# Circle  Description automatically generated with medium confidenceNE ATLANTIC MARINE BIOLOGICAL AQC SCHEME COMMITTEE MEETING

**Agenda****26th July 2023 1000-1230**

**Confirmed Attendees:** David Johns (DJ, MBA, Chair), Graham Phillips (GP, EA, Finance Manager), Claire Mason (CM, CEFAS, PSA Technical Manager), Myles O’Reilly (MOR, SEPA, Benthic Invertebrates Technical Manager), Tim Mackie (TM, DAERA Senior Scientific Officer), Claire Taylor (CT, MBA, Technical Secretary), Marianne Wootton (MW, MBA, Zooplankton Technical Manager), Jim Ellis (JE, CEFAS, Fish Technical Manager), Matt Green (MG, NRW, Marine Monitoring Ecologist), Lydia McIntyre-Brown (LMB, APEM Ltd, PSA administrator), Georgina Brackenreed-Johnstone (GBJ, APEM Ltd, Macroalgae administrator), James Albrecht (JA, JNCC, Epibiota Technical Manager) and Ross Griffin (RG, Ocean Ecology, Contractors Rep).

**Apologies:** Debbie Walsh (DW, APEM Ltd, Fish Administrator) and Claire Young (CY, DAERA, Macroalgae Technical Manager).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Last Meetings Actions** (summarised below on the agenda)
 |  | ALL |
| 1. **Minutes of the last meeting**
 |  | CT |
|  Approval of April meeting minutes |  | DJ |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Epibiota update**
 |  | JA |
|  |   |  |
| 1. **Phytoplankton update**
 |  | RS |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Priorities to HBDSEG**
 |  | DJ |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **PSA update**
 |  | CM/LMB |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Benthic Invertebrates update**
 |  | DH/MoR |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Macroalgae update**
 |  | CY |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Fish update**
 |  | JE/DW |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **Zooplankton update**
 |  | MW |
|  |  |  |
| 1. **AOB**
 |  | ALL |
| Update for any literature/reports/timetables to websiteAny QA standards updates?Use of Image J for quadrat area cover estimation  |  | CTMG |
| 1. **Contractor Questions**
 |  | RG |
| 1. **Finance update\* Confidential**
 |  | GP |

1. **Last Meetings Actions**

**Epibiota:**

JOC to look at adding epibiota results/reports onto the website. JOC had started to put this together (has now left JNCC). **Action: to update onto new website – Further Action: JA is to review notes from handover prior to next meeting – TO REMOVE ACTION**

MG discussed using quality assurance documents as there was a query using a drop-down video when looking at the flow chart in the guidance framework documents alongside the habitat mapping proforma. Action: JA to look into and review/amend as necessary: MG/JA to arrange a meeting, with additional colleagues to discuss – ongoing. **Further action: This is to be looked at later this year during a workshop meeting (one on QC). Any documents produced from this to be sent to CT for uploading onto website.**

**Phytoplankton:**

Awaiting updateAction: DJ to contact RS for post meeting update – CT has heard from RS and he is going to send some documents to her to update on Phyto component part of our website – **CT to send out reminder to RS – RS has now sent CT some items for the website – TO REMOVE ACTION.**

**Macroalgae:**

There is still no new contract for rocky shore – Action: MG to contact CY (maybe via Paul Brazier) to see if there are any further developments. GP is also discussing macroalgae with CY so will ask too. Update: MG to email CY and cc in TM – CY to respond this week**. Further action – TM to see if CY can attend next NMBAQC committee meeting.**

**PSA:**

Claire Mason has started organising a PSA workshop to be held at Cefas’ Lowestoft laboratory at the end of March (22/23). Claire Taylor has circulated information to participants to gage interest. Action: CM to send report/pictures to CT for upload to website and social media. **Action: Ongoing (photos sent to CT during meeting, awaiting text) DONE, TO REMOVE ACTION.**

Action: DW to send her Phytoplankton statistical results to LMB to see if similar stats can be utilised within PSA. **TO REMOVE ACTION.**

**Benthic:**

The next Annual report for the period 2021/2022 is now due. CT to email component leads next week but would like content by mid to end January in order to get this done by February. Action: CT – done in draft only as delays with Benthic Inverts. HBDSEG have received a draft copy. Update MoR advised still delays with last year’s own sample ring tests which are holding things up. MoR to chase DH re backlog and need to define a clear deadline for yr. 28.  **Further update: Benthic now added into draft and Annual Report completed and uploaded to website – TO REMOVE ACTION.**

MoR and CT have revamped Benthic Inverts literature page, adding unpublished keys and MoR volunteered to do the same for Macroalgae and Fish.Action: MOR to scan in relevant documents (~20 Macroalgae and ~2 Fish) and CT to upload onto website.

**Website:**

Action: Tweaks raised during website clinic have all been implemented apart from the tweaking of our logo – this has to be done through CEFAS – not yet made changes and google analytics still not working (CT). **Action:** CM to chase – DONE and google analytics now working. Would like a better resolution image for the workshop logo if achievable – **TO REMOVE ACTION**.

**Miscellaneous:**

An updated UKTAG IQI workbook for use in fish farm industry is almost available. It is hoped to be signed off in early December after an advisory group water framework meeting. **Further update: GP to have completed by the next committee meeting, GP should have final version completed by the end of this week – Done and on UKTAG website – TO REMOVE ACTION.**

MG discussed recent article re the scheme in the Porcupine bulletin. Action: MG to send CT the article for social media – **ongoing**.

Taxonomic Discrimination (TDP) development draft version (and TDP spreadsheet) was circulated to the scheme participants and appropriate Committee members for comment (16/11/21). We are still awaiting feedback ahead of producing a finalised Version 1 for upload to the scheme website (early next year). Action: MoR/DH/CT. **Update: CT has received and circulated to relevant personnel, Myles to release soon. POST MEETING NOTE: DONE – TO REMOVE ACTION**

FAQ/About section/website**:** People call the NMBAQC a certification, this is obviously not correct. Can we add a little section on this in the FAQs or About section? Action: CT/DJ to meet, check wording on website and to add a few lines explaining our role – update DJ/CT to meet before next meeting – CT Done**. DJ advised there is a further FAQ he would like adding in.**

1. **Minutes from the last meeting - approved**
2. **Epibiota Update**

**Enumeration approaches guidelines -** Galathea Marine Consultants LTD were contracted to develop guidance on the enumeration approaches available to still image analysts last financial year. The draft guidance is currently out for external review, with the intention to publish the guidance later this financial year.

**Imagery workshop -** Plans are in preparation for an imagery workshop (September/**October 2023**). The aim of the workshop is to review current drop camera still image processing and statistical analysis methods used by UK Government agencies to agree recommended guidelines that can be used for monitoring of the UKs MPA network. Participants have been invited from Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies and other government agencies involved with monitoring seabed habitats. **Action: JA to let MG know who is the NRW contact. DJ also advised JA to approach DEFRA for funding sources, maybe R&D money to tap into.**

Ring tests are also to be discussed, although previously have been received with mixed feelings – how would it apply to subject imagery? To discuss this at one of the working groups. **Action: TM to contact JA to offer advice**

Resulting guidelines are intended to be applied to JNCC and Cefas MPA monitoring that are due to start this financial year.

**Big Picture Project Working Group (PWG) meetings -** Dates for PWG meetings for each of the nine PWGs are currently being polled for. These are expected to be held between August and October 2023.

1. **Phytoplankton Update**

Samples have been sent out to participants undertaking the most recent IPI exercises, which have to be completed by 1st September 2023. A report and workshop is planned for the beginning of November 2023. **Action: DJ to touch base with RS, CT has received some items for website, TO REMOVE ACTION.**

1. **Priorities to HBDSEG**
2. eDNA:

Has been raised at HBDSEG who are looking to NMBAQC to offer QA and best practice. MBA have an EU proposal called Marco-Bolo in the pipeline, which is looking into this initiative, may have to bring in their recommendations.

CM also has a contact and can call for advice. There is also Kate Wade from JNCC – need to try and get some experts together to discuss state of play and perceived problems. **Action: JA to discuss further with DJ.**

1. Seagrass monitoring standardisation:

To look at best practice and SOPs – what fits best under Epibiota? This is to be looked at during workshops already discussed in Epibiota section.

1. Blue Carbon – biological or chemical?

A small group is to be set up looking at standardising methods with wider group to be involved ~Autumn 2023. Looking at ultimately producing technical guidance.

1. Delays in circulation of ring tests was also commented on.
2. **PSA Update**

**PARTICLE SIZE ANALYSIS COMPONENT PROGRESS REPORT**

**2022-23, Year 29**

**6.1 Subscriptions**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LabCode | PS84/85 | PS86/87 | PS-OS25/26/27 |
| PSA\_2901 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2902 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2903 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2904 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2905 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2906 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2907 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2908 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2909 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2910 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2911 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2912 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2913 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2914 | 1 | 1 | - |
| PSA\_2916 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2917 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2918 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| PSA\_2921 | - | - | 1 |
| PSA\_2922 | - | - | 1 |
| PSA\_2923 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| PSA\_2924 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| PSA\_2925 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| PSA\_2926 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| PSA\_2927 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| PSA\_2928 | **-** | **-** | 1 |
| Total (change from last year) | **17 (-1)** | **17 (-1)** | 1. **(-4)**
 |

 **6.2 2022-2023, Year 29 Operations**

All circulations of PS exercises will be distributed in line with the 2022-2023 timetable (available below). Returns and results are summarised in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Exercise | Status | Returns / Comments |
| PS84 | Samples distributed: **28/10/2022** | Fines Test  |
| Sample deadline: **16/12/2022** |  |
| Interim reports sent: **06/01/2023**Final reports due: 20/01/2023 | 14 out of 17 returned results1 x communicated non-participation2 x no communication |
| **Exercise Complete** |  |
| PS85 | Samples distributed: **28/10/2022** | Diamicton Test |
| Sample deadline: **16/12/2022** |  |
| Interim reports sent: **06/01/2023**Final reports due: 20/01/2023 | 14 out of 17 returned results1 x communicated non-participation2 x no communication |
| **Exercise Complete** |  |
| PS86 | Samples distributed: **13/01/2023** | Mud/sand Test |
| Sample deadline: 17/03/2023 |  |
| Interim reports issued: 06/04/2023Final reports to be issued: 21/04/2023 | 13 out of 17 returned results2 x communicated non-participation2 x no communication |
| **Exercise in progress** |  |
| PS87 | Samples distributed: **13/01/2023** | Gravel/ sand Test |
| Sample deadline: 17/03/2023 |  |
| Interim reports issued: 06/04/2023Final reports to be issued: 21/04/2023**Exercise in progress** | 13 out of 17 returned results2 x communicated non-participation2 x no communication |
| PS-OS25-27 | Samples request sent: 28/10/2022 |  |
| Batch 1Data submission deadline: 30/11/2022Sample submission deadline: 23/12/2022Reports Issued: 24/03/2023**Exercise complete** | 16 out of 17 data sets submitted48 out of 51 samples selected48 out of 51 samples received9 out of 17 reports sent |
| Batch 2Data submission deadline: 24/03/2023Sample submission deadline: 28/04/2023Reports issued: 07/07/2023**Exercise in progress** |

**Particle Size Component 2022-2023 Timetable (Scheme Year 29)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Module / Exercise** | **Event** | **Date** |
| PS84 & PS85 | Samples distributed | 28/10/22 |
|  | Results deadline | **16/12/22** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 23/12/22 |
|  | Final report deadline | 20/01/23 |
|  |  |  |
| PS86 & PS87 | Samples distributed | 13/01/23 |
|  | Results deadline | **17/03/23** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 31/03/23 |
|  | Final report deadline | 21/04/23 |
|  |  |  |
| PS-OS 25 - 27 | Request for sample data distributed | 28/10/22 |
|  |  |  |
| Batch 1 | Data submission deadline for sample selection | **30/11/22** |
|  | Selected samples submission deadline | **23/12/22** |
|  | Interim report final deadline (for samples received before 23 December 2022) | 24/03/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Batch 2 | Data submission deadline for sample selection | **24/03/23** |
|  | Selected samples submission deadline | **28/04/23** |
|  | Interim report final deadline | 07/07/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Annual Report | Annual report deadline | 28/07/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Workshop – | Cefas - Lowestoft | 22/23 March 2023 |

Annual Report is being worked on. **Action: LMB to send to CT once completed to upload onto website.**

1. **Benthic Invertebrates Update**

**BENTHIC INVERTEBRATE COMPONENT PROGRESS REPORT**

**2022-23, Year 29**

* 1. **Subscriptions**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LabCode | RT63/64 | LR27 | OS80/81/82 |
| BI\_2901 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2902 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2903 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2904 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| BI\_2905 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| BI\_2906 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2907 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2908 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| BI\_2909 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2910 | 1 | 1 | - |
| BI\_2911 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2912 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2913 | 1  | - | - |
| BI\_2914 | 1 | 1 | - |
| BI\_2915 | 1 | 1 | - |
| BI\_2916 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2917 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2918 | 1 | - | 1 |
| BI\_2919 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2920 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2921 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2922 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2923 | 1 | - | - |
| BI\_2926 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2927 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2928 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2929 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2930 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2931 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2932 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2933 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2934 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2935 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2936 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2937 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2938 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2939 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2940 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2941 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2942 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2943 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2944 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2945 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2946 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2947 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2948 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2949 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2950 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2951 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2952 | - | - | 1 |
| BI\_2953 | - | - | 1 |
| ° (change from 2021/22) | **23 (-)**  | **6 (-)** | 1. **(+6)**
 |

**7.2 2022-2023, Year 29 Operations**

Benthic Invertebrate exercises were distributed in line with the 2022-2023 timetable (available below). Returns, results and exercise status details are summarised in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Exercise | Status | Returns / Comments |
| RT63 | Specimens distributed 28/10/22Submission deadline 16/12/22Interim reports issued 23/12/22Ring Test Bulletin issued 30/01/23**Exercise complete** | General Ring Test; 21 out of 23 data sets received. |
| RT64 | Specimens to be distributed 13/01/23Submission deadline 17/03/23Interim reports issued 31/03/23Ring Test Bulletin issued 09/05/23**Exercise complete** | Targeted Ring Test – Peracarida excluding Amphipoda;21 out of 23 data sets received from 20 labs. |
| LR27 | Request for specimens distributed 28/10/22Submission deadline 23/12/22 (extended 09/06/23)Interim reports deadline 17/03/23LR Module Summary Report issued 19/07/23**Exercise complete** | 4 of the 6 sets of specimens received. |
| OS80-82 | Sample data requested 28/10/22Data submission deadline Batch 2 24/03/23Sample submission deadline Batch 2 28/04/23 (extended 09/06/23)OS Module Summary Report deadline 14/07/23**Exercises in progress** | 36 (97%) out of 37 datasets received; 85 (79%) out of 108 requested samples received. 63 (74%) of 85 samples reported to date; 7 samples with the external auditor.Draft OS Summary Report updated with all samples reported to date. |
| 2022/23 Annual Report & SoPs | Annual Report & Statement of Performance documents deadline 28/07/23 | Report drafted with all completed modules; OS module pending. |

* 1. **Issues arising**

Very late delivery of bulk OS data has resulted in the OS Module running behind schedule. There are twenty-three requested Own Samples yet to be submitted and seven currently with the scheme’s external auditor. Three of the samples with the external auditor are in progress and expected to be completed very soon, however the remaining twenty-seven Own Samples will take a number of weeks to be submitted and subsequently processed. There are also concerns that some samples may not have followed the NMBAQC scheme’s subsampling protocol, specifically that they have not been subsampled when the PRP subsampling criteria have been met. If such samples are encountered, they may have to be rejected as non-compliant, because auditing these samples will take days rather than hours to complete and are not provided as reasonably expected.

It is proposed that the OS Summary Report, Annual Report, and Statement of Performance documents are produced without delay, with revised versions being produced when the outstanding samples have been completed. Alternatively, the late samples can be reported outside of the scheme’s formal reporting with the Annual Report including a note explaining that this has been undertaken to ensure that contractual deadlines are maintained. Note that APEM are not funded to draft multiple versions of reports or accept scheme submissions well beyond the scheme timetable.

**7.4 Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol (TDP) Development**

TDP development draft version (and TDP spreadsheet) was circulated to the scheme participants and appropriate Committee members for comment. Feedback and comments have been received, collated, incorporated into a revised version, and uploaded to the scheme website (July 2023).

**Project milestones:**

* first draft shared with NMBAQC Scheme participants and initial comments requested before 2021-year end
* Ring Test Bulletins going forwards (RT61 onwards) now include notes regarding the TDP, where relevant
* publication of first draft TDP (overview, family level, one family to species level) on Scheme website.

**Action: DH to send to CT once finalised for website. CT to also add onto Twitter and let committee know when available. The committee to also test TDP out.**

**Next contract:**

* update family level TDP with discussion of historical records, identification standardisation problems and literature
* combine TDP text file with literature list update, to include discussion of most important literature
* workshops to agree family level TDP
* completion of provisional TDP to species level for all groups
* circulation of each provisional species level TDP for participant feedback
* workshops or feedback to resolve species level TDP for each group
* publication of full TDP (overview and all taxa) on Scheme website

**7.5 Taxonomic Workshops**

Beginner Taxonomic Workshop – University of Galway (UoG), 26-30/06/23

A beginner taxonomic course was successfully held in June at the University of Galway, IE. The workshop was delivered by five APEM/AQUAFACT benthic specialists. In total, including AQUAFACT and UoG attendees, there were twenty-three participants from ten organisations representing academic, government and private laboratories. Ten participants were based in the Republic of Ireland, five travelled from Northern Ireland, four from England, two from the Netherlands, and two from Belgium.

Twenty-two participants completed a workshop feedback questionnaire; average, maximum, and minimum scores for workshop sessions/facilities are summarised below. Full feedback results have been shared with the Contract Manager (19/07/23).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Average Score(1-5; 5 = very good) | Min | Max |
| Timetabled Groups |  |  |  |
| Sample Processing | **4.1** | 2 | 5 |
| Phyla Recognition | **4.6** | 3 | 5 |
| Annelids | **4.6** | 2 | 5 |
| Molluscs | **3.8** | 1 | 5 |
| Crustaceans | **4.5** | 3 | 5 |
| Echinoderms | **4.9** | 4 | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Teaching Aids / Resources |  |   |   |
| Workshop Folder | **4.7** | 3 | 5 |
| Test Material | **4.5** | 1 | 5 |
| Museum Specimens | **4.6** | 3 | 5 |
| Laboratory Equipment | **4.8** | 4 | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Venue & Accommodation |  |   |   |
| The Laboratory | **4.8** | 4 | 5 |
| Your Accommodation | **4.1** | 2 | 5 |

APEM encountered difficulties regarding logistics for this workshop, with the parcel containing the bulk workshop material (specimens, equipment & literature) being held by Irish customs and a second ‘emergency’ parcel being posted to NI and then subsequently transported to the Galway venue via DAERA participants. Discussions are on-going regarding whether the UoG Science/Research Dept. holds the necessary permit for scientific specimen receipt from the UK (for future workshop logistics).

One workshop participant has subsequently made an enquiry to join the scheme in order to access the LR module.

**7.5.1 Expert Taxonomic Workshop, UoG 27/11/23 - 01/12/23**

Taxonomic workshops are being planned for 2023. An expert taxonomic course is at an advanced stage of planning for November 2023, to be hosted at the Martin Ryan Marine Science Institute, University of Galway, IE. Session leaders (crustacean & mollusc groups) have confirmed availability and are working on their presentations. An EOI for the workshop is being finalised and will be made available for circulation soon.

**7.5.2 Benthic Invertebrate Taxonomic Workshop Guidelines for Presenters**

A guidance document for NMBAQC scheme taxonomic workshop contributors has been created ahead of the November workshop in Galway. If agreeable, this document could be modified and added to the scheme website as best practice guidance for taxonomic workshop delivery. **Action: DH/MOR to send to CT once finalised for website.** Post meeting note: Done and on website.

**Invertebrate Component 2022-2023 Timetable (Scheme Year 29)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Module / Exercise** | **Event** | **Date** |
| RT63 - General | Samples distributed | 28/10/22 |
|  | Results deadline | **16/12/22** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 23/12/22 |
|  | Final report deadline | 20/01/23 |
|  |  |  |
| RT64 - Targeted | Samples distributed | 13/01/23 |
|  | Results deadline | **17/03/23** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 31/03/23 |
|  | Final report deadline | 21/04/23 |
|  |  |  |
| LR27 | Protocol and request for specimens distributed | 28/10/22 |
|  | Specimen submission deadline | **23/12/22** |
|  | Interim reports deadline | 17/03/23 |
|  | LR summary report deadline | 24/03/23 |
|  |  |  |
| OS80–82 | Request for sample data distributed | 28/10/22 |
|  |  |  |
| Batch 1 | Data submission deadline for sample selection | **30/11/22** |
|  | Selected samples submission deadline | **23/12/22** |
|  | Interim report final deadline (for samples received before 23 December 2022) | 24/03/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Batch 2 | Data submission deadline for sample selection | **24/03/23** |
|  | Selected samples submission deadline | **28/04/23** |
|  | Interim report final deadline | 07/07/23 |
|  |  |  |
|  | OS summary report deadline | 14/07/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Annual Report | Annual report deadline | 28/07/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Workshop – beginners | University of Galway, IE | 26/06/23 – 30/06/23 |
|  |  |  |
| Workshop – experts | Martin Ryan Marine Science Institute, University of Galway, IE – subject to demand – EOI in draft | 27/11/23 – 01/12/23 |

1. **Macroalgae Update**

**MACROALGAE BIOMASS AND PERCENTAGE COVER COMPONENT PROGRESS REPORT**

**2022-23, Year 29**

* 1. **Subscriptions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Lab Code | RT14 OMC | RT14 OMB |
| MA\_2901 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2902 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2903 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2904 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2905 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2906 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2907 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2908 | 1 | - |
| MA\_2909 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2910 | 1 | 1 |
| MA\_2911 & 2912 | 1 | 2 |
|  |  |  |
| Total (change from last year) | **11 (+0)** | 1. **+1)**
 |

**8.2 2022-2023, Year 29 Operations**

All circulations of MA exercises were distributed in line with the 2022-2023 timetable (available below). Returns and results are summarised in the table below.

The final reports were issued to all participant laboratories on 28th April, 2023 as per the timetable with an amended version of the OMC Interim report attached.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Exercise | Status | Returns / Comments |
| RT14 OMC | Samples distributed: 23/01/2023 |  |
| Sample deadline: 03/03/2023 |  |
| Interim reports issued: 31/03/2023Final reports issued: 28/04/2023 |  8 out of 11 returned results |
| **Exercise complete** |  |
| RT14 OMB | Samples distributed: 23/01/2023 |  |
| Sample deadline: 03/03/2023 |  |
| Interim reports issued: 31/03/2023Final reports issued: 28/04/2023 | 9 out of 11 returned results |
| **Exercise complete** |  |

* 1. **Issues arising**

All nine of the OMB submissions provided results for both wet and dry weight data.

The eight OMC returns included results from a total of 25 individuals for macroalgae and 32 individuals for seagrass.

The macroalgal component is now consistent with the other NMBAQC scheme components as the prefix has been adjusted.

The interim reports were sent on the 31st March, 2023 however it was then noticed that there were a number of errors in the initial OMC Bulletin. The method of calculating the average deviation from mean % cover and ImageJ % cover used to create Figures 1 & 2, 5 & 6 and 9 & 10 was not consistent with that used in previous years. There was also an error with the formula used to calculate the z-scores for comparisons against the ImageJ results for macroalgae test A, which led to underreporting the number of fails.

**Macroalgae Biomass and Percentage Cover Component 2022-2023 Timetable (Scheme Year 29)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Module / Exercise** | **Event** | **Date** |
| RT14 OMB | Samples distributed | 23/01/2023 |
|  | Results deadline | **03/03/2023** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 31/04/2023 |
|  | Final report deadline | 28/04/2023 |
|  |  |  |
| RT14 OMC | Samples distributed | 23/01/2023 |
|  | Results deadline | **03/03/2023** |
|  | Interim reporting deadline | 31/04/2023 |
|  | Final report deadline | 28/04/2023 |
|  |  |  |

**Action: To produce annual report and send to CT for website in next few weeks.**

Contract tender advertised 28th July 2023 – added via mailchimp and twitter.

1. **Fish Update –** verbal update provided by LMB**:**

Ring tests were sent out last week, with reverse ring tests in August. There have also been difficulties with getting enough specimens. JE offered to collect fish for ring tests if needed.

In addition, there are two new useful fish books published recently, these are:

Baldock, L. and Dipper, F. (2023) Inshore fishes of Britain and Ireland. Wild Nature Press, 288 pp.

Louisy, P. (2022) Europe and Mediterranean marine fish identification guide. Editions Eugen Ulmer, 512 pp. **Action: CT to add into website section.**

1. **Zooplankton Update:**

Ring Test results for 2023 all disseminated and workshop to discuss results along with some external speakers was held 20/21 July at the MBA. There were 16 participants from 11 laboratories, some overseas.

Participants also stayed to look at own specimen samples and MBA staff provided help to problematic ID/stages of copepods.

Feedback from those attending was that a ring test every other year was still appropriate. May look at changing things slightly in future, reverse ring tests, undertaking test on site etc. Possible medusae workshop in the future.

1. **AOB**

Benchmark Image J – it was asked why this method was used to collect data. GBJ advised this was because else things cannot be seen which maybe underneath, there may be multiple things to count. Therefore this method is the most appropriate.

Could the NMBAQC Scheme incorporate a marine data standard component? Has this been discussed? **Action: DJ to invite Dan Lear (Head of DASHH) to next committee meeting**.

No further updates for website, inc QA standards, needed for website (apart from aforementioned)

1. **Contractor Questions –** nothing new was raised to the committee.
2. **Finance \*Confidential**