

# MarBEF outreach and publishing – progress report

By Olive Heffernan  
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COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH are integral components of the MarBEF network, facilitating our work within MarBEF and bridging the gap between natural scientists and the wider scientific community, industry, stakeholders and the general public.

Building durable links and establishing workable communications with others concerned with the management of marine systems in Europe is essential to ensuring the translation of our research results into management measures. Raising public awareness and creating understanding, interest and participation in marine biodiversity initiatives is central to our goal of ensuring the sustainable use and exploitation of marine biodiversity.

These objectives are reflected in the breadth of the MarBEF outreach programme and in the activities that have taken place to date. Since the publication of our first newsletter in Summer 2004, some notable milestones have been:-



Irish Wildlife Trust (www.iwt.ie)

Outreach events are an important way of raising public interest in marine issues.

- **October** - Olive Heffernan joins EcoServe Ltd and the MarBEF network as Scientific Communications and Outreach Officer.
- **October** - Review of organisations outside the network concerned with marine biodiversity and outreach in Europe; will lead to the creation of a searchable database which will be available online shortly and will be expanded over time.
- **November** - Production of publicity brochure and flyer, now available to download from the outreach web pages.
- **November** - Draft communications and publications strategy completed for the network; to be finalised by end Feb 2005.
- **December** - Theme 3 workshop on information at IMBC, Crete; featured a session on communications.
- **December** - Outreach section of the website launched.
- **January** - Outreach poster created for workshop on Public Understanding of the Marine Environment.
- **February** - Second MarBEF newsletter published.

Our role is to facilitate interaction between network members and to transmit information between MarBEF and the outside world, but to continue this we rely on communication from scientists themselves, of course. We hope that in the coming months, network members will continue to enlighten us with the fruits of their labour through contributions to the newsletter, progress reports, and details of published papers. This information is vital if we are to maintain communication with our intended audiences.

Communicating science presents a challenge in that it requires effective exchange of

information that is unambiguous, scientifically sound and clearly understood. In the case of MarBEF, our audience ranges from scientists to resource managers, industry and the general public of all age categories. Our messages need to be tailored to suit the needs of each group. We endeavour to build further links with marine biodiversity outreach initiatives worldwide and to keep abreast of developments in our field of interest. With this in mind, we urge members of MarBEF to inform us of marine biodiversity, press and outreach contacts in your region, whose details we can add to our outreach register, to let us know of innovative local, national or international activities of relevance to the network, and to provide feedback on outreach material.

In the coming months, we will continue with ongoing activities, including continued updating of the website, publicising the network and forging links. We will also instigate some new initiatives. In the short term, we will develop concepts for the MarBEF roadshows to schools, aquaria and museums, and begin a feasibility study on a coast-watch network of students and amateurs in Europe. We will also finalise the review of existing national school curricula throughout Europe, with the help of network members, with recommendations on how to integrate marine biodiversity into education.

2005 should be a dynamic year for MarBEF outreach. Until the next newsletter, we'll keep you updated through the web pages ([www.marbef.org/outreach](http://www.marbef.org/outreach)). ●

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