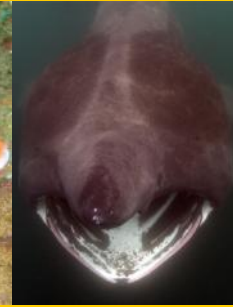


Biodiversity Matters



Issue 5

DEFA's Biodiversity News

July 2012

Rio Convention signed

From 6th August 2012 the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a Rio Convention, signed at the 1992 Earth Summit will be extended to us by the UK. This is 20 years on from Rio but also 20 years of working towards these objectives on the Island prior to signing. The Department's 2010 CBD consultation said this move is supported by about 100 respondees and 94% of all the respondees.

So it has finally happened. The Island now takes its place with 193 countries of the world in committing to conserving its biodiversity.

Manx Biodiversity Strategy



Biodiversity – the colour in our landscape

This is a key piece of work to be completed by 2015, which sets out strategic actions for delivering the 20 CBD targets by 2020. A drafting sub-committee of the Manx Nature Conservation Forum is working on this, (members taken from the Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx National Heritage, Manx Birdlife, Friends of the Earth and Mammal Society) with guidance from Northern Ireland conservationist, Bob Brown.

The CBD targets are being translated into Manx Strategic Actions and then this will lead to local Tasks in a Biodiversity Delivery Plan. The current expected date for completion of the draft is the start of 2013. The plan is to consult on this Draft Biodiversity Strategy, before embarking on the Biodiversity Delivery Plan.

Liz Charter

Events

Identifying Manx Fungi Workshops:

8th and 9th September and
15th, 16th and 17th October

See page 2 for details.



For biodiversity news and events go to www.manxbiodiversity.org, a **new website** run by members of the Manx Nature Conservation Forum. It is also the main source of information about biological recording on the Island and the work of the **Manx Biological Recording Partnership** (see page 3).

Recent news

The report of the Wildflowers of Mann Project's study of **oak and hazel woodlands** is available to download from the Project's pages on: www.manxwt.org.uk The study was part funded by a research grant awarded by the UK Joint Nature Conservation Council.



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Fabulous fungi workshop — to be held on 8th and 9th September

This Identifying Manx Fungi workshop is being run by an expert mycologist, Nev Kilkenny from Scotland. Nev trained at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens and has an interest in edible species.

The aim of this workshop is to provide an enjoyable event whose participants will develop confidence in identifying a range of edible and inedible species which occur here. DEFA wish to train people to provide reliable records of common species to assist conservation and management of sites with fungi. The workshop costs £35 for 2 days.



There is a follow up event in **15th to 17th October** for committed naturalists with three days of microscope work to tackle more difficult fungal species (£60). While Nev is here he will be giving a workshop to the Foresters on rot fungi!

If you are interested email liz.charter@gov.im or ring 695741 (working hours).

International Biodiversity Day celebrated at Ramsey Mooragh Shore ASSI and MNR inter-tidal



On 22nd May DEFA, Manx Wildlife Trust and Wildflowers of Mann Project held a public event to highlight the rare and specialist plants to be found in the ASSI-designated sand dunes and to explore and identify the animals living in the inter-tidal pools. More than 70 people attended the event which was a great success. Similar events are to be planned for other ASSIs.

New signs at the Ayres NNR

Interpretation signs giving information about the wildlife of the Ayres are now on site. A new leaflet, by the Ayres warden, will soon be available from DEFA and the Ayres Visitor Centre.

ASSI documents now more user-friendly

The format of designation documents has been reviewed and updated for use in future designations.

Aline Thomas

IoM achieves top CITES rating for legislation

New legislation has now been brought into effect under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). The Endangered Species Act 2010 came into force at the start of this year and the convention's National Legislation Project has just announced that the IoM has now achieved Category 1 status, i.e. it has joined the group of nations that have implemented the modern Convention requirements in full.

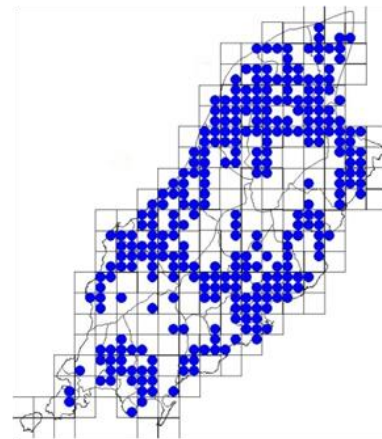
The previous legislation, from 1981, was considered inadequate by modern standards. This announcement brings to an end a long process of updating the lists, permits and finally the legislation, to meet international standards.

A brief guide for users has been posted on the Department's website. Anyone trading in listed species or derived objects or moving them on or off-island should now refer to the new regulations for current requirements, or contact the Forestry, Amenity and Lands Directorate. Application forms are available to download.

Dr Richard G Selman

Elm taxonomy

This map shows the distribution of elm trees on the Island (1km square resolution). The data comes from the Manx Biological Recording Partnership (MPRP) combined database.



Dr Max Coleman, the Botanical Society of the British Isles elm expert, visited last autumn and gave a presentation in DEFA as part of a project to improve our understanding of the taxonomy of the elms on the Island. Dr Coleman's report concluded that most of the elms are Dutch elms or wych elms. The report is available from the Department on request.

Dr Philippa Tomlinson

The Ayres National Nature Reserve — Little Tern Report 2012

June 2012 saw the greatest amount of rainfall since records began (Meteorological Office) and July wasn't much better, in spite of this added stress the little terns at the Ayres NNR enjoyed a reasonably good breeding season. Adult birds began to arrive from 19th April with six individuals recorded feeding off the Smeale Coast. It was not until 9th May that birds were observed displaying courtship behaviour with the male offering sand eels to his respective mate. This extensive length of time spent feeding, prior to establishing a recognisable colony and pairing up, could be due to a decrease in the available food supply prior to migration, a particularly difficult passage or a combination of a number of factors. Two nests were recorded in the newly formed colony, east of Rue Point. Within nine days the colony, which now consisted of sixty three individuals, had moved along the beach, again in an easterly direction, past the Smeale gate; with only two pairs remaining at Rue Point.

The newly formed little tern 'nursery site' covered an expansive area of the upper beach (approximately 700m). Little terns are particularly vulnerable to any disturbance particularly around their breeding grounds; with this in mind and a desire to keep parent birds away from the nest, in this cold weather, for as little time as possible, Sean Gray of Manx Bird Life, and the warden attempted a number of short nest surveys, retreating to cover and allowing the birds to settle between searches.

Wooden boxes were placed within a 60cm radius of five of the little tern nests (see fig.2) These boxes had been provided by DEFA and consisted of two sides, a roof and no floor. They were submerged to a distance of four centimetres into the sand and covered over with pebbles and sand. The aim was to provide shelter for the tern chicks from avian predators such as gulls, corvids and raptors (and very heavy rain). After positioning the boxes the reactions of the parent birds were observed for some while until it was established that the boxes did not prevent the parents from incubating their eggs.

Eleven nests were monitored every three days. The colony was not entered during periods of rain, high winds or low temperatures, to prevent parents leaving eggs exposed and vulnerable to chill. Sean ringed eight little tern chicks between the 2nd to the 15th July (see fig.1). To date, 23rd July 2012, five juveniles have been recorded on the wing, feeding with the adult birds, this number will hopefully increase by the end of the breeding season.

Dr Erica Spencer, Ayres NNR Warden



Fig.1 Little tern chick after being ringed by Sean Gray of Manx BirdLife



Fig.2 Wooden covering placed near to nest site to afford protection to chicks from avian predators

Dutch Elm Disease 2012

Dutch elm disease has seen a rise in infected elm to the present date (June and July 2012), compared with 2010 and 2011. There have been 25 diseased elms felled with another five sites under investigation. This figure does seem to be rather high but not when compared to 2009, when 94 diseased elm were felled during June and July. Four new areas of infection have been found so far this year; Whitebridge in Onchan, the Glenfaba Bridge area in Patrick, Sulby Bridge and a new area at Abbeylands.

New Era in the reporting of Dutch elm disease

The public are being asked to help in the fight against Dutch elm disease and at the same time have the chance of winning the latest iPad 3. DEFA are asking the public to look out for trees with the symptoms of Dutch elm disease which are wilting leaves and young shoots, premature yellowing in the crown of elm, dieback in elm or dead elm trees in the towns and countryside.

By logging on to www.openelm.org.im people can either submit a report by following the on screen guide or download iPhone or Android apps to submit the location of suspect trees. Alternatively, reports can be made directly to the Forestry Directorate by phone on 801263. Each relevant report gives you one chance in the draw.

Jimmy Lee, Dutch Elm Disease Co-ordinator

Manx Biological Recording

The **Manx Biological Recording Partnership** (MBRP) has been working hard 'behind the scenes' to create a unified networked database and this has now been achieved. The database holds over 300,000 records collected over many years by numerous recorders. It is now available, via the Government computer network, to members of staff in the iMuseum, (Manx National Heritage), DEFA and the Manx Wildlife Trust. Further details will soon be available on the Manx Biodiversity website www.manxbiodiversity.org as the Partnership develops.

BioBlitz 2011—The Raggatt

On the day, 315 species representing 29 taxonomic groups were recorded.

Dr Philippa Tomlinson

Ramsey Marine Nature Reserve is designated!



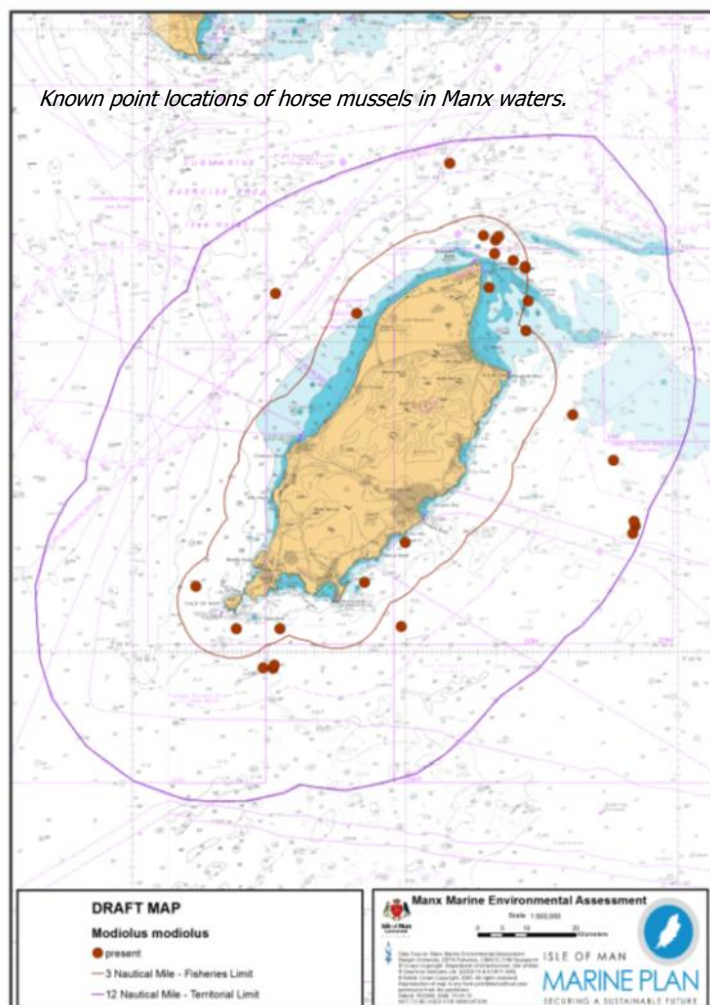
Looking south towards Ramsey, by James Cubbon

After a three year consultation process, Ramsey Marine Nature Reserve was officially designated in October 2011. The Marine Nature Reserve protects over 45km² from trawling and dredging and a range of other impacts. A further 47km² is designated as a Fisheries Management Zone, to be sustainably managed by the Manx Fish Producers' Organisation.

Last year, further survey work was carried out in the MNR, providing detailed maps of the seabed habitats. This summer research students are studying bait digging on Ramsey shore and the ecology of lugworms to help inform future management of the MNR. Ramsey Marine Nature Reserve is unusual because it was developed with the support of the scallop fishing industry to provide both fisheries and conservation benefits. This innovative approach was featured in The Guardian in the UK in March: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/15/isle-man-scallop-marine-reserve The Marine Nature Reserve protects some really special marine habitats, including the extensive horse mussel reefs off the Point of Ayre.

Dr Fiona Gell

Manx Marine Environmental Assessment



The Manx Marine Environmental Assessment is being prepared to bring together baseline information currently available for Manx territorial waters. The forthcoming technical Report will cover a wide variety of topics including:

- Infrastructure - cables and pipelines
- Marine habitats and species
- Industry – fisheries and renewable energy opportunities

Over 200 contributors have taken part in the project including Government Officers, marine experts, and local organisations, by bringing together information about Manx territorial waters in an accessible format to support the work of the Isle of Man Marine Plan Project. As part of the work, local datasets are also being mapped for the first time including point locations of key habitats including maerl, horse mussels and eelgrass; and public sightings of porpoise, dolphin, whale and basking shark.

There will soon be a consultation period to provide an opportunity for anyone with an interest in the Manx marine environment, to review the draft documents, identify gaps and highlight areas where work may later be commissioned. Each of the documents will be made available at: <http://www.gov.im/transport/planning/mmea.xml>.

For further information please contact Project Officer Laura Hanley on (01624) 695730 or email laura.hanley@gov.im.



A colourful, camouflaged spider crab walking on top of a Manx horse mussel reef.