

Minutes

Date: 30/01/2020

Location: Marine Lab, Aberdeen

Subject: Forth and Tay Regional Advisory Group (FTRAG) Marine Mammals Subgroup

Attendees: Ben King (phone) (BK), ICOL/RRPL, Carol Sparling (CS), SMRU, Erica Knott (EK), SNH, Fiona Manson (FM), SNH, Jared Wilson (Chair) (JW), MSS, Jessica Wilson (JW), MS-LOT, Kate Brookes (KB), MSS, Kate Grellier (KG), ICOL/Natural Power, Nick Brockie (NB), SSE Renewables, Philip Bloor (PB), NNG/Pelagica, Polly Tarrant (PT), NNG, Rebecca Bamlett (RB), MPP, Ross Culloch (RC), MSS, Sarah Arthur (SA), ICOL, Sarah Canning (SC), JNCC, Sophia Irvine (SI), MS-LOT, Stuart McCallum (SM), ICOL/Natural Power

Apologies: Ewan Walker (NNG), Janelle Braithwaite (MPP), Hannah Millar (MSS), Gayle Holland (MPP), Karen Taylor (SNH), Fiona Read (WDC)

ITEM	MINUTE
1.0	Introductions
2.0	Previous meeting minutes/actions
	Open items all closed out
3.0	Project updates
	Project updates provided by 3 projects with accompanying presentations (NB, PT, SA).
4.0	Updates on Monitoring proposals (Developers)
	<p>Seagreen (NB):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-construction PEMP agreed late last year (2019). • No seal monitoring proposed as it is not possible or appropriate to focus monitoring efforts on seals. • Agreement to augment the ECOMMAS array with five additional 'Seagreen locations' (two in the Seagreen Phase 1 site and three between the site and the coast). The deployment/servicing is currently being undertaken by MSS • Initial deployment March 2019 (5 C-PODs, 1 noise recorder). Second deployment July 2019 (noise monitoring devices & C-PODs at each station). <p>Data Analysis to date:</p>

- C-POD analysis for dolphin/porpoise clicks. Little pattern in data but porpoises always present (more offshore than inshore). Almost no dolphin detections. Potential to use porpoise absence as an indicator of dolphin presence. Also noise data will be analysed for the presence of dolphin whistles.
- Considerations for 1-year report (due after next service visit in April 2020)

Neart na Gaoithe (NnG) (PT):

- C-PODs and noise recorders deployed at four locations in November 2019, extending the ECOMMAS array from Fife Ness across the NnG site and beyond (two locations within the NnG site and two beyond). Planned continuation of monitoring from these deployments up to, during and for a period post construction. Overflight aerial surveys since June 2018.

Comments:

- EK: Suggested that a single report for all data from the Forth and Tay area would be more useful and tie in better with the collaboration approach.
- PB: Suggestion that data analysis incorporate ongoing activities such as geophys.
- CS: Vessel noise should also be considered within the analysis

Action: Developers to submit reporting strategy with analysis component including consideration of future development.

Action: Meeting in April to discuss report.

Update on Photo-ID project proposal (CS)

CS provided background to the Bottlenose Dolphin (BND) ID study which has been ongoing since 1989 and presented a proposal to extend the study to investigate the BND range expansion. The extension would build on the existing surveys in Moray Firth and Tay with additional survey effort in the Firth of Forth and engagement from other parties further South. SNH provided the majority of funding required for 10 surveys in the Tay but the aim is to increase this to 20 surveys and add 10 surveys minimum in the Forth

The challenge is that the population range is expanding to the south. With current effort we are increasingly unable to monitor the whole population leading to biases, incomplete knowledge about movements/range and inability to properly investigate impacts of offshore developments on movements.

Comments:

- EK: If the dolphin range is expanding into the north of England, opportunity to partner with organisations in England (such as TCE) to utilise and build on existing schemes/ data collection.
 - Agreement in the group that this was worth pursuing.
- PB: Noted that Newcastle University has done some PAM work.
- KG: See the benefits of Forth surveys, but should we be looking further south to cover the full range expansion?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA: When will we know if Firth of Forth is South enough? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CS: Answer cannot be provided until data is collected • Considering data from different sources such as citizen science and liaising with the Forth Marine Mammal Group. • SMRUC looking at getting one of their acoustic buoys in the Firth of Forth which can give an alert in real time • JW: Does effort matters when using data from further afield? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CS: As it is not systematic then it does not matter. • EK: Need to look more into funding bodies, later projects and southern counterparts, timings and breakdown of costs
5.0	ScotMER Marine Mammal update
	<p>RC provided an update on the ongoing ScotMER projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Noise Modelling Approaches to Inform Marine Mammal Pile Driving Noise Impact Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is due to deliver by the end of the financial year, and Cefas are contracted to do this work. • The Review of Demographic Parameters and Counterfactuals to Better Inform Inputs and Outputs of Population Consequences of Disturbance Assessments for Marine Mammals, and • Study to develop marine mammal dynamic energy budget models for integration into the iPCoD framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Both the above are due to deliver at the end of the financial year and SMRUC are contracted to these pieces of work • Study to provide up to date regional baselines for marine mammal knowledge across North Sea and Atlantic areas of Scottish waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The tender applications are in and MSS are reviewing. • Evidence map expansion to be updated soon and will be online. • Scottish Renewables have not attended a number of the recent ScotMER meetings but have been invited. Developers are going to follow up to ensure there is a developer representative at ScotMER meetings. on when will we get information back from ORJIP? <p>Action: ICOL to provide and an email update on ORJIP to the group.</p>
6.0	AOB
	None.
7.0	Next Meeting
	<p>Date of next meeting will be after the April meeting on reporting structure.</p> <p>Perth/St Andrews is a possible location.</p>