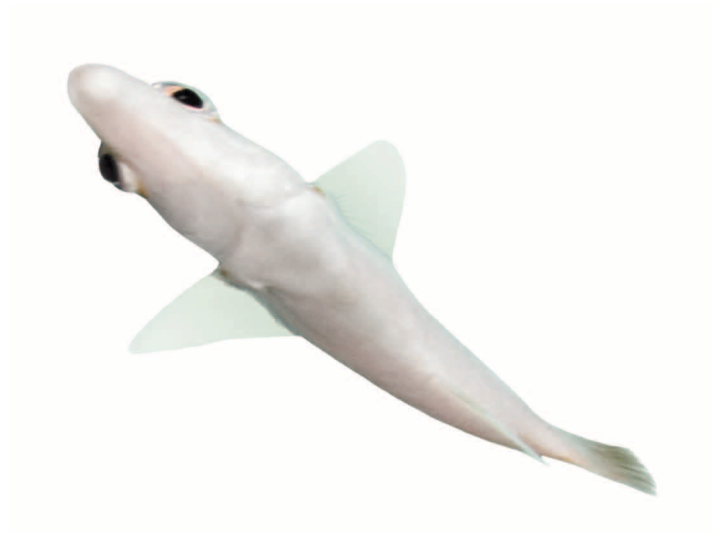


QUALITY STATUS REPORT 2010



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QUALITY STATUS REPORT 2010



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**OSPAR Convention**

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the 'OSPAR Convention') was opened for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the former Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992. The Convention entered into force on 25 March 1998. It has been ratified by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and approved by the European Community and Spain.

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PREFACE

Scientific knowledge is indispensable as the basis for our management of the marine environment. The OSPAR Convention rightly requires, through the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme, Contracting Parties to cooperate in both monitoring and assessment of our seas. This increases our knowledge and understanding of the marine environment and enables us to undertake periodic holistic assessments in order to take stock of achievements and provide directions for the future. The Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 is such a holistic assessment. It presents a clear picture of the status of the North-East Atlantic at the end of the first decade of the 21st century and shows how the status has changed since the QSR 2000 was published.

Preparing the QSR 2010 has been a huge collective achievement of the OSPAR Governments. OSPAR has used the expertise of the many specialists that provide input to OSPAR Committees and Working Groups. Without their strong personal commitment this summary report, and its wealth of supporting assessments, would not have been possible. The contributions of OSPAR observers from industry, environmental non-governmental organisations and international partner organisations in the process have clearly helped to close gaps in information and to shape recommendations for future actions. The peer review by a group of international scientists, facilitated by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, and the e-consultation on the QSR 2010 have both helped to critically review the gathered evidence and the conclusions we have drawn, as well as adding an important step in quality assurance.

The QSR process has resulted in the development of new assessment criteria, original research and fundamentally new approaches to considering cumulative effects. In so doing, OSPAR has courted controversy, has at times been provocative and has caused some unease amongst its community. I would like to extend my personal thanks to the members of the Management Group for the Quality Status Report and the Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee, who had the main responsibility for the QSR 2010, as well as to the OSPAR Secretariat. All have remained resolute throughout and ensured the delivery of this fundamental report.

It is evident that there remain gaps in our knowledge and challenges in making integrated assessments. Yet, it is equally clear that our management of the North-East Atlantic is reaping benefits in terms of reducing concentrations of contaminants, delivering improvements in fisheries and affording greater protection for vulnerable species and habitats. We do, however, face further challenges as we seek to develop marine renewable energy, understand the possible implications of an increase in the acidity of our seas and comprehend better anthropogenic influences against a background of natural fluctuations. The QSR 2010 provides OSPAR Ministers at their meeting in Bergen in September 2010 with the evidence, conclusions and recommendations needed to tackle the future challenges and to ensure OSPAR's vital role in the protection of the North-East Atlantic. I am convinced that OSPAR's contribution to a scientifically robust approach to ocean governance will remain essential for the future use of the many resources of the North-East Atlantic while ensuring a clean, healthy and biologically diverse sea for future generations.

Professor Colin Moffat
*Chairman of the Environmental Assessment and
Monitoring Committee*



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