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– International news in brief –

1. Climate talks end without result

The World Climate Change Conference in Moscow has ended inconclusively - and with bad-tempered recriminations directed at its organisers, the Russian Government. The only outcome of the five-day conference was a bland statement speaking of "lively discussions" about the Kyoto Protocol and of valuable contributions from Russian scientists which would help to inform future debates about global warming. The event was ostensibly an opportunity for scientists from around the world to present and discuss their latest research into the issue of climate change and its impacts. But the week was overshadowed by growing doubts as to whether President Vladimir Putin would live up to his previous commitment to ratify the Kyoto agreement on curbing greenhouse gas emissions - without Russia's involvement, the UN protocol is dead. Mr Putin himself set the scene during his opening speech on Monday, in which he said his government was still studying the pros and cons of Kyoto and that a decision on whether to ratify would only be taken once that was complete.

World Climate Change Conference: http://www.wccc2003.org/index_e.htm

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2. Oceans becoming more acidic

Ken Caldeira and Michael Wickett, from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, report their concerns in the journal Nature.

The world's oceans are slowly getting more acidic in response to higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The lowering of the waters' pH value is not great at the moment but could pose a serious threat to current marine life if it continues, they warn. Increasing use of fossil fuels means more carbon dioxide is going into the air, and most of it will eventually be absorbed by seawater. Once in the water, it reacts to form carbonic acid. But these researchers have tried to predict what will happen in the future by combining what we know about the history of the oceans with computer models of climate change. "And we predicted amounts of future acidity that exceed anything we saw over the last several hundred million years, apart from perhaps after rare catastrophic events such as asteroid impacts." If carbon dioxide release continues unabated, ocean pH could be reduced by as much as 0.77 units, the authors warn.

It is not absolutely clear what that means for marine life, however. Most organisms live near the surface, where the greatest pH change would be expected to occur, but deep-ocean lifeforms may be more sensitive to pH changes. Coral reefs and other organisms whose skeletons or shells contain calcium carbonate may be particularly affected, the team speculate. They could find it much more difficult to build these structures in water with a lower pH. Previously, most experts had looked at ocean absorption of carbon dioxide as a good thing - because in releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere we warm the planet; and when CO₂ is absorbed by the ocean, it reduces the amount of greenhouse warming. "Now, we're understanding that ocean uptake of CO₂ may at best be a mixed blessing."

Full article http://en-env.llnl.gov/cccm/pdf/Caldeira_Wickett_2003.pdf

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3. Commission research helps identify causes of loss of wildlife in the Baltic Sea

The dramatic loss of marine wildlife recorded last year in the Western Baltic Sea between Denmark, Germany and Sweden is largely the result of extreme weather conditions and an increase in man-made nutrients, according to the findings of a report recently released by the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), to which the European Commission provided significant input. Last autumn, the two organisations joined forces to investigate exceptional oxygen depletion in the Western Baltic that had led to hundreds of dead fish being washed ashore along the east coast of Jutland, Denmark. The report reveals that the oxygen deficiency was caused in part by heavy rain and snow, leading to the run off of higher levels of nutrients from agriculture, urban wastewater and air pollution into the sea. In addition, low wind levels and high air pressure minimised exchanges between different water levels in the Baltic. The report recommends stricter controls on nutrients reaching this inland sea to prevent future oxygen

depletion.

For further information please visit:

http://www.dmu.dk/1 om_dmu/2_ afdelinger/3_ hav/oxdep2002/default.asp

<http://ies.jrc.cec.eu.int/Units/imw/> and <http://www.helcom.fi/>

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4. New statistics on ship accidents in the Baltic available now

63 ship accidents were recorded in 2002, none of which resulted in oil or any other kind of pollution, according to statistics reported by the HELCOM countries and compiled by Latvia. "Recording no accident involving pollution is a good result having in mind that around 2000 ships are en route in the Baltic Sea on an average day; some 200 of which are oil tankers or product tankers." says Tadas Navickas, Professional Secretary of the Helsinki Commission. "But we must continue working to reduce the number of accidents in the Baltic in general." The number of reported accidents is similar to those of the years 2001 (57) and 2000 (62). Like in the previous years groundings (43) are the most frequent type of ship accident, followed by collisions (8) and various other types of accidents (12). Different types of ships have been involved into accidents including single hull (7) and double hull (7) tankers. The statistical risk for accidents is growing due to the increasing density of shipping. In this way the transport of goods at sea has been estimated to double by 2017.

Press release: <http://www.helcom.fi/helcom/news/307.html>

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5. Commission proposes action for sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean

Today, the European Commission has proposed a "Comprehensive Set of Management Measures" seeking to tackle the causes of overexploitation and other unsustainable fishing practices in the Mediterranean. The last decades have witnessed increasing fishing effort and decreasing catches in this region. In the Adriatic and the strait of Sicily, for example, the catch rates for some species are 60% lower than they were around 20 years ago. This Commission legislative proposal is the major follow up of an EU Action Plan for sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean, tabled last October in the framework of the CFP reform. The proposal seeks to achieve this aim by building on existing measures and devising new ones adapted to the specific conditions of fisheries in this region. It includes measures such as a progressive increase in mesh sizes or the strengthening of the current ban on certain trawling activities to better protect young fish, specific action for swordfish, improving control, the sharing of management responsibility between the EU and Member States and the introduction of fishing effort management.

See press release:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc_et_publ/factsheets/legal_texts/docscm/en/com_03_589_en.pdf

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- Discussion -

6. The definition of an island

Contribution of Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, Canada Research Chair in Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

There is no definition of an island in terms of size, only in terms of physical boundedness: a piece of land surrounded by water. And, even though this may appear straightforward, it isn't: there are islands at high tide which are peninsulae at low tide; while some refuse to accept that an island connected by a bridge to a mainland is any longer an island - in spite of the protests of its inhabitants.

The sand banks/ sand bars Kachelotplate and Razende Bol/Noorderhaaks were both already large enough to appear in the maps of the island regions of the European Union in the book "*Portrait of the Islands*", published by Eurostat in 1994 (pages 20 & 155 respectively) - although they carry no name in that publication.

By the way, there are other 'islands' identified in the 1994 Eurostat text which appear to lie in the same geographical area of the islands under discussion: one other near Borkum and Kachelotplate (Germany); at least seven others appear around Schiermonnikoog (Netherlands). Future candidates for island status, and more debate, no doubt!

– International News Survey –

Row about cockle fishery research publication in Dutch Wadden Sea

Because of lack of auditing and comments of stakeholders, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality delayed their own research publication (EVA-II) on consequences of cockle fisheries. Premature publication suggests the cockle fisheries is indeed harmful to ecosystem and bird populations.

<http://www.eva2.nl/>

Scientists investigate mysterious squid deaths

Spain - The cause of death of the 2 giant squids who washed up in Spain is still a mystery. Possible explanations are the research vessel Hesperides, which uses acoustics in search for oil and gas, another explanation is the global warming of sea water.

<http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/22255/>

Sonar may cause bends disease in dolphins

There is a possibility that the use of naval sonar harms aquatic creatures. The disease they get is very similar to the human decompression sickness also called the "bends". Scientists think that the sonar appliance sends signals that disorientate the animals. They want to come up too quickly to the surface. Due to this they create nitrogen bubbles in their blood and tissue. Autopsies by Spanish scientists on 10 of 14 beaked whales stranded in the Canary Islands after a multinational military exercise last year also showed evidence of DCS in the animals. The creatures started to appear on the beaches about four hours after the start of the mid-frequency sonar activity. The mass stranding of whales in the Bahamas in 2000 have also been linked to a sonar system.

http://www.enn.com/news/2003-10-09/s_9252.asp

North Sea Commissions Fisheries Partnership takes initiative to set up a shadow RAC

The European Commission developed a concept in response to demands for a more transparent and participative approach to fisheries management, called "Regional Advisory Councils" (RAC). The CFP has set up a shadow RAC for management of the North Sea fisheries. The aim is to become an official RAC. Their main target is to prepare and provide advice on the management of North Sea fisheries.

More information from Christine Absil c.absil@noordzee.nl or Monica Verbeek at mverbeek@seas-at-risk.org

Reducing air emission from ships may result in marine pollution

To reduce the air emission the oil industry and a large ship owner proposed the use of seawater scrubbers to reduce the pollution. Environmental Groups are concerned about the polluted seawater which they dump into the sea. This could harm the marine environment.

More information from Irene Bloemink (North Sea Foundation) at i.bloemink@noordzee.nl

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– Training and Courses –

7. CZM in practice

The 1st International Summer Course on Coastal Zone Management in the Atlantic Coast took place in the Faculty of Engineering from the University of Porto (FEUP), between the 1st and the 6th September 2003. The course contents, venue, organization and study visit were quite well appreciated. The number of participants (almost 30) shows the interest for this kind of events. A final evaluation by students / lecturers was made, and a number of aspects were point out to improve the contents of this summer course. A small field survey related with social perception on beach structures was also made. The organization was asked to continue having new versions of this course. For that reason we are planning to have next edition at Azores Islands (Portugal) with the support of Azores University. For further information please contact Prof. Francisco Taveira Pinto (fpinto@fe.up.pt).

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– Coastal publications –

8. Fourth Annual Survey on the implementation and enforcement of community environmental law

European commission, 2002, ISBN 92-894-5610-8.

This is the fourth annual survey on the implementation and enforcement of community environmental law in the EU. Providing up-to-date information on the state of application and the implementation of community environmental law.

9. Environmental Status of the European Seas

Chris Frid et al., ICES CIEM, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, 2003, 75 pp, <http://www.ices.dk/>

This report provides an overview of the key environmental conditions (physical, marine organisms and the communities that they form) in the North East Atlantic including the North Sea, OSPAR Maritime Area, and the Baltic Sea, the area under the Helsinki Commission, and a brief overview for the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Conclusions about the main threats to European seas, and measurements to reduce the impacts of human activities are given.

10. MEDASSET's 2003 Assessment Reports to the Bern Convention

The following 2003 Update Assessment Reports to the 23rd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), have been published as T-PVS/Files and are now available (in .pdf format) on the Internet at <http://www.euroturtle.org/medasset> under the "Publications" heading.

- t-pvs/files (2003) 13: update report on marine turtle conservation in zakynthos (laganas bay), greece. medasset, 18 pages.

- t-pvs/files (2003) 12: update report and review of nature conservation measures in patara spa (turkey), commissioned by medasset, prepared by dr. monica aureggi, 25 pages.

- t-pvs/files (2003) 14: conservation status of the green turtle (*chelonia mydas*) in the eastern mediterranean: kazanli, akyatan and samandag (turkey), commissioned by medasset, prepared by dr. max kasperek, 9 pages.

the following technical assessment report will be tabled at the bern convention meeting on 1-12-03:

- conservation assessment of sea turtle nesting beaches of belek (turkey), commissioned by medasset, prepared by dr. monica aureggi, 2003, 15 pages.

- Announcements -

11. New on the Coastal Guide list of events

November 9 - 11, 2003

FSU Symposium in Fisheries Ecology "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Integrating Marine and Human Ecology into Fisheries Management", Sarasota, Florida, USA. Info: Dr. Felicia Coleman, fax: 850.644.9829, Email: coleman@bio.fsu.edu, Website:

<http://www.bio.fsu.edu/mote/current.html>

November 10 - 12, 2003

Southern European Coastal Lagoons: The Influence of River Basin-Coastal Zone interactions, Castello Estense, Ferrara, Italy. Info: Gianmarco Giordani giordani@nemo.unipr.it, Website:

<http://www.dsa.unipr.it/lagunet/med03/>

January 21 - 22, 2004

Coastal Futures 2004: Reviews and Trends. CMS, Coastal Management for Sustainability, SOAS, London, UK. Info: bob.earl@coastms.co.uk, fax: +44 (0)1531 890415, Website:

<http://www.coastms.co.uk>

February 2, 2004

World Wetland Day, Ramsar Website: <http://www.ramsar.org>

February 2 - 3, 2004

World Wetland Day. SOAS, London, UK. Info: bob.earl@coastms.co.uk, fax: +44 (0)1531 890415, Website: <http://www.coastms.co.uk>

February 18, 2004

Ports and the Environment: Turning information into practice, SOAS London, UK. Info: bob.earl@coastms.co.uk, fax: +44 (0)1531 890415, Website: <http://www.coastms.co.uk>

March 3, 2004

The Water Framework Directive – in the estuarine and coastal environment CoastNET Conference. SOAS, London, UK. Info: bob.earl@coastms.co.uk, fax: +44 (0)1531 890415, Website: <http://www.coastms.co.uk>

April 26 - 28, 2004

BaltCoast 2004 - Managing the Baltic Sea, Rostock- Warnemuende, Germany. Info: Contact: T. Dolch, fax: +49 381 5197 211, Email: baltcoast@eucc-d.de, Website: <http://www.eucc-d.de/baltcoast2004>

May 5, 2004

Diffuse Pollution and the Water Framework Directive. CIWEM Conference. SOAS, London, UK. Info: bob.earl@coastms.co.uk, fax: +44 (0)1531 890415, Website: <http://www.coastms.co.uk>

May 28 - 30, 2004

CLEAN UP THE MED and UNDERWATER FLOORS 2004! Help to organize a wonderful Clean-Up the Med 2004! So, please, let be involved and clean your shores with local people and tourists. In the same time we are planning to organize an Euromediterranean network among the Clean-Up the Med organizations and municipalities for better communicate and organize common actions (in co-operation with European Commission DG Environment and Youth programme Info: festambiente.vm@tiscali.it

April 17 - 20, 2005

International Conference on Coastal Conservation and Management in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, Vilamoura, Algarve, Portugal. Info : ICCCM2005 Secretariat, Tel: 351 966055637, E-mail: icccm2005_as@aeiou.pt, Website: <http://icccm2005.tripod.com>

– Colofon –

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**Deadline for submitting contributions to EUCC Coastal News No 10, 2003:
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Established in 1989, EUCC - the Coastal Union is an association involving the largest coastal network in Europe with 750 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.nl>



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