

EUCC Coastal News

No 4 April 2005

EUCC Coastal News is a monthly newsletter published by EUCC - The Coastal Union for its members and for the press. Readers and Network members (only entitled to newsletters) are encouraged to join the EUCC as a Private or Professional member. Members are entitled to a variety of services and discounts: check in www.eucc.net/en/members. For free subscriptions, comments or contributions, please contact: news at coastalguide.org (apologies for anti-spam code).

– Contents –

– Coastal & Climate Change –

1. EUCC Coastal and Climate Change initiative endorsed, initial focus on tourism
2. Parallel changes in ice for the Arctic and Antarctic
3. Impact of decreasing glaciers and snowfall in mountains on rivers, coastal and marine areas
4. German researchers warn of European sea level rise due to ocean circulation changes
5. Currents could disrupt ocean food chain
6. Sea-level records reveal surprising choppiness

– Ecological Networks –

7. European Eel must not go extinct
8. Eels on BBC front page
9. Europhlukes
10. Cetaceans on the move due to warmer climate?

– EUCC News –

11. EUCC has new International Secretary
12. ICZM programming in Romania (2003-2005)
13. Clean up the Med

– EU News and Initiatives –

14. GIS to monitor how clean Europe's coasts are
15. Monitoring & Managing of European Sea grass Ecosystems - M&MS
16. Call for action to stop the destruction of deep ocean habitats in international waters

– International news in brief –

17. Fish from some areas of the Baltic Sea are so contaminated that they may be too toxic for EU markets
18. Baltic Sea Ideal For Final Pre-Launch CryoSat Validation
19. UN: Fatal collapse ecosystems at hand
20. HERMES project
21. Marine Life Complicates Removal of Old Oil Rigs

– Publications –

– Newsletters and new websites –

– Events and training, 1st Announcements –

– Colophon –

– Coastal & Climate Change –

1. EUCC Coastal and Climate Change initiative endorsed, initial focus on tourism

EUCC Coastal and Climate Change is an EUCC led initiative, with the aspect of tourism and climate change going forward under the auspices of the Interreg project Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet). This was endorsed at the meeting of the EUCC Executive Committee and the CoPraNet partnership in Portugal in April during the ICCCM 2005 conference. The EUCC Coastal and Climate Change initiative, and the CoPraNet climate change and tourism proposal will apply throughout Europe.

The Mediterranean region would be the first area of implementation for the CoPraNet proposal, with the Baltic region being proposed for the next area. Within the Mediterranean region, European countries would be included, and the participation of Turkey, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries and North African countries would be sought to include their experience with addressing aspects of climate change. The main implementing partners will be regional or local governments in the Mediterranean. There is also a role for regional and European tourism and environmental organizations.

The Mediterranean region is surrounded by eighteen countries and has a coastline of 46,000 kilometres. It hosts one hundred million visitors every year, with tourism, agriculture, and fisheries being important economic sectors. Impacts and pressures on the coastal and marine environment vary widely throughout the Mediterranean. The coasts of the northwest Mediterranean are the most affected by pollution because of urban populations, industrial activities and the discharges of the Ebro, Po and Rhone Rivers. The North African coast, in contrast, is more arid with less urban and industrial development.

There are uncertainties over climate variability and extremes in the Mediterranean region. However, there is likely to be an increase in the frequency of extreme events and of droughts in the western Mediterranean. In general, warmer conditions over the Mediterranean region should lead to an increase in the occurrence of extremely high temperatures and a decrease in low temperature events. In areas experiencing decreases in precipitation, droughts are likely to become more frequent as the probability of dry days and the length of dry spells increases. Climatic change will impact ecosystems, species, biodiversity and human uses (e.g. agriculture, fisheries and tourism) throughout the region.

Further information will be available in the future on The EUCC- The Coastal Union website, www.eucc.net, and The CoPraNet website, www.coastalpractice.net.

By: Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

2. Parallel changes in ice for the Arctic and Antarctic

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Scientific Report documents climatic changes throughout the circumpolar Arctic. One of the key findings is that the Arctic has been warming rapidly and much larger changes are projected for the future. Increasing temperatures, melting glaciers, reductions in the extent and thickness of sea ice, thawing permafrost, and rising sea level illustrate this warming trend. In the Arctic, changes in sea ice are a key indicator and agent of climate change, affecting surface reflectivity, cloudiness, humidity, exchanges of heat and moisture at the ocean surface, and ocean currents.

Changes in sea ice have enormous economic, environmental and social implications. The changes have negative impacts on ice-dependant wildlife and northern peoples like the Inuit with a traditional subsistence lifestyle based on hunting mammals on or adjacent to sea ice. Changes may have positive economic effects, as it may facilitate increased marine transportation, economic development and immigration into the region.

Parallel changes to ice are occurring in the Antarctica, at least partially caused by global warming and climatic change. Glaciers on the Antarctic Peninsula are shrinking rapidly as a result of climate change. The peninsula is the most northern part of Antarctica, and the only part of the continent that extends outside the Antarctic Circle. In the most comprehensive study of its kind, scientists with the British Antarctic Survey and the US Geological Survey measured 244 glaciers on the peninsula, each typically stretching tens of miles from the Antarctic mountains to the surrounding seas. They found 87% of the glaciers had retreated significantly in the past 50 years.

Scientists from the British Antarctic Survey and the US Geological Survey built up a picture of the glaciers' history by taking measurements from more than 2,000 aerial photographs taken since the 1940s, along with more than a 100 modern satellite images. The vast majority of glaciers had begun to shrink, with the most dramatic retreats being seen since the turn of the millennium. Temperatures in the region have warmed considerably, with a rise of more than 2°C in the past 50 years. Scientists are unsure whether

the increase - up to five times greater than would be expected from typical global warming - can be attributed solely to man-made climate change or is exacerbated by natural climate variation. Although the steady loss of the glaciers is unlikely to lead to local ecological disaster, the speed with which they are disappearing is an indication of the pace and effects of climate change.

Source:

Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Overview Report: Impacts of a Warming Arctic, as located on <http://www.amap.no>

Ian Sample, science correspondent, Friday April 22, 2005, The Guardian, and Science and Nature, BBC website,

British Antarctic Survey website <http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/>

By: *Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir*

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

3. Impact of decreasing glaciers and snowfall in mountains on rivers, coastal and marine areas

In March 2005, the WWF Nepal Program released a report summarizing the state of glaciers, glacial retreat, and subsequent impacts in Nepal, India and China. Seventy percent of the world's freshwater is frozen in glaciers, and the Himalayan mountains have the largest concentration of glaciers outside the polar caps. These glaciers are referred to as the Water Tower of Asia, extend over 33,000 square kilometres, and feed seven of Asia's great rivers (Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, and Huang Ho). Along with seasonal snowfall and precipitation in the Himalayas, the glaciers regulate and ensure a year round supply of water to billions of people.

Climate change has affected the Himalayan glacier ecosystem greatly. Sixty-seven per cent of these glaciers are retreating, with climate change being the major cause. It is thought that accelerated glacial melting will initially lead over the next few decades to increased flooding, including glacial lake outburst flooding, and landslides. Over the longer term, as the volume of glacial ice decreases, there will be corresponding decreases in glacial melt water and river flows. There will be also corresponding and dramatic impacts on biodiversity, wetlands, people and economies in a region suffering from existing freshwater shortages.

As well as anticipated effects such as these, unanticipated and unexpected climatic interactions may also occur due to declining snowfall in mountains. For example, reduced snowfall in the Himalayas, caused by global warming, is affecting marine life in the distant Arabian Sea, and this phenomenon could aggravate global climate change.

During the northern hemisphere's summer months, the difference in temperature between the land and sea surfaces in Eurasia creates strong monsoon winds that blow from the Arabian Sea eastwards towards India. These winds pull surface water with them. In the western Arabian Sea, near the coasts of Oman, Somalia and Yemen, the displaced surface water is replaced by water rising from the bottom of the Arabian Sea. This deeper, cooler water is rich in nutrients. Its upward movement leads to a surge in the number of microscopic plants, called phytoplankton, that float near the surface.

The amount of phytoplankton at the surface of the Arabian Sea has been gradually increasing every year since the late 1990s. The research team of the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, led by Joaquim Goes, found that this was linked to changes in the strength of the winds and temperature of the sea surface in the western Arabian Sea, and conclude that the recent increase in phytoplankton is caused by stronger monsoon winds dragging more of the nutrient-rich water from the bottom of the Arabian Sea.

The Bigelow research team believes this is because the amount of winter snowfall in the Himalayas has been decreasing since the late 1990s. As a result, the land heats up faster during the summer months and generates stronger winds. While the deep water of the Arabian Sea is rich in nutrients, it has little oxygen and can suffocate marine life when it is brought to the surface. Fishermen off the coasts of Somalia, Oman and Yemen say the number of dead fish they catch has been increasing steadily for the past five to seven years. If this trend continues, more fish will die.

Bringing deep water to the surface in this part of the globe could also dramatically increase global warming. Some bacteria are dealing with low oxygen levels at the bottom of the Arabian Sea by extracting oxygen from nitrate, which is found in the water. The process, known as 'de-nitrification', produces nitrous oxide, a powerful greenhouse gas. When de-nitrification happens at the bottom of the sea, the nitrous oxide is trapped. But when the water rises to the surface, the gas is released into the atmosphere, and acts as a greenhouse gas that is about 300 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. If the Himalayas continue to receive less winter snow, says Goes, "the Arabian Sea will become a chimney for nitrous oxide", and increase anticipated impacts of climate change.

Source:

WWF –Nepal Program report: An Overview of Glaciers, Glacier Retreat and Subsequent Impacts in Nepal, India and China.

www.panda.org/downloads/climate_change/himilayanglaciersreport2005.pdf

<http://www.bigelow.org/climatechange>

Science (22 April 2005, Vol. 308), Goes et al., Warming of the Eurasian

Landmass Is Making the Arabian Sea More Productive, Science 2005 308: 545-547

See also <http://www.oc.nps.navy.mil/%7Eprasad/science/> further discussion.

By: Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

4. German researchers warn of European sea level rise due to ocean circulation changes

One of the most immediate consequences of a reduction in ocean circulation, such as the Atlantic overturning circulation, would be marked changes in local sea levels, according to scientists in Germany.

Deep-ocean circulation is driven by the density differences between water masses - the result of differences in their temperature and salinity. This constant circulation means that the ocean's surface is not flat, but rather has hills and valleys associated with the currents.

Anders Levermann and his colleagues from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research investigated the effects of a possible shutdown of the Atlantic overturning circulation. They found that this would cause a sea level rise of up to one metre in the northern Atlantic, and a corresponding drop in sea level in the southern Atlantic, as the ocean's hills and valleys level themselves out.

Furthermore, the team warns that unlike sea level changes due to global warming (which causes sea water to expand) or ice melt (which adds more water to the oceans), these changes would occur much more rapidly, following the circulation changes almost without delay.

To put that into perspective, while global warming and ice melt can lead to global sea level changes of tens of centimetres per century, a disruption in ocean circulation could result in changes of up to 2.5 centimetres per year in some regions. The regional effects on coastal areas of Europe and North America following such a sharp rise could be serious, the team adds.

[http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-](http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:23623)

[bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:23623](http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:23623)

5. Currents could disrupt ocean food chain

If increased precipitation and sea surface heating from global warming disrupts the Atlantic Conveyor current - as some scientists predict - the effect on the ocean food chain in the Atlantic and other oceans could be severe, according to a new study just published in Nature.

In a worst case scenario, global productivity of phytoplankton could decrease by as much as 20 percent and in some areas, such as the North Atlantic, the loss could hit 50 percent. The study was conducted by Andreas Schmittner, an assistant professor in the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University.

In his sophisticated computer model, Schmittner does not predict that the Atlantic Conveyor current, which drags warm water from the southern tropics into the North Atlantic and warms Europe, will be disrupted. Rather, his study is one of the first to examine what would happen to the ocean food chain if such a disruption did take place.

Phytoplankton are the basis of the entire marine food web. They ultimately affect everything from zooplankton to the larger fish that people consume.

The Atlantic Conveyor current has the strongest impact in the North Atlantic, but it is a global phenomenon, Schmittner said. Surface waters from the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Ocean and the southern Atlantic are pulled northward where they are cooled by the atmosphere in the North Atlantic. As the water cools, it sinks 2,000 to 3,000 meters and begins flowing southward. The upwelling from the mixing of waters constantly replenishes the supply of phytoplankton at the surface, forming a rich nutrient source at the bottom of the marine food web.

http://www.innovations-report.de/html/berichte/umwelt_naturschutz/bericht-43005.html

6. Sea-level records reveal surprising choppiness

A new reconstruction of past changes shows that the sea level varied more dramatically between ice ages than was previously thought. This implies that the global climate during these intervals was not as stable as scientists used to think.

William Thompson and Steve Goldstein have developed a new method of determining the age of coral. Coral dating is one of the best ways to document the rising and falling of the oceans over time.

Using their new dating system, Thompson and Goldstein, then at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, reassessed past measurements of uranium decay, and reconstructed sea level changes from between 70,000 and 240,000 years ago. What they found was very surprising, explains Thompson: "This record shows high-frequency changes that are very consistent and persistent." The

survey uncovered sea level changes of as much as 30 metres, that occurred at intervals of 3000 to 9000 years, where changes were commonly thought to occur on a maximum 100.000 year time-scale. In addition, significant sea level change was detected during interglacial periods. These periods were always thought to have a constant sea level.

<http://www.nature.com/news/2005/050411/full/050411-9.html>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– Ecological Networks –

7. European Eel must not go extinct

European fishermen and environmental organisations must operate together to prevent the European eel from going extinct. Like the Dutch fishermen the EECONET Alliance, a network of European environmental organisations, also fears for the existence of the species, which only lives in Europe. The EECONET Alliance therefore supports the cooperation that has developed in the Netherlands Eel Committee between sport- and professional fishermen, researchers and environmental organisations. EUCC – The Coastal Union takes part in the Eel Committee on behalf of the Alliance.

The committee, that started working on April 4, wants to take its own responsibility and to take direction of the Dutch eel policy. Chairman of the committee is Albert-Jan Maat MEP. The goal of the Eel committee is to draft a Dutch containment plan for the eel in the coming six months.

Ambassador of the European nature

The European eel is under heavy pressure. Research shows the eel population to be decreasing drastically in recent years. The most recent evaluation of the European eel population shows it to be no longer within the safe biological limits and drastic measures, on European level as well as on national level, to be necessary to prevent the eel from going extinct. The drafting of an international recovery plan is recommended from a scientific viewpoint. Barring the complete implementation of the plan it is proposed to take measures to limit the negative effect of fisheries and the other factors (cormorants, migration barriers, habitat losses, waterpower) to lowest possible level. The Dutch EU-presidency has put the eel problem significantly higher on the international agenda, causing quick progress on that level.

The EECONET Alliance has declared the eel to be ambassador of the European nature. The animals travel thousands of kilometres at sea during their lifetimes, before they enter the coastal- and inland waters and subsequently return to sea to procreate. That lifecycle shows the connections between European environments, on land as on sea. This interdependence takes central stage in the European network of areas (EECONET).

Dutch emergency plan

The Netherlands Eel Committee is going to draft an urgent action plan for a Dutch Management policy Eel, which conforms to international obligations flowing from under more the European Fisheries Policy and the European Directive Water. The to be drafted management plan contains a fisheries plan for the entire inland fisheries sector. Also proposals are drafted for the necessary Dutch catch registration, monitoring, maintaining aspects, research regarding migration bottlenecks (including waterpower), habitat losses and social-economic aspects. Lastly the committee wants to create a political and societal base for the drafting and implementation of an eel-recovery plan.

The Eel Committee asks the Dutch government, as chairman of the European Fisheries Council till July 1 2005, to take political action to move other European countries also to swiftly draft plans for their own national management plans, and to push the European Commission to shape the international cooperation as soon as possible.

For more information: Marijke Kooijman, (EUCC – The Coastal Union, EECONET, Kust en Zee) E-mail: m.kooijman@eucc.net

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

8. Eels on BBC front page

Baby eels are now more expensive than caviar, thanks to huge demand in Asia. They cost 600, 700, 800 euros a kilo. Glass eels appear on the menu in China and Japan as an aphrodisiac speciality. Eel stocks in Europe are in steep decline. The EU has discussed banning eel fishing altogether. But Eric Feunteun, eel expert at the University of La Rochelle, says that would be unwise: "There are lots and lots of other causes - for example, reduction of habitat, diminution of the quality of the water and ... the importance of the dams which stop the eels from migrating upstream but also kill them when they go back downstream. Fishermen are very important for the river systems because they are the only people who live there all the time and who can give you information on the state of the river and stocks. If they go

away, and they will go away if we close the fisheries, we will have no information at all. So they really play a crucial social role.”

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4432951.stm>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

9. Europhlukes

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) are endangered worldwide. Knowledge of numbers, habitat, and migration patterns are necessary for the protection of the cetacean populations.

In order to gain knowledge for the protection of the European populations, the European Community financed Europhlukes.

The Europhlukes project, which started in November 2001, and came to an ending in October 2004, developed a European Cetacean Photo-identification system and database. Photo-ID is considered to be one of the least intrusive methods for gathering knowledge of large aquatic animals.

In the Europhlukes database, photos of cetaceans are accessible, and data of where and when an individual cetacean has been photographed before, can be retrieved by using visual characteristics, like trailing edge, and coloration pattern.

In this way, the Europhlukes database provides an infrastructure, which assists in monitoring, and surveying cetaceans, and habitat important for cetaceans.

For more information, visit the Europhlukes website: www.europhlukes.net

10. Cetaceans on the move due to warmer climate?

A project led by Joanna Stockill of Newcastle University to map the presence of cetaceans off the North East coast has led to the believe that the number of dolphins and whales in the North Sea are on the increase. Rising water temperatures and the abundance of food are mentioned to be among the factors responsible for this increase. The increasing amount of squids that are caught by local fishermen for example might indicate that the sea temperature is increasing, causing these more “southern” species to extent their presence northward.

Not only from the coast of the UK has there been an increase of reported sightings of whales and dolphins. Bram Couperus of the Netherlands Institute for Fisheries Research (RIVO) states: “The last couple of years have shown an increase in the number of fish and seabird species that normally occur in more southern waters. The last decennia also showed an increase of sighted cetaceans on the coast of the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as an increase in the amount of beached cetaceans. The harbour porpoise for example is been sighted again since 1994 following years of absence, but especially the last two years has shown a fierce increase of the amount of sightings.” Although the causes behind these changes in abundance or presence of cetaceans are not known yet, some plausible theories have been suggested. A shortage of food in the northern parts of the North Sea for example, combined with the increasing occurrence of southern species up north might lead to a different distribution of cetaceans like the harbour porpoise.

For the full press article of Newcastle University see:

www.ncl.ac.uk/press.office/press.release/content.phtml?ref=1112607082

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– EUCC News –

11. EUCC has new International Secretary

Since February this year the EUCC has an International Secretary following organizational changes. This newsletter is a good opportunity for a short introduction. Helias A. Udo de Haes studied biology in Leiden, the Netherlands. In 1978 he founded the Institute of Environmental Sciences of Leiden University (CML), of which he is still the scientific director. During quite a long period of time he participated in activities aiming at coastal protection. In fact, his first action was the leading of a successful action group in 1969 against the building of a motorway through the dunes north of The Hague. Later on, he joined in the establishment of the Dutch Society for Dune Conservation in 1977, of which he was the first chairman. An important activity of this foundation concerned actions against too intensive exploitation of the dunes by the drinking water companies. As director of CML he also participated in research on possible alternatives for the drinking water supply in the province of South Holland. In 1989 he co-operated in the establishment of the - then - EUDC (the European Union for Dune Conservation) of which he was the first president. He very much strived for an enlargement of the scope of this organisation, aiming to also include rocky costs and consequently changed its name into EUCC. He is an enthusiastic bird watcher, and also loves whale watching. The present further extension of EUCC's aims to also include nearby marine ecosystems receives his warm support. Overfishing of the seas and oceans is one of the vast

environmental problems which only step by step becomes recognized by the wider public. After a year or so he will retire from the university, and hopes to join once again in the activities of the EUCC.

More information about the CML is to be found at: www.leidenuniv.nl/cml

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

12. ICZM programming in Romania (2003-2005)

Two years of ICZM programming in Romania resulted in an "Outline Strategy for the integrated management of Romanian Coastal Zone – Towards implementation", final version April 2005. This Outline forms the top of the a valuable set of 'ICZM Romania Project' Reports. The project, "Implementation of the WFD and ICZM in transitional and coastal waters in Romania", is commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs to Royal Netherlands Haskoning. It supports the EU in its efforts to increase integrated management for the development of coastal zones in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000) and the ICZM Recommendation (2002). The Romanian Ministry Environment and Water Management (E&WM) is the principal Romanian counterpart.

EUCC - The Coastal Union is a consortium partner of this project, which among others:

i) inventoried the main coastal problems (erosion is a major threat, pollution is diminishing due to declining industrial output), ii) organised participatory workshops to increase involvement of stakeholders of coastal zone e.g. in the Dobrogea Region, iii) started to increase the ICZM vertical and horizontal integration stipulated by the WFD and ICZM Recommendation, iv) extensively reported on the main coastal issues, the delineation of the Romanian coastal zone, ICZM planning instruments, and legal and institutional strengthening of the existing ICZM arrangements.

A core group of the Romanian High Level National ICZM Committee accepted the Outline Strategy as a valuable report. The hosting Director General of E&WM will pursue future ICZM phase II actions to be included in the Romanian National Plan for Development 2007 – 2014: strengthening the legal and institutional ICZM frame simultaneously at national, provincial and municipal level, and starting with execution of some pilots like sand nourishments and rehabilitation of cultural heritage of a coastal Danube, future EU border city, alleviating poverty of its inhabitants. Shared funding from Romania, EU and The Netherlands is a preferred option for such a multiple year ICZM phase II programme.

13. Clean up the Med

From May 27 to 29 the "Clean up the Med" action will take place for the 11th time. A large number of volunteers will clean up more than 800 beaches along Mediterranean shores. They will work to take away many tonnes of rubbish which has piled up throughout the winter. The aim of the action is to show that the quantity of rubbish could decrease if every local administration arranged for a separated waste collection plan, as provided by the European Commission regulations and national legislation. The "Clean up the Med" is organised by the Italian organisation LEGAMBIENTE and through the years has involved about 3,200 organisations, schools, universities, municipalities and hotels and tourist residence chains. This year, for the first time, EUCC Mediterranean Centre will take part in the campaign.

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– EU News and Initiatives –

14. GIS to monitor how clean Europe's coasts are

Like anywhere in the world, Europe's coastlines face potential exposure to pollution. The EU-backed project called I-MARQ (Information System for Marine Aquatic Resource Quality) is finalising a prototype geographical information system (GIS) which aims to deliver real-time data on coastal water quality. This information can, in turn, be used to help decision-makers take appropriate action against contamination. The system can be used by a range of users, such as beach-side hotels to predict bathing water quality. Tourism in coastal areas is demanding ever-increasing environmental quality and requires daily and seasonal information on coastal environment quality and stress. I-MARQ is currently validating its system and will test run it in the Solent estuary off southern England and at two locations on the Cote D'Azur in France. The project is funded by the Union's Information Society Technologies (IST) programme and includes 11 European partners.

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/news/article_05_01_11_en.html

15. Monitoring & Managing of European Sea grass Ecosystems - M&MS

The goal of the M&MS project is to define the habitat requirements of sea grasses in the European coasts, the present threats to the sustainability of the ecosystem they form, and their resilience to disturbance in order to strengthen our forecast capacity and formulate cost-effective monitoring plans and management strategies. The project is using a multidisciplinary approach to compile and analyse existing monitoring data, performing broad-scale and detailed field studies and making experimental manipulations and detailed process studies in the field and laboratory.

For more information please visit the website, which serves as the main information and data exchange site for the M&MS project under the EU Fifth Framework Programme.

<http://www.seagrasses.org/>

16. Call for action to stop the destruction of deep ocean habitats in international waters

Leading deep sea scientists spoke out against the European Community's failure to fulfil its commitments to protect the seabed from high seas bottom trawling. Addressing a gathering at the European Parliament, on the 19th of April 2005, hosted by MEPs Paolo Casaca and Elspeth Attwool, the scientists echoed concerns already raised by the United Nations General Assembly and the European Community itself, over the enormous damage caused by bottom trawl fishing to deep-sea corals and other rare and unique species, fish populations and sensitive deep ocean habitats worldwide.

EU member states have already committed to take action to preserve the biodiversity and habitats of the deep seas in international waters under a range of conventions and agreements, but have resolutely failed to do so. Only a temporary moratorium, an effective time-out from the trawling, will allow appropriate international measures to be put into place to preserve this heritage over the longer term.

The visit to Parliament by the scientists forms part of a European mission which includes similar events in Spain, Germany and the UK.

<http://www.savethehighseas.org/display.cfm?ID=51>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– International news in brief –

17. Fish from some areas of the Baltic Sea are so contaminated that they may be too toxic for EU markets

According to a new WWF report, "Clean Baltic within REACH?", every year from the late 1980s to early 1990s, 31 kg of polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs) accumulated in the fish caught from the Baltic Sea, and almost certainly ended up on people's plates.

Some of the fatty fish found in the Baltic do not comply with EU requirements for dioxins, and in 1995 the Swedish authorities recommended that women of childbearing age limit their consumption of Baltic herring and salmon because of the contamination with toxic substances such as furans, dioxins and PCBs. The report also reveals that several fish species, such as Atlantic salmon, sea trout, cod and turbot, have shown signs of reproductive problems in recent decades. The level of brominated flame retardants (PBDEs) found in herring is 50 times higher in the Baltic Sea than in the Atlantic. But it is not only the fish that is contaminated.

The levels of polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs, banned since 2000) and PBDEs in top predators such as seals, guillemots and the white-tailed sea eagle are two to five times higher in the Baltic Sea than in the North Sea and Arctic Ocean. Other harmful chemicals, such as perfluorinated compounds, have been found lately in harbour porpoises, as well as in various fish and bird species.

The Baltic Sea is an ecosystem highly sensitive to pollution, as there is little exchange of water with the neighbouring Atlantic Ocean. As a result, the sea's contaminated water can remain in place for 25 to 30 years. And, to make the situation even worse, low water temperatures and ice cover mean that the chemicals biodegrade extremely slowly.

<http://www.aquamedia.at/>

18. Baltic Sea Ideal For Final Pre-Launch CryoSat Validation

The northernmost part of the Baltic Sea, between Finland and Sweden, recently provided an ideal location for scientists to successfully address critical issues relating to sea ice validation, before CryoSat is launched in September. (CryoSat is a three-year radar altimetry mission, scheduled for launch on 15 September 2005, to determine variations in the thickness of the Earth's continental ice sheets and marine ice cover. Its primary objective is to test the prediction of thinning arctic ice, due to global warming.) The experiment examined the possible sources of error that could arise in the sea ice thickness maps that will be generated using data from ESA's ice mission CryoSat.

Measurements were performed on ground and by helicopter along a 1600 kilometres long calibration line that was established over the Bay of Bothnia. In addition to contributing to Cryosat validation of sea ice, the Bay of Bothnia provided the first occasion to test the ASIRAS airborne radar altimeter using a new Low Altimeter Mode (LAM) recently implemented by Radar Systemtechnik (RST). This new mode allows the plane to fly closer to the ground, improving the quality of the laser and datasets. ASIRAS will be used extensively at low altitudes during major large-scale campaigns in 2006. The lessons learned from the Bay of Bothnia campaign mean that ESA is now much better prepared and confident for next year.

<http://www.terradaily.com/news/eo-05zk.html>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

19. UN: Fatal collapse ecosystems at hand

A United Nations report sketches how the excessive use of natural resources leads to irreversible damage to the environment. Never before in history has the damage humans cause been as big as it is now, according to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

The damage caused by humans will often be irreversible and lead to the unexpected and abrupt 'collapse' of ecosystems, as has happened to the once abundant cod-stocks before New Foundland. This could lead sudden changes in water quality, creation of "dead zones" along the coasts, the collapse of fisheries, and shifts in regional climate.

According to the report, humans have, by excessive use, seriously polluted or exhausted two thirds of the ecosystems on which life on earth depends.

A global survey is necessary to cope with this problem, as is a far greater awareness of the problems, and grass root activism by the wider public.

See: <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Products.Synthesis.aspx>

20. HERMES project

Deep ocean research stretching from the Arctic to the Black Sea is to receive 15 million euros as part of a programme involving 15 countries across Europe. Led by Southampton Oceanography Centre's Professor Phil Weaver, the HERMES project (Hotspot Ecosystem Research on the Margins of European Seas) will study ecosystems along Europe's deep-ocean margin and is one of the largest research projects of its kind. HERMES will bring together leading experts in biodiversity, geology, sedimentology, physical oceanography, microbiology and biogeochemistry, as well as experts in socio-economics. This represents the first major attempt to understand European deep-water ecosystems and their environment in an integrated way.

<http://www.eu-hermes.net/>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

21. Marine Life Complicates Removal of Old Oil Rigs

A rusting oil rig perched on the muddy bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, notorious for its vast "dead zone" off the Mississippi Delta, might seem an unlikely setting for a thriving ecosystem. But that is exactly what Paul Sammarco has found on more than a dozen of the 4,000-plus drilling platforms that dot the Gulf. Sammarco, a marine biologist at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, has discovered that the rigs have spawned lush marine habitats that are home to a profusion of rare corals and 10,000 to 30,000 fish each.

The results of his research, which he will publish later this spring in the journal Marine Biology, have thrown a surprising new wrinkle into an ongoing debate on how best to dispose of the thousands of old rigs due to be abandoned as oil and gas production winds down. His work has also raised questions about the "Rigs to Reefs" program under which states bordering the Gulf have been turning old rigs into artificial reefs designed to sustain fish, sponges and other marine life. Under this program rigs are either towed elsewhere and sunk, tipped on their sides or cut down well below the water's surface so they would no longer be hazards to navigation. However, according to Sammarco, "an oil rig's biggest contribution to marine life is in the shallow waters where sunlight penetrates." Other possible future uses that would benefit from these conditions as well are aquaculture or biotechnology.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A42189-2005Apr10.html>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– Publications –

Küsten Newsletter 2/2005

The second newsletter of EUCC Germany had been issued in German. If you wish to subscribe to this newsletter please send an email to: newsletter@eucc-d.de. The newsletter can be found at: <http://www.eucc-d.de>

Sustainable Tourism

By F.D. Pineda & C.A. Brebbia (ed.), (2004, 362 pp.), WITpress, Ashurst Lodge, Ashurst, Southampton, SO40 7AA, UK, Fax: 44 (0) 2380292853, E-mail: witpress@witpress.com Web: <http://www.witpress.com>, ISBN 1-8-5312-724-8, ISSN 1476-9581, Price € 186

The demands of tourism can contribute to the destruction of the natural and cultural environment upon which it depends and it is therefore essential to find ways to protect these environments for present and future generations. Exploring issues concerned with accomplishing environmental, social and economic sustainability of tourism, the papers featured in this volume come from the first international conference on this topic. The contributors adopt a multi-disciplinary approach designed to foster greater

understanding and collaboration between scientist and social science experts, practioners and policy makers.

The papers are grouped under the following headings: Tourism Impact; Tourism Strategies; Sustainable Tourism; Ecotourism; Cultural Tourism; Coastal Issues; Tourism and Protected Areas; Tourism, Infrastructure, Transport and Hotels; Surveys and Analysis; IT in Tourism.

Managing Britain's Marine and Coastal Environment. Towards a sustainable future

By Hance D. Smith & Jonathan S. Potts (ed.), (2005, x, 309 pp.), Routledge, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, Fax 01264 343005, ISBN 0-415-32945-0, Price £ 75

Britain's maritime tradition is well documented. The management of its marine and coastal environment is therefore paramount, and offers lessons for other nations across the world. The beginning of the new millenium marks a major, long-term turning point in the historical development of Britain's maritime interest discernible by continued diversification and intensification in the uses of the sea; unprecedented and often adverse environmental impacts engendered by these uses; and the beginning of a major effort to establish a comprehensive management system which can deal with both multiple uses and environmental impacts. This collection, featuring an impressive list of contributors, covers themes including maritime history; environmental issues; fishing; public policy; tourism; technology and resources as well as open sea development and management. Each chapter examines the present state of a particular theme before suggesting possibilities for the future. This book will be a useful addition for those interested in geography, the environment and maritime studies, as well as engineers and policymakers.

– Newsletters and new websites –

Resource materials for strengthening environmental rights in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

The results of the project Environmental Information, Education and Public Awareness are now available through its website: www.rec.org/AarhusConvention. The website makes available country-specific Aarhus Convention user guides that contain comprehensive training materials and detailed instructions for the delivery of trainign on the Convention. The materials can be used as a resource by officials, individuals and organisations in all EECCA countries. Contact details for national experts who have been trained to deliver training on the Convention can also be found on the website.

Delivering the evidence for marine policy

Delivering the evidence for marine policy: innovative research in the marine environment 1989- 2004. The UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are publishing a free brochure and CD ROM which provides electronic coverage (with web links) of more than 10 years of government-funded departmental research on the marine environment, focussing on the research conducted before Defra launched its web site. Several hundred copies of the brochure and CD have been sent out to members of the UK and international marine community as part of Defra's wider drive to broadcast the science and enhance the evidence base for policy.

Please visit web page <http://www.cefas.co.uk/publications/marine1989-2004/default.htm> where you can download a pdf version of the brochure and order a hard copy of the brochure and CD.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Towards an Atlantic Vision

The Coastatlantic project (Interreg III B) - "Integrated Coastal Zone Management: Towards an Atlantic Vision" has a new website: <http://www.coastatlantic.org>. A presentation of the project, a presentation of the partners and a presentation of the meetings are available on line.

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– Events and training, 1st Announcements –

This list only includes the 1st Announcements of conferences and training courses.
For a complete overview of conferences please visit: <http://www.coastalguide.org/meetings>
EUCC related conferences are added in boxes.

May 8-11, 2005 – Lebus, Germany

Eurosite workshop: Integration of Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000

http://www.eurosite.org/article.php3?id_article=260

May 11, 2005 – London, UK

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Water and Planning

Getting good value - challenges for application and delivery

www.coastms.co.uk

May 11-12, 2005 - Boulogne-sur-Mer, France

Fish Marketing and Labelling Workshop

www.coastms.co.uk

May 25-27, 2005 – Nijmegen, the Netherlands

International Symposium on Flood Defence

<http://www.isfd3.nl/>

July 2005 - Samothraki Island, Greece

International Volunteer Eco-Camp

For more information please contact Michalis Theodoropoulos at medsos@medsos.gr

July 5-7, 2005 – York, United Kingdom

40th Defra Flood and Coastal Management Conference 2005

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/conference/conference.htm>

August 9-11, 2005 – Rostock, Germany

My Baltic Sea of Tomorrow: Youth Forum

http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/pressreleases/Baltic_Youth_Forum_2005.pdf

August 21-27, 2005 - Stockholm, Sweden

World Water Week

<http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>

August 23-25, 2005 - Galway, Ireland

1st International Conference on the Health and Biodiversity – COHAB 2005

www.cohab2005.com

August 31- September 2, 2005 - Kiel, Germany

InWaterTec 2005

<http://www.inwatertec2005.de>

September 5-9, 2005 – Porto, Portugal

International Training Course on Coastal Erosion Management

<http://www.fe.up.pt/~fpinto/Erosion>

October 23-28, 2005 – Geelong, Australia

'First International Marine Protected Areas Congress' IMPAC1

<http://www.impacongress.org/>

[Back to: – Contents –](#)

– Colophon –

© Articles may be reproduced free of charge with acknowledgement and citation of EUCC Coastal News and the URL of the Coastal Guide (www.coastalguide.org). The articles of this and previous issues of EUCC Coastal News can be found at <http://www.coastalguide.org/news>

EUCC Coastal News Editorial Team: Miranda Wien, Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir, Ben Spaans, Marijke Kooijman, Arnoud van der Meulen, Albert Salman, Marleen Smallegange, Renee Versteegen, Bart van Engeldorp Gastelaars, Cora Seip.

Magdalena Ariadne Kim Muir, EUCC Advisory Board Member, is our special editor on Climate Change.

**Deadline for submitting contributions to EUCC Coastal News No 2005/05 :
24 May 2005.**

Established in 1989, EUCC - the Coastal Union is an association involving the largest coastal network in Europe with 2500 members and member organisations in 40 countries. For more information please contact EUCC International Secretariat, POB 11232, NL-2301 EE Leiden, the Netherlands, tel.: +31-71-5122900, internet: <http://www.eucc.net>



The European
Commission

This publication has received funding from the European Community. Sole responsibility of this publication lies with the authors; the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information herein.

[Back to: – Contents –](#)