



...moving towards 2020? WWF's Essentials for OSPAR 2000

briefing

In 1998, at Sintra WWF welcomed the progress made on identifying and addressing the threats to the marine environment from hazardous substances, nutrients and radioactive discharges as well as the need for action to protect ecosystems and biological diversity of the North-East Atlantic.

In 2000, World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

Welcomes the forthcoming entry into force, following ratification by OSPAR Contracting Parties and the EU, of Annex V to the Convention on the Protection and Conservation of Ecosystems and Biological Diversity. WWF believes that this new Annex to the OSPAR Convention will be a powerful tool for the protection of marine wildlife throughout the OSPAR Convention area. Furthermore, WWF welcomes the recognition that progress continues to be needed to combat hazardous substances, eutrophication, and radioactive substances and to address the management of the offshore oil and gas industry and that work is ongoing to achieve this via the implementation of OSPAR Strategies.

Welcomes the publication of the North-East Atlantic Quality Status Report and recognises the quantity of hard work that has been undertaken to produce such a comprehensive review.

Recalls the Sintra Ministerial commitment to *"promote the establishment of a network of marine protected areas to ensure the sustainable use and protection and conservation of marine biological diversity and its ecosystems"*.

**Meeting of the
OSPAR Commission
Copenhagen
Denmark
26 - 30 June 2000**

WWF is, however, concerned that progress towards the ambitious targets given by Environment Ministers in Sintra (1998) is slow. Although deadlines of 2020 to eliminate inputs of hazardous substances and radioactive inputs seem a long way in the future many of these pollutants are extremely persistent and will exist in the marine environment for many generations even if early action is taken. Without early action - not only will the deadlines be lost but human

For information, contact:

Stephan Lutter
WWF North-East Atlantic Programme
Am Güthpol 11 · D-28757 Bremen · Germany
Tel: +49 421 65846-22 · Fax: +49 421 65846-12
E-mail: lutter@wwf.de

impact on the North-East Atlantic environment and on marine wildlife will last for generations to come and will threaten the viability of wildlife populations. Two years since Sintra, and little change has occurred on the ground - no inputs of hazardous substances have been eliminated and, as yet, little new action has been taken to protect marine biodiversity.

WWF briefings launched at OSPAR 2000:

- Synthetic Musk Fragrances
- Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, UV Light and Marine Wildlife
- Salmon Migration and Breeding Impaired by Atrazine
- Banco Gorringe – A Potential Marine Protected Area
- Lucky Strike Hydrothermal Vents – A Potential Marine Protected Area
- Biotrans Abyssal Plain – A Potential Marine Protected Area

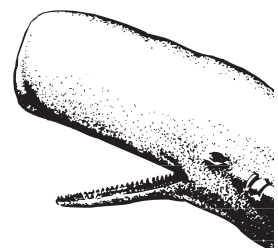
At OSPAR 2000, as a matter of priority, Contracting Parties must address the following issues:

Hazardous Substances

At OSPAR 1999, WWF had raised concern about the limited progress with respect to 15 Chemicals for Priority Action and called for additional initiatives to complete the list of lead countries and elaborate programmes and measures to meet the deadline 2003 as agreed in Sintra. At OSPAR 2000, WWF congratulates Contracting Parties on the progress made in following up these tasks so far. However, in the light of the Sintra commitment „to move towards the target of cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by the year 2020 ... and to emphasise the precautionary principle in this work,“ WWF is worried about the weakness of proposed action to reduce and eliminate a number of priority chemicals, such as musk xylene and brominated flame retardants, for which background documents have been elaborated by Lead Countries.

WWF further complements the OSPAR Commission on its efforts to establish the Dynamic Selection and Prioritisation Mechanism for Hazardous Substances (DYNAMEC). Nevertheless, WWF has identified the following loopholes of this mechanism: the DYNAMEC methodology does not sufficiently select and prioritise substances that are

- moderately persistent and bioaccumulating, and which have been found in the marine environment
- persistent and toxic, and which are released in large volumes. For example, many pesticides with these properties that have been found



in the North Sea have not been selected as they do not meet the criteria for bioaccumulation.

- hazardous in terms of their ability to disrupt the endocrine system.

WWF urges Contracting Parties to increasingly make use of the „safety-net procedure“ to compensate such shortcomings of DYNAMEC. WWF is not satisfied with the outcome of the first update of the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action that results in adding only another 12 compounds and therefore suggests to include additional substances such as particular musk compounds and the pesticides atrazine, simazine, diuron and linuron.

WWF proposes that OSPAR should publish and widely distribute the List of Substances of Possible Concern as it includes 400 (groups of) hazardous chemicals to which the 2020 target of cessation definitely applies.

WWF's submissions to OSPAR 2000
(Download from <http://ngo.grida.no/wwfneap>)

OSPAR 00/5/6-E Proposed Additions to the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action

OSPAR 00/5/7-E Synthetic Musk Fragrances: A Cause of Concern

OSPAR 00/5/14-E(L) Comments on the Outcome of DYNAMEC

OSPAR 00/5/16-E(L) Hazardous Substances identified by OSPAR for cessation of discharges, emissions and losses before 2020 - presented and published by **Seas At Risk and WWF**

OSPAR 00/8/2-E Developing a Framework for Marine Protected Areas in the North-East Atlantic - Report of the WWF Workshop, 13 - 14 November 1999, Brest, France

Ecosystems and Biodiversity

WWF recognises the progress made in terms of elaborating the measures required to begin implementation of Annex V, such as Criteria for the Selection of Species and Habitats, Criteria for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and classification schemes for coastal and marine habitats. With the imminent entry into force of OSPAR Annex V, Contracting Parties must ensure that rapid progress is made to

- Finalize lists of threatened species and habitats, special features, and unique areas and move forward with a first tranche of MPAs based on current knowledge.
- Develop a strategy to set up a representative network of MPAs, beginning with a consistent framework for the classification of all habitats (inshore to offshore, and benthic to pelagic) and criteria for the selection of MPAs for a representative network, and
- Promote the designation and implementation of a representative network of MPAs protecting the full range of biodiversity in the North-East Atlantic.

WWF supports the proposal for an OSPAR-Programme "Development of a System of Marine Protected Areas in the OSPAR-Maritime Area" as agreed by IMPACT 1999.

WWF urges OSPAR Contracting Parties to agree a recommendation to the UN Secretary General to ensure that high seas MPAs are considered on the agenda of the 2nd UN Informal Consultative Process on the Oceans in 2001.

Radioactive Substances

WWF supports the commitment of OSPAR Contracting Parties to eliminate emissions of radioactive discharges to the marine environment and urges that this commitment is achieved rapidly - preferably ahead of the current 2020 deadline. WWF believes that it is unacceptable for emissions of radioactive substances to be transferred to other media (i.e. air or freshwater) in order to provide the required protection for the marine environment.

Quality Status Report

WWF welcomes the QSR as a good overall assessment of the health of the marine environment of the NE Atlantic, in particular, the reflection of the scale of fisheries problems is to be welcomed. There are however some areas which WWF feels have not been adequately covered or where the full range of current knowledge is not fully reflected.

The loss of coastal wetlands and coastal development, including the provision of flood defences, is not perceived as such a serious threat as it should be. At a time when it is predicted at 50% of the world's coastal wetlands will be lost in the next century, in large part due to rising sea levels and coastal erosion linked with climatic changes and global warming, WWF believes that the QSR should give greater recognition to this serious threat to coastal habitats and biodiversity of the NE Atlantic.

Furthermore, WWF believes that the QSR is somewhat complacent with respect to the assessment of the impacts of nutrient pollution as well as the serious threat posed to the marine wildlife and ecosystems of the NE Atlantic due to the impacts of global climate change.

On each of these issues plus the scale of the problem with respect to hazardous substances, WWF believes that the QSR does not fully reflect the need for urgent action, but relies instead on on-going Strategies.

WWF briefings on Hazardous Substances

Brominated Flame Retardants - Bisphenol A - Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPE) - Phthalates - Vinclozolin - Endocrine Disrupting Pesticides - Pesticides in Surface and Coastal Waters - Cetaceans & Endocrine Disruptors - Seals & Endocrine Disruptors - Fish & Endocrine Disruptors

WWF Proposals for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Sula Ridge - Celtic Shelf Break - Rockall Bank - Rockall Trough and Channel - Western Irish Sea front - Dogger Bank - Waters west of Sylt

Download from <http://ngo.grida.no/wwfneap>