

Channel Coast News

Issue 9 - January 2004

The newsletter for the Southeast Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme www.channelcoast.org

Regional News

South East Coastal Group

Validation of survey data is almost complete. The validation process has highlighted a number of minor issues, which are being discussed with suppliers in review meetings in January. Once these minor issues have been resolved, data will be loaded into SANDS for distribution.

It is understood that a new version of SANDS will be released in early February. It is therefore proposed to delay installation in Local Authorities until the new version is available.

South Downs Coastal Group

Gardline Environmental has completed all hydrographic fieldwork along the SDCG frontage and is currently processing the data. The entire dataset will be delivered in February 2004.

Kampsax will be revisiting the Aerial Flight that was undertaken by BKS in March 2003 and extracting the required profiles to meet the baseline specification. This survey has all Arun District Council and ABMS profiles included, but further profiles will be taken to ensure that an average 50m profile spacing is achieved along the entire SDCG frontage.

All tenders for the Post Storm/BMP surveys were significantly over budget. Tenderers were asked to re-price, with Beach Management Plan items changed to provisional. Discussions with the EA are ongoing to complete the BMP surveys in conjunction with the ABMS flight, provided the required accuracy can be achieved. The re-priced tenders were returned on 9 January and are being re-accessed. The contract will now run as a single package for the entire frontage between Selsey Bill and Birling Gap.

SCOPAC

Following the first major storm of the winter ($H_s = 3.6\text{m}$ at Boscombe), post-storm surveys have been carried out at Bournemouth and in Southampton Water.

Environment Agency (Southern Region)

Kampsax have provided a quote to undertake a 1:3000 flight instead of the usual 1:5000 flight for the SDCG area and to reanalyse the March 2003 1:3000 photographs. This potential alteration is being

investigated in order to meet the needs of both the EA and SDCG. Work is also ongoing to collate the re-numbered profiles from the three coastal groups in order to forward to Kampsax.

Hannah Gribben, a member of the EA's Flood Defence Strategic Planning team, will be providing data management assistance to the project, including the photo archive, data requests and GIS related requests from the Project Team.

Channel Coastal Observatory

The wave buoy at Pevensey Bay was cut loose from its mooring overnight on 18 December, but was rapidly recovered from the beach by PCDL. The buoy has been checked and serviced but, unfortunately, bad weather has delayed its re-deployment.

What's New?

MapInfo training on Friday 6 February at Arun District Council's offices. A few places still available.

Contacts

If you have any queries about the Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme, or would like a personal copy of this newsletter by email, please contact your area representative:

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Coastal Biodiversity Mapping and Monitoring

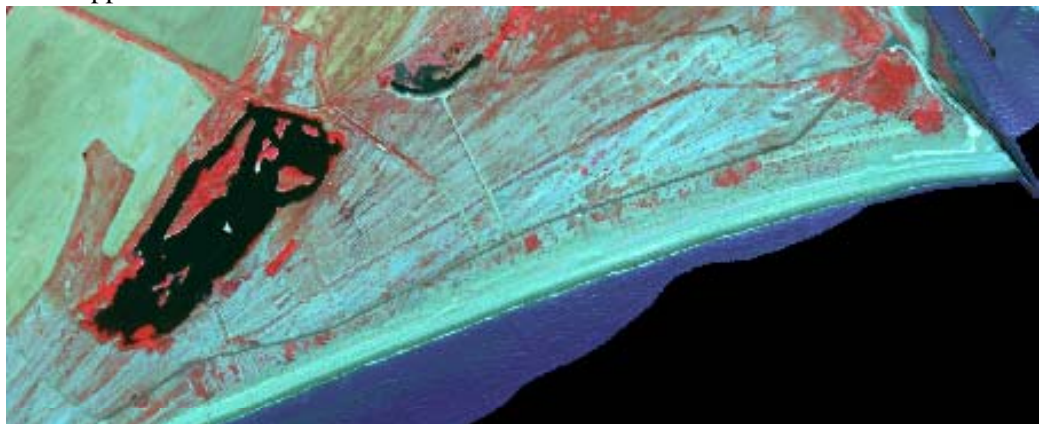
The coastline of the southeast supports a wide range of coastal habitats, including inter-tidal mudflats, coastal grazing marsh, sand dunes, salt marsh, vegetated shingle and saline lagoons. Indeed, vegetated shingle along the southern coastline forms approximately 68% of the UK resource, as well as a sizeable proportion of the global total. In this context, it is important that we ensure that it is protected, conserved and wherever



feasible, enhanced. The southeast coastline's habitat is under threat from sea-level rise, increased storminess, development pressure and coastal defence works. Despite the range of habitats and the importance of biodiversity, there is currently no systematic, regional mapping or monitoring of habitat location, extent and condition.

The Coastal Biodiversity Mapping and Monitoring project is seeking to redress this lack of information by providing, for the first time, a region-wide baseline assessment of biodiversity from the Isle of Portland to the Thames estuary. However, coastal habitat depends crucially on both local geomorphology and the coastal processes acting upon it and therefore it is essential that ecological information is combined with other coastal data. Accordingly, English Nature, working with the Environment Agency, has commissioned a scoping study by the CCO to develop an accurate, repeatable and cost effective mapping programme. The project will also develop standard techniques for monitoring coastal biodiversity, which can be applied elsewhere.

CASI false colour image of the vegetated shingle habitat at Rye, shown in the photograph above.



The project aims are to:

1. Provide a systematic approach to condition assessment of English Nature designated coastal sites, linked with coastal processes.
2. Provide an accurate regional biodiversity baseline dataset for the southeast, to enable more effective spatial planning in the coastal zone and provide a better understanding of the impact of climate change.
3. Improve understanding of the changes in extent and condition of the coastal biodiversity resource in the southeast. Provide this data to coastal planning authorities to ensure that biodiversity impacts are minimised or negated and that opportunities to enhance the resource are maximised.
4. Provide environmental data that will allow the exploration of options for the sustainable management of the coastal zone, with particular reference to sea defences, flood risk and land use.
5. Collect environmental data through remote sensing techniques to determine annual losses and gains of coastal habitats and enable operating authorities to report to Government.
6. Coordinate data collection and management with the SRCMP, to provide economic and technical benefits.

A major advantage of the coordinated approach is that the data produced will be consistent with other coastal information. For example, the SRCMP's aerial photography and LiDAR data can be widely used for mapping habitat type. Ecological information, held as a GIS layer, can be readily combined with other types of survey information, such as sediment type. An important emphasis for the biodiversity project is to investigate the potential of airborne spectral imaging technologies and aerial photography, in parallel with traditional land based survey methods. The Compact Airborne Spectrographic Imager (CASI) is proving useful for discriminating different types of vegetation, although problems with ground truthing remain.

For further information on the coastal biodiversity mapping project, please contact: susan.watt@english-nature.org.uk phil.griffiths@environment-agency.gov.uk or Andy.Bradbury@soc.soton.ac.uk