Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

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Ocean and Coastal Futures

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Session six

Restoring Nature

Can we achieve well-managed and restored marine and coastal seascapes by 2030?

Chair

Professor Dickon Howell,

Howell Marine Consulting

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

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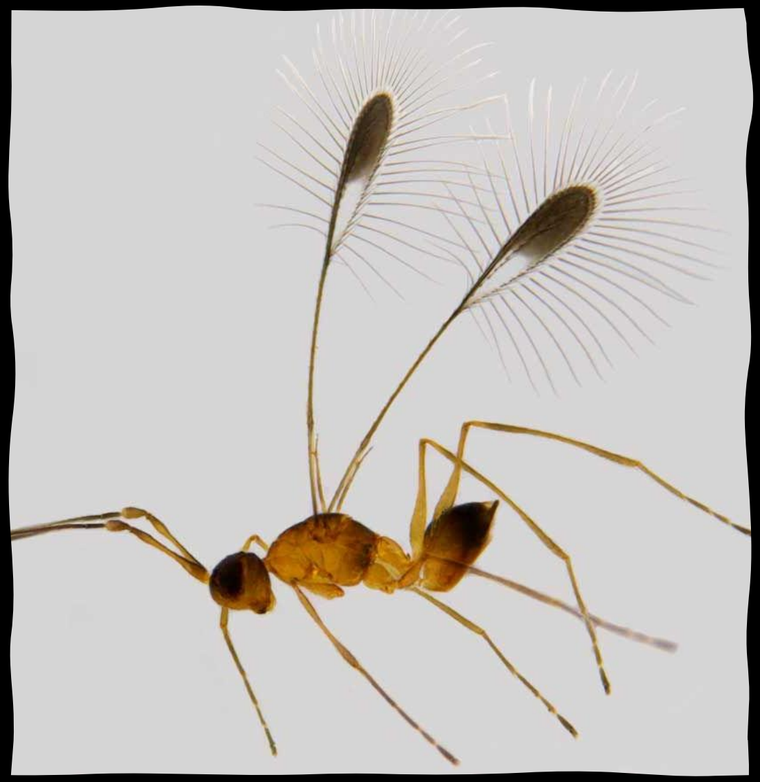
Restoring Nature

Queering as a Regenerative Pathway in Nature

Jasmine Isa Qureshi,
Ecologist and Writer

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030



Queering as a Regenerative Pathway in Nature

Jasmine Isa Qureshi (they/she)

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REGENERATIVE?

RESTORATIVE?

SYSTEM CHANGE?

SYSTEMIC TOXCITIES?

FLUIDITY?

WHY?

INDIGENOUS?

DECOLONISATION?

INCLUSION?

CONSERVATION?

WHY?

WHY?

DISMANTLING?

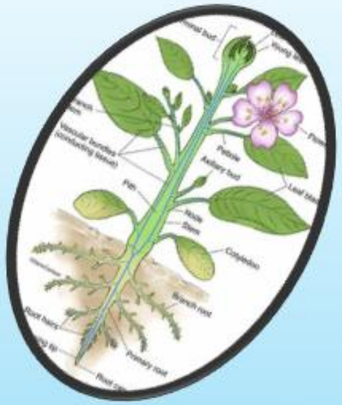
QUEERING...

MECHANISM?

WHAT?

INTERACTION?

CONTINUATION OF QUESTIONING? REIMAGINATION? RESTRUCTURING?



Anthropocentrism

Sexuality

Beginnings

Norms

The baggage of humans

Limitations

Awareness

Labels

Penguins aren't Gay

Forced representation

Assumptions

Elite

Anthropomorphism

Capitalism

Colonialism

Pseudo freedom

Hierarchies

Binaries...Dualisms...the Beginning of The 2 Absolutes.

- Indigenous communities
- Rebellion
- Liberation
- Erased handprints...
- Blueprints for a better future...

- Break those assumptions
- **Deconstruction**
- **Decolonisation**
- Human vs Nature.
- Science vs Religion
- Becoming aware of the limits

Now let’s plug all of that into ocean conservation, coastal restoration and marine ecology...

Jasmine (They/Them)

@wildheartwithacamera INSTAGRAM
@jazzywildheart.bsky.social BLUESKY
@GoWildForBees TWITTER (x)

Jasmineswildheart.com WEBSITE

WORKSHOPS
SEMINARS
SPOKEN WORD
WRITER
BOOK (on the way)
CONSULTANT

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Restoring Nature

Reflections on why we are not achieving our environmental goals

Laura Seddon,
Marine Management Organisation

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

An analysis of how we make decisions that affect the marine environment

Reflections on why we are not achieving our environmental goals

Dr. Laura Seddon (she/her)

Marine Management Organisation

laura.seddon@marinemanagement.org.uk

Marine Management Organisation

NCEA | Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment

Image credit: NE Flickr

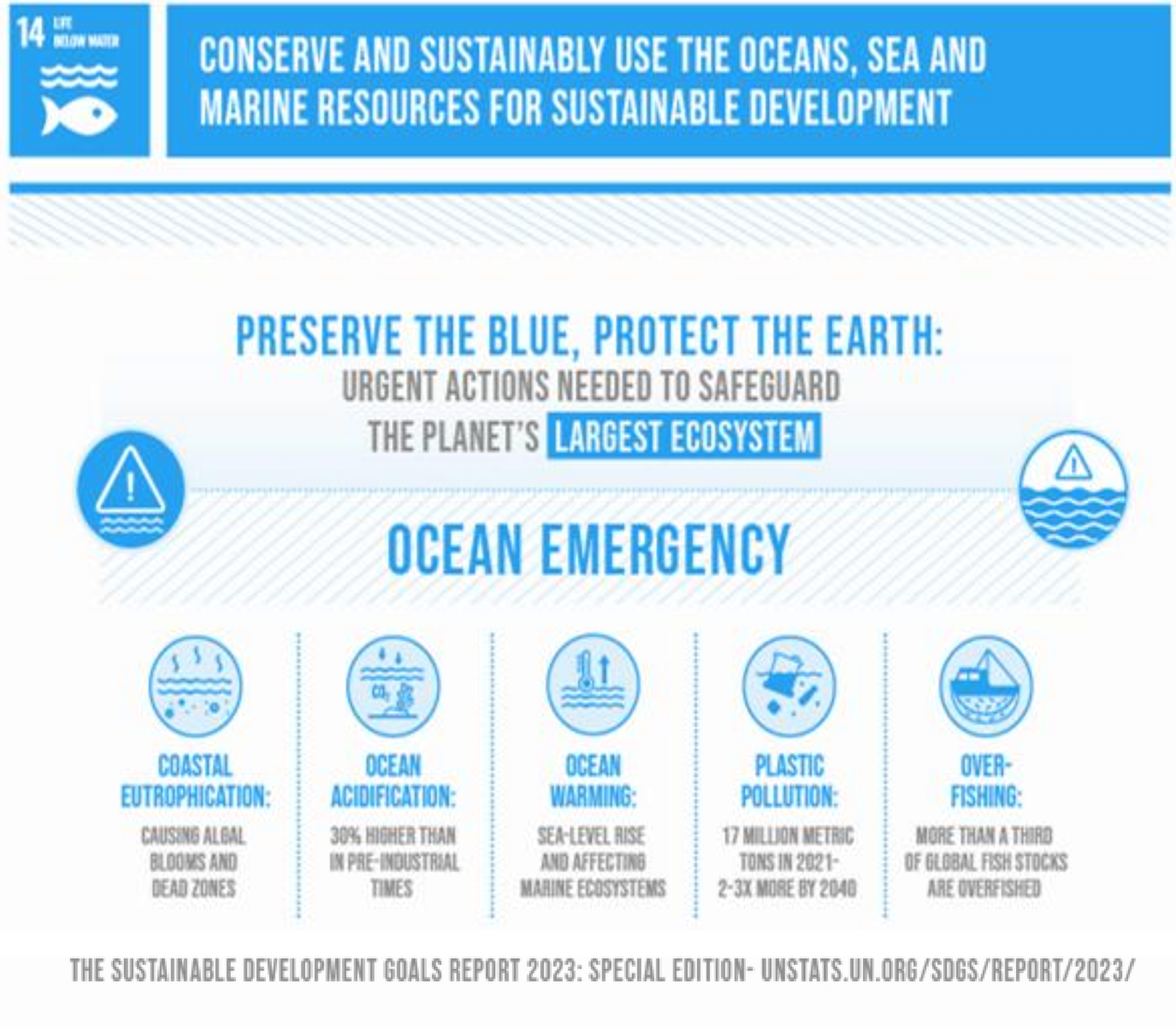
Environmental goals and objectives

NCEA Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment

2030

- Action to combat climate change and its effects
- Improved food security
- Clean water
- Responsible and sustainable consumption and production
- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Resilient communities
- Biologically diverse seas
- Clean and renewable energy
- Greater social justice and equality

international, national and local scales

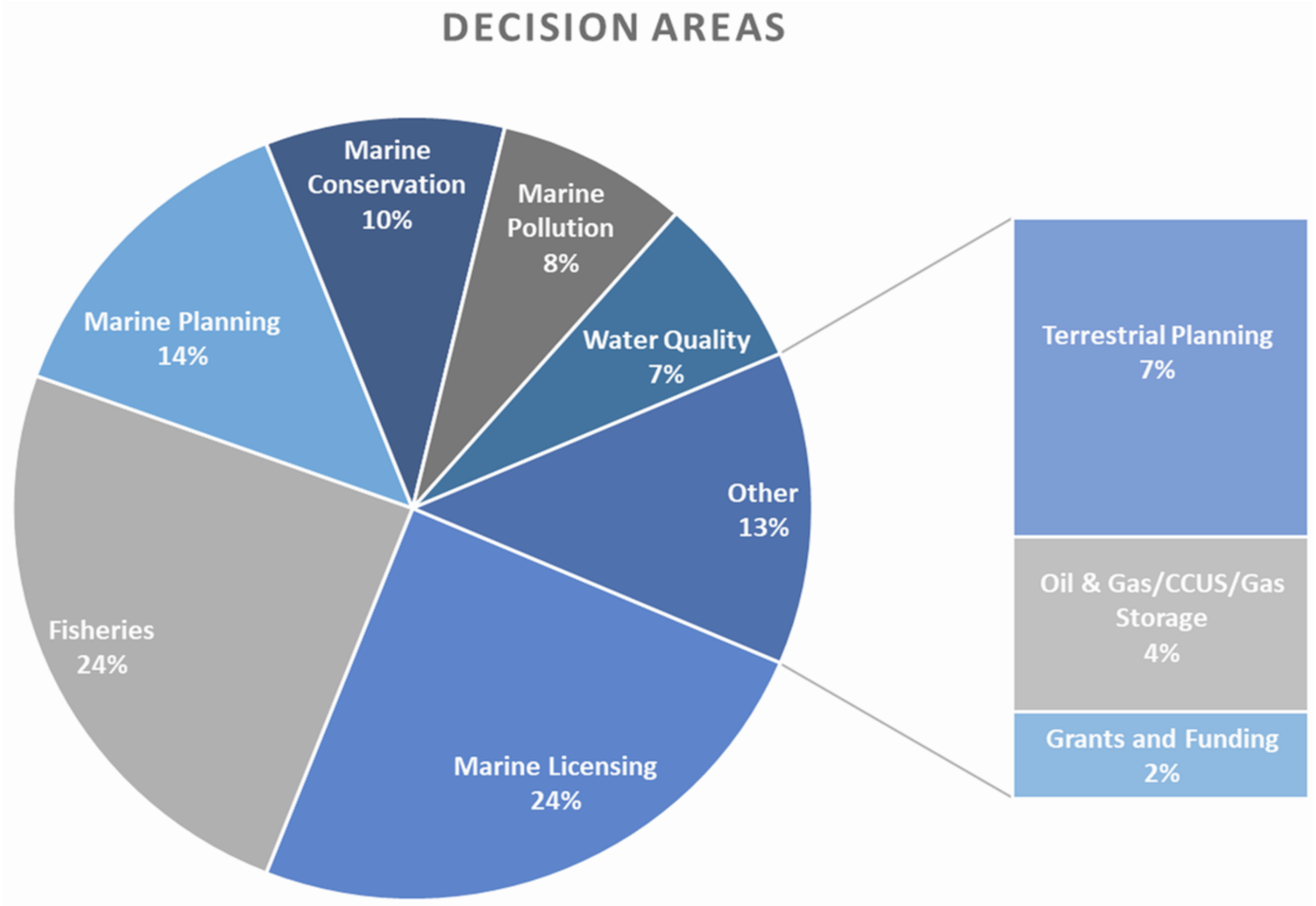


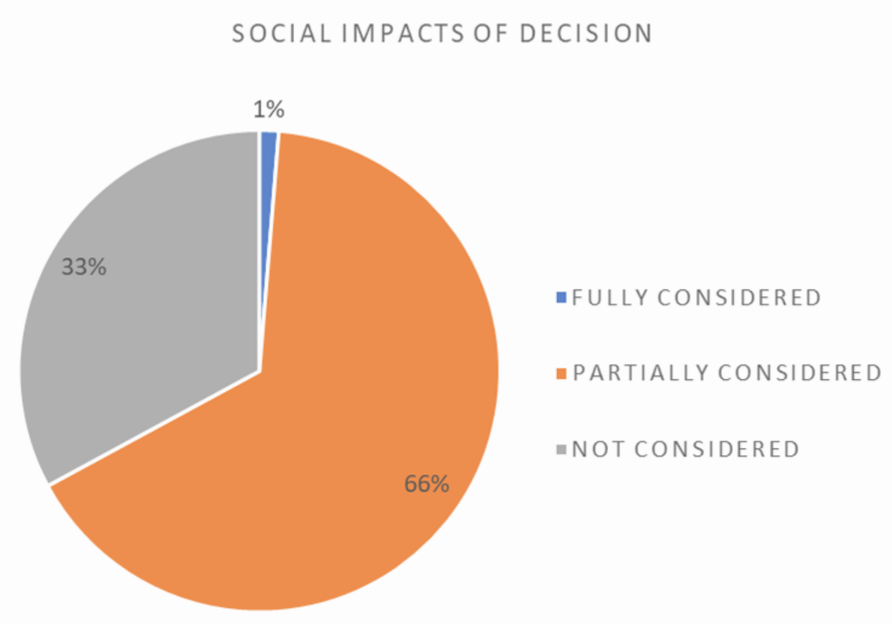
Why consider decision-making?

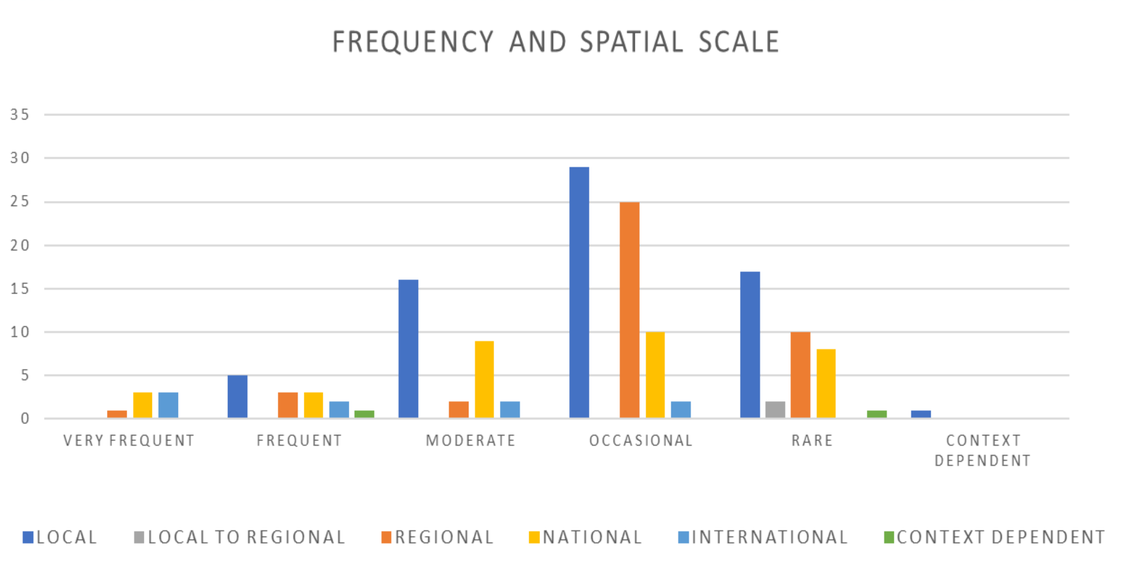
NCEA | Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment

Understanding the Marine Decision-Making Landscape

NCEA | Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment







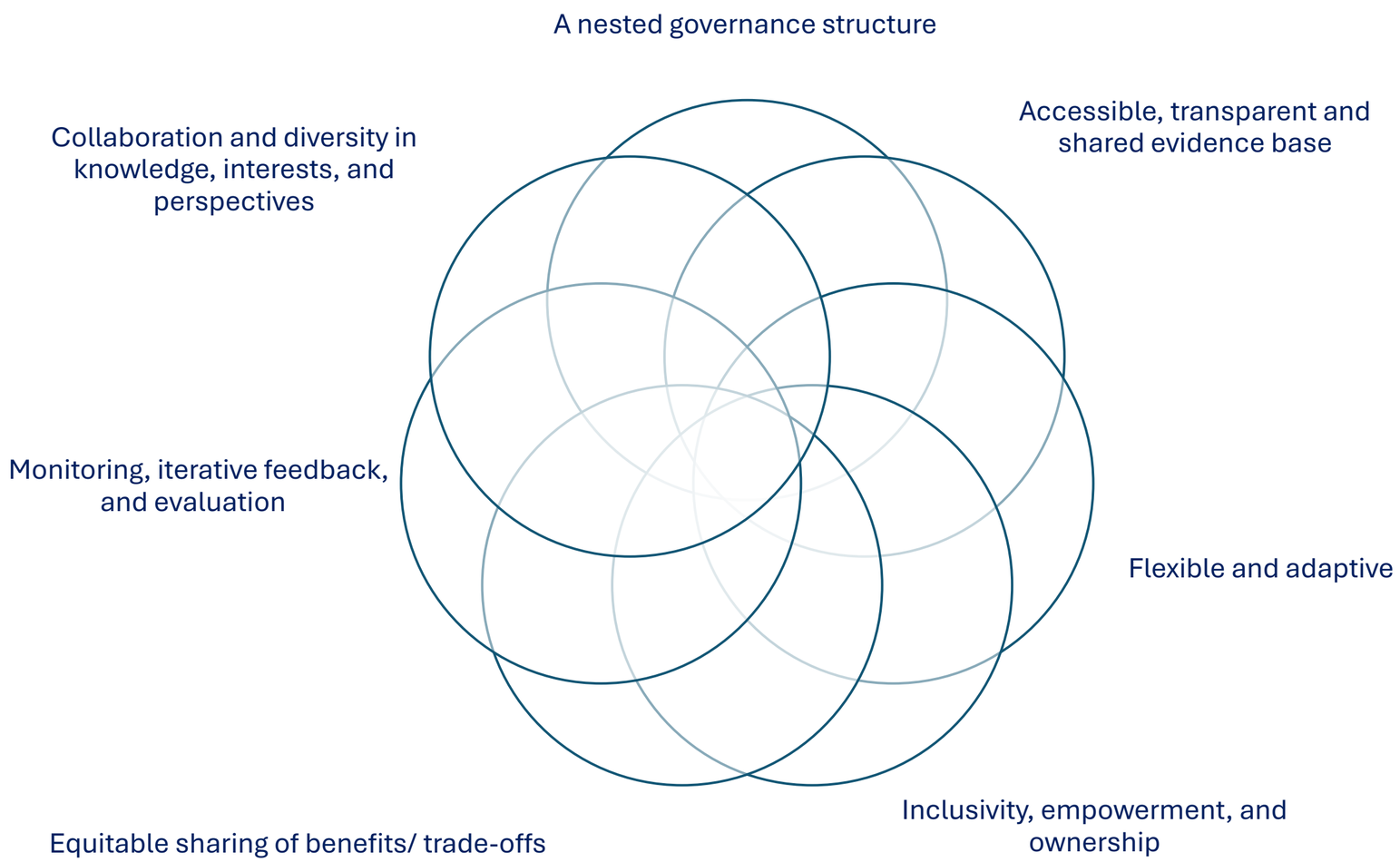
Sustainable and equitable decision-making

NCEA | Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment

What to consider?

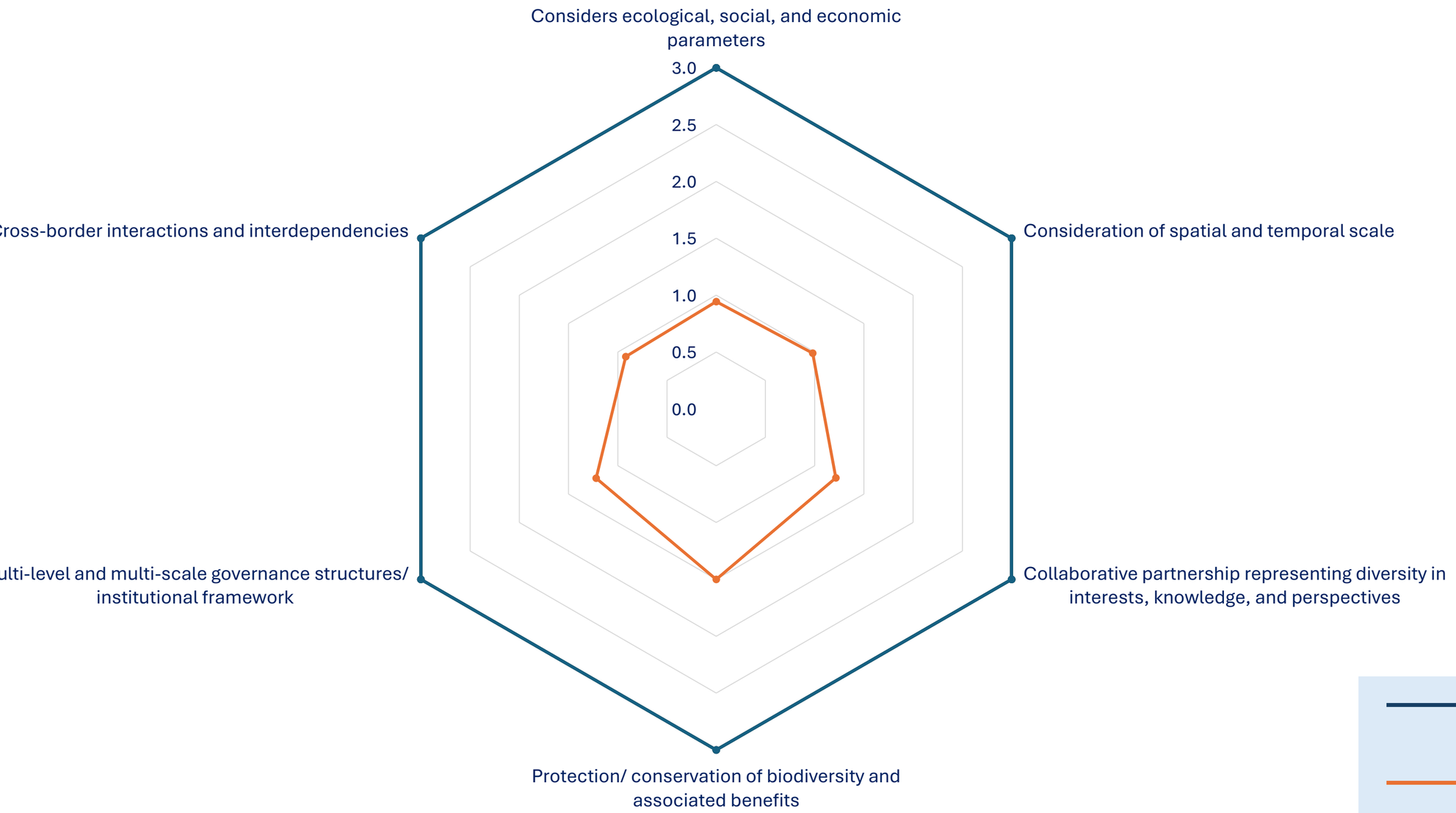
- Ecological, social and economic parameters
- Spatial and temporal scale
- Protection/ conservation of biodiversity and associated benefits
- National objectives and local priorities
- Cross-border interactions and interdependencies
- Legal and institutional frameworks and structures

How are decisions made?



Towards sustainable and equitable decision-making

NCEA | Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment



A comparison of key characteristics of sustainable and equitable decision-making between catalogued decisions and an idealised approach

Idealised decision

Current decisions (average)

Thanks for listening!

Acknowledgements

The MMO Evidence and Evaluation team, in particular Leonie Robinson, Meg Stafford, Emma Martin, Alice Walpole, Rachel Day, Roanna Goater, and Amy Flude.

All the decision makers and advisors who have taken the time to engage with us and been open to discussing how decisions are being made and what might be possible in terms of change.

Image credit: NE Flickr

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Restoring Nature

UK Blue Carbon Mapping Project

Ruth Williams,
The Wildlife Trusts

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

BLUE CARBON

The need to protect essential stores of carbon in our seas

Ruth Williams – The Wildlife Trusts

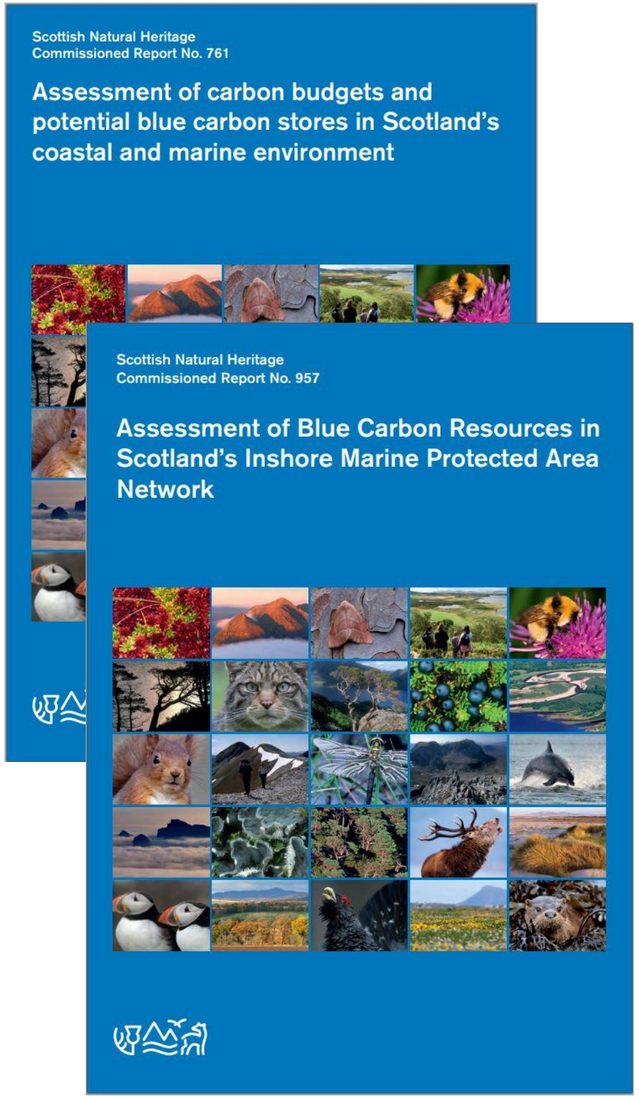
Blue carbon is simply the term for **carbon captured and stored by marine plants, animals and habitats**.

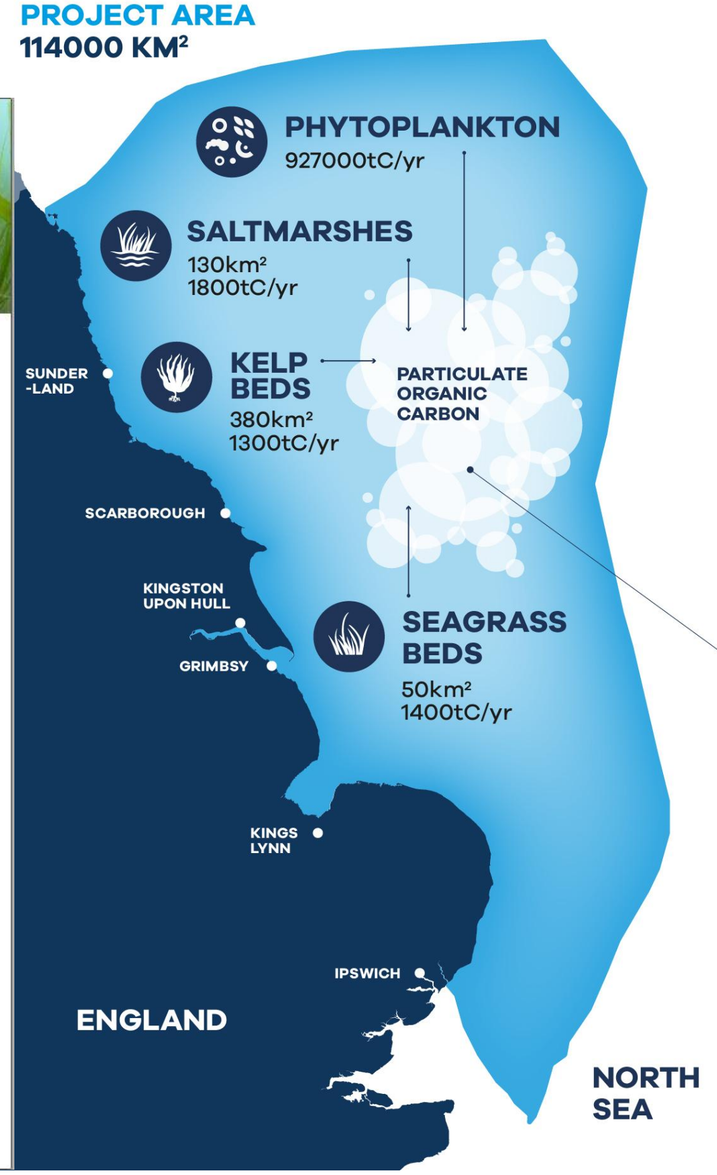
The Wildlife Trusts

RSPB

WWF | FOR YOUR WORLD

BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION





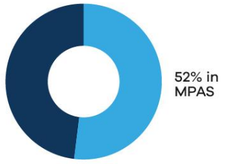
KEY

tC/yr
Organic carbon accumulation (tonnes per year)

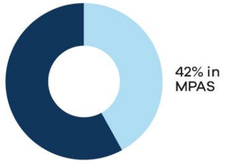
MtC
Million tonnes carbon

CARBON STORES

ORGANIC CARBON
37 MtC



INORGANIC CARBON
63 MtC



THE CARBON STORED IN THE TOP 10CM OF MARINE SEDIMENTS = 20% OF ALL FORESTS IN THE UK

Partnership Project

Project Partners: The Wildlife Trust, WWF & RSPB

Management: Bex Lynam and Dani Clifford TWT

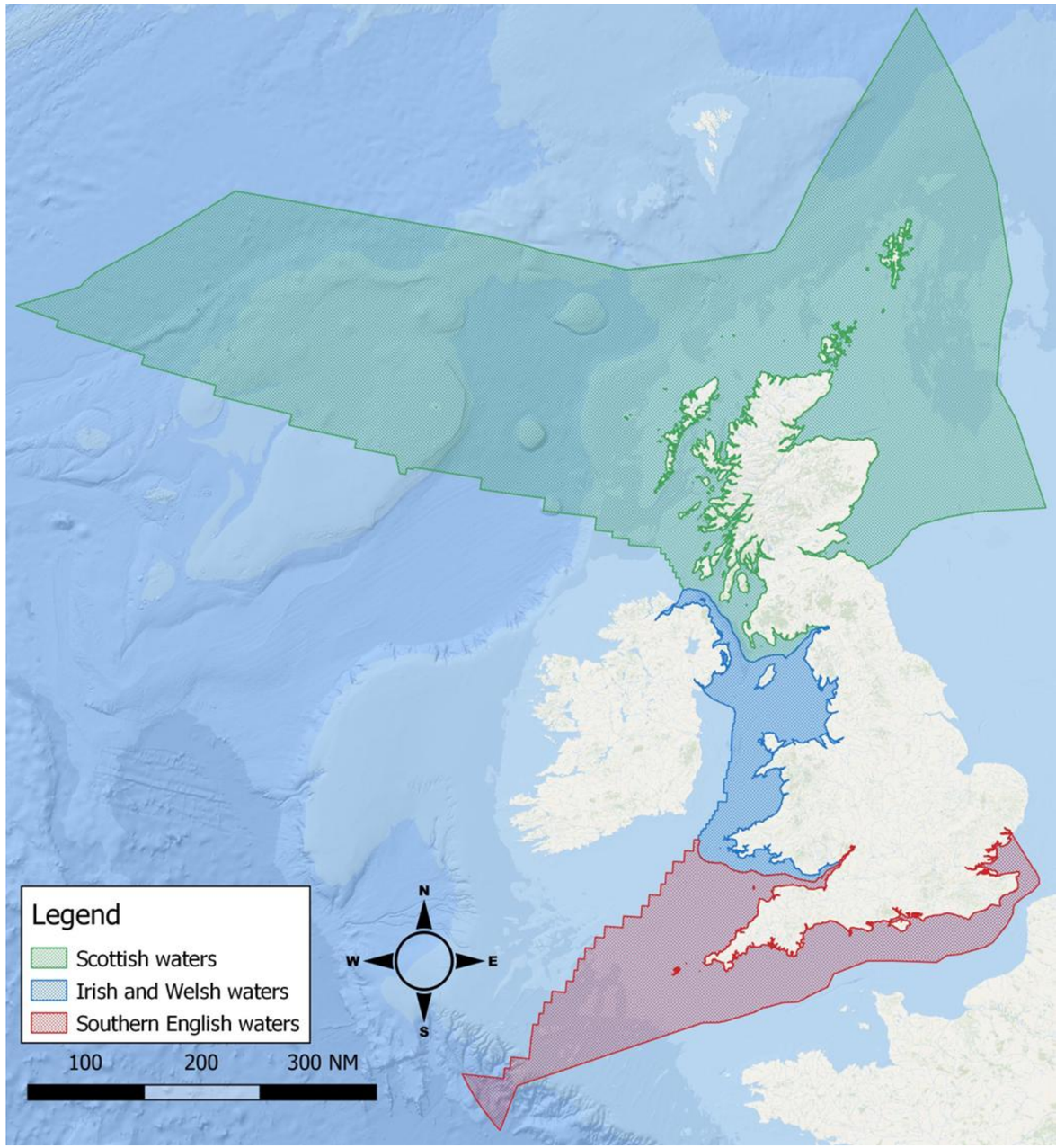
Research: SAMS (with MBA and Uni of St Andrews)

Expert Advisors: Prof. Dan Laffoley & Prof. John Baxter

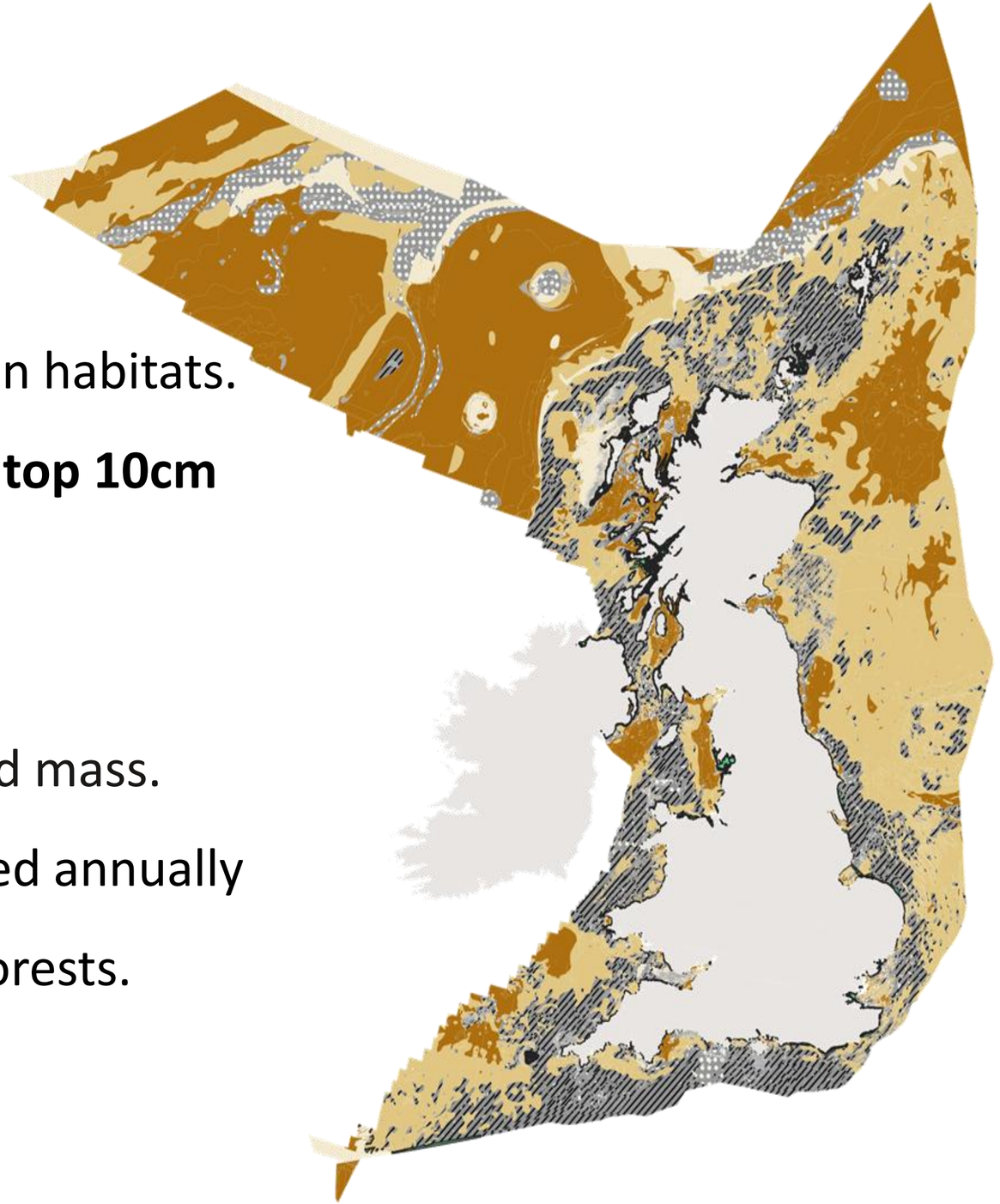
Advisory Group: Independent advisors, Environment Agency, MMO, Natural England, JNCC, Country representatives (from Welsh Government, IoM Government, DAERA, NatureScot, Marine Scotland), TCE & TCE Scotland

How did we do it?

- Comprehensive inventory of all blue carbon habitats across UK's and Isle of Man EEZ.
- Mapped the extent and distribution of all blue carbon habitats.
- Assessed the quantity of C stored in each.
- Assessed the average sequestration rate / year in each.



How much is down there?

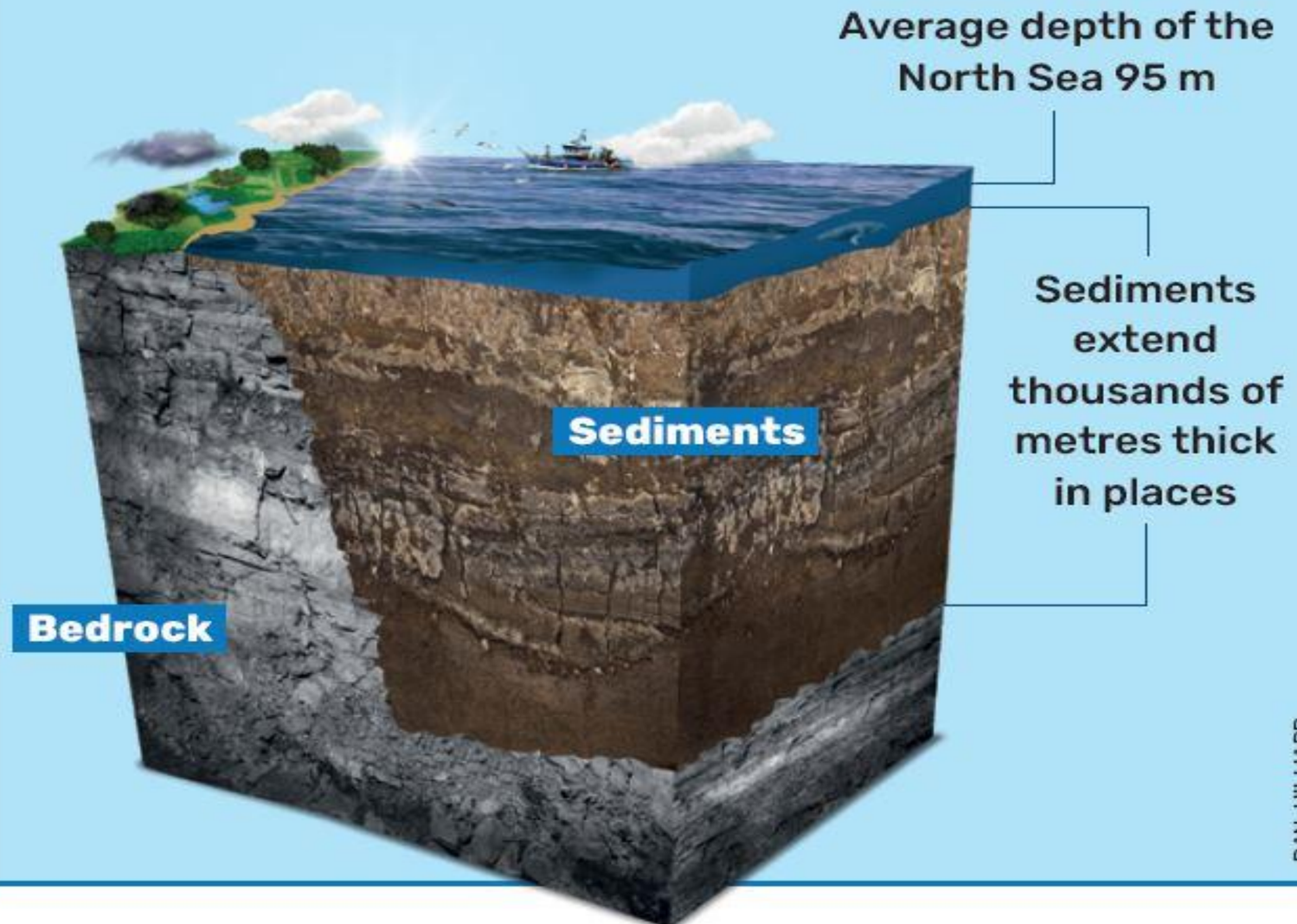


- First country in the world to map its blue carbon habitats.
- **244 million tonnes** of organic carbon stored in **top 10cm** of seabed.
- Over **98% in seabed sediments**.
- **885,000 kms^2** – over 3x the size of the UK's land mass.
- *Up to* **13 million tonnes** of organic carbon added annually to sediment stores – about 3x as much as UK forests.

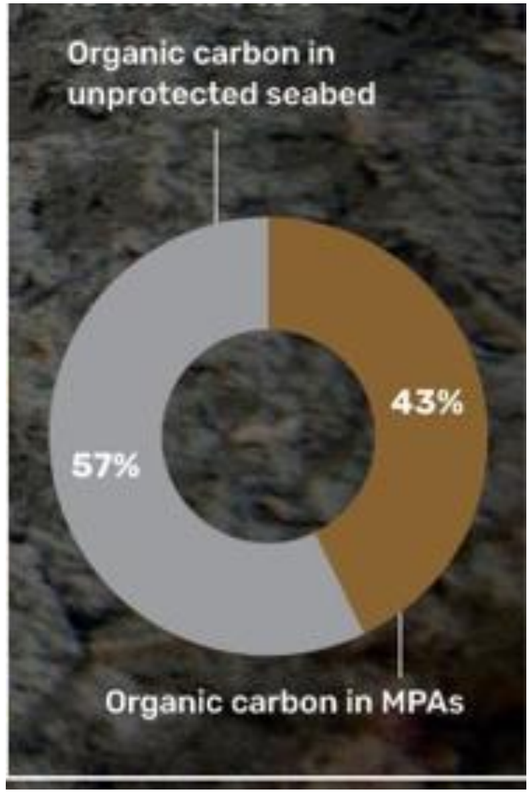
The Wildlife Trusts RSPB WWF FOR YOUR WORLD

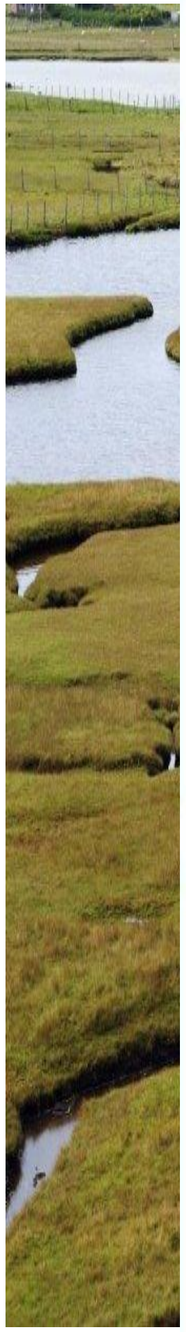
We have estimated the tip of the iceberg

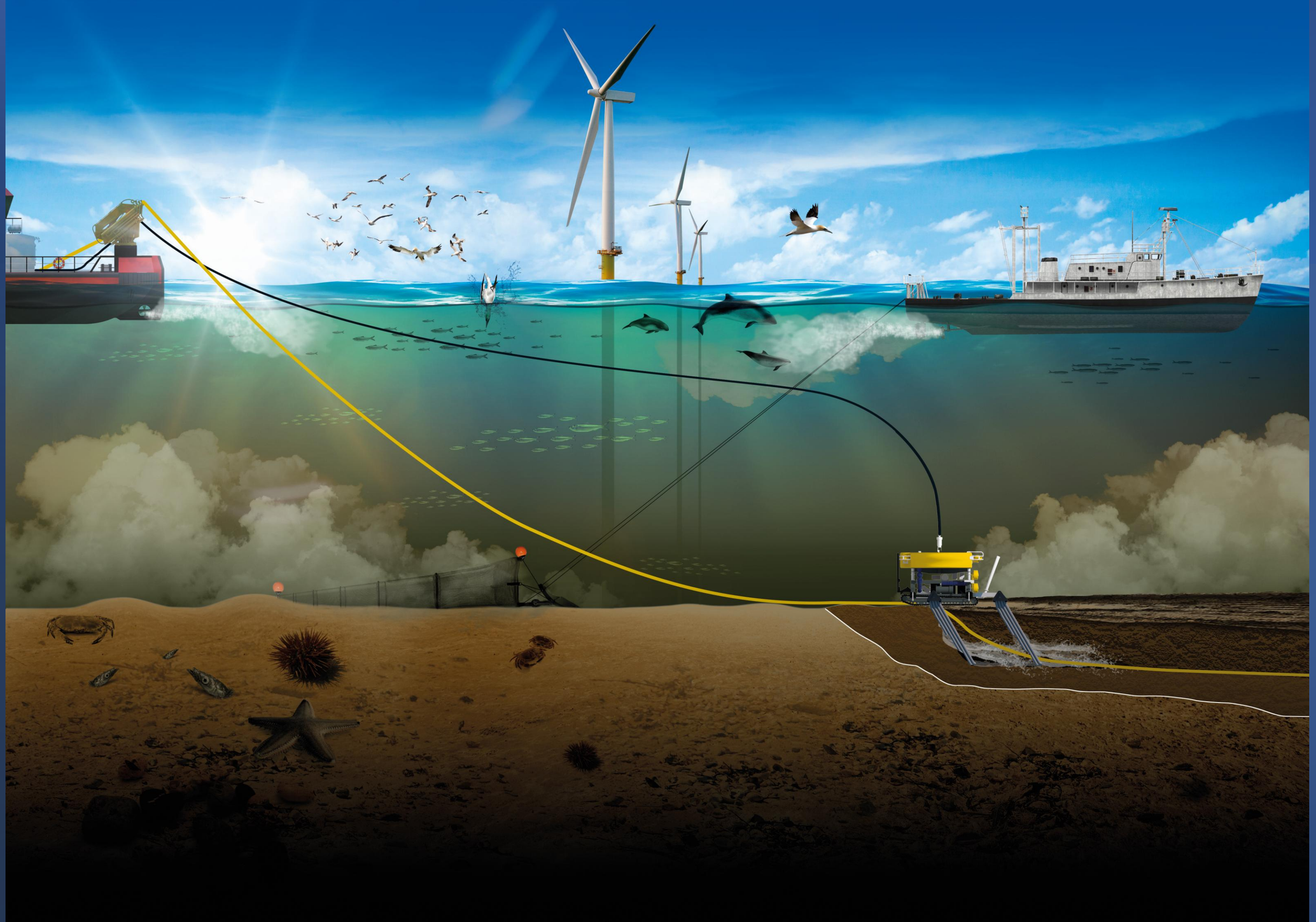
Seabed sediments in UK waters are thousands of metres thick in some places. It is the top layers that are the most at risk from the impacts of human activities.



- Coastal vegetated habitats (kelp, seagrass beds and saltmarshes) **cover just 1%** of UK seas but **contain 1.7% of organic carbon.**
- 286 000 tC/yr particulate organic carbon. **60%** of this is in saltmarsh.
- Marine Protected Areas **(MPAs) contain 43% of the organic carbon.**







What needs to change?

Better management of Marine Protected Areas

- All MPAs are protected from destructive activities that damage blue carbon.
- Account for both carbon and biodiversity in designating new protected areas.

Improved strategic planning of activities in UK seas

- Consider blue carbon in UK marine plans.
- Minimise the impacts of fishing and developments by undertaking blue carbon impact assessments.
- Transition fishing industries away from activities that damage the seabed.

More investment and research on protecting blue carbon

- Allocate funding to restore habitats including seagrass beds and saltmarshes.
- Support research and monitoring of blue carbon dynamics.
- Add seagrass and saltmarsh to the Greenhouse Gas Registry.

Take homes….

- Read and share reports - on our blue carbon web page.
- Mud is GREAT and a huge carbon store.
- MPAs contain 43% of the organic carbon but most is unprotected as not a feature.
- MPAs need to protect carbon as well as biodiversity.
- Include blue carbon in marine planning to avoid or minimise impacts.
- Learn more to fill in the gaps in knowledge.

Can we achieve well-managed and restored marine and coastal seascapes by 2030?

OCEAN ACTION IS CLIMATE ACTION!

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Restoring Nature

Towards Northern Ireland's Ocean Recovery – From Policy to Practical Marine Conservation

Robert Walsh,
Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

Towards Northern Ireland's Ocean Recovery

From Policy to Practical Marine Conservation

30th January 2025
Robert Walsh – NIMTF Officer
Coastal Futures 2025

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

Ulster Wildlife

RSPB

WORKING GROUP

Northern Ireland environment link

STEERING GROUP

SHARK TRUST

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

Friends of the Earth

WWT
For wetlands. For life.

Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS HERITAGE TRUST

National Trust

MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Our journey towards healthy seas and ocean recovery

The Northern Ireland Marine Task Force is a coalition of non-governmental organisations working together towards, healthy productive and resilient seas and is funded by Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation.

2007

NIMTF established.

Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 paves the way for the designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) and the creation of marine plans and updated licensing regimes.

2011

NIMTF campaign for ambitious Marine Bill and Marine Management Organisation (MMO) equivalent for Northern Ireland.

2011

The NIMTF 'Act UP Campaign' resulted in 4000 letters to MLAs calling for a strengthened Marine Bill.

2012

NI Environment Minister forms a new marine division inside the department (DoE) for coordinated marine activities.

2013

2015

NIMTF campaign for the designation of four proposed MCZs: Rathlin Island, Waterfoot, Outer Belfast Lough and Carlingford Lough.

2015

NIMTF launches the MCZ Roadshow which results in over 1400 signatures in support of better marine protection for NI.

2016

All four MCZs were formally designated protecting a host of important marine features including; deep seabed, black guillemot, seagrass beds, ocean quahog and seapens.

2017

NIMTF leads the NI voice in campaigning for an ecosystem based UK Fisheries Bill.

2018

NIMTF and academic partners submit critical evidence on the need to strengthening the ecosystem based approach within the draft Northern Ireland Marine Plan.

2020

NIMTF cautiously welcome the UK Fisheries Act (2020), in particular new commitments to setting climate change and sustainability objectives.

2020

NIMTF engage on the development of NI MPA [illegible] proposals on fisheries

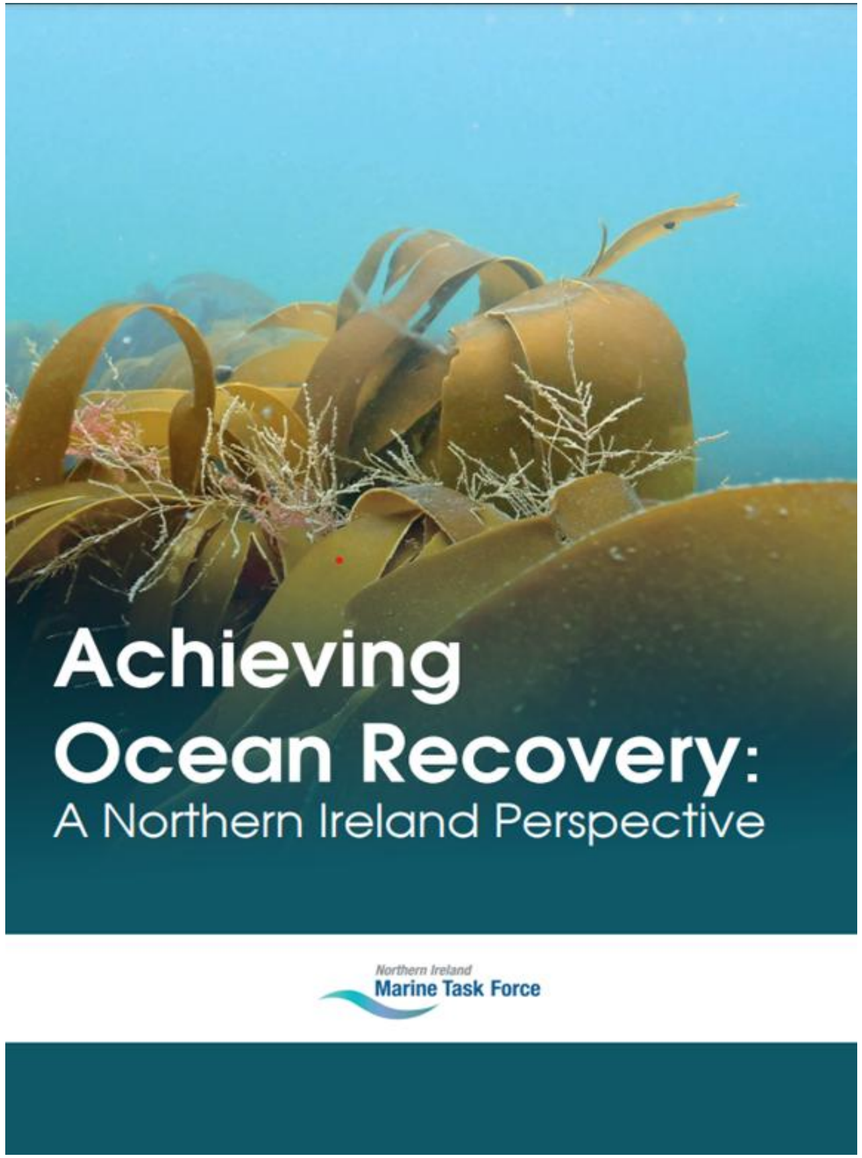
2021

NIMTF launches a new vision for ocean recovery in NI and continues to work with DAERA, the fishing industry and our members to deliver for nature at sea.

2030

Current Status of marine environment in NI

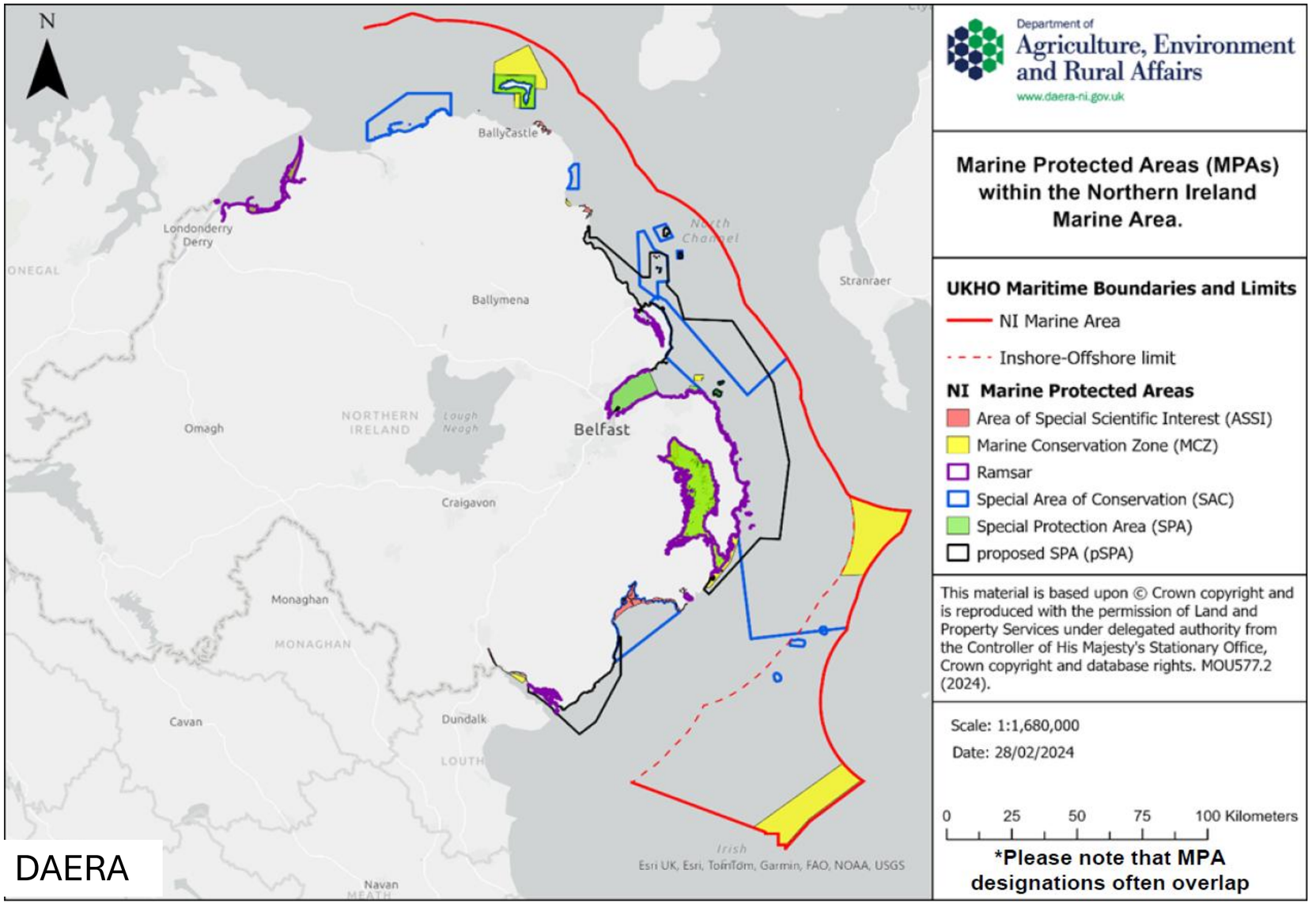
- 12th worst out of 240 regions for biodiversity loss
- 38% designated -> <10% actively managed*
- History of political instability
- NIMTF has a 'Marine Vision' for Ocean Recovery



*NISRA NI Environmental Statistics Report 2023

Vision: Recovering Biodiversity

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force



DAERA

- Management Plans
- Transparent assessment
- Finalise proposed SPAs
- Enforcement

Relevant Policy: MPA Strategy Review (2024)

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Relevant Policy: Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy (2024)

Relevant Policy: Seabird Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2024)

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

The Northern Ireland Marine Taskforce (NIMTF) is a coalition of non-government environmental organisations – it includes RSPB, Ulster Wildlife, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, National Trust, Friends of the Earth, Marine Conservation Society, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Surfers Against Sewage, Shark Trust, Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust and Northern Ireland Environment Link. The NIMTF has the support of approximately 100,000 local people. We are working towards healthy, productive and resilient seas for Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force response to: Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy 2024

Submitted: 16th December 2024

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

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Northern Ireland Marine Task Force response to: Seabird Conservation Strategy and Action Plan 2024

Submitted: 16th December 2024

Vision: Sustainable Fisheries

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

DEFINING A UK GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO END OVERFISHING

PART THREE: ESTABLISHING THE ENABLING CONDITIONS – DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

> The longer it takes for a strategy to come out that aids sustainability or restoration, the potential more impact is going to take place in the meantime, which means you're going to have to double your efforts to return back to the original state.
>
> ROBERT WALSH

> There has to be short term goals but also ensuring that there's continual review towards those goals. DR MATHIEU LUNDY

Relevant Policy: Fisheries Management Plans

Oceana

NIFF Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

"Partnership working will be key "

A joint response to the consultation on the draft Joint Fisheries Statement (April 2022) by:

The Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation

and,

The Northern Ireland Marine Task Force.

Co-Fish Aims:

(1) Coordinate knowledge sharing between government departments and stakeholders to improve the efficacy of the MPA network.

(2) ensure regulations are delivering benefits for the marine environment through habitat & species protection and restoration.

3) Ensure the livelihoods of the NI fishing industry is not hindered by such designations.

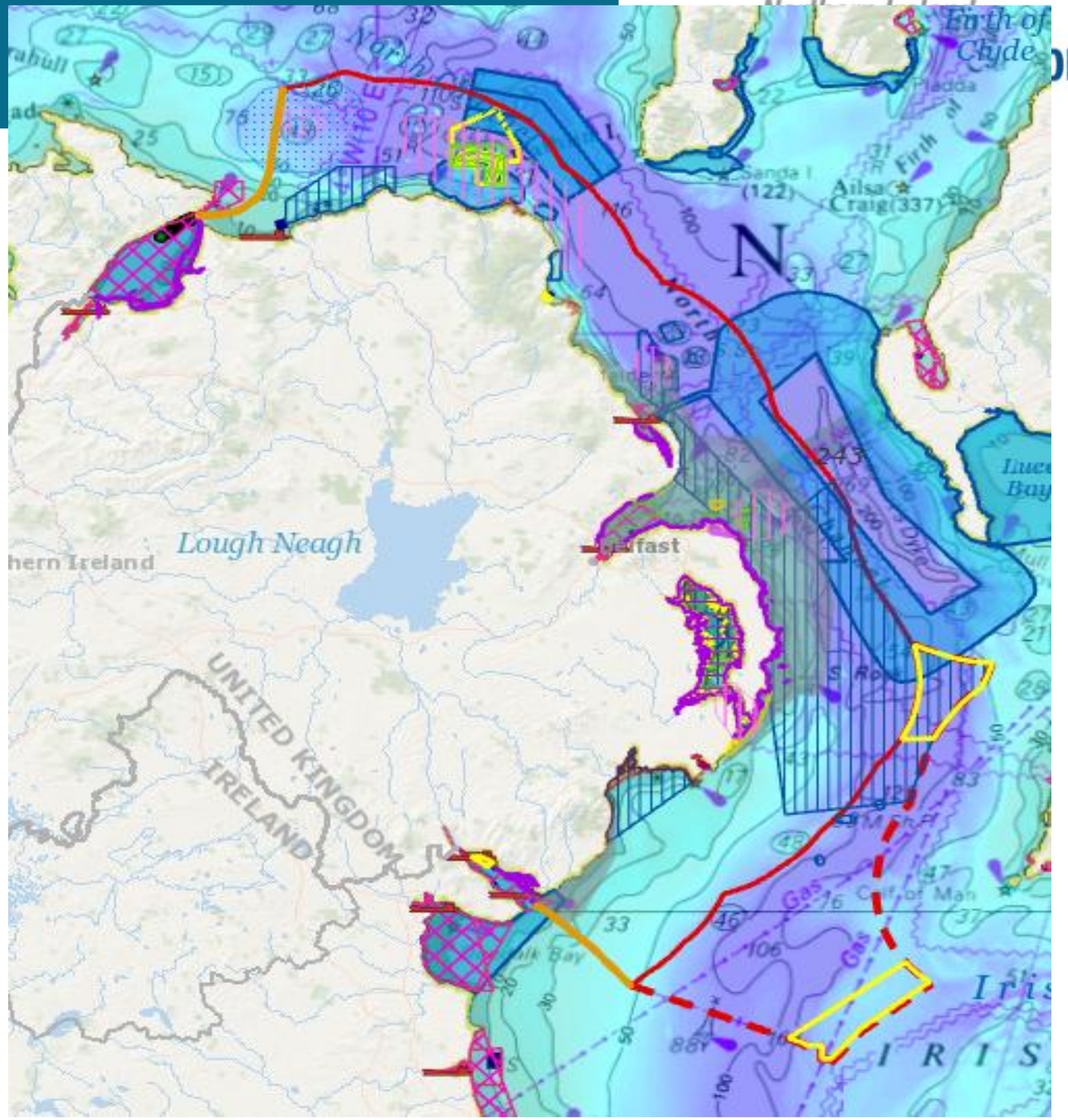
CO-FISH

Fisheries and Conservation Partnership

Vision: Sustainable Development at Sea

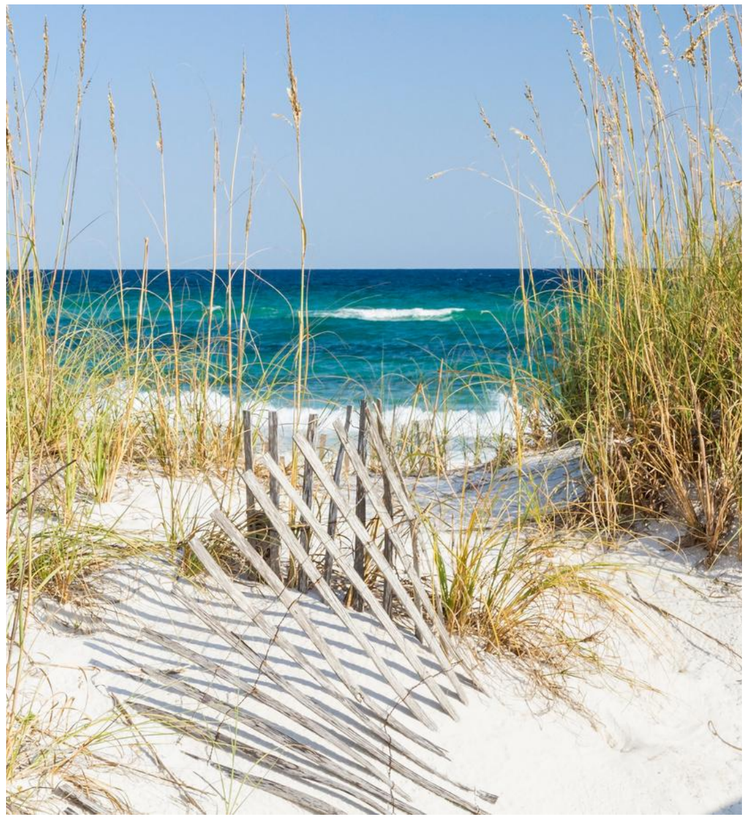
Relevant Policy: Draft NI Marine Plan

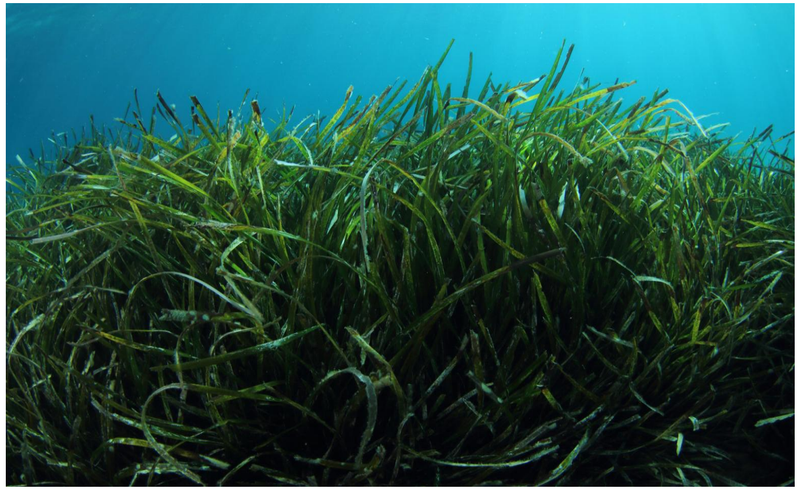
Relevant Policy: Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan

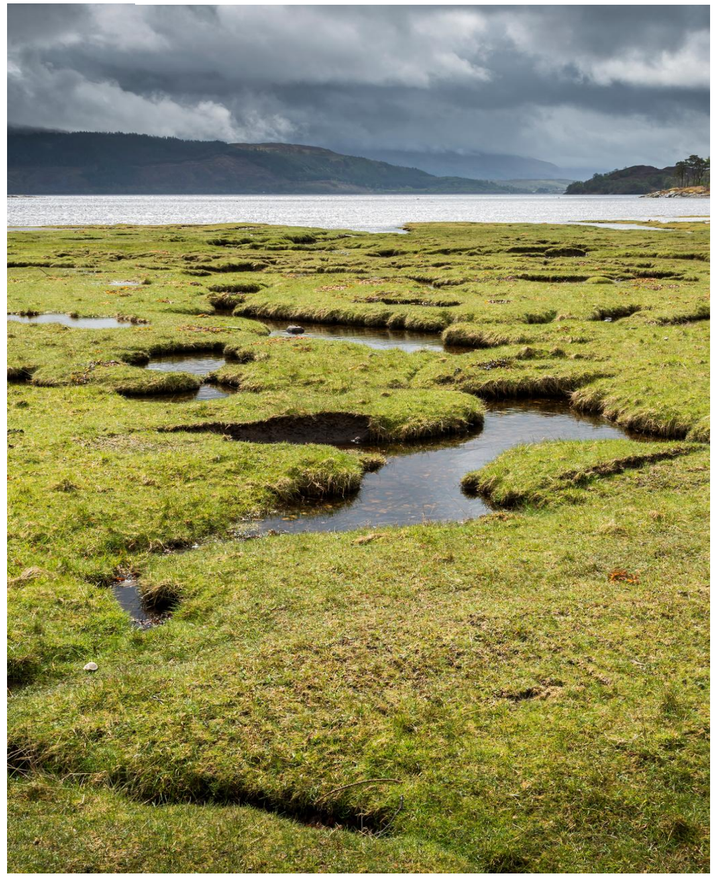


Vision: Climate Action

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force







Relevant Policy: Blue Carbon Action Plan (2024)

Relevant Policy: Climate Change (NI) Act 2022

Relevant Policy: NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme – Round 3 (2024)

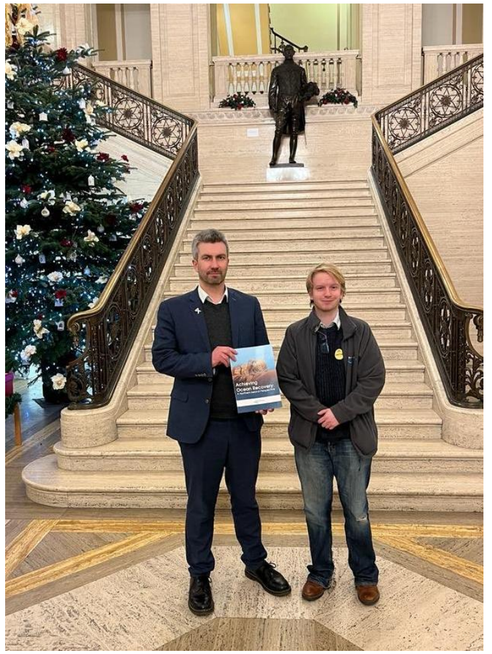
Vision: Raising Voices

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Local People → **Local Voices** → **Local Action**

Vision: Raising Voices

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force



Achieving Impact

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Engagement

Awareness

Northern Ireland Assembly

Questions put to Minister

AQW 18601/22-27	Mr Mark Durkan *(SDLP - Foyle)*	To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether his Department has assessed aquaculture activity at Foyle Lough to ensure that it is being managed sustainably. + Display Answer	21/11/2024	Answered on 28/11/2024	Foyle; Fish farming; Sustainable development; Seas and oceans; Borders
AQW 18600/22-27	Mr Mark Durkan *(SDLP - Foyle)*	To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs whether his Department has assessed the current levels of (i) inter-tidal hand-gathering of shellfish species; and (ii) bait-digging within Foyle Lough.	21/11/2024	To be answered by 06/12/2024	Shellfish; Fisheries; Foyle
AQW 18599/22-27	Mr Mark Durkan *(SDLP - Foyle)*	To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail (i) any action he is taking to ensure the cessation of all unlicensed aquaculture activities; and (ii) any engagement he has had with the Loughs Agency in relation to delivering effective enforcement, particularly in relation to Foyle Lough. + Display Answer	21/11/2024	Answered on 28/11/2024	Fish farming; Licensing; Loughs Agency; Foyle; Reserved matters

Member Action

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

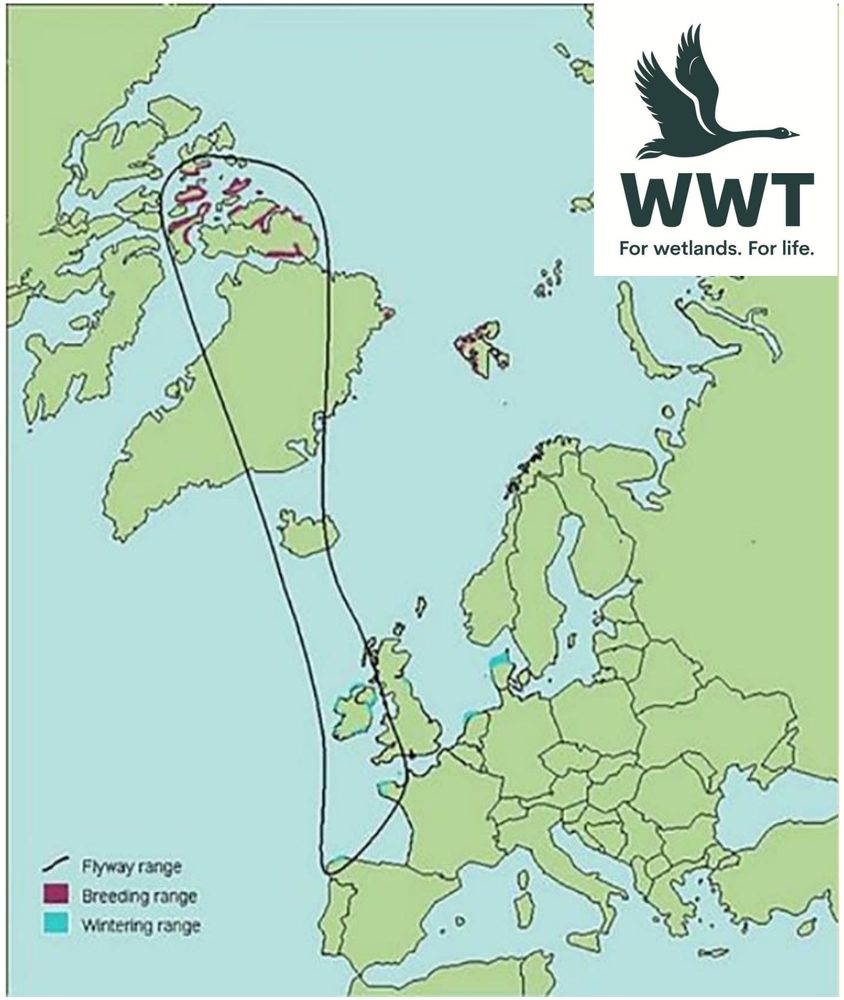
LIFE Raft – Invasive Non-Native Invasive Species Eradication

KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL

Health, Oceans and Communities

Native Oyster Nurseries Restoration

Coastal Adaptation and Management



Saltmarsh Restoration and the Big Brent Weekend

Action

Politicians

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

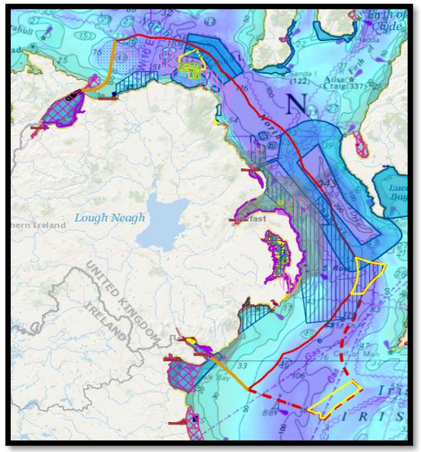
Members

Departments

Northern Ireland Assembly

Communities

Industries



What we need now

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

- Urgent Action
- Dedicated Funding
- Political Leadership
- Public Ownership
- Cross-Sector Approach
- Transboundary Approach

Thank you!

Northern Ireland Marine Task Force

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www.nimtf.org

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

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Session six

Restoring Nature

Unlocking saltmarsh superpowers

Sarah Fowler,
Chief Executive, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

Coastal Futures Conference 2025

The Path to 2030

WWT
For wetlands. For life.

UNLOCKING SALTMARSH SUPERPOWERS

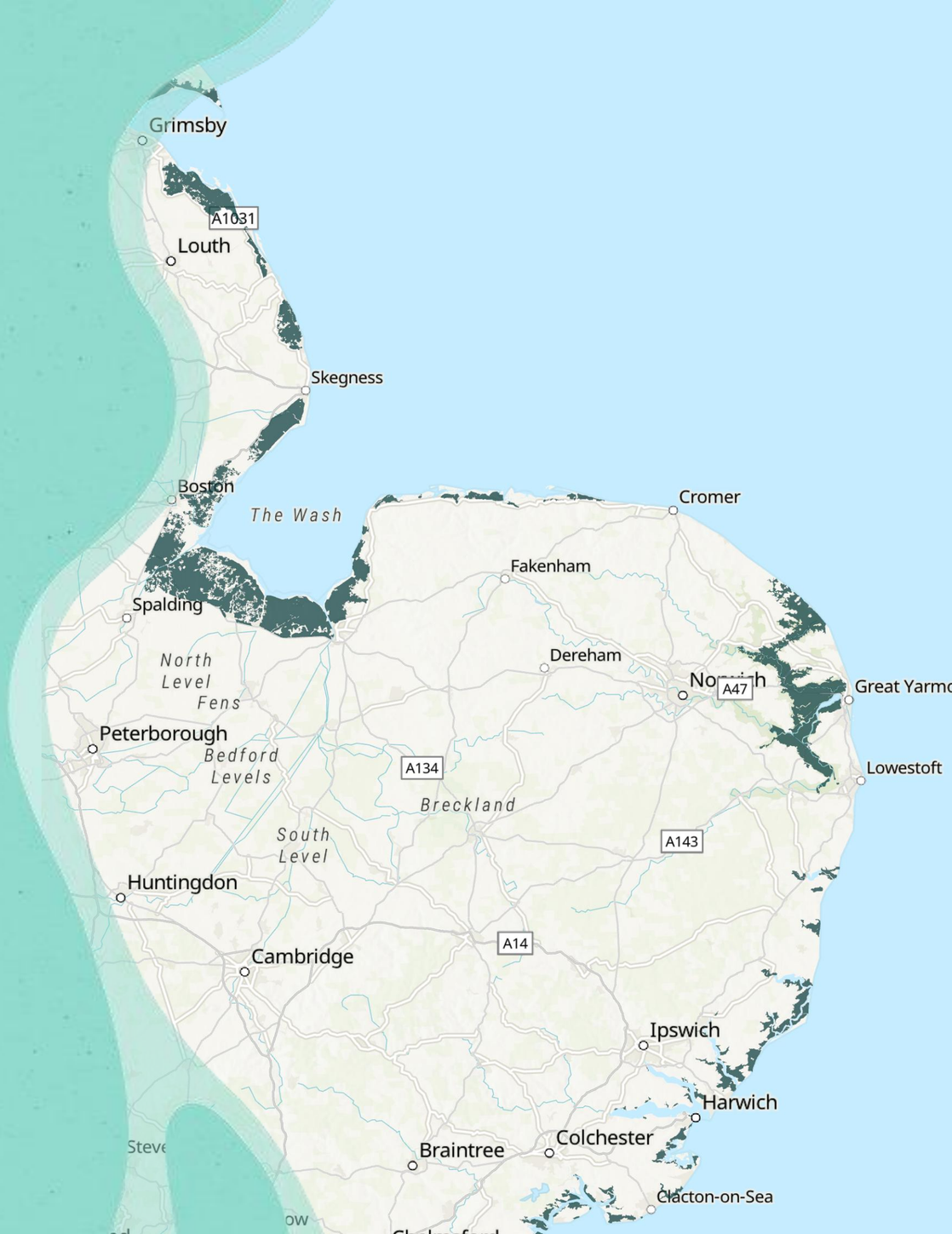
SARAH FOWLER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WWT

WE ARE WWT

WWT
For wetlands. For life.

SPATIAL OPPORTUNITY

- WWT investigated the potential of restoring 100,000 hectares of wetlands around the UK and mapped saltmarsh potential
- We found 170,000 hectares of suitable land – our first goal is to restore 22,000
- This is the first step – and likely the easiest



CHALLENGES

- Land availability
- Infrastructure
- What's already there
- Awareness of SMPs
- Data and permissions
- Community perceptions

HOW DO WE FUND THIS?

- The Saltmarsh Carbon Code could signal a sea change in funding opportunities
- Make saltmarsh an investable proposition by valuing the full range of benefits it brings
- Investigate opportunities for bundling and stacking benefits

GOING FORWARD

- Keep testing, learning and sharing our findings together
- We need funding solutions and incentives for landowners
- We will talk about saltmarsh superpowers, and we need you to as well

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saltmarshsolutions@wwt.org.uk

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Session Six Panel Debate

Restoring Nature

Can we achieve well-managed and restored marine and coastal seascapes by 2030?

Chair: Professor Dickon Howell, Howell Marine Consulting

Jasmine Isa Qureshi, Ecologist and Writer
Laura Seddon, Marine Management Organisation
Ruth Williams, The Wildlife Trusts
Robert Walsh, Northern Ireland Marine Task Force
Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Jo Ratcliffe, Environment Agency
Samir Whitaker, Orsted

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Ocean and Coastal Futures

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