



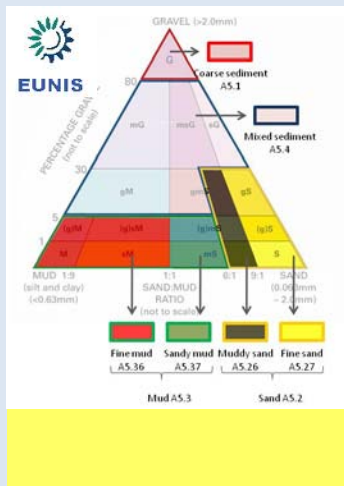
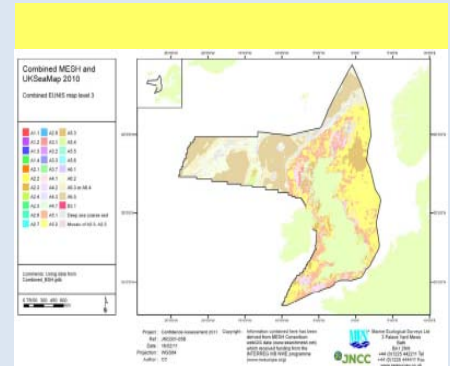
Marine Ecological Surveys Limited

Over 30 years of experience in Environmental Impact Assessment, Site Appraisals, Eco-Audit & monitoring programmes and research in the marine environment

Find out all the news from MES this Spring...

Mapping the UK seabed – How confident are we?

In February MES were awarded a contract by the JNCC to review the methodology for assessing confidence in two nationally significant EUNIS (European Nature Information System) habitat maps: the MESH survey based and the UKSeaMap 2010 predicted maps. This work was commissioned to ensure the best use of available seabed habitat data in the JNCC's development of a UK-wide Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. The review consisted of both a detailed literature review concerning the underlying data (data collection methods, processing and confidence scoring), as well as multiple trials in GIS to assess alternative methods of weighting and combining scores. The report provided a series of recommendations to the JNCC, ranging from the finer detail of the survey maps and associated confidence assessments, to the broader methods of how to amalgamate the two maps. The findings of the report will have a significant impact on how the JNCC decide to update and combine the two maps in the future in order to produce the most accurate EUNIS maps of the UK seas, informed through robust confidence assessments.



EUNIS Workshops Train the New Fisheries Committees

MES have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in seabed habitat surveying, interpretation and mapping. These specialist skills have been shared within the marine sector through MES's biotope identification training scheme. In February, MES coordinated a workshop that provided guidance on the identification of habitat biotopes from still and video images, using the EUNIS classification scheme. This involved an overview of the biological characteristics important in habitat mapping and a guide to the EUNIS hierarchy system, sourcing data to assist biotope classification, biological associations, and the importance of metadata and standards. In addition, attendees were involved in practical identification of habitats and categorisation exercises. The day was held for the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in Sussex and saw an excellent attendance from both IFCAs and other interested parties (Wildlife trusts & Natural England). MES aim to continue running similar workshops; please do not hesitate to contact us for more details.

Aggregate Extraction Guidelines

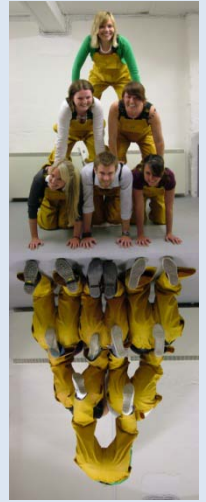
MES have made a significant contribution to the recently published second edition of "Guidelines for the Conduct of Benthic Studies at Marine Aggregate Extraction Sites - 2nd Edition". This document was compiled by Cefas with assistance from a number of project partners, including Natural England and the JNCC. The first edition of this document has served as the standard for benthic surveys across a variety of industries since its publication in 2002. The updated version of these guidelines will no doubt continue to prove crucial to UK marine science. MES are proud to have played a key role in the creation of this prestigious document. The revision of "Guidelines for the Conduct of Benthic Studies at Marine Aggregate Extraction Sites" was funded through the Marine Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. For more information see <http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/alsf/projects/mitigation-and-management/08p75.aspx>



Ecological Gymnastics

MES continue to be actively involved in current training programs and conferences, ensuring that staff remain abreast of developments within the UK marine sector. A summary of recent MES staff participation is highlighted below:

- Bryony Pearce presented new biotope modelling methods developed by MES as part of the Humber REC, in the publication 'Ecological Gymnastics – Combining a top-down & bottom-up approach to Biotope Modelling' (demonstrated by MES staff, right!) at the recent GeoHab 2011 Conference, hosted by the Geological Survey of Finland.
- Matthew Green represented MES at the International Conference "It's not just about the fish" social and cultural perspectives of sustainable marine fisheries, at the University of Greenwich.
- MES presented the biological highlights from the REC projects at the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society Conference, Southampton.
- Josh Hatton & Matthew Green attended the NMBAQC inshore fish identification course at Dove Marine Laboratory, Newcastle, where they received advanced training in fish ID & survey methods.
- Several MES staff attended the 'Moving seaward - Sustainable development of the maritime and the coastal zone' short course at UWE.



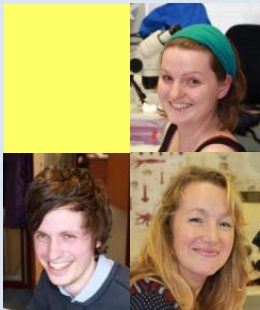
Two Laboratories Go Forth

MES's second laboratory has been up and running since 7th March, following refurbishment of our building directly adjacent to the main office. Lisa Grubb, laboratory tutor at MES, is now in-charge of supervising the new lab and staff. She is extremely happy with the amount of space and the increased productivity this brings, saying that: *"It has allowed MES to increase work capacity, and the ability to take on larger projects such as the East Anglia Offshore Windfarm survey, the largest benthic survey of it's kind"*

MES Taxonomy Summer School



The Benthic Taxonomy Summer school, which runs in June, provides participants with hands-on experience of working in the marine environment and an introduction to invertebrate species identification skills. Attendance can be for one or two weeks and there is also the opportunity to learn Seasearch survey techniques. See our website for details on the summer school and the bursary competition. www.seasurvey.co.uk/taxonomy-school



MES Continue to Grow & Provide Academic Support

Within our new laboratory space, expanded to meet UK demands for marine taxonomic services, one more taxonomist has arrived at MES: Ciara Burke joins as a Junior Macro-benthic Taxonomist. Ciara spent several years working at Oceanlab, University of Aberdeen, on a number of projects looking at the effect of benthic macrofauna on carbon cycling in abyssal and coastal habitats. MES has also continued its academic support with a one month work placement for Layla Lidster; and Rob Goodchild who joined the consultancy and GIS arm of MES for four months. Both are studying for Masters degrees in Environmental Consultancy.

Competition

There is a prize up for grabs to the first MES newsletter reader who can correctly identify which marine organism this unusual feature belongs to? Congratulations go to Mark Russell from BMAPA and Andrew Bellamy of Tarmac Marine Dredging Ltd who correctly guessed that it was Silver Pit shown in the last newsletter's multibeam image.

