

COASTWISE NORTH DEVON

January 2014

Biosphere Marine Working Group

The Group, with Coastwise representation, is currently taking part in the €4.7m ValMer project, valuing the benefits delivered to society by the functions of healthy marine ecosystems. Six ecosystems on either side of the Western Channel are to be studied, including, under the auspices of Plymouth University, the soft marine sediments of the Biosphere. University researchers are consulting local fishers & others to develop the model at stakeholder groups the first of which met in December.

It is anticipated that the resulting evaluation will provide a useful tool for government and local authority planners, and others assessing policy options for developments impacting comparable ecosystems.



Photo by Dorothy McCormack

A video that captures the essence of the event can be seen at <http://www.northdevonb10.org.uk>

A resounding success: 100 experts & volunteers, 750 general public, 300 school children, 795 species found.

Data added to national data bases

Increased public awareness of wildlife and how to get involved

Fostered good relations between naturalists & the public

Introduced bioblitzes to local agenda for nature

New skills acquired for the future

FROM SEALS & SNAILS TO ICEBERGS & ICECREAM

A big Thank You to our Autumn Speakers

An excellent Autumn programme got off to a great start with a report from BioBlitz Co-ordinator Jim Monroe which was followed by a series of talks quite as captivating as Robert Down's website headlines:

"Seal's Eye View of the North Devon Coast", kayaker Rob McIntyre

"John Walters knows some disgusting insects", the naturalist & artist

"Sue's Seals Steal the Scene", Sue Sayer, Cornish Seal Group

"Measuring a snail's sexy bits", Sarah Clark, Inshore Fisheries & Conservation

"Clocking Hockings", Geoff Hocking & the family ice-cream firm

"Montagu - much more than just a Harrier and a Blenny", historian Ron Cleevely

"Icebergs seen in North Devon Recently", Andy Torbet of BBC's Project Iceberg

"Hedgehogs in the sea near Woolacombe", Holly Morgenroth, Exeter Museum

Not forgetting the AGM, with a couple of light-hearted presentations by members -Chris Mandry, diving under the sea, & Paula Ferris, peering down the microscope.

SPRING PROGRAMME, 9.45 - 11.45 am BARNSTAPLE LIBRARY

January

16 Fish of the North Devon Coast, Doug Herdson, Fish Biologist

23 Wetland Bird Survey & the Taw/Torridge Estuary, Tim Jones, Consultant Ornithologist

30 Marine Life of Lundy's MCZ, Robert Irving, Ecologist, Lundy Field Society

February

6 What has bioblitz ever done for us - why do species matter? Pip Jollands, Ecologist

13 Shoreline Species & Climate Change, Fiona Crouch, Shore Thing Officer, MBA

20 Scallops, Chris Mandry, Diver, Ilfracombe Dive Club

27 Marine Botany in an English Dress: the Curious Structure of Seaweed, Sarah Hotchkiss, Phycologist

March

6 Seascapes, our first Wordle, Elaine Hayes, North Devon AONB Manager

13 On the Beach, Members' session led by Malcolm Roberts, Coastwise Co-chair

20 Marine Biodiversity Monitoring in Devon, Sara Marshall, Carlotta Molfese & Matt Palmer, Devon Wildlife Trust Interns

MORE AUTUMN ACTIVITIES....

The annual **Isley bird trip** took place in December on one of the few suitable tides and by chance a beautiful day with excellent visibility. Plenty of birds were in evidence including 7 spoonbills and several flocks of small waders. Much scrub round the site had been cleared leaving the reserve more exposed. This has been raised with the RSPB who are in discussion with the land-owners.

Coastwise submitted its **Atlantic Array** concerns to the Planning Inspectorate. Subsequently RWE withdrew its windfarm application, citing as its reasons:

- Significant technical challenges within the Bristol Channel Zone, including substantially deeper waters and adverse seabed conditions
- Prohibitive costs to overcome such technical challenges in current market conditions
- Focus on progressing more technically and economically viable offshore projects

Rose Day represented Coastwise at the November meeting of the **Devon Maritime Forum** with its 'Blue Growth' theme, at Exmouth. She reported back on topics covered including MCZs, tourism, tidal energy, and sustainable fishing.

Membership numbers settled at around 65 as usual, mainly regulars with an encouraging number of newcomers. In addition several holiday-makers responded to the Taster session invitation. Past members continued to join for the occasional talk, and outdoor meeting and were very welcome.

The Courtyard did us proud for the **Christmas lunch**. 37 members attended. Our thanks to John Broomhead for organising this annual event. The buzz throughout suggested it was well worthwhile.

LOOKING AHEAD

This year's excursion to south west rock-pools is scheduled for 26/27 April when Mavis Symons is planning a **Coastwise visit to Falmouth's rocky shores** under the guidance of Trudy Russell, Natural England, & Jason Birt, Newquay College. Mavis has previously organised highly successful visits to The Gower and Looe.

Shore Safaris for Members - now that plenty of traditional rock-pool rambles are on offer thanks to Combe Martin Museum & the National Trust, we are reviewing the format of ours to focus on the interests of members. We intend to run most just for members in 2014 so that we can share and develop our knowledge & enthusiasm with one another. Though the events will not be advertised to the public we will be happy to respond to interest and queries from beach-goers at the usual Brolly basecamp. We will learn together and be able to share our pet enthusiasms freed from other responsibilities and hassle - that's the theory. Let us know your views.

Devon Wildlife Trust has been awarded a grant from Exmoor National Park towards a 2 year **Shoresearch Project** to train volunteers and develop beach surveys on the Exmoor coast between Combe Martin & Minehead. Welcoming the project, we anticipate opportunities for members to participate.

BOOK NOW FOR....

Science at the Seaside, a series of talks focussing on Victorian science, collecting and nature writing. Most are by members and friends of Coastwise and are part of a university & FLAG supported project based at Ilfracombe Museum.

21 January **Jim Monroe**: Victorian Naturalists on the North Devon Coast

18 February **Prof John Plunkett**: Microscopes, Magic Lanterns & Victorian Popular Science

18 March **Holly Morgenwroth**, Collectors on the Coast

15 April **Maya Plass**: Seashore Guides

13 May **Dr John Travis**: Ilfracombe, a health resort where death came calling

24 June **Sarah Hotchkiss**: Edible Seaweed: Past and Present Uses

To book your place call the museum on 01271 863541

COMMON FISHERIES POLICY

Government announcement: A historic deal to reform the broken CFP has been agreed and the new regulation enters into force on 1 January 2014. The ground-breaking new CFP will radically transform fishing practices in Europe and includes:

- firm dates to ban fish discards
- a legally binding commitment to fish at sustainable levels
- decentralised decision making, allowing Member States to agree the measures appropriate to their fisheries

In presenting the EU reform package, the German Social Democrat MEP Ulrike Rodust stated: "As of 2015 the principle of maximum sustainable yield shall apply... Our objective is that depleted fish stocks recover by 2020."

MEP Graham Watson, writing to Coastwise, said "It is a policy I felt happy to support. It is still work in progress, with loopholes that will still have to be closed, but it is a major step forward... the vote to ban deep sea trawling in the North East Atlantic was another matter. The Liberal Democrat amendment was lost by 342 votes to 326."

Edited by Paula Ferris, January 2014

www.coastwisenorthdevon.org.uk