

**Newsletter No. 24, January 2007
Marine Information Network
Friends of the Earth Local Groups**

**Where we are, and
Where we are going**

We offer greetings and best wishes to our members for 2007. This newsletter will review where we are and what we have achieved during 2006, and outline where we expect to be going during 2007 and, importantly, the part you can play.

Firstly, we must draw your attention to the fact that **this is the time of year for you to renew your membership of MARINET.** Our constitution requires all members to renew their membership in January of each year, and you will find a membership renewal form attached to this newsletter – please complete this and return to the address given. **Membership remains free of charge.** However, we would ask members to make **a donation, if possible, according to your means.** We have no paid staff and all MARINET officers give of their time voluntarily and free of charge, but we do have administration costs of around £700 a year and these have to be met by the membership. We currently have 52 members. So your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Also, please note, that we run a **Regional Page on the MARINET website** www.marinet.org.uk/regional.html This page enables members to provide the public with contact details for your group/organisation, and also allows you to give a description of the work and campaigns with which you are involved. If you are already listed on the Regional Page, please check whether you want to update the information, and if you are not currently listed please consider using this facility. **It is free of charge, and the form for providing this information about yourself accompanies the membership renewal form.** The MARINET website www.marinet.org.uk is currently receiving over 160 visits a day from the public.

Overleaf, we will review what MARINET has achieved during 2006 and our plans for 2007, but before we do so we would like to draw your attention to the **current review of the national Friends of the Earth Five Year Plan, and the relevance of this review to MARINET.**

National FOE organises its work by means of a 5 Year Plan, and the current Plan expires at the end of 2007 and will be replaced by a new Plan from 2008 onwards. This 5 Year Plan sets the priorities within national FOE and, once agreed, becomes a firm blueprint. During this coming year national FOE will be asking its Local Groups and supporters for their views as to the direction and content of the new 5 Year Plan.

MARINET would like to ask you to engage in this process because national FOE is currently considering reinstating Biodiversity as a key campaign theme during the next 5 years. If this were to happen, it is distinctly possible that national FOE would give some focus to **UK marine biodiversity** which is seriously challenged at the present time by climate change, over-fishing, aggregate extraction and general pollution, **and the opportunity to do something about this during the next 5 years exists via the proposed UK Marine Bill and the draft EU Marine Strategy Directive.**

Therefore please submit your thoughts and views to national FOE as soon as possible – the first stage of consultation closes at the end of January, and from then on ideas will begin to harden. **Response forms can be obtained from** http://community.foe.co.uk/strategic_plan, or simply write in with your thoughts to Strategic Plan Consultation, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.

2006 : Where we are.

The key development during 2006 has been the growth of the **MARINET website** which now carries a wealth of documents, news and information. It is a major resource for both members and the public, see www.marinet.org.uk

Marine Aggregate Campaign : we have contested strongly the granting of new licences off the Norfolk coast (Area 401/2 and Areas 202/436), and we are endeavouring to ensure that proper monitoring will be undertaken by the Government and the industry as new licences are granted in the new dredging areas in the Eastern English Channel. See: www.marinet.org.uk/mad.html for our Briefing Papers, and for our objections to specific proposals www.marinet.org.uk/mad/objection.html

Marine Bill : we have explained to Government that their proposed Marine Bill (due before Parliament in the 2007/2008 legislative session) must tackle the issue of regenerating the biodiversity and economic value of UK seas by means of marine reserves covering at least 30% of UK seas up to the 200 nautical miles limit, and the development of political responsibility via a Ministry of the Sea with a Minister in the Cabinet, see www.marinet.org.uk/marinebill.html

Marine Reserves : We have developed key documents to support our work on Reserves. These are an **in-depth illustrated guide** with supporting text to the marine animals to be found in UK seas, www.marinet.org.uk/mreserves/marineanimals.html
A key document outlining **the principles of the ecosystem approach** for marine management, see www.marinet.org.uk/mreserves/ecosystem.html
and a review of **marine reserves worldwide**, see www.marinet.org.uk/mreserves/laymansguide.html

Bathing Waters : We provide a definitive user's guide to bathing water quality in the UK, see www.marinet.org.uk/ukbw/gbeachg.html
and, the public health issues surrounding sewage and wastewater treatment along with the recent reform of the EU Bathing Water Directive, see www.marinet.org.uk/ukbw/sewage.html

Renewable Energy : the UK seas offer a major energy resource, see www.marinet.org.uk/refts.html
Latest News : The MARINET website provides a monthly report on **UK marine news stories**, covering: marine aggregates / coastal erosion / marine bill / marine reserves / renewable energy / bathing water / pollution / global warming see www.marinet.org.uk/latestnews

2007 : Where we are going.

It was agreed at the MARINET AGM at the Local Groups Conference in September that we should give priority in our national campaign over the next 12 months to the Government's proposal for a **Marine Bill**. We will still continue to focus on other important issues such as our successful work on overseeing marine aggregate dredging licences, the implementation of the bathing water quality standards and a raft of pollution issues, but we must now try to make the most of this unique opportunity to get the UK Parliament to focus on marine issues.

Marine Reserves : The Marine Bill will not go before Parliament before the 2007/08 legislative session at the earliest. MARINET's Steering Group has therefore decided that the best way to get **ecological principles established within the Bill** is to get Government to view Marine Reserves and the principles which underlie them as a core feature of the Bill. To secure this objective, we are currently seeking to build **an alliance of the major marine NGOs** (Greenpeace/WWF/Wildlife Trusts/Marine Conservation Society and others) to lobby for effective Marine Reserves throughout UK seas.

The aim will be to persuade the Government that Marine Reserves **are not just** a matter of nature conservation, with a few highly protected sites established like islands throughout the UK's seas.

Rather, a network of Marine Reserves covering at least 30% of UK seas up to 200 nautical miles must have **as central to its purpose** the development of **an economic tool** for the regeneration of UK fisheries and, similarly, to allow other industries (oil/gas, aggregates, renewable energy) to develop profitably on an ecologically sustainable basis.

Marine Reserves and the ecosystem approach to marine management **must be seen by fishermen and all users of the sea as the means by which they can develop their livelihoods sustainably**. Marine Reserves must therefore be designed and operated with their consent, and be periodically redrawn in order to realise **the economic benefits** that the Reserves have been designed to deliver.

Therefore, during 2007, we will be seeking allies to persuade Government that conservation, ecology and biodiversity **are not restraints on economic development**. Rather, they are the keys to the building of an **enduring, long-lived and profitable future for our seas** and for all those who earn a living from them. Please join us in this campaign. *For further information, tel. 01249 653972.*