

ANNUAL ECOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE CUMBRIAN COAST 2011

Purpose

To inform Members that the annual ecological survey of the sites chosen as representative of the rocky foreshores to be found along the Cumbrian coastline was undertaken by Dr. Jane Lancaster during periods of suitable spring tides, between 19th May – 28th September 2011.

Recommendations

- 1. Members note the report.**
- 2. Members consider if they wish for Dr. Lancaster to continue with the survey in 2012.**

Detail

1. The now obsolete Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee commissioned an annual ecological survey of 11 rocky shore sites along the Cumbrian coast between 1993 and 2010. The original aim of the survey was to provide an overview of the shore life and physical features of the coastline within the Committee's district. The sites chosen were selected as being representative of the different rocky shore ecology present, and surveyed annually in order to provide information on the natural changes that take place on the shore, and to act as an early warning system of any possible damage to the ecosystems that may occur due to pollution, or physical disturbance by mankind.
2. At the meeting of the Technical, Scientific and Byelaws Sub-Committee held on 21st June 2011, it was resolved that Dr. Lancaster be asked to continue the survey in 2011. An invoice amounting to £3,200 has subsequently been received from Dr. Lancaster from carrying out this work.
3. The report, which outlines the findings from the 2011 survey, is presented in a similar format to that of previous years with an abundance rating supported by a general discussion of each of the sites visited.
4. Of particular interest this year, is the continuing recovery of the Byerstead Fault transect site just to the south of Whitehaven. The report indicates that this site has now virtually recovered from the impact of discharges from the former Marchon (Albright & Wilson) chemical plant since its closure in 2002. Also that *Sabellaria alveolata* (Honeycomb worm) was again found to be thriving on the Cumbrian coast especially at Dubmill Point in the upper Solway Firth, and further south at Nethertown and Tarn Point.

5. Members are reminded that whilst the survey is not directly related to fisheries management issues, it has over the past 19 years built into a valuable time series of information useful for monitoring the ecological well-being of the marine environment between the intertidal extremes of high and low water.

Enforcement Director
20 February 2012