

FORAGING FOR FISHY FACTS

Coastwise has successfully delivered the significant Oral History component of Devon Wildlife Trust's Living Seas Project (funded by the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund) and exceeded the target despite the tight timetable.

Project Co-ordinator Jill Portsmouth reports that Coastwise was approached by DWT in the summer to help them gather information about changes in the marine environment that have taken place in living memory. This information could be changes in numbers of cetaceans, fish, seals, lobsters, rockpool species, seaweeds and birds or changes in water quality, sea movements, beach debris, and much else. The intention is to identify whether local marine life is changing and, if so, why.

Coastwise has enthusiastically tackled this challenge and has recorded 20 people ranging from fishermen, anglers and charter boat owners to harbourmasters, coastguards, divers and coastal dwellers. The information recorded has been fascinating and informative from both a marine and a local history point of view. Participants have also lent pictures, photos, postcards, poems, copies of which have been taken.

About 30 hours of interviews have been recorded and a major editing task is now being undertaken by DWT to focus on information to be used by DWT & Finding Sanctuary. This may help to identify very special marine areas which are vital to the health of our sea-life and which could become Marine Protection Zones around the North Devon coast.

All interviewees are being invited to a get-together when they will be able to meet and share their recollections. We will take the opportunity to follow up points of particular interest.

Although the project is now drawing to a close, Coastwise enthusiasm is such that we plan to continue interviewing the many more people suggested to us.

We want to provide a valuable resource to both local people and researchers in the future.

Copies of the recordings will be held in Barnstaple Museum, and the information used by Coastwise to guide us in finding new ways of contributing to North Devon's coast.



BBC's Kirk England interviewing Combe Martin boatman, Michael Irwin to launch the Oral History project, photo Malcolm Langford

New Programme - any changes will be circulated

January

8 Marine Bill • Baroness Sue Miller
15 Gosse, Eliot & Darwin • Peter Stiles
22 Divers & Seasearch • Keith Denby
29 Oral Histories • Cat Jones

February

5 RNLI • Berni Putt
12 Marine Animals • Paul Naylor
19 Fishweirs or Birding - TBA
26 Lundy Marine Reserve • Warden

March

5 Saltmarshes • Pip Jollands
12 Ilfracombe Harbour • Robert Down
19 Mini Sessions • Ro Madgett

Marine Policy in brief

Devon

Baroness Sue Miller, a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Marine Bill, talked to Coastwise on 8 January in an excellent session - see Robert Down's report. Her commitment and local experience is helping make the Bill a more useful piece of legislation.

North Devon & Somerset **Coastal Authorities Group invitation**: Shoreline Management Plan on 19 January, 4-6 pm at Bideford Town Hall. Consultants Halcrow present progress.

In November Defra announced a shortlist of 7 sites for the proposed Marine Management Organisation, including Plymouth.

UK

Marine Bill progress: 2nd reading December 2008, to Lords from 12 January 2009, the Commons after Easter. Royal Assent summer/autumn.

The UK government is starting to identify priorities for **EU Common Fisheries Policy Reform** and the Fisheries Minister has set out guidelines which draw on stakeholder views and the report of House of Lords inquiry into the Progress of the Common Fisheries Policy.

EU Fishing ministers have recently agreed that plans for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), get under way - to be completed in 2012. Meanwhile a cod recovery plan has been agreed.

In December EU fisheries ministers reached agreement on 2009 fish quotas, with a big increase in permitted catches of cod in the North Sea but cuts elsewhere. They also agreed to tackle the problem of fish discards that are thrown back and left to die because they are too small, the wrong species or because fishermen do not have a quota to bring them back to market.

A recent **EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive** aims to achieve Good Environmental Status in Europe's seas by 2020 - with populations of fish and shellfish within safe biological limits, maintaining the biological diversity of marine habitats and species, and limiting contaminants to the marine environment to levels which do not cause pollution.

www.coastwisenorthdevon.org.uk

Matt Saunders of sorce.co.uk, a professional website designer who shares our goals, has given his time to design our logo and website. The website will develop as we gain experience and as members and others use it - so please start now.

Beach Profiles

We are building up a library of information about beaches compiled by members and drawing upon our collective knowledge of the natural and cultural history of some of North Devon's favourite coast locations. Already posted: Tunnels, Saunton, Croyde, Instow, Bucks Mills.

The content of each will develop as our knowledge grows and contributions are received. Please contact Projects Co-ordinator Don Hills if you would like to undertake a profile or have information to add.

Other Planned Events

See website for updates

Bird Trip - if not 19 February

Downend Beach clean - end April

Spring/summer rock-pooling - to be arranged

Geologist, Paul Madgett, at Hartland 9 May, Downend 2

& Ilfracombe 30 June - DWT Local Members events

Shore Thing Monitoring 23 & 26 June, Lee & Abbotsham respectively

Joint rock-pool ramble with British Naturalists 20 September

Getting Involved

Full Members - £30 • Associate Members - £15 + session fee • Enquiries: Secretary Marjorie Heath, 01271 831190

Other Committee members:

Chairperson - Paula Ferris

Deputy Chair, and Treasurer - Robert Down

Programme Co-ordinators - John Broomhead & Malcolm Roberts

Projects Co-ordinator - Don Hills

Research Co-ordinator - Paul Madgett

External Relations Co-ordinator - Jill Portsmouth

Members - Anne Brown, Brian Heath, Jim Munroe

Bring your suggestions to them