



## Manx Blue Carbon Project – Working Group

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – 3rd Meeting

### Attendees:

Peter Duncan	DEFA - Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer
Claire Evans	National Oceanography Centre (NOC) – Senior Scientist
Rowan Henthorn	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Lara Howe	Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) - Marine Officer
Martin Skov	Bangor University – Reader in Marine Biology
Jacqui Keenan	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Hannah Muir	Swansea University – PhD Researcher
Simon Nicholas	KPMG – Assurance and consulting partner
Emma Rowan	DoI – Senior Infrastructure Policy Officer
Richard Selman	DEFA – Ecosystem Policy Manager
Andy Stewart	DfE – Director of Policy & Strategy
Jan Geert Hiddink	Bangor University – Professor of Marine Biology

### Apologies:

David Beard	Manx Fish Producers’ Organisation (MFPO) - Chief Executive
Jack Emmerson	DEFA – Sea Fisheries Policy Manager
Glen Geeves	DEFA – Climate Change Partner

### Meeting notes

#### 1. Approval of notes from 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting

- Amended to remove duplication of SN’s name in attendance
- Group approved notes for publishing on the Net Zero Website

#### 2. Blue Carbon project update and phase 1b funding

##### Project Update

- The Project Team (RH & JK) attended the [MASTS](#) Blue Carbon workshop in Glasgow on 10 November 2022, to engage in discussions regarding emerging blue carbon

research and financing frameworks, and connect with leading blue carbon experts from around the UK and beyond.

- The Team have been invited to the next UK Blue Carbon Forum meeting, as a result of attending the MASTS workshop.
- The Project will contribute to the UK blue carbon mapping project, sitting on the advisory board for the Irish Sea blue carbon mapping component.
- A meeting was recently held with the Jersey blue carbon project, including officers from DEFA, Jersey Government, and representatives from Blue Marine Foundation. Both projects are at fairly similar stages in development and it was agreed to share knowledge where possible.
- The Team were recently approached by a company called Bright Tide about their upcoming [blue carbon accelerator programme](#). Whilst it was agreed that it was not appropriate for the project to join the programme, due to the resource requirements and nature of the programme, the Team will do some webinars on the Project to share and connect with other projects within the programme. Partners may be invited to contribute to these webinars if appropriate and relevant.
- The Team will attend the Coastal Futures conference in London on the 25th & 26th Jan. Key sessions include:
  - TACKLING THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE: Working together for our ocean and coasts
  - DELIVERING MARINE RESTORATION: Net gain, blue carbon, restoration & re-wilding
  - BALANCING ACT: Strategic compensation and spatial prioritisation
- The Team will record a Biosphere podcast on blue carbon with Member for the Environment, Dr Michelle Haywood MHK at Manx Radio.

## Phase 1b

- The Phase 1b funding request was approved by Treasury which means the Project has been fully funded for another two years, which includes funding for:
  - A PhD with Bangor University on the impacts of fishing of key blue carbon habitats.
    - Additional resources for a part time fisheries liaison role to support this work.
  - Continuation of funds for fieldwork and analysis to support the NOC/Swansea PhD.
  - Some funding to establish biodiversity & ecosystem service/function baselines – likely linking with MWT and Seasearch.
    - Potential MSc student projects could support. **Action: RH/JK to add as an agenda item for Research Workshop in March.**
  - Phase 1b will continue mapping blue carbon, and work to create a mapping tool that has multiple interfaces for both operational analysis and planning with project partners and a public interface to highlight blue carbon locations for various uses (planning, fishing, recreational boaters etc.). The tool will hopefully have the capacity to allow the public to report unmapped blue carbon habitats.
    - **Action: RH/JK to share tool with ER when complete for wider territorial seas work**

- Mapping outputs be added to a revised climate change chapter of the Manx Marine Environmental Assessment (MMEA – available [here](#)) – team to liaise with territorial seas committee as well as PD. **Action: ER to share marine spatial planning mapping.**
- Funding for some public and stakeholder engagement events on blue carbon.
- Funding for continuation of the Team to continue to deliver the Project.

Over the following weeks the Team will have meetings with the partners to plan this phase of the project in detail and an in-person scoping workshop with all research partners is planned in March at Bangor University.

### 3. Member updates

#### Bangor University

- PhD to investigate the effect of bottom trawling on carbon stored in seabed – focus on nephrops fishery in west coast's belt of muddy sediment – which likely has the largest impact on carbon due to size of fishery and habitat type. Chapters include comparing carbon and benthic fauna with gradients of fishing intensity to identify effects; experimental closures to monitor impact and recovery and finally modelling to upscale in order to assess how much additional carbon could be captured through fisheries management in the territorial sea.
- PhD likely start around June time (once paperwork finalised and recruitment process completed).
- NERC call for project proposals on the effects of bottom trawling on carbon storage and sequestration in the seabed. Bangor will be working alongside a consortium of UK Universities to submit a bid – potential synergies with the Manx blue carbon project.
- **Action: RH/JK/PD to discuss potential closures with DoI to ensure placement aligns with plans for infrastructural developments in the territorial sea.**

#### DEFA Ecosystems Policy

- Tynwald motion in December to acknowledge the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis and commit to taking action.
- COP15 – Kunming Montreal Biodiversity Framework – 4 goals, 23 targets. Biodiversity Strategy to be reviewed in line with this
- Nature Recovery Network continues development (with MWT) to map areas being managed for wildlife on land and at sea – including portal for public contribution
- Looking for agreement on BAP priority habitats – includes marine habitats.
- Mapping of Kirk Michael soft sediment cliffs final report has been completed.
- Flood group – subgroups established including one to create a Shoreline Management Plan and monitor changes over next 18 months.

## DEFA Fisheries

- Met with Prof. Stuart Jenkins from Bangor to discuss linkages/separation between the blue carbon PhD project and the Bangor Fisheries contract; discussed aligned interests and interactions, particularly in relation to closing areas for experimental research.
- Fisheries Liaison role will help facilitate interaction between PhDs, DEFA/Bangor fisheries teams, fishing community.

## Department of Infrastructure

- Territorial Seas Committee continue to manage activities and infrastructure in the territorial sea – such as working with Orsted and other windfarm sites and Crogga. Primarily providing consents and keep a watching brief on other infrastructure projects.

## Department for Enterprise

- Reviewing financial support schemes – potential to provide support for businesses looking at carbon reduction. Will share as plans progress.

## KPMG

- New role recruited - ESG Associate Director with specialisation in carbon credits and innovative climate finance recruited from Australia.
- IOM mentioned in COP15 – KPMG used IOM as one of 3 showcases – punching above our weight and the concept of what we're trying to do. Can't (unlike UK) create commercial carbon or biodiversity credits with large areas of land, but size lends us to effective holistic, progressive and inclusive work; which is highly valuable and sort after in an international market.
- Ensured that a key pillar of the Island Economic Strategy was sustainability.

## Manx Wildlife Trust

- Manx Eelgrass Group's first meeting Wed 11<sup>th</sup> January. Priorities include continuing to map Derbyhaven seagrass bed, investigating other mapping opportunities e.g. full map of Ramsey and continuing to monitor transplant site in Port Erin.
  - Swansea to continue analysis of drone footage in Feb and will hopefully contribute to that mapping effort.
- Potential for drop down camera rig to ground truth

## MFPO

Update via email:

*"The fishing industry had some significant changes in 2022. One of the main changes was the 2022 King scallop consultation followed by a reduction in the number of licenced boats in the King scallop fleet permitted to fish in the Territorial Sea. In the*

*first 2 months of the King scallop season (Nov-Dec 2022) a total of just 38 boats fished during this period – 24 Manx and 14 from UK. This compares to 44 boats in 2021/22 (28 Manx, 16 UK) and 59 boats in 2020/21 (29 Manx and 31 UK). There has therefore been a decline in Manx registered boats fishing over this period from 29 in 2020/21 to 24 in 2022/23. However, there has been a larger decline in the number of UK boats fishing from 31 in 2020/21 to 14 in 2022/23 which will result in a lower carbon footprint for the overall fishery. Note that at the start of the 2016 season there were 31 Manx and 57 UK boats prosecuting the fishery. These are significant changes.*

*As boats are limited by a night time curfew, daily catch limits and weather patterns, the permanent reduction in licenced boats should result in a lower impact on the sea bed. Already this season we have observed higher catch rates and boats meeting their daily catch limits in 70% of fishing trips. As some boats are returning well before the curfew this will result in less time interacting with the sea-bed. In the 0-3 mile zone catch rates are at their highest level for 6 years, all around the coastline. In the sensitive inshore area, with daily catch limits this means less sea bed disturbance and also lower fuel use. These changes could bring about new management options/challenges and the inshore fishery will be monitored over the full season to ensure that fishing isn't concentrated just in the inshore areas. This can be done through the MFPO as over 90% of fishing activity in the 0-3 mile is now carried out by MFPO members as the number of UK boats permitted to fish in this zone is very limited, and through the Scallop Management Board.*

*The fishing industry and DEFA have also been trying to facilitate diversification for Manx registered boats into other species that are found within the Territorial Sea. This is extremely challenging as quota for these species is controlled by DEFRA, UK and to date our appeals for a share of the quota for Manx boats have fallen on deaf ears. Correlating home ports to available stock (zonal attachment) should result in lower carbon footprint and, with the excellent history of fisheries management within Manx waters by DEFA and the local fishing industry, care of stock and fishing grounds."*

## **National Oceanography Centre and Swansea University**

- Sample analysis: Sediment dating of offshore cores continues – results expected in the following months. Training on alpha spectrometry to refine results and sedimentation rates.
- Current focus on the literature review, having passed 1<sup>st</sup> year of PhD
- European Geosciences Union (EGU) abstract for conference in April in Vienna, had been circulated round DEFA team and academic partners for review.
- BioIsle project – was highly scored (same as one project that did get funding). Positive feedback from Daphne Cain and Climate Change Transformation Team to progress project. CE has a meeting with CCTT to progress bid.
- Developing a Seagrass Code for temperate waters – CE setting this up as part of another consortium.
- Socio-Oceanography workshop in Winchester, March 2023 – natural capital assessment with Sarah Taylor from NOC. Potential to use as a forum to workshop how to progress BioIsle and solidify offering – funding is available to bring people

from the Island to attend the workshop – **CE to reach out to individual members.**

#### 4. Terms of Reference – vote on adoption

- Approved
- Edit: Following discussion surrounding Members from businesses, it is acknowledged that the ToR may require amendments once a decision has been reached (see below).

#### 5. Deloitte membership application – discussion and vote

- The application prompted question from members regarding the involvement of private organisations in the working group.
- SN left the meeting to allow open discussion between the other members of the group.
- Question was raised about whether it is appropriate to have businesses involved in a Government working group, with the potential to influence policy or benefit commercially from information gleaned.
- Question of the fairness and transparency of how specific businesses (KPMG and Deloitte) have become involved; this has largely come about due to their expertise, and work they are currently doing or planning in relation to blue carbon.
- The Group recognises the value of having businesses in the working group, particularly in light of the growing and vital role which businesses are playing in driving and financing nature-based solutions to climate change, and projects which protect and restore nature.
- It was highlighted that the main functions of the working group are:
  - To provide expert advice to the Manx Blue Carbon Project
  - To bring together interested and relevant parties to ensure a holistic and connected approach to blue carbon

With these in mind, the group felt it is beneficial and appropriate to involve businesses, as long as it is done 'correctly' – with fairness and transparency.

Potential options discussed:

1. Include businesses as WG Members, with seats limited as per current Terms of Reference and with an amendment to cover conflicts of interest.
2. Have a single representative from business, representing the interests of the business community as a whole, rather than a specific business; this would likely be from the Chamber of Commerce.
3. Businesses could have an 'advisory' role to the group, being invited to contribute as and when their expertise is needed and the agenda calls for it.
4. Approach Chamber of Commerce to chase the formation of a Blue Economy group

Group decision:

- To acknowledge and thank Deloitte for their application, and advise that it has led to review of group structure and we will inform them of a decision in due course.

- To take the options discussed to DEFA's internal Blue Carbon Steering Group, and DEFA Minister and Members as required, before a decision can be circulated to the group and agreed via email.
- **Action: RH/JK to raise with internal Steering Group and contact Group members and Deloitte with outcome.**

## **6. Suggested meeting dates for 2023**

- a. 10:00-11:30 Wednesday 19 April
- b. 10:00-11:30 Wednesday 19 July
- c. 10:00-11:30 Wednesday 18 October

**Action: RH/JK to schedule**

## **7. Any other business**

No other business