

SWAN NETWORK NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY, OCT 16

News from the SWAN Office

This week the SWAN office is reintroducing the network newsletter, which will be sent out every Friday. Members are invited to send in local news items and upcoming events for inclusion at info@swanireland.ie. Feedback is also welcome and will be taken on board as we work to streamline the newsletter in the coming weeks.

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Update

Nuala Freeman (SWAN) and Karin Dubsky (Coastwatch/SWAN) attended a [Celtic Seas Partnership Workshop](#) in Dublin last week (report to follow) at which the DECLG gave a presentation on the status of the MSFD implementation in Ireland. Currently the DECLG are in the process of finalising the draft Programmes of Measures (PoMs), (measures to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status of our marine waters). The next step is the public consultation which is scheduled for early next month for a period of 8 weeks which may be lengthened to 9 or 10 weeks due to the overlap with the holiday period. SWAN will be requesting a longer consultation period in order to allow stakeholders adequate time to critically review the draft PoMs and to provide a meaningful response. Given that the final PoMs are due to be reported to the Commission by the 31st March 2016, this leaves little time for the DECLG to review and incorporate feedback. SWAN will be seeking assurances from the DECLG that time constraints cannot be used as an excuse for a short consultation period and for not incorporating stakeholder input as was the case for the previous MSFD consultations. There has also been no progress in establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) (to contribute to a coherent and representative network of MPAs), as the DECLG stated that in order to establish meaningful MPAs more research was needed along with proper protection and enforcement. This requires new legislation which won't in place until the next cycle, which is in six years. SWAN would argue that this is too late and would result in Ireland not meeting our MSFD obligations. For further information please contact Nuala at nfreeman@swanireland.ie.

Upcoming Events

The Coastwatch Survey has been extended to the weekend; Volunteers have until Sunday, **October 20, 2015** to perform eco-audits of low tides within designated survey units. [More information here](#)

"Hatcheries and Stocking: Have They a Role in Restoring Atlantic Salmon Stocks?" Event to be held Saturday, **21 November 2015** from 11:00 to 17:00 (GMT) at **Ballsbridge Hotel**, Pembroke Road, Dublin 4.

"Implementing the Atlantic Action Plan and Measuring the Ocean Economy": 2nd National Event for the Support Team of the Atlantic Action Plan, in Association with the 6th Annual Beaufort Marine Research Workshop. Event to be held Tuesday, **24th November 2015** at the **Glenlo Abbey Hotel** in Galway. The day will include discussion of a wide range of topics pertaining to the marine sector in

Ireland, as well as fostering a project development forum and highlighting opportunities available to Irish stakeholders. More information and how to register forthcoming.

Note: If you were unable to attend the Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals held at the end of September, the presentations are now available to view and share [here](#).

Water News from Ireland

The EPA's annual [Drinking Water report for 2014](#) was published this week. The press release is [here](#).

The report brings good news in that the number of people on 'boil water notices' has dropped from 23,000 to 6,000, and that access to safe drinking water supplies has dramatically increased. Hidden behind the headlines, however, are more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million people (770,000) who are still being serviced by 112 water supplies that remain on the EPA's 'Remedial Action List'. These are drinking water supplies "in need of improvement to ensure . . . safety & security". Of these 112 'at risk' supplies, 30 lack adequate treatment to prevent *Cryptosporidium* entering the supply. In addition, the EPA found poor catchment-based source protection in 40 of 62 public water supplies audited last year (65%). It is notable, given the importance of source protection, that despite the fact that animal faeces and agricultural pesticides are recognised sources of drinking water contamination, the potential impacts of agricultural intensification are barely mentioned in the report.

The Irish Times [reviews the report here](#), noting the significant threat of E.coli contamination that human or animal waste poses to private wells.

The EPA has launched a new web resource entitled '**Ireland's Environment**', encouraging public access to environmental data divided into 8 subsections: water, air, climate, environment and wellbeing, waste, land & soil, nature, and sustainable economy. [View more here](#)

Water News from Abroad

[EUROPE'S FISHERMEN TO GET BLUE CREDENTIALS](#)

"Europe's fishermen have faced a rising tide of cheap imports from Asia, but that could be turning now that they're able to prove their blue credentials to environmentally aware customers [. . .] "[A Norwegian] research team has studied supply chains in Europe and Asia to help them develop a standard that enables fishing firms to show the environmental impact of their catch, giving them an edge over products whose journey to the same supermarket shelf has been thousands of kilometres longer. [. . .] It means that small, one- or two-boat fishing outfits will be able to compete in Europe against fishing conglomerates, as it's easier for them to show supermarkets that they operate sustainably. . ." [Read more](#)

[MARINE PROTECTED AREAS INCREASE SURVIVAL OF ATLANTIC COD](#)

"Marine protected areas (MPAs) are widely used to safeguard marine ecosystems across Europe. This study investigated the effect of a partially protected area (PPA) off the coast of Norway on a population of Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*). The PPA reduced the number of deaths due to fishing, increased survival and stimulated movement to surrounding areas. The authors say that preventing fishing altogether would increase survival even further and recommend no-take zones in areas where populations are severely reduced." [Read more](#)

[WORLD'S RICHEST REEF SYSTEM COULD SOON SUCCUMB TO CLIMATE CHANGE](#)

“Scientists are predicting the demise of most of the world’s coral reefs by as early as 2050. The Coral Triangle is the richest of them all and could be the first to go: The publication last week of the Worldwide Fund for Nature’s (WWF) [Living Blue Planet report](#) painted a bleak picture of the state of the world’s oceans: marine populations, including reef ecosystems, have halved in size since 1970 and some species are teetering on the brink of extinction. Coral reef cover has declined by 50% in the last 30 years and reefs could disappear by as early as 2050, the report says, if current rates of ocean warming and acidification continue. WWF estimates that 850 million people depend directly on coral reefs for their food security - a mass die-off could trigger conflict and human migration on a massive scale.” [Read more](#)

[ARE HUMANS MAKING THE SEAS MORE NOISY, ASK SCIENTISTS?](#)

“Humans could be making the seas more noisy as we continue to move into the ocean environment – forcing fish, dolphins and other marine life to move out of their natural habitat and disrupting their breeding habits. Like a noisy bar – where the constant hubbub of background noise from conversations and other hullabaloo might force pub-goers to speak a little louder, or get ‘fed up’ with the racket and leave – researchers are keen to see if underwater noise is having a similar effect on creatures in the sea such as fish, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoise. There is concern that rising levels of underwater noise pollution worldwide may have an impact on marine life by interfering with communication – causing changes in behaviour, and raising stress levels in marine life.” [Read more](#)

[2016 EIP WATER CONFERENCE TO LOOK AT HOW WATER INNOVATION IS SUCCEEDING IN EUROPE](#)

“[. . .] EIP Water's third conference will be held under the theme "How is water innovation succeeding in Europe?" and will build on the success of the previous two events in Brussels (2013) and Barcelona (2014). Participants in the 2016 EIP Water Conference are expected to include high-level representatives of the public and corporate water sector in Europe and beyond, among them water managers, representatives of water authorities, customers (i.e., innovation demanders) from the private and public sector, water-using sectors, innovation providers, and those involved in innovation development, uptake and financing.” [Read more](#)

Miscellaneous News

The European Commission’s Natura 2000 Award, which honours remarkable nature conservation achievements, is now entering its third year. Local and national authorities, businesses, landowners, NGOs, educational institutions and individuals that demonstrate a commitment to activities related to Natura 2000 may all qualify for one of the five award categories The Award, which is devoted to raising awareness about Natura 2000 and which recognizes excellence in the management and promotion of the network and its objectives, will also bestow an ‘EU Citizens Award’ to the application that receives the most nominations through an open public vote. The call for applications is now active, and will remain open until **December 1st, 2015**. The award ceremony will take place in Brussels in May of 2016, and will be led by Karmenu Vella, the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. [More information may be found here](#)

On the Passing of the Climate Bill: On October 8th, the Climate Action Bill passed the Dáil with cross-party support. Having campaigned on behalf of the bill for seven years, Friends of the Earth welcomed this development while also maintaining that a concrete plan to reduce emissions is still lacking. In a [press release](#), Director Oisín Coghlan wrote: “The passing of the Climate Action Bill is a significant milestone. It hard-wires transparency, expert advice and parliamentary accountability

into climate policy-making. And we know from experience that without a legal mandate these things are not guaranteed. The Bill is weaker than it should be, but has significantly improved thanks to engagement by TDs from all sides during the legislative process.”

While the bill does reference the Government's national policy objective of 80% reductions in emissions from electricity, transport and buildings, plus carbon neutrality in agriculture and land use, binding 2050 targets are noticeably missing. Ireland is also not on track to meet 2020 EU targets, and a national action plan to reduce emissions is still not in place, the last one having expired in 2012. Friends of the Earth now looks to Minister Alex White’s ‘Energy White Paper’ for meaningful policy commitments. As Coughlan stated, "We need to see the White Paper set out a compelling vision of a fossil-free Ireland by 2050, mandate 20% local ownership of renewable energy projects, and introduce a fair price for solar electricity to unleash a rooftop revolution of household and community-owned renewables. We have to enable Irish communities - GAA clubs, Parish groups and Green Schools – to take ownership of the energy transition we need."