

March 2010 meeting MCS South East

This month Kat Stevenson a staff member from MCS head office who is based in London came along to give the local group an update of the head office activities and projects for the coming year.

Head office has had a very good few years recently and this is reflected in the staffing levels that they now have and can maintain [35 staff]. Some significant fund raising from Sea-France and Deutsche Bank [see below] have made this possible.

MCS are the recipient of the Deutsche Bank charity funding initiative for the current year following a major awareness campaign started by Peter Hiam a bank employee and supporter of MCS. Kat has been given an office in the bank premises in the city of London as a base from where she will be able to arrange and run the London based activities.

A number of activities are planned and they include the following

- End of the Line film showing
- Payroll giving campaign
- Mercedes raffle
- 4 people running the Marathon on behalf of MCS
- Art Auction
- Earth Watch Week in March
- Behind the scenes tour of the refurbished London Aquarium
- Celebrity Chefs Fund raising dinner
- Big Blue Day in June
- World Turtle Day in May
- World Cup Fundraising
- Enduro Challenge & JP Chase Challenge
- Channel swim, 3 peaks and any future suggestions

Head office is actively promoting sustainable seafood with the chef's and restaurants in the London Square Mile. This is to tie in with the new pocket Good Fish Guide currently in production, the website and recommending places to eat where the fish on the "avoid list" have been removed from the menus.

MCS fisheries team has been very active and has 3 staff members who are working hard to achieve their goals

- Mel – working to reform The Common Fisheries policy by promoting a new "Credits" based system
- Sam – working to influence the remaining major supermarkets who are lagging behind Waitrose, M&S, Sainsbury's and the Co-op to change their fish stocks to more reflect the fish online recommended fish
- Jean-Luc – working to promote the "Your Seas Your Voice" campaign to aquaria to help generate more public response in designating areas for protection/designation

Coolseas Roadshow -is to run a competition to provide a visit to the winning primary school in the Kent area and develop an internet based version to provide wider access.

Beachwatch – the results of this years beach cleans are due out in March and are expected to show that the top 10 items of rubbish are all plastic based products. The aims for this year

are to improve the database and so target the sources of plastic rubbish to try and reduce the amounts being used and so ending up on the beach. Head office will continue to press for a ban on balloon releases with local authorities and charities.

Good Beach Guide – will be supported by the RNLI this year and it is hoped that this will enable a more user friendly search facility to be established. The overuse of combined sewer outlets is to be challenged with the water companies and local authorities.

The evening concluded with a question and answers session to allow the members of the local group to voice any concerns they may have.

One concern raised by a couple of the members was the lack of information from Head Office to the local groups on the objectives that MCS as a whole are promoting. Improving this communication will better reflect the society when local groups represent the society at dive shows and similar local events. Supplying promotional documents, posters and sales materials would also give a more coherent promotion of the society.

Another concern was the lack of information interactive and similar available to schools other than primary schools. It was felt that as all schools were promoting a “Science Week” that would be a good opportunity for MCS to offer guidance that the schools would be able to use and also provide feedback.

All present were very pleased to have had the chance to meet and discuss the society with a member of head office staff and hoped that this would be the start of a regular visit to the MCSse local group.