatial monitoring might be appropriate for chemistry. However, it will take time to develop a programme for biological elements. National programmes/activities should be taken as a starting point.

OSPAR monitoring experts advised that any monitoring should:

- meet the requirements of key statutory drivers such as the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme of the OSPAR Convention and potentially the MSFD;
- include coherent data collection for key ocean acidification parameters (carbonate system and related physico-chemical and biological parameters);

- include data collection into existing programmes and surveys where appropriate (e.g. research vessels and moorings) to facilitate a cost-effective measurement programme;
- include the use of coastal sentinel sites for high frequency climate change and ocean acidification monitoring;
- target ecologically vulnerable areas and include seasonal offshore transects and the mapping and monitoring of saturation horizons;
- incorporate relevant indicators to track impacts on key ecological processes, sensitive habitats and ecologically and economically important organisms (e.g. cold-water corals, coccolithophores, molluscs and macroalgae).

OSPAR 2011 welcomed a proposal for developing a pragmatic and cost-effective way forward to help OSPAR to cover climate change and ocean acidification in future assessments. Although only few programmes are specifically set up to monitor the marine environment in the context of understanding or observing climate change, there are many, often overlapping, programmes and initiatives at local, national, regional and global levels which collect or collate information that can provide relevant information for OSPAR. One example of relevant ongoing initiatives is the ICES Working Group on Oceanic Hydrography which already prepares annual assessments of the marine climate (temperature and salinity) in the North Atlantic. To progress research and close gaps in knowledge on effects of climate change and ocean acidification on marine biodiversity, a request has been included in the ICES 2012 Work Programme for advice on tools to detect and quantify the effects of ocean acidification and climate change on species, habitats and ecosystem function, including the identification of suitable species and key areas.

This strand of OSPAR work is particularly relevant to 'Rio+20', the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which is scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, where ocean governance issues and the so-called 'blue economy' are likely to be key topics.



Flooding in Norway@Sebastian Unger

## Year in brief

A new chapter for the OSPAR Commission started this year following the Ministerial Meeting, the adoption of a new Strategy and a new working structure. A key focus for OSPAR has been the implementation and dissemination of the successful outcomes achieved at the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen in September 2010.

**October 2010:** Mr Victor Escobar replaces Mr Atle Fretheim as Chairman of the OSPAR Commission.

The establishment of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas in the wider Atlantic was presented to the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan to bring global attention to the establishment of the world's first network of MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction. This pioneering step in oceans governance was a significant contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity.

**November 2010:** First meeting of Intersessional Correspondence Group (ICG) on the MSFD (ICG-MSFD) set up to provide the link between the EU Common Implementation Strategy process and regional coordination of relevant Member States within OSPAR.

ICG-COBAM Workshop considers how to determine GES for MSFD Biodiversity Descriptors 1, 4 and 6.

The OSPAR Secretariat exchanges informal views with high-level representatives from littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas, particularly in connection with the development of the oil and gas industry.

Two key instruments, the Bonn Agreement Action Plan (BAAP) and the Dublin Declaration, were adopted at the first Ministerial Meeting of the Bonn Agreement in Ireland, both underlining a clear cooperation with OSPAR.

OSPAR's ICG-Marine Litter meets to facilitate the voluntary monitoring programme for beach litter and coordinate marine litter issues in relation to the MSFD.

**December 2010:** In association with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, OSPAR presents relevant conclusions of the QSR 2010 on fisheries management to the Long distance fleet Regional Advisory Council at their annual meeting in Tallinn.

**January 2011:** North Sea Network (NSN) 2011 promotes closer cooperation with other international forums, such as the Bonn Agreement, INTERPOL and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

**February 2011:** An ICG on Ballast Water Management (ICG-BWM) is set up to deal with the work plan for the Ballast Water Management on ships operating between ports in the North-East Atlantic.

**March 2011:** The Barcelona Convention co-hosts the OIC meeting in Spain and welcomes the opportunity to exchange information and experience on offshore oil and gas activities in both Regional Seas Conventions.

Work on drilling in extreme conditions and associated potential environmental impacts is in progress as a direct result of ongoing global responses to the Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

OSPAR's work on marine litter is given a high profile at the 5th International Marine Debris Conference in Hawaii.

**April 2011:** The Biodiversity Committee recommends measures to protect 7 species of threatened and/or declining seabirds for adoption.

**May 2011:** OSPAR presents the North-East Atlantic MPA network at the 2nd International Marine Conservation Congress.

**June 2011:** The International Maritime Organization (IMO), in collaboration with OSPAR and the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention conduct a Workshop to implement common objectives to protect the marine environment in the Abidjan Convention Region.

OSPAR expert group (ICG-SEA) launches a major socio-economic analysis study both to support the OSPAR Biodiversity Strategy and to facilitate regional coordination of the regional implementation of the MSFD.

OSPAR participates in the 'Seas the Future' Conference in the Faroes to strengthen ties with relevant competent authorities in Nordic Regions and to transfer knowledge and experience.



## OSPAR Commission and Abidjan Convention

In June 2011, OSPAR, the UNEP Abidjan Convention and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Office for the London Convention and Protocol joined forces to conduct a joint workshop for the countries of the Abidjan Convention. The workshop supported capacity-building for ecosystem management along the Atlantic coast of Africa, identifying best practice with regard to the prevention of marine pollution, dumping of wastes and other matter at sea, establishment and management of marine protected areas and environmental impacts from offshore oil and gas activities.

The workshop was organised with the support of the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Governments of Gabon, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, and took place from 6 to 10 June 2011 in Libreville, Gabon. It brought together the national focal points of seventeen Abidjan Convention Parties, marine environmental protection experts from the IMO, OSPAR and UNEP, and representatives of relevant regional stakeholders, including the oil and gas industry, non-governmental organisations (e.g. WWF and IUCN) and sub-regional marine protected areas initiatives. For OSPAR, the Secretariat and representatives of three Contracting Parties (Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom) participated in the workshop.



The workshop raised awareness of the benefits of regional environmental cooperation and the work of relevant international agreements and conventions, such as the London Convention and Protocol and the OSPAR Convention. One of the main results was a recommendation that cooperation between the OSPAR Commission and the Abidjan Convention should continue and, if possible, be expanded.

OSPAR 2011 welcomed the outcomes of the workshop and the resulting recommendation for closer cooperation. OSPAR agreed that a joint memorandum of understanding will be developed between the two Regional Seas Conventions, looking towards greater coherence in the eastern Atlantic Ocean. This agreement will create a framework for future cooperation to take place between the two Conventions, to enhance the two-way exchange of experiences and best practice, technical cooperation and capacity development. One initial way of doing this will be to explore an expert exchange to support development of specific capacity in the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention.



Representatives of the Abidjan Convention, Contracting Parties and OSPAR Commission at the Abidjan workshop

## OSPAR Commission and NOAA

The OSPAR Secretariat hosted the attachment of Midori Akamine of the United States, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at its London headquarters from April to September 2011. Midori has worked in environmental policy and law at NOAA and in international venues, mainly in Asia. At NOAA, Midori is the Director of the Marine National Monument Program that sits in NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service in the Pacific Islands Region. This program coordinates co-management regimes to devise and implement marine conservation strategies in the largest US MPAs that total approximately 880 000 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean, islands and atolls. The US experience in devising governance and strategies to conserve the MPA resources is informative for the formulation of strategies to achieve management measures in the OSPAR network of MPAs. During her tenure at OSPAR, Midori has shared her experience and contributed to the OSPAR initiatives which are breaking new ground, especially in the area of governance of high seas MPAs.



Manta©Kydd Pollock

As OSPAR is currently investigating a rationale for proposing the Charlie-Gibbs South MPA as the first IMO high seas Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in the world, the US experience in designating its largest MPA as an IMO PSSA is an area of special relevance for the NOAA-OSPAR exchange. Midori has brought to OSPAR her experience in this process as it was applied to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The US PSSA designation was accompanied by an expansion of Areas to be Avoided, and a ship reporting system as an Associated Protective Measure; these measures have been implemented to

protect the sensitive habitats of the North-Western Hawaiian Islands. At OSPAR 2011, Midori presented possible associated protective measures for consideration and outlined the designation process. Related to this topic, Midori will participate with David Johnson, Executive Secretary, in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) partnership's international seminar to conduct an analysis of the creation and management of cross-sectoral MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Midori will also participate in the OSPAR Commission's ICG-MPA and has participated in the IMO Marine Environmental Protection Committee 62, including its technical group considering proposals for PSSAs.

Midori's activities whilst at the OSPAR Secretariat also include her assistance in the development and participation in the first regional workshop to identify Ecological or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) for repository candidacy under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Joint North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), CBD, OSPAR workshop is scheduled for September 2011 and its format will serve as an example for other such global workshops. Another example of informal cooperation is the connection of OSPAR and NOAA regarding the United Nations Regular Process and regional approaches to describing the North Atlantic in the assessments now getting underway. Midori has also worked on bilateral relationships between OSPAR and both the International Seabed Authority and the Arctic Council, and also drafted a new regional Memorandum of Understanding for OSPAR and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). With the success of these and other activities, it is hoped that future beneficial exchanges between OSPAR and NOAA may occur.



Midori Akamine on Hōkūle'a, voyaging canoe of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, off Waikiki with Diamond Head in the backdrop.

## Organisation

### Contracting Parties

The work under the OSPAR Convention is managed by the OSPAR Commission, made up of 16 Contracting Parties. These are: Belgium, Denmark, the European Union (represented by the European Commission), Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### Observers

The OSPAR Commission may, by unanimous vote of the Contracting Parties, admit as an observer, any State which is not a Contracting Party to the Convention and any international governmental or non-governmental organisations whose activities are related to the Convention. These observers are entitled to participate in meetings of the Commission, its main Committees and its Working Groups. Observer organisations provide valuable expertise, draw attention to specific issues and facilitate networking with stakeholders. Full details of all these observers can be found on the OSPAR website.

The Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with the Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances 1983 (the Bonn Agreement) and the OSPAR Commission are formally observers at each other's meetings. This extends to the Bonn Agreement's Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA). Since all Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties are OSPAR Contracting Parties and since the two organisations share a common Secretariat, there has always been close cooperation.



## Committee Chairs

### Vice-Chair of the OSPAR Commission

Mr Richard Moxon (United Kingdom)

The following individuals chaired OSPAR Strategy Committees and Working Groups during the period 2010/11

#### Biodiversity Committee (BDC)

Mr Olivier Laroussinie (France)

#### Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee (EIHA)

Mr Lex W A Oosterbaan (The Netherlands)

#### Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee (HASEC)

Mr Uli Claussen (Germany) and  
Ms Ana García González (Spain)

#### Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Committee (OIC)

Mr Kevin O'Carroll (United Kingdom)

#### Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC)

Dr Justin Gwynn (Norway)

#### Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME)

Mr Martin Mørk Larsen (Denmark)

#### North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)

Captain Jeremy Smart (United Kingdom)

## Internships

During 2010/11, OSPAR hosted two students: Julien Jreissati, France, worked on updating the website and modifying its structure so that it is aligned with the objectives of the new Communication Strategy.

Joe Green, UK, undertook two main projects. The first was a brief analysis of the 2010 Cancún climate change summit and the second, the current state of Blue Carbon and any outcomes which might impact on OSPAR Contracting Parties.

## OSPAR Secretariat

A professional Secretariat of 12 staff is based in London. During the year Ms Emily Corcoran replaced Dr Richard Emmerson as Deputy Secretary. Ms Andrea Weiss and Mr Sebastian Unger came to the end of their contracts and have both taken up new positions in Germany. Ms Audrey Baconnais-Rosez returned to her national administration, the French Defence Procurement Agency to work on naval information systems. OSPAR 2011 paid tribute to outgoing members of the Secretariat and recognised their significant contributions.

# Reports adopted by OSPAR 2011 for publication

Reports adopted by OSPAR 2011 can be downloaded from the OSPAR website at [www.ospar.org](http://www.ospar.org) once they are published.

## Implementation Reporting

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on:

- OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5 to promote the use and implementation of environmental management systems by the offshore industry
- OSPAR Recommendation 2005/2 on environmental goals for the discharge by the offshore industry of chemicals that are, or contain added substances, listed in the OSPAR List of chemicals for priority action
- OSPAR Recommendation 2003/4 on controlling the dispersal of mercury from crematoria.

Implementation Report of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4:

- Report from Belgium
- Report from Germany
- Report from Spain.

## Biodiversity

Annual report on dumping of wastes or other matter at sea in 2009

OSPAR database on offshore wind-farms: Data 2010/2011 (Updated)

Background Document on Bluefin tuna

2010 Status Report on the OSPAR network of Marine Protected Areas

Background Document for Altair Seamount Marine Protected Area

Background Document for Antialtair Seamount Marine Protected Area

Background Document for Josephine Seamount Marine Protected Area

Background Document for Mid Atlantic Ridge north of the Azores Marine Protected Area

Report of the OSPAR/MSFD workshop on approaches to determining GES for biodiversity

Identification of ecological monitoring parameters to assess Good Environmental Status of marine waters

Background Document on Ecological Quality Objectives for threatened and/or declining habitats

## Hazardous Substances

Background Document on neodecanoic acid ethenyl ester

Background Document on Tetrabromobisphenol-A

Background Document on organotin compounds

Review Statement for the OSPAR Background Document on Perfluorooctane Sulphonate

Mercury losses from the Chlor-alkali industry in 2009, including an assessment of 2008 and 2009 data and trends

## Monitoring and Assessment

2010/2011 assessment of CEMP data

Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme: Deposition of air pollutants around the North Sea and the North-East Atlantic in 2009

Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges to Convention Waters: OSPAR Contracting Parties' RID 2009 Data Report

## Offshore Oil and Gas

Biennial update of the inventory of oil and gas offshore installations in the OSPAR maritime area

Annual report on discharges, spills and emissions 2009, including its assessment

## Radioactive Substances

Annual report on liquid discharges from nuclear installations in 2009

Annual report on discharges of radionuclides from the non-nuclear sectors in 2009

## General

Update of the Quality Assurance Handbook

Annual report of the OSPAR Commission 2010/11

Rapport annuel de la Commission OSPAR 2010/11

The 1992 OSPAR Convention is the current instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. It combined and up-dated the 1972 Oslo Convention on dumping waste at sea and the 1974 Paris Convention on land-based sources of marine pollution.

Copies of this Annual Report are available from:

OSPAR Commission  
New Court  
48 Carey Street  
London WC2A 2JQ

t: +44 (0)20 7430 5200

f: +44 (0)20 7430 5225

e: [secretariat@ospar.org](mailto:secretariat@ospar.org)

[www.ospar.org](http://www.ospar.org)

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