

NATIONAL MARINE BIOLOGICAL AQC SCHEME / BEQUALM
Teleconference Meeting Minutes
23/08/11 10:30-12:30

Attending: Tim Mackie (TM, Chair, NI EA), David Hall (DH, Contractor), Steve Coates (SC, EA), Myles O'Reilly (MoR, SEPA), Keith Cooper (KC, CEFAS), Carol Milner (CMi, Contractor representative), Amanda Prior (AP, Finance Manager, EA), Milly Hatton-Brown (MHB, Technical Secretary SAHFOS), James Strong (JSt, AFBI), Lucie Skates (LS, CCW).

Apologies: Claire Mason (CMa, CEFAS), Joe Silke (JS, MI) Clare Scanlan (CS, SEPA) Raphael Salas (RS, MI)

1. Last Meeting Actions

Action: KC talk to Thomas Maes and Ed McManus Re the write-up of the faunal data from the CSEMP redesign project

KC has spoken with Thomas Maes (Cefas) and has reiterated the importance of the write up of their results. KC will continue to follow this up with Ed McManus; he has suggested that a letter from the NMBAQC to the HBDSEG or CSEG committees impressing upon them the need to write up the results could help.

There is a CSEMP Benthic teleconference on the 31st August.

Action: TM send MOR details of CSEMP teleconference.

Action: KC Speak to Melanie Sapp (CEFAS) and Ed before the CSEMP meeting.

ACTION: CS compilation of macroalgae taxonomic literature list. CS to update when draft minutes go out.

Action: TM follow up epibiota video guidance document with Bill Sanderson (Herriot Watt ex CCW) who is looking for funding for a PhD student to carry out the work.

TM has spoken to Bill but the projects they each have in mind are too different to combine. The work will need to be undertaken by another PhD student TM will continue to liaise with Bill about the prospect of him taking on another student to carry out the project.

Action: CS speak to Emma or whoever completed the contract to find out what the cost of algae RRT would be. CS to update when draft minutes go out.

Action: DH Contact experts from workshops and ask for a finalised version of identification keys to put on the website. Ongoing (Hesionid guide is online, latest Cumacean guide is being tested and will go online ASAP).

Action: MHB to keep JS up to date with progress of SAHFOS/MBA Phytoplankton 2012 workshop. Ongoing – regular updates are provided.

Action: MHB Call Claire to get a copy of the PSA guide and circulate it to all

Action: ALL read PSA document final draft or pass to PSA person within their organisation and check that it scans properly and is robust. Email any feedback to CMa.

Action ALL: comment to CS on Macroalgae report – specifically GIS estimates as the method for this has changed. Outstanding

Action: CS to assess participant feedback from Y17 and the cost of running a macroalgal blooming workshop in Year 18 to decide whether or not to go ahead with it.

Action: CS chase up Yr 17 rocky shore test report and participant feedback. CS to update when draft minutes go out.

Action: AP/CS add to contract tender for someone to explore or price video ring testing so it can be offered as an optional module in macroalgae scheme.

To be revisited in the future - the tenders for macroalgae had to go out quickly so that there was time to collect summer images. It was included in the specification that contractors would provide a quote for running a video ring test.

Action: TM contact James Strong about use of video for macro algal identification, ask him to contact CS. Ongoing - JSt has been at sea a lot so not progressed.

Action: ALL Email a paragraph to DH for CSEMP report describing how their samples have been collected (ie sampling strategies clustered or dispersed, fixed or re-randomised etc.) and how it has changed over time.

Action: DH Email MOR CSEMP Invertebrate sample flagging report.

2. Priorities paper outcomes from HBDSEG meeting

TM updated everyone on the work prioritised by HBDSEG at their last meeting. It was decided that Epibiota video QA was the area that should be prioritised for development by NMBAQC although TM is concerned that available funds may not stretch far enough. TM suggested the possibility of funding a temporary position to work on the project. The other area that HBDSEG was interested in was the Automatic Biotope Classification. It was decided that spreading funds between the two would make funding thin on the ground.

Action TM: Talk to Roger Proudfoot and JNCC to clarify the end product, outcomes they would like to see.

3. Phytoplankton update

The phytoplankton exercise is still underway, the enumeration part is complete and all results have been received from the participants. The identification exercise, which was developed by Jacob Larsen (IOC) in the web platform 'Ocean Teacher,' will be launched in the next 2 weeks. The one day year 18 workshop is being organised by RS and Wendy Higman and will take place at the CEFAS laboratories, Weymouth, UK. The proposed date for this workshop is the week of the 8th of November (exact day TBC), it is hoped that Jacob Larsen and another guest speaker (TBC) will attend.

4. PSA

CMA has emailed a final copy of the PSA guidance document - it will be circulated to the committee shortly (once it has been uploaded to an FTP site or otherwise accessed by MHB).

Action: MHB to access and circulate final PSA doc.

CMA would like to organise a meeting next year to promote the best practice guidance document and to discuss the barriers people have about following the guidelines – sometimes people say they are following the best practice guidelines but results submitted indicate that they haven't. DH agrees that it is worth getting together to discuss experiences following the guidelines and to see if more guidance could be provided.

DH provided an update of all tests, participation, reports and bulletins. The PSA reporting will be modified - in future lab results will be split into those following the guidelines and those using different protocols and the pass/fail line will be removed.

5. Benthic Invertebrates

DH provided an update of all tests, participation, reports and bulletins.

All year 16 reports are complete; DH is working on the outstanding year 17 reports and bulletins. Year 18 exercises are about to start DH has created a "spare" lab code in case there is a late sign up by Martin Ryan. A beginner's Invertebrate taxonomic workshop is being organised for end of November.

Action TM: Talk to Bob Kennedy and remind him to sign up to the scheme.

6. Macroalgae

CS to email update.

7. Epibiota

JSt and TM highlighted the need for a new strategy for carrying out the Epibiota Scheme component work. A dedicated person is required to take on the workload and progress this component. As the use of video surveying is expanding the QA needs to be prioritised.

TM raised the issue that the greatest need, identified by the majority of stakeholders that attended the workshop, was training. TM expressed his concern that if/when people move on from jobs the training does not provide a long lasting benefit to QA. What might be more useful is a resource (i.e. video QA DVDs/CDs or a library) that could be dipped into for training purposes as well as being a QA procedural tool that will have longevity and be more widely available than a workshop.

Action: AP forward Emma Verling's email address to TM

Action: JSt and TM meet to discuss the next steps and involve Emma Verling.

It was recommended that JSt, TM, MOR, AP and Emma Verling should meet to develop this work further at a later date.

8. Fish

DH provided an update of all tests, participation, reports and bulletins.

SC ran through the options for running a "southern" workshop in April 2012 for 20 – 40 participants, using Pete Henderson's extensive fish specimen collection.

Action: SC to continue looking into costs, accommodation etc.

SC reported that there is a demand for fresh water sampling to be included in the NMBAQC scheme; sampling often takes place in transitional waters and fresh water species are often misidentified or not counted. In the future it is likely that fresh water and marine sampling will be carried out by the same teams of people; there is a market for training in statutory agencies and groups like the IFCAS and Rivers Trust. Ian Cowx is a Fresh water fish expert and could provide training.

Action DH will continue to include some freshwater species in the fish ring tests.

Action: SC / MHB send out flyer to determine if there is a demand for freshwater fish ID to be added on to the workshop.

9. AOB

MHB will be leaving on September the 9th. SAHFOS are in discussions with a potential candidate – nothing has been confirmed yet MHB to meet her WB 5th September and will keep committee updated. Thanks to everyone for all their support, it has been a pleasure working on the committee.

Action: MHB Send CV of new candidate around to the committee and update them on any progress.

10. Finance

Provisional date for next meeting: Tuesday 15th November

Action: MOR investigate venue.