



Manx Blue Carbon Project – Working Group

Wednesday 19th April 2023 – 4th Meeting

Attendees:

Peter Duncan	DEFA - Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer
Claire Evans	National Oceanography Centre (NOC) – Senior Scientist
Henry Goode	Deloitte - Analyst, WorldClimate Team
Rowan Henthorn	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Lara Howe	Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) - Marine Officer
Jacqui Keenan	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Hannah Muir	Swansea University – PhD Researcher
Emma Rowan	DoI – Senior Infrastructure Policy Officer
Richard Selman	DEFA – Ecosystem Policy Manager
Martin Skov	Bangor University – Reader in Marine Biology
Andy Stewart	DfE – Director of Policy & Strategy
Kelly Taylor	DEFA – Climate Change Partner: Land, Sea, and Nature
Ben Tovell	KPMG - Associate Director, ESG
Dominic Wall	Deloitte – Assistant Manager, ESG

Apologies:

David Beard	Manx Fish Producers Organisation – Chief Executive
Jan Hiddink	Bangor University – PhD supervisor (Martin Skov to represent)
Stuart Jenkins	Bangor University – DEFA Fisheries advisors
Leigh Morris	Manx Wildlife Trust (Lara Howe to represent)
Simon Nicholas	KPMG (Ben Tovell to represented)
James Strong	National Oceanography Centre (Claire Evans to represent)
Charlotte Vale	Deloitte (Member of their ESG team to represent)

Meeting notes

1. Welcome & introductions

The Group welcomed new representatives from existing Member organisations, and new Members:

- Kelly Taylor: Land, Sea, and Nature Partner - DEFA Climate Change Team
- Ben Tovell: Associate Director, ESG - KPMG
- Dominic Wall and Henry Goode: Deloitte representatives

2. Notes from third meeting - Appendix 1

- Review of actions
 - Government BC Mapping resource: On hold due to delay with Nature Recovery Network map
 - Marine spatial planning map
 - ER had discussed with SN following previous meeting and decided not to share due to potential commercial sensitivities. ER can share for info only, as long as it's not shared wider without advising ER.
 - **HM to contact ER to request anything which may be useful for her research. Bangor may need to do the same.**
 - Experimental closures in Western Mudbelt: Bangor PhD still being recruited; closures will be discussed with stakeholders including DoI in due course
 - Business memberships – decision from Steering Group and Environment Director to include business members, with some amendments to Terms of Reference.
- Notes approved for publication
 - **JK/RH to publish on website**

3. Terms of Reference v2.2 – Appendix 2

- Current version approved and adopted
 - **JK/RH to publish on website**

4. Blue Carbon Project update

- Research Group: Workshop held in Bangor 19 April to plan for the next 2 years and discuss collaboration. Research Group will meet every 6 weeks to ensure alignment and share knowledge/learning.
- Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services: RH/JK creating plan/timeline to collate and analyse existing data, and invite partners to fill gaps/analysis
- Fieldwork: Drone, side scan sonar, and coring planned for August
- Manx Mapping project: Slightly delayed due to other Government Technology Services (GTS) work
- UK BC Mapping Project: IOM BC is feeding in to assessment for the Irish Sea and sitting on the Advisory Board – meeting on 10 May
- Fisheries Liaison & Blue Carbon Support Officer recruitment: Applications close Sun 23rd Apr; interviews taking place 3rd May.
- Spectacular Seaweeds workshops: RH/JK running schools workshops with MNH in April
- Bright Tide webinar: RH will present about the Manx BC Project to members of the [Bright Tide Blue Carbon Accelerator](#) programme on 6 June

5. Member updates

Bangor University

- PhD recruitment: Interviewing end of April, aiming to start in June
- Fieldwork: Arranging financial details for fieldwork contract
- Natural Environment Research Council ([NERC](#)): Submitted bid to NERC for research into BC in UK, focussing on trawling impacts on sea bed carbon stores; should hear by summer
- NERC approached Bangor to set up centre for doctoral training on solutions for Net Zero across the UK (CE invited too) – may involve other PhD research relating to Manx Blue Carbon

DEFA Ecosystems Policy

- Biodiversity Delivery group – review of Strategy underway
- [Biodiversity Action Plans](#) (BAPs) being reviewed
- Cliff erosion issues handed over to Flood Unit in Dept of Infrastructure
- Nature Recover Network map undergoing testing

DEFA Fisheries

- Nephrops (aka langoustines or scampi) quota secured from UK for:
 - Approx 4.6 billion langoustine in western mud – traditionally fished by Northern Irish boats in Manx waters
 - Manx fishing industry have never had quota. Some are keen to fish with traps/creels instead of trawls – thought to be lower impact on seabed and blue carbon.
 - Links closely with Bangor PhD to assess impacts of different gear
- Herring quota also secured for first time in 40yrs
- **JE stay in contact with ER re: fishing vessel activity (ongoing)**

Department of Infrastructure

- Crogga Hydrocarbon extraction site: request to vary work programme
- Orsted Morgan, Mona, & Morecombe Bay wind farms: public consultation open 19 Apr; DoI involved in statutory process, will coordinate with members of Territorial Seas Committee.

Department for Enterprise

- Nothing BC specific – DfE role is to support commercial enterprise. Currently reviewing financial support scheme and incorporating flexibility into the area of blue carbon/marine innovation.

KPMG

- Investigating ways to fund Net Zero journey in Small Island/Big Ocean States – including potential for carbon/biodiversity credits, blue bonds etc.
- Biodiversity Credits:
 - Growing interest in globally, particularly among governments – such as [Australia’s Nature Repair Bill](#); some interest from corporates, but a key driver might be the release of the updated [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) framework in September 2023. This is likely to trigger a growing interest in businesses embedding biodiversity and other ecosystem services into accounting standards, though adoption of the TNFD is not compulsory, and change will be gradual. It is likely that some corporates will move prior to any compulsory requirements, much like carbon offsetting.
 - Currently 68 different carbon markets/exchanges – voluntary and regulated.
 - IOM advantage: Appetite within local financial sector, benefit of being able to develop collaborations across/within sectors to support manx nature-based projects.

Group discussion:

- Interest and will from private sector, NGOs, public, academia – but governance framework/blended finance structures are needed.
- Biodiversity will become part of corporate accounting requirements, building market driver/demand for nature disclosures – TNFD end of 2023.
- Any framework must consider bundled ecosystem services (ESS), not just one - valuing habitats on one ESS (e.g. carbon) doesn’t give an accurate value, and could result in a valuable ecosystem not being protected/restored, or a high carbon ecosystem is overly-focused valued.
- Paper/recommendation needed to highlight what is required from Government to enable this – fits with responsibilities under the [Climate Change Act](#).
- **JK – approach Climate Change Team to convene blended finance meeting**
- **All – contact JK if interested in being involved in blended finance meeting**

[Manx Fish Producers Organisation \(email update\)](#)

- Long term Management Plan (LTMP) for King scallops now in place since Nov 1st 2022. Boat numbers reduced and number of fishing trips is down by 20% compared to 2020/21 season. Catch rates are at their highest for several years and with a daily catch limit in place, which reduced fishing time and sea bed contact. Maximum number of dredges is 6 per side now (down from 7) which again reduces interaction with sea bed.
- LTMP for queen scallop is being progressed and would be expected to be in place for 2024 season. The queen scallop fishery has been granted an improved rating from Marine Conservation Society and is highest rated of all queen scallop fisheries due to sustainability and fishing practices.

- Herring quota will reduce carbon footprint of that fishery if it is landed and processed on island; DEFA/MFPO looking into this. Nephrops quota for creel fishery from 2024 will again help to reduce carbon footprint and seabed disturbance, and could provide a background for closing off an area of the Territorial Sea for prawn creel fishing.
- Cold stores: One of the main aims of the fishing industry in the near future must be to get increased cold stores on island to reduce or eliminate our reliance on UK storage systems.

Manx Wildlife Trust

- See item 6.

The National Oceanography Centre and Swansea University

- Carbon analysis: High resolution carbon analysis on 13 offshore core samples, with values falling within a range which agrees with literature values. Mixing of sediments in offshore cores may have resulted in the variation in values – Bangor PhD will look at this in more detail.
 - Mixing question – bioturbation (e.g. burrowing) expected to be deeper than trawling. Some cores look slightly mixed on surface, less so lower down; plan to compare with dates for trawling and nephrops data from AFBI. X-rays of cores do not show significant burrowing.
- Sedimentation rate & dating analysis: 7 cores analysed.
- Next: Scanning cores for oxidation of different elements
- Discussion highlighted the contrast in discussion about blended finance and biocredits, and the scientific research needed to support such a framework.

Deloitte

- Part of wider UK group – WorldClimate, Biodiversity and Natural Capital Teams.
- Open and interested in collaborations – [previous/current collaborations](#) include Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Whale & Dolphin Conservation (see [Ocean Financing report](#)), and Soil Association
- [IOM Climate Collective](#) launched – business led ESG network, supported by IOM Chamber of Commerce to make a positive impact on ESG, bringing together communities, businesses and government
- **DW - share links with group**

DEFA Climate Change

- Kelly open to connecting – get in touch with anything CCTT can support with. Recognition that healthy ecosystems are an integral part of the response to climate change.

6. Manx Wildlife Trust – Seagrass restoration

- Continuing to map existing seagrass beds; snorkelling and diving in Ramsey – though small plants have been found further up the shore.
- MWT met with Orsted re: biodiversity net gain; visiting the Wilder Humber project in June.
- Visited Carmarthenshire Project Seagrass site
 - Site is one year old
 - Run in partnership by marine biologist and horticulturalist
 - North Wales and Isle of Wight seeds collected
 - Water filter/cooling system used
 - Seeds planted early in year
 - Trialling varied germination methods – inc PH levels, abrasion, processing through an acid to imitate going through digestive tracts, different sediment types
- Project Seagrass team suggested trying to link up the existing seagrass patched in Derbyhaven.
- Continue to work closely going forward – possibly trialling Manx seagrass nursery. Linking up with other Project Seagrass groups.
- Richard Unsworth (Project Seagrass and Swansea Uni) advised at the Research Workshop in March to assess where conditions are favourable now rather than historically, using habitat suitability modelling – which would be informed by data gathered through HM's PhD fieldwork and Seasearch survey dives.

7. Any other business

- None

Future meetings:

- 10:00-11:30 Wednesday 19 July
- 10:00-11:30 Wednesday 18 October