

Channel Coast News

Issue 17 - November 2004

The newsletter for the Southeast Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme www.channelcoast.org

Regional News

South East Coastal Group

All repeat baseline surveys have now been completed with the resultant data being verified before release. The autumn Profile campaign is well underway, with final delivery of data expected just before Christmas. Bathymetric data has begun to arrive from Gardline and is undergoing validation. On first inspection the data coverage is good.

Due to exceptional tidal conditions along the North Kent Coast on 11 November 2004, Storm Profiles have been requested along the length of coastline from Faversham Creek to Minnis Bay.

South Downs Coastal Group

All bathymetric data has now been received from Gardline, and is being checked.

Due to problems with tide and weather windows not coinciding and the shorter light windows experienced in the winter months, despite the efforts of the Project Team and Kampsax, the October flight has not been undertaken. Other options are being investigated for both the short and long-term, including undertaking the survey as soon as possible using our Post Storm Survey contractor, Halcrow. There are likely to be significant financial implications of undertaking the survey in this way, so our Project Partners will be consulted once all of the costs are known. In the longer term, options such as undertaking the survey via LiDAR (where spring tides during daylight hours are not a requirement) are being investigated.

Development of the SDCG SANDS database continues, in preparation for the receipt of the April 2004 photogrammetry data currently being quality assured by Arun District Council. This data will be reported on in the first SDCG Annual Report, due for publication at the end of January 2005. Arun District Council's Monitoring Report (March 2000 - March 2003) is now complete and has been submitted to Arun District Council and the CCO.

Environment Agency (Southern Region)

The LiDAR flights are now underway with the Isle of Wight and many areas in Kent being flown in October. The aerial photography flights have now ceased for the winter. Unfortunately, the SCOPAC area and the SDCG October flights were not completed due to poor

weather during the tidal windows, as mentioned above. Discussions are underway as to how to improve the opportunities for collecting this data in the future. QA checking of the aerial photogrammetry data is ongoing.

SCOPAC

Good spring tides and favourable weather recently enabled a record number of topographic surveys to be surveyed in one week – in total 11 Management Units (a mixture of baseline and profile surveys) were completed.

Channel Coastal Observatory

Presentations were made to Local Authority engineers, DEFRA Regional Engineers, Environment Agency representatives and Consultants at three DEFRA Training Days held recently in Warrington, Cardiff and London. There was much interest, particularly from the northeast and Wales, in the scope of the southeast's Regional Monitoring Programme and progress with the planning for the southwest's programme.

The search and download facility for aerial photographs is now fully operational on the website (via the Data Catalogue button). External users can now be advised to obtain photographs directly from the website.

Contacts

If you have any queries about the Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme, or would like a personal copy of this newsletter by email, please contact your area representative:

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Ecological Monitoring - Part I

Introduction

On behalf of English Nature (EN) and the Environment Agency (EA), the Channel Coastal Observatory recently undertook a scoping study to explore the best methods for development of an accurate, repeatable and cost effective ecological monitoring programme along the south-east coastline between Portland Bill and the Isle of Grain (see *Channel Coast News* issue 9, January 2004). The scoping study investigated monitoring for Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs - EA led), Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs - EN led) in parallel with the South-east Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme to provide the following ecological and coastal deliverables:

- DEFRA high level target 9
- DEFRA Public Service Agreement (PSA)
- Condition assessments of SSSI's, and cSAC Annex I habitats
- Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
- Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHaMPs)
- Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)
- Coastal Defence Strategy Studies (CDSs)
- Beach Management Plans (BMPs)

It was found that considerable costs could be saved through collaboration with the Regional Monitoring Programme. This edition of the newsletter will present recommendations for monitoring SSSI and cSACs and the December edition will provide an update on BAP monitoring.

SSSI and cSAC targets

EN are required to achieve the Government's Public Service Agreement target, which is to manage 95% of the SSSI's into "favourable" or "recovering" condition by 2010. They are also required to maintain "favourable condition" of cSACs. The condition of SSSI and cSACs are therefore monitored by EN once every six years.

EN current approach and Common Standards Monitoring

EN have obtained a baseline for the condition of SSSI units and cSACs throughout the south-east region but not via a repeatable and scientific method. Common Standards Monitoring (CSM) was therefore recently produced for each habitat and approved by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to provide a more detailed method of assessment. However, this has not yet been implemented on a strategic level. Whilst SSSI and cSAC monitoring was in this transitional phase, it was pertinent to investigate linking

ecological monitoring with coastal process monitoring to increase the understanding between the two.

Recommended Approach

CCO therefore assessed two possible SSSI and cSAC monitoring approaches which not only satisfied the CSM guidelines and linked with the Regional Monitoring Programme, but also provided a scientific and repeatable method of assessment. The recommended approach is illustrated in Figure 1 and suggested that:

- Coastal profiles are selected at approximately 400m spacing and extended landward and seaward to form transects that cover designated habitats
- A quantitative ratio between number of quadrats per SSSI area to be derived for assessment
- Transects are followed where possible, otherwise "spot" quadrats are surveyed at important locations
- A hand held GPS is used for repeatability purposes with potentially a PC tablet to log the assessment

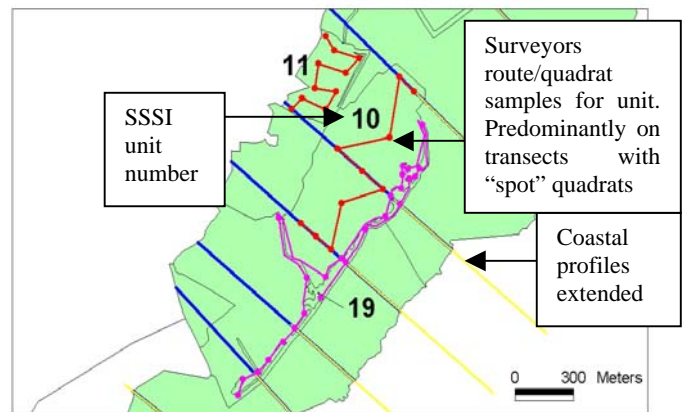


Figure 1. Recommended approach for Pennington SSSI units

Data Management and Analysis

It was recommended that the existing data management framework at the CCO be utilized for the twin purposes of cost saving and regional consistency of data, whilst taking account of the current EN condition monitoring data management structure. It was also recommended that a coastal ecologist be employed to link the two programmes and to undertake analysis of ecological response to coastal processes and climate change.

Progress

EN have approved in principle the recommendations from the scoping study. Discussions are ongoing between CCO and EN to find appropriate funding. For more information please contact Samantha Cope (Samantha.Cope@soc.soton.ac.uk) on (023) 80285818.