

Current marine and coastal issues for North East Kent: proceedings of the third North East Kent Coastal Conference 9 November 2006

The North East Kent Coastal Conference is a well-established biennial forum that is held to facilitate communication and exchange of information between coastal researchers from academia, statutory agencies, local authorities, consultancies and NGOs active in North East Kent. On the 9 November 2006, the third Coastal Conference was held with a theme of *Current marine and coastal issues for North East Kent*.

The Conference Objectives

- The main objective of the Conference was to provide a forum in which knowledge about the North East Kent coast could be shared.
- The Conference provides the opportunity to communicate science results and address current issues of interest and concern within the North East Kent European marine sites.

What was done

The conference covered three main topics:

- ongoing research
- the use of coastal resources
- managing coastal resources.

The presentation sessions were complemented by four participatory workshops dealing with topical, often controversial, issues within the North East Kent European marine sites:

- implications of collecting from the foreshore
- the establishment of a highly protected marine area
- the Thanet Coast Projects future remit
- an assessment of the impact of human activities.

Results and conclusions

This report contains papers from all the talks given at the Conference as well as outputs from the workshop sessions.

The talks given at the Conference and the subsequent papers produced provide a good indication of the type of research, which is currently going on within the North East Kent coastal and marine environment. Sharing of this research will enable more informed and robust decisions to be made about the way that we manage North Kent coast and seas.

Outputs from the four participatory workshops have shown how some of the current major issues impacting the North East Kent European marine sites need to be progressed. In particular, the outputs from the *Implications of collecting from the foreshore* workshop have been used to scope out a two year research project into the impacts of *Shellfish collecting on the marine sites*.

Discussions around the establishment of a highly protected marine area highlighted the sheer breadth of issues, which would need to be addressed if such a proposal would be taken forward within the marine

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sites. These issues ranging from economic to the actual size and location of a site, have shown the complexity and potential conflict which can result from such proposals. This information will be particularly beneficial for future discussions around the creation of a network of marine protected areas within English waters.

Overall, the Conference has shown the ongoing commitment to increasing the understanding of North Kent's coastal and marine environment and using this information to guide better decision making and management within a constantly changing environment.

Natural England's viewpoint

Natural England views this biennial conference as a fundamental part of ensuring that the North East Kent European marine sites remain in a favourable condition. Not only does the Conference provide updates on what is currently working within the management of the marine sites, it also flags up potential environmental issues, which may impact upon the sites in the future.

The Conference, which attracts a wide range of stakeholders, continues to maintain and raise the profile about the importance of the marine and coastal environment.

Further information

For the full details of the research covered by this information note see Natural England Research Report NERR029 - *Current Marine*

and Coastal Issues for North East Kent: Proceedings of the third North East Kent Coastal Conference 9 November 2006.

Research Reports for the first two North East Kent Coastal Conferences have been produced:

- ENRR 570 - *Proceedings of the North East Kent Coastal Research Workshop, 22 October 2002.*
- ENRR 630 - *'Making Connections': Proceedings of the second North East Kent Coastal Conference, 11 November 2004.*

Contact us

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Report authors

Tony Child, Ian Tittley

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