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SADCO SADSO

Looking forward to 2005/6

The Newsletter provides insight into the main activities of last year, as well as those activities of the Workplan 2005/6 that have been accepted by the Steering Committee.

Somewhat more subdued in the Newsletter are three "management" issues around SADCO, that are nevertheless of significant importance:

- The **SADCO MoU**. After 15 years of wonderful interaction among the sponsoring and participating organisations, it has been recognised that a more formal, up-front agreement is called for. This will take the shape of an MoU in which the responsibilities of the various role players are indicated. It should be finalised within the next few months (see P 6).
- The **OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System)** contract between the CSIR and the Rutgers University has been signed by both parties, initiating the start of the establishment of the OBIS Sub-Saharan Node (see P6).
- SADCO has had discussions with some of the contractors of BCLME regarding management of data collected on that programme. Deliberations have also taken place about the role that SADCO can play in making SAEON (**South African Environmental Observation Network**) successful. Should these discussions come to fruition, it could dovetail with the OBIS activities mentioned above.

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Annual report 2004/5 highlights

- An extensive system was created to check (QC) marine data, based on accepted international procedures (incl. graphic interfaces and plots). All incoming data is now screened according to these procedures.
- An MoU, to establish the relationship between the SADCO Consortium members, and indicate their support for SADCO, was drafted and circulated.
- A total of 1564 CTD stations, from France, Namibia and UCT were loaded. SADCO now has approximately 200 000 hydrographic profiles (see station distribution on Centre Page)
- The database was modified to accommodate vertical profiles of velocity (such as ADCP data). Reformatting, loading and extracting software was developed. No underway ADCP has yet been submitted to SADCO.
- Moored ADCP data, received from MCM and collected on the ACEP programme, was loaded and flagged.
- Surface weather data was routinely loaded.
- The VOS database has been cleaned according to the QC checks established last year.
- Automatic Weather Station and weather buoy data has been received from NatMIRC and MCM. CTD data was scouted from Germany.
- The Inventory was enlarged with 164 new entries, the bulk of which originated from actual data sets submitted to SADCO.
- Presentations were given in Grahamstown (Agulhas-Somali LME Planning Meeting); on OBIS funding a visit was made to the Bedford Institute for Oceanography to discuss QC issues. A SAEON meeting was also attended in Cape Town.
- A proposal was submitted to the Rutgers University for SADCO to establish the sub-Saharan OBIS node. The Contract is being finalised between CSIR and Rutgers.

Annual report 2004/5 highlights

SADCO work plan, 2005/6

The Steering Committee meeting of May is partially devoted to explore and decide on activities of the data centre for the next year.

Below is a list of activities that are regarded as important to the development of the data centre's capabilities. These will be undertaken as funding allows (and as the data materialises from the relevant donor).

- Finalise aspects of the marine load program with quality control measures
- Marine database retro-active cleanup
- Load:
    - "Underway" ADCP data from MCM
    - Current measurements from *Meiring Naudé*
    - AWS data from MCM
    - Weather data from Roman Rock (IMT)
    - CTD/XBT/Bottle data from Japan, Namibia and Germany
    - Continuous and discrete CTD data from MCM
    - Moored ADCP data from MCM (ACEP)
    - GODAR data from WOD2001
    - XBT data (France)
    - ARGO float data
    - Coastal temperature data (MCM)
    - Other data types (e.g. chemical, plankton)
    - Coastal AWS data from SAWS
- Finalise MoU
- Pursue involvement in SAEON

The following activities have already started:

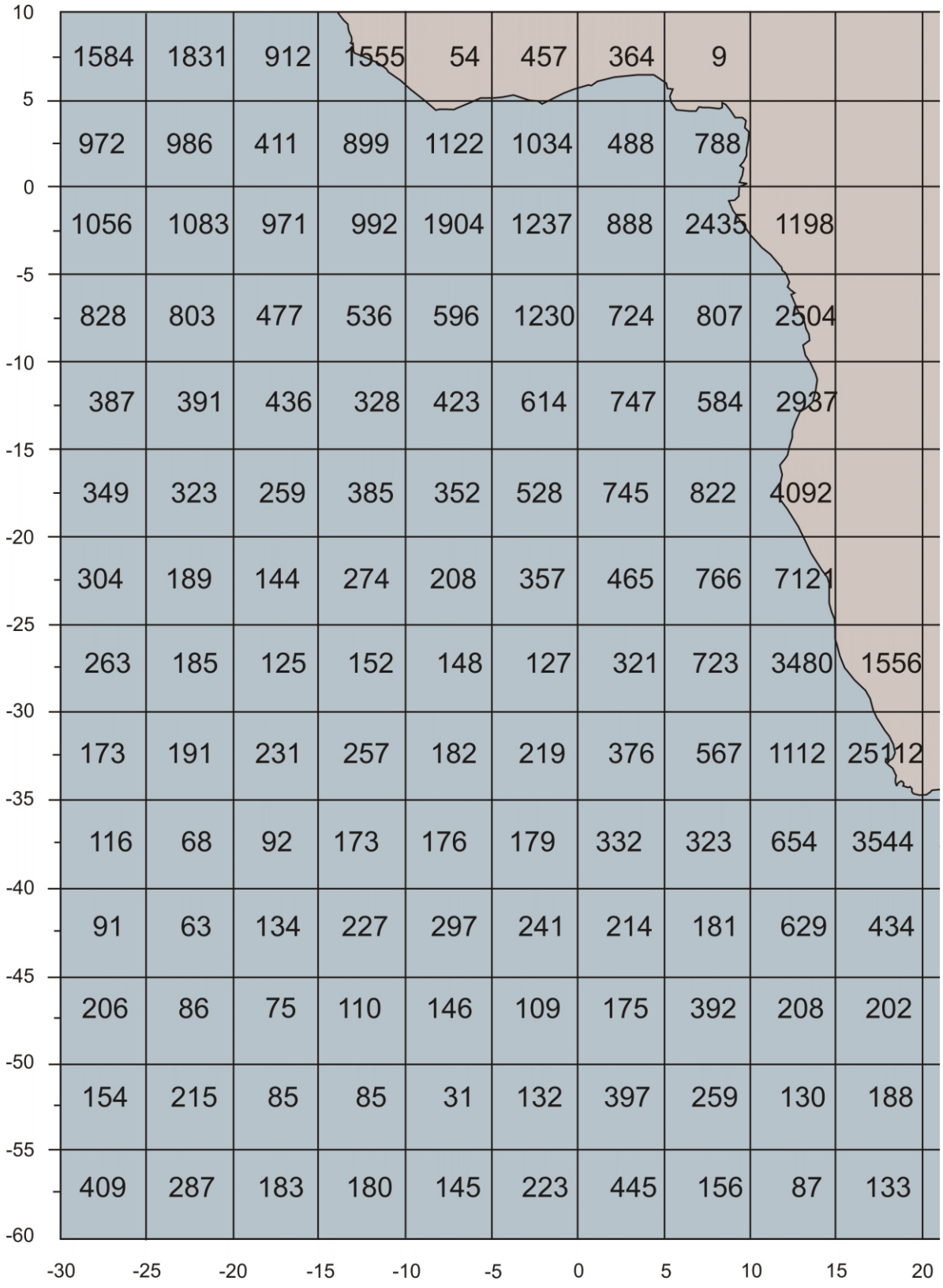
- Loading current measurements from the *Meiring Naudé*
- Loading CTD data from Namibia and Germany
- Loading Automatic Weather Station data from MCM
- Finalising the MoU

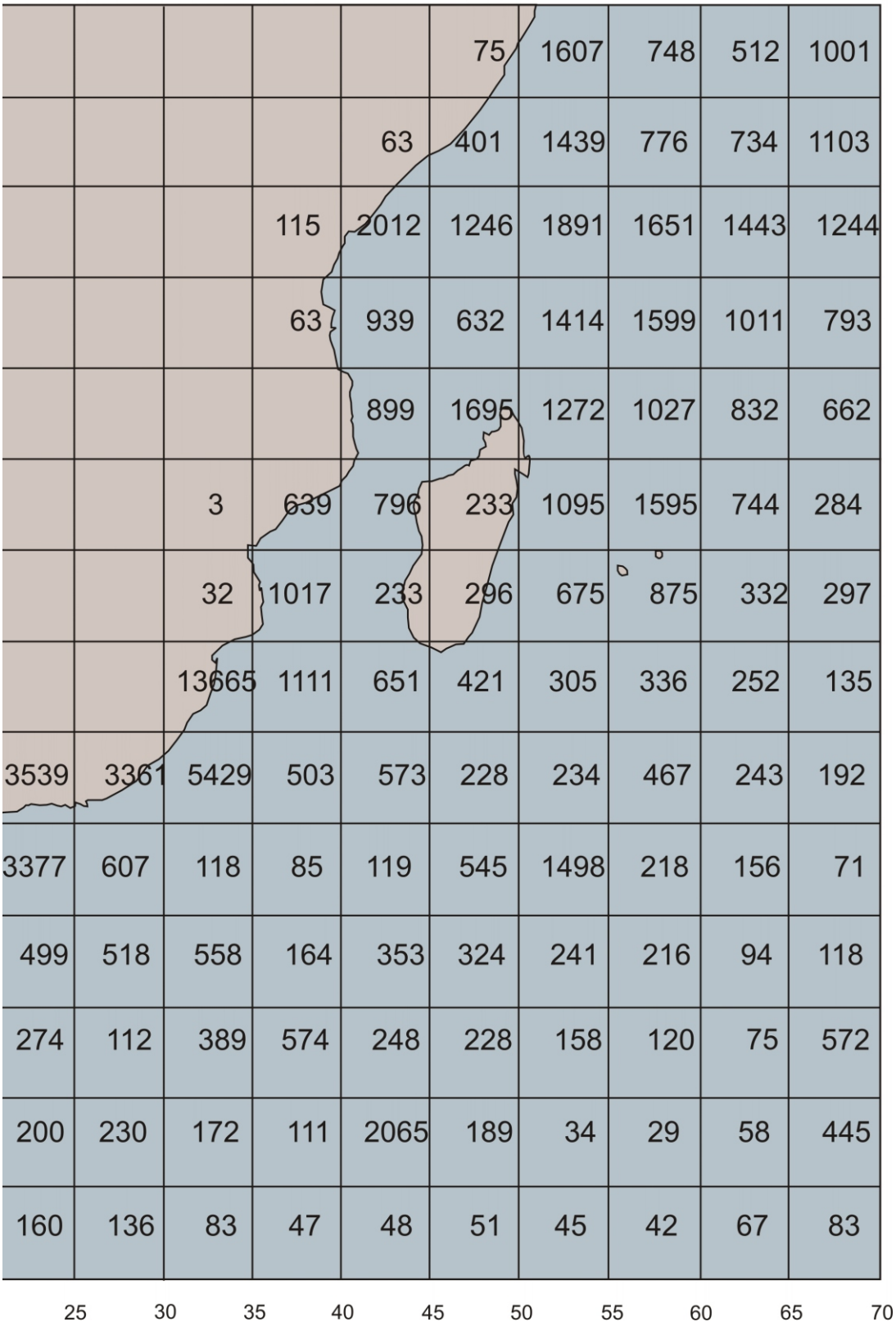
Figure on Centre Page

One of the recent requests for SADCO was for an inventory of hydrographic stations on the database in an area off the West Coast.

Louise Watt was asked to expand the area to cover virtually the whole of SADCO's target area, and produce a graph of the amount of data. The chart on the next page shows the **distribution of the number of hydrographic stations in 5º x 5º blocks**. The total number was 198 180. It is estimated that if the remaining area to the south (off the Antarctic continent which is also part of SADCO's target area) was included, the number of stations would be approximately 200 000.

SADCO Hydrographic Stations

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63 401 1439 776 734 1103
115 2012 1246 1891 1651 1443 1244
63 939 632 1414 1599 1011 793
899 1695 1272 1027 832 662
3 639 796 233 1095 1595 744 284
32 1017 233 296 675 875 332 297
13665 1111 651 421 305 336 252 135
3539 3361 5429 503 573 228 234 467 243 192
3377 607 118 85 119 545 1498 218 156 71
499 518 558 164 353 324 241 216 94 118
274 112 389 574 248 228 158 120 75 572
200 230 172 111 2065 189 34 29 58 445
160 136 83 47 48 51 45 42 67 83
25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70

Status of the OBIS contract

As has been mentioned in the 2004/5 Highlights (page 2), CSIR submitted a proposal to the Rutgers University to host the OBIS (*Ocean Biogeographic Information System*) Sub-Saharan Node.

The proposal has been accepted. The contract has just been signed by both parties (July 2005).

An exciting and demanding work load awaits SADCO over the next 12 months, with the following items during the first few months:

- Installing the software to allow communication between the node and the OBIS central office (USA).
- Create the data tables to house the data submitted to the Node.
- Identify the main data providers, and negotiate issues around data flow, digitising, etc.

Status of the SADCO MoU

At the November meeting of the Steering Committee it was decided that the financial and general support of the consortium members for SADCO may be better coordinated under the umbrella of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the members. It will also provide documented evidence to any auditors about financial agreements in line with stipulations of the PFMA (this will probably take the shape of an Appendix to the MoU, updated annually).

The Manager of SADCO was charged with the generation of such an MoU, and to circulate it among members for input and comment.

- The draft MoU was created. While MoUs are normally very concise (with little detail about the actual technical aspects) it was decided to include some more details about SADCO, the composition and responsibilities of the Steering Committee, the role of the SADCO Database Agency, SADCO Manager, etc. In this way, the document would also become a useful reference document for the SADCO sponsors.
- The draft MoU was circulated among the members by the NRF Secretariat in December 2004, for comment.
- By the end of March 2005 feedback had been received from virtually all members. The MoU was discussed by the Steering Committee in May 2005, and the plan is to have it finalised shortly.

New Annual Report outlook

The SADCO Annual Report for 2004/5 is being finalised, after having been accepted at the meeting of the Steering Committee at the end of May 2005.

It has been considered to “redesign” the Annual Report cover, and a selection will be made from the two designs above.

Attendance of ODINAfrica training session, Belgium

(a) An **ODINAfrica Biodiversity Data Management training session** was held in Brussels in April 2005. The training session was meant to introduce data managers from west African states (primarily francophone countries) to the management of biodiversity data.

Ursula von St Ange was invited to attend, and help with the training sessions. Her transport and accommodation was gratefully covered by ODINAfrica.

An important by-product of her attendance at the course is the personal contact she made with the representatives of the countries that could provide biodiversity data for the sub-Saharan Africa OBIS node. The countries represented at this session were Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Angola, the Comores, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Madagascar, Guinea, Togo, Benin, Senegal, Gabon and Tanzania.

(b) Ursula also had the opportunity to attend an **OBIS Regional Nodes meeting** immediately afterwards. This meeting reported on progress made so far in establishing the regional nodes, and discussed new administrative and technical issues that have emerged since the last meeting in September 2004

This meeting was attended by all the node managers (or their representatives), as well as the OBIS Programme and OBIS Portal Managers from Rutgers University. The regional nodes are Australia, Canada, China, Europe, Indian Ocean, Japan, New Zealand, South America, sub-Saharan Africa and the United States of America.

(c) Toward the end of her trip, Ursula spent a couple of days with the ***Flemish Marine Institute*** (VLIZ). The latter was aimed at seeing first hand how an operational biodiversity database is managed (VLIZ has been hosting the European Regional OBIS Node for the past year).

Ursula von St Ange

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