



# Newsletter Summer 2004

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## Tay Estuary Forum Update

### Annual Conference 2004

The forum's Annual Conference 2004 was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April at West Park Conference Centre, University of Dundee. Each year the event aims to provide an overview of local and national issues relating to the sustainable management of the estuary and its surrounding coastline. Just under 80 delegates, from a wide range of organisations, attended the one-day conference this year to listen to a number of presentations and contribute to discussions. The programme included several invited speakers who covered a wide range of topics relating to coastal zone management including both national issues and local initiatives.

The one-day conference was split into three sessions. The first session "Managing Scotland's Changing Coastline", included an overview on the recent ICZM National Stocktake from Frank Fortune (BMT Cordah). Two examples of soft engineering projects being used to combat coastal squeeze, the first from Kenna Chisholm (RSPB) who spoke about Nigg bay, the first managed realignment project in Scotland. Les Hatton (Fife Ranger service) then spoke about a Beach Nourishment Project at St Andrews Bay, which produced a solution to erosion that met the needs of everyone involved. The session also included an overview of Angus Council's Shoreline Management Plan, which has recently been launched for consultation from Mark Davidson (Angus Council).

The second session of the day, entitled "Marine Resources and Industry" included presentations, which looked at both historical and future innovation in technology. Bill Dow, University of Dundee, explained some of the effects that building the Rail and Road Bridges across the Tay had on navigation and sediment movement in the estuary.



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*(Pictured above from left to right are Bill Dow, Kenna Chisholm, Katriona Finan and Rob Duck)*

Maf Smith (Scottish Renewables Forum) looked to the future with an introduction to the potential of Marine Renewable Technologies, such as wave and tidal energy sources.

The Final session "Scotland's Improving Water quality?" looked at the national picture through an informative presentation on the Water Framework Directive and how it might be implemented in Scotland, from Callum Sinclair (SEPA). Local water quality issues in the estuary were then discussed with an overview from Craig Carr on the Tay Wastewater Treatment Works and the effect that the facility has had on water quality in the Tay. Jeff Halkett, (Keep Scotland Beautiful) concluded the day's discussions with an insight into the various types of beach awards available and the recent improvements in water quality in the Tay, which have resulted in an increase in the areas potential to gain beach awards.

Delegates were also given their chance to contribute to the day's discussions when they were invited to highlight issues which they feel are important during the afternoon's Soap-box session.

*If you would like to contact the Forum please do so at the address below*

*Katriona Finan*

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# Beach Litter Ballons Again

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has published its Beachwatch 2003 Report, giving results for the UK's biggest annual beach clean and litter survey carried out in September 2003. The report records the highest density of litter on beaches surveyed since Beachwatch began eleven years ago. On average, one item was recorded for every 48 cm of beach surveyed.

Litter density had risen by 29% from last year, and by 99% from 1994. Litter from beach visitors, fishing debris and plastic litter were also at a record high and sewage related debris had increased for the first time in five years. For the UK as a whole, beach visitors were found to be the biggest source of beach litter surveyed (contributing 36.7 % of all litter found), followed by fishing debris (14.6%), sewage related debris (7.8%) and shipping litter (2.0%). These levels indicate that current legislation is having little or no effect on reducing aquatic litter and that public attitudes still need to be changed.

On 21st-22nd September 2003, more than 2600 volunteer helped to clean and survey a total of 135 km of UK coastline on 244 beaches. In Scotland, volunteers surveyed 42 beaches. A total of 55,124 litter items were found, averaging 1,535 items per kilometer, higher than in 2002 (1,240 items/km) but below the UK average of 2,074.5 items/km.

Beach visitors were found to be the biggest source of beach litter recorded in Scotland contributing 31.8 % of all litter found, followed by sewage related debris (23.4%), fishing debris (11.1%) and shipping litter (2.0%).

"Every single piece of rubbish has an owner, and every single person can make a difference by making sure they take their rubbish with them when they leave the beach" says Calum Duncan, MCS Marine Conservation Officer for Scotland.

Sewage Related Debris (SRD) increased throughout the UK for the first time in 5 years. In Scotland, SRD levels were almost double that found elsewhere, comprising 23.4% of the Scottish total, with an average density of 359 items/km surveyed, an increase from 72.3 items /km in 2002. However, elevated SRD levels at Saltings to Bowling beach, where >10,000 cotton bud sticks (56% of the UK total of 17,981!) were recorded, made a vast contribution to this total. Yet even discounting this peak data, Scottish SRD litter levels have still risen to 79.5 items/km.

The remarkable figures for Scotland show that we are still not getting the 'Bag It and Bin It' message.' Calum continued we can all minimise our impact on the

coast by disposing of sanitary items in the dustbin NOT the toilet, refusing carrier bags at supermarkets and taking our beach rubbish, including disposable barbecues, home with us. Such individual actions should be bolstered by less plastic packaging, better plastic recycling facilities, a tax on plastic bags, environmentally sustainable beach cleaning regimes, legal recognition of litter as bona fide pollution, statutory monitoring of identifiable beach litter - such as sewage debris, windblown landfill waste, fly-tipped litter and raw plastic pellets - and regulation at source.'

Plastic items accounted for over 50% of the litter found throughout the UK, including 5,831 plastic bags, the equivalent of 43 plastic bags for every kilometer of coastline surveyed. Every year thousands of animals are thought to die as a result of entanglement or ingestion of litter.

"The public needs to understand the link between creating litter, and the consequences of their actions" said Andrea Crump, MCS Litter Projects Co-ordinator. "Plastic bags and balloons are eaten by marine turtles, which mistake them for jellyfish; this can result in a turtle starving to death, or drowning". The average number of balloons found for every kilometer of beach surveyed increased from last years figure of 6.5 per km to 8.7 per km (a 34% increase).

*Continued overleaf ...*

Underwater clean ups and event of the (MCS) Marine Conservation Society's Adopt-a-Beach project, which encourages volunteers to clean up their local beach on a regular basis to identify the sources of litter. These surveys found an average of 36 items per square meter surveyed, and nearly a third of this was attributed to fishing litter.

Environmental Action Fund.

The data from Beachwatch surveys also contributes to the International Coastal Cleanup, involving 100 countries worldwide, organised by the Ocean Conservancy in the United States.

Beachwatch is the flagship

Adopt-a-Beach is funded by The Crown Estate and Defra's

**Beachwatch 2003 Summary Report is available to download on the MCS website [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)**

## Action Along the Angus Coast



### **Montrose Seafront Gains Seaside Award**

Montrose Seafront has attained the standards necessary for the Seaside Awards of distinction Resort Category 2004. Montrose seafront award beach extends from the end of the ramp/board walk to the north to just beyond the promenade to the south.

An award beach may fly a Seaside Award Flag when it meets specific criteria for management and cleanliness and the bathing water reaches the overall legal minimum microbiologic standards the previous year. The Seaside Award, which is only valid for one year, recognises two categories of beach: Resort Beaches and Rural Beaches Montrose Beach is in the resort beaches category.

The award period is from 1st June to 31st Sept and is valid for one year. Information about Seaside Awards can be found at <http://www.seasideawards.org.uk>

*Jim Campbell Parks Services Manager, Angus Council*



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### ***The Angus SMP Launched***

The Angus Shoreline Management Plan has reached the final consultation stage and is now awaiting the remaining consultee replies. The Shoreline Management Plan has been issued to a wide spectrum of consultees in the form of both hard documents and CDs. Copies are also available in local libraries and Access offices.

Numerous useful comments have been collected over the last two months. These comments will be used to make final alterations to the document before it is produced for Council approval.

This is scheduled to take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

It is hoped that the Shoreline Management Plan for Angus will be made available on the Internet in the near future. Thus, enabling an even larger number of people access to the document.

For more information please contact Susan Crawford or Mark Davidson, Angus Council Roads Department, on 01307 473282.




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### ***Coast Protection Works at Tayview Caravan Park, Monifieth***

Tayview Caravan Park Monifieth, in the 1930's – 1950's was used as a landfill site. Erosion started in the 1970's and in the 1990's there were cases of landfill material being exposed onto the beach. It was decided a scheme was required to prevent further erosion and contain the landfill material.

Funding for the project came from Angus Council Environmental Health and Consumer Protection and the Scottish Executive. Total funding for the scheme was £400,000.

scheme was issued to contractors earlier in 2003 and the contract was awarded to AWG Construction Services Ltd in June.

After a delay to allow for the sand martins nesting in the dunes, work commenced on the sixteen-week project on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

Over 10,650 tonnes of Rock armour was delivered to the site from Friarton Quarry in Perth to act as a protecting revetment.

A new foot way/cycleway has been constructed on top of the rock armour revetment with landscaping either side of the footway with a new boundary fence to the adjacent caravan site.

Rock Groynes have been placed at various locations to encourage the build up the sand on the beach. Steps and a ramp have now been constructed to facilitate access on to the beach.



After the works

# More Scottish Beaches Make the Grade

**Scottish Water is pleased that a record number of Scottish sites have been included in the latest Good Beach Guide.**

56 Scottish beaches are recommended this year, an increase from thirty three – that is a 70% improvement on last year.

This follows the success last year, when the best ever bathing water results were recorded by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and further underlines Scottish Water's commitment to improving the environment.

The Marine Conservation Society, which produces the annual guide, has acknowledged the success is down to "huge improvements" in the



(St Andrews TEF 2004)

sewage infrastructure across Scotland. Since Scottish Water was formed in 2002, it has worked with SEPA and all other bodies to significantly improve the bathing waters in Scotland. This involved identifying the beaches and waters most at risk.

Between 2002 and 2006 the priority is to maintain standards at the 60 sites that are fully designated as bathing waters by SEPA and the EU (as opposed to the 123 sites listed by the Marine Conservation Society). The most recent, independent analysis available showed that only three of those sites failed to meet the Mandatory Standard and that only one of those failures was possibly linked to Scottish Water discharges.

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Atholl continued: "After decades of under investment in the water industry, we are now involved in dozens of projects to provide a higher level of waste treatment to effluent discharged into coastal water, in order to meet stringent European directives. We are also improving or removing 400 unsatisfactory sewer overflows, which can occasionally discharge untreated waste water into rivers and bathing waters.

"Though the scale of investment required to improve Scotland's extensive coastline poses great challenges, carefully targeted investment and closer working with our regulators will ensure bathing water quality continues to improve."

*Scottish Water  
May / 2004*

## Water Framework Directive: SEPA's River Basin Management Planning Strategy Consultation

One of the biggest and most ambitious pieces of European environmental legislation is the Water Framework Directive (WFD), which aims to provide effective co-ordination of water environment policy and regulation. SEPA's Callum Sinclair reports on a key consultation taking place.

The WFD became law in Scotland at the end of 2003 through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (the WEWS Act), which brings forward new requirements and tasks in Scotland to protect, maintain and improve the water environment in a sustainable way.

The Act will be delivered through the River Basin Management (RBM) Planning system, which will develop, set and present for all Scotland's waters:

- Environmental and economic assessments,
- Monitoring programmes and results,
- Environmental objectives, and
- Programmes to achieve these objectives.

SEPA is leading this process in Scotland, and the first River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) will be published in 2009, with subsequent plans every six years. SEPA has already been working with many other organisations and stakeholders on this new process, and in April published a consultation document considering key issues associated with RBM Planning. This will lead to the publication of a Scottish RBM Planning Strategy in the autumn.

SEPA wants to hear your opinions on what it proposes. The consultation closes on **21 July**, so there's still time to give your views (see details at end of article).

In summary, the consultation considers and makes proposals on three key aspects of RBM Planning:

- Developing administrative arrangements and principles to support RBMP production,
- Delivering effective participative and consultative opportunities, and
- Effectively integrating the RBMP with other plans and planning.

### Administrative arrangements

The WEWS Act requires the formation of sub-basin plans and one or more advisory group to assist RBMP production, although the remit, membership geographic coverage and procedures of such plans and groups can be determined by SEPA. However, we are keen to encourage stakeholder engagement in the process and develop proposals for these groups and plans that are consistent with the views and aspirations of others.

The formation of a RBMP National Advisory Group, developing from the existing Scottish Executive National Stakeholder Forum, to co-ordinate and inform RBMP production is proposed. Options are also given for a supporting network of Area Advisory Groups covering the Scottish River Basin District, with the preferred option being eight groups based on surface water catchments, coastal water units and aligned, where possible, to local authority boundaries. It is proposed that these groups begin to form in 2005/06 to deliver required reports from 2006.



### Effective participation and consultation

SEPA wants to adopt a participative approach to RBMP production. This will help make best use of knowledge and expertise, give a more accurate reflection of national and local priorities, and promote ownership of the plan objectives and the actions required to achieve them.

The consultation proposes key principles for the consultative and participative activities and methods that will support RBMP production. It also proposes that a Participation and Communication Plan is produced by December 2006, using principles identified in the document. Such a plan would support and inform activities

undertaken by the proposed National and Area Advisory Groups.

### Integration of the RBMP with other planning activities

It is recognised that RBMP will not be the only plan with an important contribution to make in managing the water environment. It will be necessary, therefore, to integrate and co-ordinate the RBMP with other planning frameworks to ensure that their preparation and content contribute to common goals, while respecting differing requirements and objectives. This can be achieved by involving the right people at the right time, and by making reference to those plans already in place.

The consultation document makes proposals in relation to a range of existing planning activities and types that is felt will help integrate and co-ordinate the RBMP with these activities. Many proposals identify the need to include representatives of either sectors on the National or Area Advisory Groups.

For example, in respect of coastal planning it is proposed that the Scottish Coastal Forum could become a member of the National RBMP Advisory Groups with individual coastal partnerships and fora, such as Tay Estuary Forum, becoming members of relevant Area Advisory Groups. More specific recommendations are made on the important relationship between the RBMP and Statutory Development Plans. A joint working group of representatives from RBM Planning, the Scottish Executive and Development Planning is proposed to inform and assist co-ordination between these plans towards the crucial first RBMP of 2009.

You can view and respond to the document at [www.sepa.org.uk/consultation](http://www.sepa.org.uk/consultation), or request a hard copy from: [rbmp@sepa.org.uk](mailto:rbmp@sepa.org.uk). Further information is available at [www.sepa.org.uk/wfd](http://www.sepa.org.uk/wfd).

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## UK seas in crisis

An urgent call for legal protection for UK seas and the wildlife they host is being made to mark United Nations World Oceans Day (June 8).

Wildlife and Countryside Link, an alliance of leading conservation groups, says pollution, noise and disturbance from offshore industry, fishing and recreation is threatening marine wildlife including sea birds, dolphins and cold water corals.

More than 40,000 species – 50 per cent of the UK's plants and animals – live in British seas yet domestic wildlife law extends only 12 nautical miles from the coast. That leaves important, vulnerable and sensitive marine species and habitats largely unprotected.

Stuart Singleton-White, head of the Link Campaign for Marine Legislation said: "The neglect of our seas by government has been woeful.

The oceans are our last living system for managing inshore wilderness but are being exploited and damaged almost beyond repair.

"There has been too much talking about what should be done. Action must replace words now and legislation must be introduced in the next session of Parliament to save our seas before it is too late."

Wildlife and Countryside Link is urging government to adopt four main measures to improve marine protection, including:

A co-ordinated approach and overall vision for UK waters, including an ecosystem-based approach to managing the marine environment;

Improved, properly enforced marine legislation, including the designation of protected areas and better species protection; A planning system to enable strategic and integrated - rather than piecemeal - management of activities at sea; and a new

The campaign is supported by 300 MPs who have signed Early Day Motion number 171 Calling for improved marine protection.

Their move follows a call from members of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee who said in their Marine Environment report in March that there was "a pressing need to update and streamline the legislative and institutional framework governing marine environmental protection."

As part of the campaign to introduce legislation, Wildlife and Countryside Link is meeting top civil servants and lobbying politicians, co-ordinating campaign events across the UK, and working to increase public support for better marine protection.

A leaflet *The Last Living Wilderness – A Future for Our Seas* and further information can be obtained on the website <http://www.wcl.org.uk> or [annie.smith@wcl.org.uk](mailto:annie.smith@wcl.org.uk)

## The Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the river Tay?

The Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*margaritifera margaritifera*) was originally found in thousands of rivers on either side of the North Atlantic. In Europe it was once found as far south as Spain and Portugal. In recent decades a combination of factors, including the decline in salmon (on which young pearl mussel are dependent) and on major and widespread modifications to natural watercourses for bank protection, flood alleviation etc, have dramatically reduced its range. Even Scotland, a world stronghold for the species, now has only a handful of rivers where healthily reproducing pearl mussel populations can be found.

Although it is traditionally associated with rocky stretches of fast-flowing rivers e.g. the upper reaches of rivers like the Tay and the South Esk in fact the species can thrive in slow-moving lowland rivers provided water quality remains high and there is little disturbance to the river bed.

In the very recent past mussels were to be found in the South Esk well below the upstream limit of tidal influence above Bridge of Dun. In fact at least one Montrose lady sports a ring with a pearl taken by her husband-to-be from the South Esk just above Montrose Basin before World War II. Sadly live mussels are no longer to be found in the South Esk much below Brechin.

Excitingly, recent survey work indicates that there may well be a healthy pearl mussel population in the Firth of Tay almost as far downstream as Newburgh. If confirmed this would add significantly to the wildlife interest of what is already an internationally important site.

### ***Your chance to comment...***

#### **The Sixth Report**

The Sixth Report from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee: Marine Environment: Session 2003-2004: HC76 can be found at [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/environment\\_food\\_and\\_rural\\_affairs/environment\\_food\\_and\\_rural\\_affairs\\_reports\\_and\\_publications.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/environment_food_and_rural_affairs/environment_food_and_rural_affairs_reports_and_publications.cfm)

#### **Articles for the TEF Newsletter**

It is important that the Tay Estuary forum's Newsletter covers a wide selection of information relating to coastal management, including local projects that are taking place around the Tay. I would like to take this opportunity to ask that forum members use the newsletter as a tool to inform other forum members of any work that which they are carrying out that relates to the coastal zone either locally or at a national level.

Please email [k.finan@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:k.finan@dundee.ac.uk)

#### ***Scotland's Seas: your chance to have your say...***

If you would like to more about the current initiatives that are managing human impacts on our coasts and seas, or if you would like to have a copy of the consultation paper on developing a strategic framework for the coasts and seas,

Please Contact

[waterenvironment@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:waterenvironment@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

or visit the website at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultation/environment/dsfsme-00.asp>