Coastal Futures 2026

Delivered by OCF

# Coastal Futures 2026

## From ambition to action

Royal Geographical Society, London & online

28 & 29 January

# Delegate Notes

Ocean and Coastal Futures

The Royal Geographical Society, London & Online

conference@coastms.co.uk www.coastal-futures.net Ocean and Coastal Futures @oceanandcoastalfutures

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# Conference Details

Coastal Futures 2026

Delivered by OCF

**Wi-Fi**: CoastalFutures26, **Password:** CF_Conf26

**Social Media:** Please use #CoastalFutures26 and tag us on the relevant pages, LinkedIn: Ocean and Coastal Futures, Instagram: @oceanandcoastalfutures

**Registration:** Registration opens at 08.30 on day one and from 08:15 on day two.

**Access to the lecture theatre:** The main doors into the lecture theatre will close just before the conference starts just before the beginning of each session. If you arrive late or wish to re-enter the theatre after this time, you will need to enter via the back doors downstairs, or access the balcony via the main staircase.

**Timing:** A bell will ring 10 minutes before the start of each session and a final reminder will be 3 minutes before the doors close.

**Refreshment Breaks:** Tea and coffee will be served **during registration on day one and all breaks**. To enable attendees to be seated in the auditorium on time, we will **not** be serving teas/coffee upon arrival on **day 2**. There are two main refreshment breaks, with savoury food at the first break and refreshments and biscuits in the second. All food is vegetarian or vegan. No food is allowed in the theatre. Please do not bring any citrus fruits or citrus flavoured teas or drinks to the conference as we have a delegate with a severe allergy. We recommend that you bring a water bottle.

**Wednesday 28th evening reception:** Wine and soft drinks will be served from 17:45 - 19:00. The building must be vacated by 19:30.

**Networking:** A delegate list is available on our website and has been provided in the joining instructions email.

**Photography & filming:** Please note that photography and filming is taking place at this event. The photographs and videos may appear on our website or other promotional material. If you would prefer not to be photographed or on video, please let the camera operators or registration desk know.

**Q&A:** We will be using the Slido app for Q&A. Instructions will be given on the day.

**Quiet Space:** During sessions most rooms in RGS building can be utilised as quiet space. During conference breaks the Council Room will be made available for dedicated use. The Council room is **not for taking phone calls or meetings - should this be required please ask about available spaces at reception.**

**Comfort:** If you need more regular breaks or are uncomfortable sitting for too long, consider using the balcony area at the top of the Ondaatje theatre during the event – accessible via the stairs to the right of the cloak room. This will allow you to come and go more easily without disturbing the speakers. If you need fresh air during the day, you can access the RGS garden at the back of the building. If you leave the venue, remember to take your conference pass with you for re-entrance. The Society is a non-smoking venue.

**Feedback:** Shortly after the event you will be sent a link to an online evaluation survey.

**Conference outputs:** The Coastal Futures online archive will host the programme and delegate notes. The conference keynote presentations and sessions will be recorded.

**Valuables:** You may store bags and equipment in the RGS cloakroom but we cannot take responsibility or guarantee their safety.

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# Venue & Accessibility

The event will take place in the heart of South Kensington's arts and science district, in one of London’s most charming and iconic venues - The Royal Geographic Society. The Grade II* listed building combines unique character with modern facilities to create a perfect backdrop for the event.

View the location here.

**Accessibility:**

There are two spaces in the Ondaatje Lecture Theatre allocated for wheelchair users and a ramp can be provided for speakers to access the stage. There are a set of steps on the ground floor of the venue, but a stair lift can be made available.

If you have any accessibility requirements you can let us know when completing your ticket booking, or contact us directly at **conference@coastms.co.uk.**

For further information visit the RGS accessibility information page.

A virtual tour of the Society’s main spaces is available on the RGS website to help you familiarise yourself with the layout of our public spaces before you arrive.

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# OCF & Coastal Futures 2026

**Ocean and Coastal Futures (OCF) is excited to welcome delegates in-person and from across the world online for our hybrid Coastal Futures 2026 conference.**

The long-running Coastal Futures conference series has been a staple event for the UK ocean, coastal and water sectors for over three decades and is the largest ocean event of its kind in the UK.

The 2025 conference was the biggest ever, with over 780 delegates from 285 organisations, with 585 in-person and over 200 online attendees. In 2026 we are honoured once again to be joined by Minister Emma Hardy, who delivered the opening address in 2025.

Ocean and Coastal Futures (OCF) exists to convene, connect and share. We are on a mission to improve sustainable ocean management by empowering practitioners with the knowledge and connections they need.

As well as Coastal Futures, we run a series of high-impact events, including 'Blue Finance' and the UK's keystone marine restoration event, ReMeMaRe, an ongoing collaboration with the Environment Agency. We host webinars, such as our Ocean Justice and Marine Restoration series and we are working with partners to build a regional conference series across England on the state of the marine environment. We are the home of OCF news, jobs and events, providing targeted high-quality information to our informed and specialist subscriber base - the largest specialist group of ocean & coastal practitioners.

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# From Ambition to Action


**The ocean underpins our climate, our economy, and our well-being. Yet rising demand for space and resources makes the future of our seas more contested than ever.**

Coastal Futures 2026 will bring together leaders and practitioners from across sectors to move beyond ambition and into action, navigating our shared future by exploring the policies, partnerships, and innovations needed to deliver a thriving ocean for all.

## Themes:

- **Shared stewardship:** Exploring the collaborative efforts needed to manage our ocean and coasts. This theme will highlight how different sectors — government, industry, NGOs, academics, and coastal communities — can work in partnership on sustainable resource management through place-based approaches, moving away from fragmented efforts.
- **Balancing blue growth:** How can society balance economic development, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the need to protect marine ecosystems and minimise pollution? This theme explores the challenges and opportunities of the growing blue economy.
- **Coastal resilience & community well-being:** Centring on the connection between the health of our rivers and seas and the well-being of coastal communities. The theme will address how society can adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable livelihoods. We want to highlight the work of those building bridges and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities.
- **Innovating for a healthy ocean:** Highlighting the role of science, technology, and finance in creating a sustainable ocean future, this theme will explore how new solutions and innovative financial tools can support policy development, marine conservation, improve ocean management, and drive the restoration of degraded habitats.
- **Planning our ocean space:** Delving into the complexities of planning and sharing space both inshore and offshore, we will examine how to effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites. This theme will highlight the planning tools and approaches needed to reduce conflict and promote a more sustainable and equitable use of the ocean.
- **Action & accountability:** Focusing on turning ambition into reality, this theme will address the policy frameworks, legal instruments, and accountability mechanisms - both public and private sector - needed to ensure that commitments to ocean sustainability are met, and that progress is monitored and reported on.

**Across two days, the conference aims to challenge thinking and move debate forward in an informative and collaborative way.**

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# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| 09:55 | **Welcome** **David Tudor,** Co-Founder & Director, OCF |
| 10:15 | **Ministerial address - Emma Hardy, MP** |
| 10:30 | **SHARED STEWARDSHIP**<br>Exploring how different sectors — government, industry, NGOs, academics, and coastal communities — can move away from fragmented efforts to work in partnership on sustainable resource management through place-based approaches.<br>Chair**: Natasha Bradshaw**, Co-Founder and Director, Ocean and Coastal Futures<br><br>**Speakers:**<br>• **Kirsten Carter**, RSPB: Together We Fly – A Collaboration Story of Sandeels, Seabirds and Conservation Success<br>• **Kim Wide**,Take A Part: A "Community-First" Creative Framework for Cultural Democracy and Ocean-led Environmental Justice<br>• **Duncan MacRae**, The Protected Areas Foundation: Community 30x30: Supporting 30 community groups to work towards effective management of at least 30 marine protected areas across England and Scotland by 2030<br>• **Emily Bulled,** AIFCAs: Restoring Balance: Inshore Fisheries, Social Justice, and Local Governance in a Changing Environment<br>• **Sahar Stevenson-Jones**, Society for Ecological Restoration: The Collaborations We Need for the Ocean We Want |

# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11:45 | **Quick Speakers** | • **Naomi Roesner**, Sea Ranger Service<br>• **Chris McDougall**, AtkinsRealis<br>• **Shovi Anjum,** Solway Firth Partnership |
| 12:00 | **Break** | |
| 13:00 | **COASTAL RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**<br>Centring on the connection between the health of our rivers and seas and the well-being of coastal communities. The theme will address how society can adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable livelihoods. We want to highlight the work of those building bridges and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities<br><br>Chair: **Beccy MacDonald Lofts**, Lead Officer, LGA Coastal SIG<br>• **Jaap Flikweert**, Haskoning and Councillor Harry Blathwayt: Coastwise: helping coastal communities plan for coastal change<br>• **Karen Thomas**, East Suffolk Council: Resilient Coasts - Strategy to Action<br>• **Justin Ridgewell**, Environment Agency and Cornwall Council: The road less travelled – charting Bude's unique coastal adaptation journey<br>• **Heather Coutts**, AtkinsRealis, The Moors at Arne: Delivering coastal habitat resilience<br>• **Mairi MacArthur**, Environment Agency, CoastCraft: Visualising Coastal Change Block by Block with Minecraft Education<br>• Councillor **Mark Packard** from East Suffolk Council |
| 14:30 | **Break** | |

# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

**PLANNING OUR OCEAN SPACE**

Delving into the complexities of planning and sharing space both inshore and offshore, we will examine how to effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, fishing, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites. This theme will highlight the planning tools and approaches needed to reduce conflict and promote a more sustainable and equitable use of the ocean.

15:30 Chair: **Paul Gilliland**, Strategic Advisor and Deputy Director, MMO

- **Jo Pollett,** ABPmer: Mapping What Matters: Co-designing collection of data on social and cultural values of English fishing grounds
- **Richard Howells**, Marine Directorate: Thinking Big: Enabling Offshore Wind & Marine Resilience through Strategic Compensation in Scotland
- **Rebecca Kavanagh**, Queen's University Belfast, Navigating Co-existence & Co-location in the marine space

# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

**Exclusive showcase of The Crown Estate's Marine Delivery Routemap.** Built on world-class data, this innovative digital platform will provide dynamic modelling and mapping of potential seabed and coastal use across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for decades to come. See how moving from isolated sectors to a truly interconnected, systems-led approach - underpinned by deep evidence - can bring multiple benefits.

16:15

We're thrilled that Coastal Futures 2026 will exclusively present this showcase by The Crown Estate.

- **Olivia Thomas** - Head of Planning & Technical, Marine
- **Jamie Moore** - Marine Delivery Routemap Director, Marine
- **Ciaran McKeon** - Project Manager, Marine

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**An Uncharted Course: Breaking barriers in marine and coastal leadership**

17:00

**Chair: David Tudor,** Co-Founder & Director, OCF

- **Tsian Deslandes,** Founder, Mermaids Beyond Borders
- **Ismail Kholwadia,** Founder, Focal Elements
- **Alan Munro,** Founder, Young Sea Changers Scotland

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## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| 17:30 | **OCF Bob Earll Award - Outstanding contributions to ocean and coastal management.**<br><br>This year's award celebrates inclusive leadership and community engagement: recognising an individual(s) whose leadership has demonstrably fostered greater inclusion and community engagement. The Award recognises those who are building bridges between diverse groups, breaking down barriers, and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities to participate in and benefit from ocean stewardship. |
| 17:45 | **Reception** |

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## #CoastalFutures26

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## Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:25 | **Welcome** | **David Tudor**, Co-Founder & Director, OCF |
| | **Ministerial address – Huw Irranca-Davies MS,** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs for Wales (by video) | |
| 9:35 | **Keynote** | **Natalie Prosser**, CEO, Office for Environmental Protection |

**ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

This theme will address the policy frameworks, legal instruments, and accountability mechanisms - both public and private sector - needed to ensure that commitments to ocean sustainability are met and that progress is monitored.

9:50 **Panel Session – Robust evidence to actionable policy**

Chair: **Dickon Howell**, CEO, HMC

- **Prof Grant Stentiford**, Chief Scientist, Cefas
- **Samir Whitaker,** Ørsted
- **Katie-Jo Luxton,** RSPB
- **Tim Adey,** OEP

# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| 10.35 | **Panel Session - Fresh perspectives on marine recovery**<br>Chair: **David Tudor**, OCF<br>• **Caroline Price,** Head of Nature, The Crown Estate<br>• **Elizabeth Beall,** Managing Director, Finance Earth<br>• **Alec Taylor,** Director of Policy and Research, Oceana<br>• **Kristin Rechberger,** Revive Our Ocean |
| 11:15 | **Alistair Carmichael MP**, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fisheries:'A Cross-Party Action Plan for a Thriving and Sustainable UK Fishing Industry' |
| 11:30 | **Break** |
| 12:35 | **BALANCING BLUE GROWTH**<br>How can society balance economic development, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the need to protect marine ecosystems and minimise pollution?<br>Chair: **Darroch Baker,** Managing Director, APEM Group<br>• **Eleanor Besley-Gould**, CEO, Sustainable Shipping Initiative: Focussing on co-benefits: Shared Stewardship for Climate, Nature and People<br>• **Jenny Oates**, Natural Resources Wales: Evidence driving action for Welsh Seas<br>• **Nicola Teague,** APEM Group: Beyond Compliance: Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Marine Stewardship<br>• **Ros Gaulton**, Defra: Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package<br>• **Ellie Maher,** CEA: Ensuring Effectiveness & Equity of Offshore Wind Environmental Compensation<br>• **Jo Bayes**, Environment Agency: Source to Sea |


# PROGRAMME

## #CoastalFutures26

*Timings may be subject to change

## Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 14:00 | **Break** | |
| 15:00 | **Keynote** | **Tony Long, CEO, Global Fishing Watch** |
| 15:20 | **INNOVATING FOR A HEALTHY OCEAN**<br>Highlighting the role of science, technology, and finance in creating a sustainable ocean future, this theme will explore how new solutions and innovative financial tools can support policy development, marine conservation, improve ocean management, and drive the restoration of degraded habitats.<br><br>Chair: **Ruth Williams**, Head of Marine Conservation, The Wildlife Trusts<br><br>**Speakers:**<br>• **Audrey Jones**, Howell Marine Consulting: Making Marine Net Gain a reality: how to measure losses and gains in the marine environment<br>• **Olly Hicks,** Algapelago: Proving the scalability of ocean regeneration with Blue Forests<br>• **Rory Atton,** ARC Marine: Reef Enhancement for Scour Protection - RESP Project | |
| 16:10 | **Keynote** | **Michael Fishbach,** Founder, Great Whale Conservancy |
| 16:30 | **Close** | |


# Meditation Sessions with Tracy Hewet

For a delegate, Coastal Futures is a big event. There's people to catch up with, exhibitors to visit, not to mention the packed programme of talks and other activities.

To get the most out of your time at the conference, it helps to be in an open and relaxed state of mind. However, we can find ourselves arriving feeling a little flustered or stressed.

That's why we're delighted to offer you the chance **to attend a Pause and Reset Meditation Session each morning, with Worklife Coach and Wellness Specialist, Tracey Hewett.**

Tracey will lead a 15-minute grounding mindfulness meditation designed to help focus attention and settle the nervous system. You'll leave feeling calmer, centred and ready for a day at Coastal Futures.

Total session time 20 minutes including welcome and close.

**Pause and Reset Times**

| | |
|---|---|
| Wednesday 28 January | 8:45 am |
| Wednesday 28 January | 9:15 am |
| Thursday 29 January | 8:45 am |

**Reserve your seat now**


# Posters

Posters can be viewed in the Drayson Room during the breaks and evening reception

| Abstract # | Name | Surname | Organisation | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Stephen | Hall | Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Seabed 2030 | Closing the mapping gap |
| 2 | Jerome | Curoy | JBA Consulting | Integrating Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal and Socio-economic Resilience |
| 3 | David | Lamb | OceanOS Earth | Seeing the Whole Ocean: AI approaches to Climate, Fisheries and Policy |
| 4 | Kelly | Haynes | The Environment Agency | Local knowledge, national impact: Citizen science empowers collective action for healthier rivers and coasts |
| 5 | Jamie | Davies | Marine Management Organisation | Blue Belt Programme: Long-term sustainable financing opportunities in the UK Overseas Territories |
| 6 | Phoebe | Holding | APEM Group | Brown crabs – hard or soft? An innovative partnership between academic researchers and the fishing industry with the shared goal of sustainable fisheries management. |
| 7 | Jacques | Villemot | Rewilding Britain | Offshore wind for a wilder future |
| 8 | | | Campaign for National Parks | Seabeds to summits: National Parks at land, coast and sea |
| 9 | Kate | Jury | National Trails UK | Coastal Wildbelt: A national initiative to unlock and support projects and partnerships to deliver for people and nature, |
| 10 | Joshua | Bishop | Risk & Policy Analysts | Tides of Change: Climate, Communities, and Coastal Economies |
| 11 | Sophie | Day | University of East Anglia and North Norfolk District Council | When coastal erosion transcends generations – planning for the future of graveyards at risk |
| 12 | Emma Jane | Greenway | Natural England | Marine Net Gain: Evidence Development for Marine Nature Recovery |
| 13 | James | Ward | Office for Environmental Protection | Plans, Progress and Prospects: Holding government to account on marine targets and commitments |

## Posters can be viewed in the Drayson room during the breaks and evening reception

| Abstract # | Name | Surname | Organisation | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Miriam | White | University of Plymouth's Centre for Coastal Communities | Exploring the Impact of Place on Coastal Youth Future Expectations |
| 15 | Georgia | de Jong Cleyndert | Cumbria Wildlife Trust/North West Wildlife Trusts | The Irish Sea Network: Lessons in transboundary collaboration for marine conservation |
| 16 | Maisy | Fuller | University of Plymouth | National Marine Parks: Turning the Tide of UK Coastal Management |
| 17 | Freyja and Nicola | Thomson-Alberts and Bridge | Ocean Conservation Trust | Mobilising Ocean Action Through Data-led Insights |
| 18 | Charlotte | Lyddon | University of Liverpool | Coast-R Network+ and the Resilience Coastal Communities and Seas Programme |
| 19 | Ciara | Taylor | Marine Conservation Society | Local, place-based, partnership working in Wales: Lessons learnt from the Marine Conservation |
| 20 | Robert | Walsh | Northern Ireland Marine Task Force | Northern Ireland's Progression to Achieving Marine Nature Recovery - NIMTF's Recommendations |
| 21 | Hannah | Tidbury | APEM Group | What lies beneath: rapid invasive species monitoring in support of blue growth |
| 22 | Chantal | Lyons | Mindfully Wired | Building a bycatch mitigation trial around a collaborative core in the North Sea |
| 23 | Eloise | White | Intertek Metoc | Spatial Planning for Sustainable Offshore Growth |
| 24 | Rada | Pandeva | Thalassophile Project/ University of Exeter | Thalassophile Project: Universally Accessible Marine Science & Ocean Literacy |
| 25 | Elizabeth | Brett | Marine Management Organisation | Place-based decision-making in the marine area – the story so far. |
| 26 | Pamela | Buchan | University of Exeter | Public Participation in Marine Decisions: The Case of Offshore Wind. |

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# Speaker and Poster Abstracts

## Contents

# Speaker Abstracts
# Wednesday 28th January

## Welcome Address: Emma Hardy MP

**Emma Hardy MP,** Minister for Water and Flooding (including domestic and international marine)

Emma Hardy is the Labour Member of Parliament for Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice, a position she has held since June 2017. In July 2024, she was appointed Parliamentary UnderSecretary of State for Water and Flooding at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. As the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Water and Flooding, Emma Hardy is responsible for domestic and international marine matters.

Prior to her parliamentary career, Emma was a primary school teacher and an organiser for the National Union of Teachers. She has been actively involved in campaigns related to education, women's health, and infrastructure development in her constituency.

# Session one: Shared Stewardship

## *How can we achieve the collaborative efforts needed to manage our ocean and coasts?*

Speakers will highlight how different sectors — government, industry, NGOs, academics, and coastal communities — can work in partnership on sustainable resource management through place-based approaches, moving away from fragmented efforts.

**Chair: Natasha Bradshaw,** Co-Founder and Director, Ocean and Coastal Futures

## Together We Fly – A Collaboration Story of Sandeels, Seabirds and Conservation Success

**Kirsten Carter,** RSPB
kirsten.carter@rspb.org.uk

In 2024, the UK celebrated a landmark conservation victory: the permanent closure of industrial sandeel fishing in English North Sea waters and all Scottish waters. This milestone, built on over 30 years of advocacy, science, and public support, marked a crucial step in reviving the UK's struggling seabird populations—especially Kittiwakes, a red-listed species facing global extinction. Sandeels, small oil-rich fish, are vital to the North Sea food web, sustaining seabirds, marine mammals, and commercial fish like cod and haddock. Climate change and industrial-scale fishing had severely depleted sandeel stocks, contributing to dramatic seabird declines. Since the 1960s, Kittiwake numbers have halved, and one in four Puffins have vanished since 2000. The RSPB's 2021 "Revive Our Seas" report highlighted the link between sandeel loss and seabird decline. Public awareness surged with the 2024 David Attenborough series Wild Isles, and the UK Government's consultation drew over 33,000 responses—95.5% supporting closure in English waters and 97% in Scotland. Though the EU challenged the closures under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a 2025 Arbitration Panel upheld the UK's ecological rationale, fully endorsing Scotland's ban and resolving procedural issues in England. Conservationists, UK officials, and the offshore wind industry hailed the decision as science-led and essential for seabird resilience amid threats like avian flu and climate change. This talk shares how one small fish inspired a national movement, driving change and laying the groundwork for ecosystem-based marine management.

**Additional authors**
Mark Duffy and Jacob Bentley, Natural England

## A “Community-First” Creative Framework for Cultural Democracy and Ocean-led Environmental Justice

**Kim Wide,** Take A Part
kim@takeapart.org.uk

How can we use cultural democracy and devolutionary practices to model "community-first" approaches to ocean conservation and activism? Take A Part champions cultural democracy and environmental justice, reconnecting Plymouth's historic East End to its coastal environment since 2017 and partnering with the newly established Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (PSNMP) to champion for community access, inclusion and advocacy within the park's strategy. Through our community governance model, the Arts Action Group (AAG), we collectively define strategies and allocate resources, ensuring a community-first approach that fosters cultural co-production, developing local skills and leadership. Our key local programmes are driven by the AAG's strategic ambition for ocean justice and the creation of a Creative Community Climate Action Plan to assist them in shaping their own future and relationship with the ocean, as the PSNMP continues to develop and shape the city and the East End community. Through this discussion, we will explore how communities can use models of governance and creative methodologies to shape their relationship to the ocean and local environmental futures. We will explore the development of a Creative Climate Action Plan, the role digital and young people are playing as a 'next generation' of ocean climate justice activists and how environmental themes are supporting preventative health activities and a Creative Wellbeing Hub in the local area as well as how the East End and Indigenous Orang Asli Temuan people are bridging environmental issues of ocean plastics through dialogue.

## Community 30x30: Supporting 30 community groups to work towards effective management of at least 30 marine protected areas across England and Scotland by 2030

**Duncan MacRae**, Protected Areas Foundation
duncan@protectedareasfoundation.org

Although 44% of the UK’s domestic waters are covered by some form of protected area designation, very little of this is actively managed for conservation outcomes, which severely limits the likelihood of achieving healthy seas and securing the UK’s contribution to the international ”30x30” target to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030. Coastal communities living around these MPAs (1) possess deep knowledge about their history, use and ecology (2) have the most at stake in their protection and (3) are best placed to provide active management on an ongoing basis. Indeed, the best examples of recovery of marine ecosystems (and associated local fisheries) all have local stakeholders deeply embedded in design, monitoring, outreach and engagement and ongoing management.

Yet we find that most communities wanting to play a bigger role in the management of their local marine ecosystems still lack a pathway and ongoing financial support to do so. In this presentation, we show how approaches established as best-practice for community-led MPA management elsewhere in the world can readily be adapted for use in the UK. By adopting these, strengthening pathways to connect government goals with community action, and learning from domestic examples leading the way, we set out a vision for supporting 30 coastal community groups in England and Scotland to effectively and inclusively manage 30 MPAs by 2030, through a co-design and co-development process addressing capacity development, co-governance and sustained finance, setting the UK on a path to truly achieve an equitable and sustainable Blue Economy.

**Additional authors**
Belinda Bramley, Kat Bruce

## Restoring Balance: Inshore Fisheries, Social Justice, and Local Governance in a Changing Environment

**Emily Bulled,** AIFCAs
emily.bulled@association-ifca.org.uk

Inshore fisheries make valuable contributions to coastal regions. Published work by the Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries (ISSF) Consortium recognises these national benefits, from food security to coastal employment, cultural heritage and marine stewardship. Despite the productivity of our inshore waters, across the UK, new analysis by the ISSF Consortium highlights a rapid decline in our inshore small-scale fisheries, reflecting the combined pressures of environmental change, habitat degradation, and increasing competition for marine space. The warming of our seas is reshaping coastal ecosystems, altering species distributions, and transforming the very conditions that underpin inshore fisheries. Amid these pressures lie significant opportunities; to rethink what effective, sustainable inshore fisheries management looks like in an era of ecological and social transformation. This requires recognising that marine recovery is not only an ecological responsibility but also a social one. Embedding social justice within marine recovery means ensuring that coastal communities and fishers have a voice and a stake in their future. Emergent fisheries, such as the developing clam fishery in the Thames Estuary and the well-established, effectively managed fishery in Poole Harbour, illustrate the potential for adaptive, locally responsive governance to deliver both ecological recovery and viable livelihoods. These examples demonstrate how innovation, science, and community engagement can coexist within a framework of sustainability and accountability. Ultimately, the future of the inshore marine environment depends on effective systems of local governance, the kind embodied by the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs).

Their place-based approach, statutory remit, and collaborative ethos position them as central actors in delivering fair, resilient, and adaptive management for the UK's inshore waters in the face of accelerating environmental change.

**Additional authors**
Rob Clark, Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

## The Collaborations We Need for the Ocean We Want

**Sahar Stevenson-Jones,** European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration
sahar.stevenson-jones@ser-europe.org

The ocean faces accelerating pressures from climate change, biodiversity loss, and anthropogenic activity, and effective recovery requires more than isolated initiatives—it demands coordinated, principled action. As a global partner to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) is advancing marine restoration through policy, practice, and adherence to its core principles and standards, including evidence-based practice, ecological integrity, and long-term sustainability. This presentation, convened by members of the SER-Europe Marine Restoration Working Group, will examine how collaboration, standardisation, and knowledge sharing can accelerate seascape-scale restoration and support the recovery our blue planet urgently requires. Central to the discussion is a call to establish a Global Marine Restoration Working Group—a proposed platform to build secure, long-term relationships that enable restoration at scale. Such a group would bring together existing marine alliances and select representatives from marine ecosystems to equitably co-design pathways for collective action. By fostering trust, sharing expertise, and aligning priorities across regions and ecosystems, it could strengthen cross-alliance partnerships and enable seascape-scale restoration grounded in ecological connectivity and functional recovery. Through contributions from leading marine alliances—including the Global Mangrove Alliance, World Seagrass Association, Native Oyster Restoration Alliance, the UK & Ireland Native Oyster Network, Kelp Forest Alliance, and the Locally Managed Areas Network—the presentation will illustrate how principled, collaborative approaches can unite diverse efforts under the common UN Ocean Decade vision: the collaborations we need for the ocean we want. By promoting equity, inclusivity and openness, this presentation aims to catalyse a global movement in which stewardship, guided by standardisation and best practice, drives ecosystem recovery—delivered together, at seascape-scale, and at the pace the planet requires.

**Additional authors**
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# Session One: quick speakers

## Training the Next Generation of Ocean Stewards: Sea Ranger Capacity for Marine Conservation

**Naomi Roesner,** Sea Ranger Service
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**Additional authors**
Roeland Koelman, Claudia Breet and Elise Chalcraft

Decades of overexploitation, pollution and coastal erosion have put marine ecosystems under severe pressure, leading to the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of habitats such as seagrass meadows and oyster reefs. Although conservation and funding efforts are increasingly addressing these issues, the emphasis remains on awareness, policy and research. Meanwhile, the capacity and infrastructure required to implement nature-based solutions is insufficient, due to a shortage of skilled professionals capable of delivering large-scale restoration projects. At the same time, coastal regions are at risk of being left behind as they face growing social and economic inequalities characterised by high youth unemployment. The Sea Ranger Service was founded to address these issues by combining marine ecological services with a social mission to educate and employ young people in ocean conservation. By combining professional maritime training with hands-on restoration work, the Sea Ranger Service creates meaningful employment opportunities for young people, supporting governments and scientific partners in their efforts to restore ocean health. In this presentation, young Sea Rangers themselves share their experiences of working on seagrass restoration and offshore ecological monitoring in the North Sea and Celtic Sea. They describe their training as deckhands and field technicians, learning to deploy sampling equipment, conduct biodiversity surveys and collect data for research and monitoring programmes. The presentation will showcase the results of recent seagrass planting and ecological data collection projects, reflecting on the lessons learned from operating a social-environmental enterprise in the marine sector.

## Shared Waters: The EU Ocean (P)act - Revising the Directives

**Chris McDougall,** AtkinsRéalis
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# Clear Coasts

**Shovi Anjum,** Solway Firth Partnership
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The Solway Firth, one of the United Kingdom's largest embayments, is a 44,000-hectare mosaic of interconnected saltmarshes, sandflats, and tidal channels. Defined by its rich ecological, cultural, and political heritage, and governed through complex cross-border arrangements, the Firth provides a distinctive context for advancing collaborative, place-based approaches to coastal management and restoration. The CLEARcoasts project (2023–2026), led by the Solway Firth Partnership in collaboration with Swansea University, brings together government agencies, industry partners, NGOs, academics, and local communities to deliver practical, evidence-based habitat restoration in the Cumbrian Solway. Centred on the application of BESE-elements® biodegradable matting as an innovative Nature-based Solution for saltmarsh enhancement, the project integrates scientific monitoring, adaptive design, and participatory engagement to promote both ecological and social resilience. Operating within protected and highly regulated environments, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and under the constraints of limited budgets, CLEARcoasts demonstrates how shared stewardship can transform small-scale initiatives into meaningful, replicable models of coastal restoration. Its phased, iterative approach, guided by local knowledge and stakeholder collaboration, enables interventions that respond to site-specific challenges such as erosion, while strengthening relationships between landowners, conservation bodies, and communities. This presentation illustrates the value of place-based collaboration in achieving sustainable outcomes for both coastal ecosystems and the well-being of the communities that depend on them.

# Session Two: Coastal Resilience and Community Wellbeing

***How can society adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable livelihoods?***

Speakers should focus on centring the connection between the health of our rivers and seas and the well-being of coastal communities, highlighting the work of those building bridges and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities.

**Chair: Beccy Macdonald Lofts,** Lead Officer, LGA Coastal SIG

## Coastwise: helping coastal communities plan for coastal change

**Jaap Flikweert,** Haskoning
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National mapping for England shows that 3,500 households could be lost to coastal erosion by 2055, and the Shoreline Management Plans identify various communities that will have to undergo a managed transition away from coastal erosion risk. In some communities, this is already happening. North Norfolk District Council's Coastwise project is funded by UK Government to develop new approaches for addressing the known policy and funding gap around supporting those communities. Coastwise is working on different tracks to fill this gap: trialling practical actions on the ground, working with homeowners, developing 'coastal literacy' materials, exploring funding and finance mechanisms and making policy recommendations. This abstract focuses on Coastwise's specific objective to explore and develop Coastal Change Transition Plans. Haskoning was commissioned to carry out an evidence review, option appraisal and blueprinting to explore what these Transition Plans could look like, in terms of purpose, structure and content. The study concluded that there should be an 'ecosystem' of plans: a Strategic Plan for the Council, locally owned Transition Plans per community and Transition Plans for key sectors / themes such as highways, housing, but also features such as graveyards. But the plans should also have a place within their 'biome', the existing landscape of plans, and ultimately be mainstreamed to become part of regular plans. Coastwise has since initiated local Transition Plan development for six of its communities, testing out different approaches for engaging with the communities, and working with them to develop and choose preferred options for their future.

**Additional authors**
Rob Goodliffe - North Norfolk District Council, Sophie Day, University of East Anglia ,Chris Smith - Environment Agency, Victoria Clipsham - Haskoning

## Resilient Coasts - Strategy to Action

**Karen Thomas,** East Suffolk Council
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The Resilient Coast project is led by East Suffolk Council under the Defra Flood & Coast Resilience Programme (FCIP) Since 2022 we have developed approaches to underpin the adaptation decisions needed along our coast. We have one of NW Europe's fastest eroding coasts requiring very dynamic planning and action to create a sustainable and resilient future for people, wildlife and the economy. With over half our Shoreline Management Plan policies requiring 'no active intervention' or 'managed realignment' policies, often with no funding linked to delivery - we are working towards adaptive solutions that will put Shoreline Management Plan policy into action and support transition to a more resilient coast. We are creating a 25 year integrated Coastal Strategy with deliverable actions that support coastal change, help those most affected by risk and allow our coast to remain healthy and viable. Through bespoke coast and marine monitoring programmes and new economic approaches we will inform a new adaptive approach- incorporating planning, development, housing, environment and economic opportunities. Our cross-council, cross-sector Strategy will provide options for those at risk today and in the future and make space for nature and economic growth by embedding our work into the ESC Local Plan.

**Additional authors**
Laura Winter

## The road less travelled – charting Bude's unique coastal adaptation journey

**Justin Ridgewell,** Environment Agency and Cornwall Council
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Bude lies on the north Cornwall coast, has a population of around 7000, and acts as the local economic and services hub for a wider network of hinterland communities. With wide Atlantic beaches, it is a focal point for tourism, but this open coast position exposes it to energetic storms which, with sea level rise, increasingly drive coastal change. Managing impacts in a way which accommodates natural coastal variation, alongside the core values of Bude and its community, is imperative. This paper captures 15 years of progress - Bude's own unique 'ambition to action' story. It charts a course from 2011, when the Shoreline Management Plan first captured the aspiration for community-led adaptation, through to the present day when we see the first interventions being delivered. Our story navigates between these start and end points via the storms of 2014, production of innovative coastal change visualisations, establishment of a climate partnership, deliberations of a citizen jury, and the relocation of an iconic Bude landmark.

Arriving in the present day, the paper details the diverse range of interventions now being delivered – including a community vision, relocated beach huts and toilets, adapting RNLI facilities, realigning coastal paths – and even the trialling of sustainable transport options. But this is not just a story about those outcomes, it also provides an example of how innovative technologies can be used at the earliest stage of coastal adaptation thinking, to improve stakeholder discussions and understanding of the combined impacts of flooding, coastal and climate change.

**Additional authors**
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## The Moors at Arne: Delivering coastal habitat resilience

**Heather Coutts**, AtkinsRéalis
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The Poole Bay, Poole Harbour & Wareham Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy set out a plan in 2014 to create between 44 and 110Ha of compensatory intertidal habitat at the Moors at Arne, Poole Harbour, Dorset. This scheme is now being constructed on the ground with likely completion in 2026. Whilst compensatory habitat schemes are not new, the extent of existing ecology, archaeology and community interest at this site is unusual and a likely indicator of challenges and opportunities as more complex schemes are required to respond to climate change. The journey from strategic ambition to action on the ground has required extensive collaboration between the local community, interest groups, the harbour authority, Natural England, RSPB, and the Environment Agency (EA). Particular lessons learnt from this work include impacts from enabling change, and therefore climate resilience, of the terrestrial flora, fauna and archaeology on site to transition to intertidal habitat. This has required a particularly well thought out and balanced approach to navigating the legislative framework relevant to managed realignment schemes. These lessons are relevant to ongoing and future management of both the marine and coastal space, as delivery of coastal resilience will require more complex, nuanced change.

**Additional authors**
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# CoastCraft: Visualising Coastal Change Block by Block with Minecraft Education

**Mairi MacArthur,** Environment Agency
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CoastCraft is an innovative educational game developed in partnership by Minecraft Education, Cornwall Council, and the Environment Agency, as part of the Making Space for Sand project. Funded through the Environment Agency's £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme (FCIP), the project aims to reduce the vulnerability of communities to coastal change by improving understanding of future scenarios, working with communities to develop adaptation and resilience plans, and supporting adaptation actions. Designed for students aged 9–14 and aligned with Key Stage 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum, CoastCraft immerses players in a virtual version of Bude, Cornwall. Using real-world data and coastal modelling, the game introduces students to the dynamic processes shaping coastal landscapes and challenges them to make decisions that balance environmental, social, and economic needs in response to climate change and sea level rise. Players explore nature-based solutions such as sand dunes and engage in creative problem-solving to build coastal resilience. Through engaging gameplay, CoastCraft helps students understand the impacts of climate change, and empowers them to experiment with real-world solutions in a virtual environment. By bringing coastal change to life on a familiar platform, the game supports the development of climate literacy and inspires the next generation of environmental champions to face future coastal flooding and erosion challenges with creativity and confidence.

**Aknowledgements**
Cornwall Council, Environment Agency, Minecraft Education, Geographical Association , Blockbuilders

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# Session Three: Planning Our Ocean Space

***How can we effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, fishing, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites?***

Delving into the complexities of planning and sharing space both inshore and offshore, speakers will highlight the planning tools and approaches needed to reduce conflict and promote a more sustainable and equitable use of the ocean.
and restoring nature.

**Chair: Paul Gilliland,** Strategic Advisor and Deputy Director, MMO

## Mapping What Matters: Co-designing collection of data on social and cultural values of English fishing grounds

**Jo Pollett,** ABPmer
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Fishing grounds are more than just a place of work for fishermen . They can matter for many reasons, including social and cultural ones such as heritage, community identity, and safety. Transit routes to these grounds can be just as important. Yet data on the socio-cultural values of fishing grounds and routes are missing for many fishing communities. The UK Government recognises the need to integrate these data into decision-making, as the fishing industry comes under growing pressure from other marine uses. The Mapping What Matters project is co-creating and testing a methodology to gather data on why certain fishing grounds are important to fishermen, which is intended to be rolled out nationwide. An integral working group of active fishermen has been involved in every aspect of project design including how fishermen could interact with paper charts to provide their data, a communication strategy to encourage participation, and how the data will be protected, anonymised, and shared. As of late January, the methodology will have been road-tested with fishermen in Brixham, with a separate pilot happening in North Yorkshire in February. In this talk, ABPmer and Mindfully Wired will speak on behalf of the project team and the working group to share strategies and learnings from the co-design process and showcase the methodology, including how fishermen's annotations and verbal input will be digitised for use by decision-makers and fishing communities themselves. * The term 'fishermen' is preferred by the working group, which includes female fishermen.

**Additional authors**
Suzannah Walmsley (ABPmer), Chantal Lyons (Mindfully Wired), Anna Patel and Emma Plotnek (Fishing into the Future), Julie Urquhart and Molly Atkins (Countryside and Community Research Institute), Beshlie Pool (South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen), Emma Westling and Edd Hind-Ozan (Defra).

## Thinking Big: Enabling Offshore Wind & Marine Resilience through Strategic Compensation in Scotland

**Richard Howells,** Marine Directorate
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The rapid expansion of offshore wind is pivotal to achieving Scotland's Net Zero ambitions, but also brings cumulative pressures on our marine environment. To address this, the Scottish Government has been working to deliver environmental assessment reforms and strategic compensation for offshore wind. These will enable adverse impacts of offshore wind on protected habitats and species to be offset in a strategic manner, resulting in innovative and larger scale benefits for the wider marine environment and communities. A key part of this work is the development of a Portfolio of Strategic Compensatory Measures (PoMS) initially exploring priority seabird species (kittiwake, gannet, guillemot, razorbill, puffin, and greater black-backed gull). PoMS explores five potential compensation options: predator control, habitat restoration, fisheries management, prey habitat enhancement, and large-scale marine litter removal. Each measure is supported by a detailed roadmap outlining practical steps for delivery, including resources, costs, and ecological effectiveness. The roadmaps also define success criteria, monitoring requirements, and adaptive management options. This collaborative approach draws on the latest science, stakeholder input, and alignment with national policies, including the draft updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy and Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan. We will share insights from the portfolio's development and wider SG work to enable innovative reforms for offshore wind. This work demonstrates how strategic, science-led, and collaborative approaches can deliver a thriving ocean, providing new opportunities for positive investment in the marine environment.

**Additional authors**
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# Navigating Co-existence & Co-location in the marine space

**Rebecca Kavanagh,** Queen's University Belfast
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As pressure on marine space intensifies due to the expansion of offshore renewable energy (ORE), aquaculture and other maritime activities, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is increasingly important for balancing competing demands. This expansion contributes to spatial squeeze, where traditional and emerging uses vie for limited space. Within this context, 'co-existence' and 'co-location' are often presented as solutions, yet these concepts lack clear, consistent definitions, hindering effective implementation. This research explores how these terms are interpreted through comparative case studies: the island of Ireland and Orkney, Scotland. In Ireland, the National Marine Planning Framework and South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan offer insights into evolving governance. Preliminary insights from Orkney highlight locally embedded practices of sharing marine space, shaped by a longer history of community engagement in offshore renewables. These reflect a grounded, place-based approach to spatial management that contrasts with the more top-down approach evident in Ireland, reflecting its earlier stage in MSP development. This presentation shares early findings from Orkney illustrating how co-existence is navigated on the ground. Across both contexts, emerging typologies of co-existence and co-location span social, environmental, and economic dimensions, reflecting varied ways marine space is negotiated and shared. This research aims to clarify MSP's role in managing spatial demands and conflicts, addressing shortcomings such as vague definitions and limited integration of social and environmental factors. By moving beyond a focus on economic compatibility, co-location and co-existence are reframed not just as technical arrangements but as evolving principles with potential to guide more adaptive, inclusive, and forward-looking MSP in offshore settings.

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# Exclusive showcase of The Crown Estate's Marine Delivery Routemap.

- **Olivia Thomas** - Head of Planning & Technical Marine
- **Jamie Moore** - Marine Delivery Routemap Director, Marine
- **Ciaran McKeon** - Project Manager, Marine

Built on world-class data, this innovative digital platform will provide dynamic modelling and mapping of potential seabed and coastal use across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for decades to come. See how moving from isolated sectors to a truly interconnected, systems-led approach - underpinned by deep evidence - can bring multiple benefits. We're thrilled that Coastal Futures 2026 will exclusively present this showcase by The Crown Estate.

# An Uncharted Course: Breaking barriers in marine and coastal leadership

***How can we effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, fishing, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites?***

Panellists will explore the structures that create inequalities, ask how we can amplify the voices of young people in UK marine decision-making and create a strong sense of sector belonging.

- **Tsian Deslandes, Founder,** Mermaids Beyond Borders
- **Ismail Kholwadia,** Founder, Focal Elements
- **Alan Munro, Founder,** Young Sea Changers Scotland

# Speaker Abstracts
# Thursday 29th January

## Opening Address: Huw Irranca-Davies MS

**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**

Huw Irranca-Davies is the Member of the Senedd (MS) for the Ogmore constituency. Huw was appointed Deputy First Minister on 11 September 2024, in addition to retaining responsibility for Climate Change and Rural Affairs matters.

Huw was elected as Labour MP for Ogmore in 2002. In Westminster Huw served in several roles including as a Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ministers in DWP, Northern Ireland and DCMS; as a Government Whip; as the Under-Secretary of State for Wales; and as Environment Minister in Defra.

From 2010 he served as Shadow Energy Minister, and then as Shadow Minister for Food, Farming and Rural Affairs. In May 2015, he was elected as the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, a position held till May 2016 when he was elected to the National Assembly of Wales – now Senedd Cymru.

# Keynote Speaker: Natalie Prosser

***The evolving landscape of environmental law and the legal framework helping to protect our coasts and seas.***

**Natalie Prosser,** CEO, Office for Environmental Protection

Natalie Prosser is the highly respected legal professional and Chief Executive of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). bringing a wealth of experience in public and regulatory law to our stage.

Her keynote will address the critical challenges, offering attendees deep insights into the future of environmental governance, the OEP's crucial role in holding public bodies accountable, and the legal levers available to safeguard the environment.

# Speaker: Alistair Carmichael MP

**Alistair Carmichael MP,** Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fisheries: 'A Cross-Party Action Plan for a Thriving and Sustainable UK Fishing Industry'

The APPG on Fisheries currently comprises 27 MPs and Peers. The activities of the APPG are advised by an Expert Panel, encompassing a diversity of expertise and stakeholders from across the UK's fishing and seafood sector. The National Fisheries Action Plan's development is overseen by the APPG's Co-Chairs alongside an additional independent Parliamentary Chair and expert Review Board. The Action Plan is being co-delivered, as a collaborative endeavor spearheaded in partnership with fishing industry and related stakeholders.

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# Session Four: Action and Accountability

***How do we make good decisions and make sure those good decisions are followed through with action on the ground?***

Focusing on turning ambition into reality, speakers will highlight the policy frameworks, legal instruments, and accountability mechanisms - both public and private sector - needed to ensure that commitments to ocean sustainability are met, and that progress is monitored and reported on.

**Chair: Dickon Howell,** CEO, Howell Marine Consulting

- **Prof Grant Stentiford,** Chief Scientist, Cefas
- **Samir Whitaker,** Ørsted
- **Katie-Jo Luxton,** RSPB
- **Tim Adey,** OEP

# Panel Session - Restoring Our Marine Ecosystems

**Chair: David Tudor,** Co-Founder and Director, Ocean and Coastal Futures

- **Caroline Price**, Head of Nature, The Crown Estate
- **Elizabeth Beall**, Managing Director, Finance Earth
- **Alec Taylor,** Director of Policy and Research, Oceana
- **Kristin Rechberger**, Revive Our Ocean

# Session Five: Balancing Blue Growth

***How can society balance economic development, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the need to protect marine ecosystems and minimise pollution?***

Speakers will explore the challenges and opportunities of the growing blue economy.

**Chair: Darroch Baker,** Managing Director, APEM Group

## Focussing on co-benefits: Shared Stewardship for Climate, Nature and People

**Eleanor Besley-Gould,** Sustainable Shipping Initiative
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Focussing on co-benefits: Shared Stewardship for Climate, Nature and People Shipping is often seen only as a climate problem, yet it offers some of the most powerful opportunities to deliver co-benefits for people, nature, and the ocean economy. By tackling issues holistically, we can unlock multiple wins: Climate–Nature: slowing ships cuts emissions, underwater noise, and whale-strike risks. Climate–People: shore power and clean fuels reduce carbon while improving health in port communities. Nature–People: biodiversity-sensitive routing and fouling management protect ecosystems while sustaining fisheries and livelihoods. Lifecycle: safe, circular shipbreaking prevents toxic coastal pollution, safeguards workers, and reduces embedded carbon. This presentation will showcase how these interventions can move from isolated pilots to pathway implementation projects — integrated routes that combine efficiency, fuel transition, biodiversity protection, and human welfare. These pathways are already under early development and offer a model for embedding co-benefits directly into NDCs, Sustainable Ocean Plans, and IMO measures. By convening governments, industry, NGOs, and funders, we can turn fragmented action into systemic change. Co-benefits are not “nice to have”; they are the most efficient, equitable, and politically compelling way to deliver on climate, biodiversity, and community well-being simultaneously. Key message: Shipping can be transformed from a problem into a driver of breakthroughs. Early thinking on pathways implementation shows how shared stewardship can deliver measurable results for climate, nature, and people by 2030.

## Evidence driving action for Welsh Seas

**Jenny Oates,** Natural Resources Wales
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NRW has recently published it's State of Natural Resources Report, with key findings for marine and coastal ecosystems supported by recent work that assessed the condition of features across the Welsh MPA Network. This presentation will outline the findings from these strategic evidence reports, highlighting how these can be used to inform funding and deliver change and action that supports both the nature and climate emergency. This includes, for example, the Nature Networks programme; Marine Fund Cymru development; 30x30 delivery; spatial opportunity mapping; and ocean literacy work.

**Additional authors**
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## Beyond Compliance: Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Marine Stewardship

**Nicola Teague,** APEM Group
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As the UK's coastal infrastructure expands to meet growing water and energy resilience needs, estuarine and marine environments - home to some of the nation's most ecologically sensitive and legally protected habitats - are under increasing pressure. Consenting pathways now have the opportunity to move beyond compliance toward proactive stewardship.
Drawing on APEM's role as technical lead and strategic advisor on nationally significant infrastructure projects, this presentation sets out how developers, regulators, and stakeholders can adopt a shared-stewardship approach from project inception. It advocates for Evidence Plan processes to be shaped around ecological outcomes, enabling:

1. the development of bespoke monitoring programmes that reduce uncertainty, expand the evidence base, and go beyond tick-box exercises; and
2. the open, early development of "compensation without prejudice" strategies that focus attention on opportunity - asking "What could this deliver?" rather than "What can we get away with?"

Examples will be drawn from current desalination proposals and tidal barrage development - clear growth areas in UK marine infrastructure. When stewardship is embraced as a shared responsibility, infrastructure delivery ceases to be a test of regulatory thresholds and becomes a deliberate mechanism for environmental improvement. Shifting our collective mindset toward shared stewardship means successful infrastructure design and delivery not only avoids harm, but can actively leave the marine environment in a demonstrably better condition.

## Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package

**Ros Gaulton**, Defra
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## Ensuring Effectiveness & Equity of Offshore Wind Environmental Compensation

Ellie Maher, Collaborative Environmental Advisers
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Drawing on my extensive experience of identifying and delivering compensation for offshore wind projects at CEA, this presentation considers what ecological compensation the industry has delivered to date, what is in the pipeline and what more could be done to secure successful outcomes for projects and nature. Following the planning decision for Hornsea 3 in 2020, compensation has been a hot topic for offshore wind. To date, compensation has been delivered on a project-led, or collaborative basis. However, the imminent availability of the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) has led to developers seeking to secure strategic compensatory measures (SCMs) to offset adverse environmental impacts.

While SCMs have potential to deliver compensation at scale, options are limited, present stakeholder concerns, and lack pace and ambition. A scarcity of 'like-for-like' compensation is an obstacle, with very few, if any options available for some receptors – particularly fauna with diverse migratory lifestyles. While existing SCMs may provide comfort for limited projects, sparse options are a major concern for future projects. To ensure responsible delivery of offshore wind in an increasingly constrained marine setting, the scale of SCMs must be more ambitious. The benefits of ecosystem-scale SCMs implemented across borders could include climate change mitigation, biodiversity gain, and marine industry growth. Such outcomes would impact target and non-target receptors alike and result in benefits such as increased food supply and habitat restoration at scale. This approach would ensure an abundant supply of long-term SCMs, while presenting a unique opportunity to invest in nature and marine industries.

# Keynote Speaker: Tony Long

***Making activity at sea common knowledge to ensure the fair and sustainable use and safeguarding of the global ocean.***

**Tony Long,** CEO, Global Fishing Watch

Drawing on 27 years in the British Royal Navy and his leadership of The Pew Charitable Trusts' campaign to end illegal fishing, Tony pioneered the maritime monitoring systems essential for a sustainable future.

Global Fishing Watch (GFW) is an ocean transparency pioneer. They use a powerful combination of satellite imagery, vessel GPS data, and machine learning to analyse millions of gigabytes of data, effectively mapping human activity at sea from space.

GFW turns this big data into actionable information, creating a public, first-of-its-kind snapshot of industrial activity at sea. GFW's mission is to make activity at sea common knowledge to ensure the fair and sustainable use and safeguard of the global ocean.

# Keynote: Michael Fishbach

**Michael Fishbach,** Founder, Great Whale Conservancy

For nearly three decades, Michael has been at the forefront of whale research and conservation, working directly in the field to protect some of the ocean's most iconic species.

From long-term research in the Sea of Cortez to collaborating with organisations including National Geographic, the BBC, Mission Blue and the Ocean Alliance, Michael's work has helped transform how we understand whales and their critical role in climate protection.

His research and advocacy have also driven action at the highest levels, bringing together global shipping, conservation leaders and policymakers, and even taking the issue of ship strikes to the United Nations General Assembly.

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# Session Six: Innovating for a Healthy Ocean

***How can new solutions and innovative financial tools can support policy development, marine conservation, improve ocean management, and drive the restoration of degraded habitats?***

Speakers will highlight the role of science, technology, and finance in creating a sustainable ocean future.

## Making Marine Net Gain a reality: how to measure losses and gains in the marine environment

**Audrey Jones,** Howell Marine Consulting
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Achieving ‘net gain’ means taking action to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before. To underpin a future regulatory Marine Net Gain (MNG) regime, we need to be able to measure losses and gains from marine development. A metric approach is used terrestrially, but due to the complexity of marine ecosystems this won’t work offshore. A collaborative project led by HMC, ERM and eftec, commissioned by Natural England and Defra, explored potential approaches for a MNG Assessment Framework. This examined various assessment levels ranging from individual ecological features to ecosystem services and natural capital benefits. Key recommendations are: 1. A strategic target for the marine environment is needed which MNG can contribute to and be measured against, which should be Good Environmental Status (GES). 2. A strategic nature restoration plan is needed that sets out the targets and the need for nature restoration in the context of achieving GES based on the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS). 3. This could be used as the basis for setting regional programmes of measures for nature restoration within each Marine Plan Area, which MNG could contribute to. To assess loss from development, the project also provided insights on whether existing Environmental Impact Assessments could be used to evaluate potential impacts on GES, which would then inform the MNG requirement, which developers would meet either directly or via a funding mechanism. This would mean that MNG would be delivered in line with the UKMS and link with other marine policy areas.

## Proving the scalability of ocean regeneration with Blue Forests

**Olly Hicks,** Algapelago
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The Blue Forest project is Europe's first large-scale initiative focused on active offshore regeneration. It aims to tackle significant scientific and scalability challenges in ocean restoration. Our seas are vital for climate regulation, and the Blue Forest seeks to demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative, nature-based solutions. The project focuses on the active restoration of key species such as kelp and shellfish. Installation began this autumn in the UK, addressing the alarming decline in temperate kelp and shellfish reefs. Dramatic losses have occurred, with only 5% of their historical extent remaining due to overfishing, pollution, and commercial dredging. The Blue Forest employs a unique conservation aquaculture approach. This method facilitates the rapid establishment of core species within 1 to 4 years, enabling the restoration of entire reef ecosystems. Initial projections suggest that a 100-hectare site could significantly boost commercial fish stocks, remove substantial nitrogen levels, and filter billions of gallons of water daily. In collaboration with leading academic institutions, the project aims to provide a scientific blueprint showcasing its benefits for biodiversity, water quality, carbon sequestration, and nutrient cycling. By proving the scalability of Blue Forests, this initiative offers a model for the cultural and economic revival of Northern European coastal communities while directly supporting local fisheries. Success depends on overcoming technical, financial, and regulatory barriers. Additional funding is crucial for expediting research, validating outcomes, and developing sustainable credit markets.

**Additional authors**
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## Reef Enhancement for Scour Protection - RESP Project

**Rory Atton,** ARC Marine
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World-first full-scale ecological scour deployment at UK wind farm. RESP aimed to research, develop and test ARC marine's ecologically enhanced scour protection, culminating in a live pilot installation around an offshore monopile on RWE's Rampion Offshore Wind farm.

**Additional authors**

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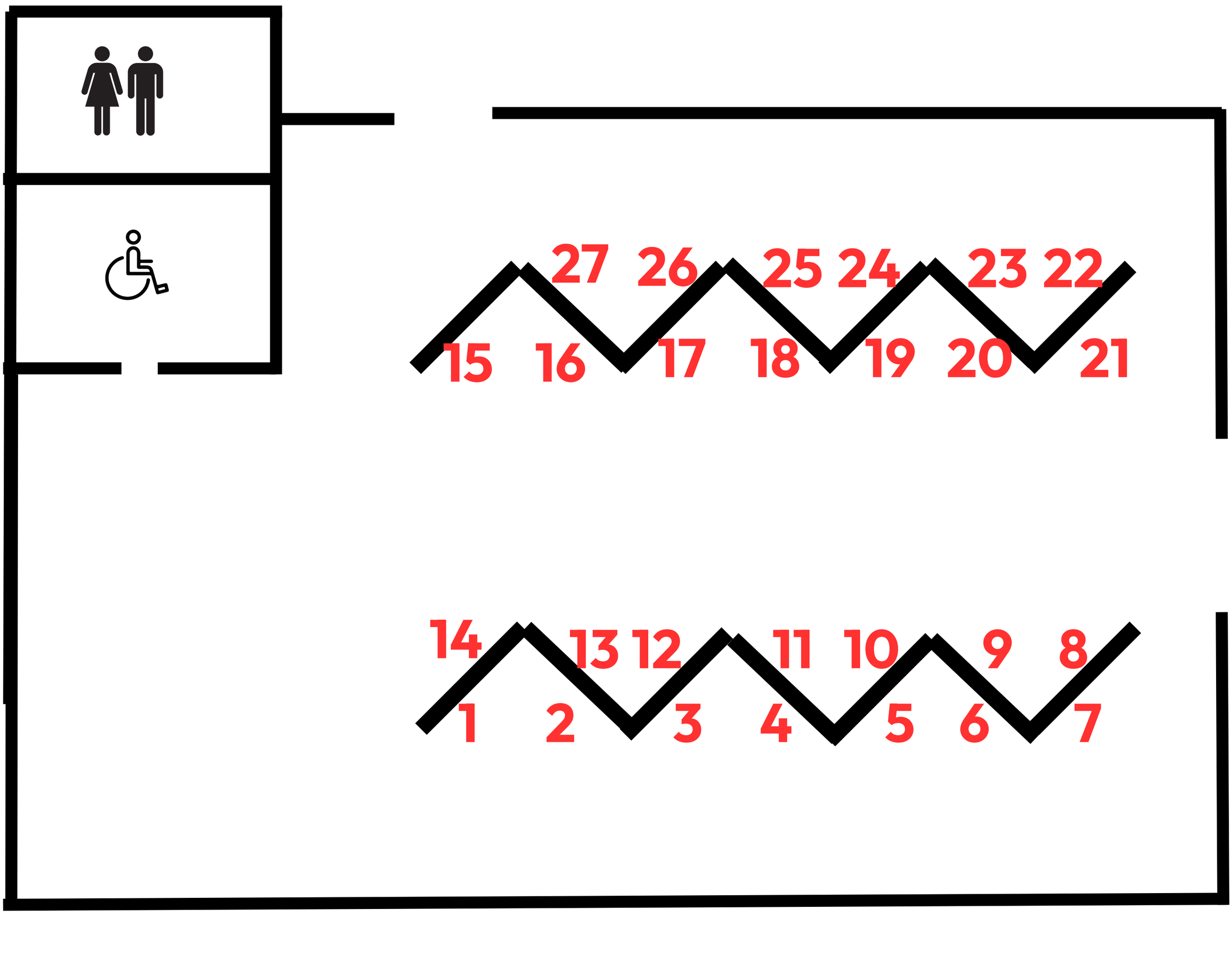
# Poster Display Layout

**Located in the Drayson Room**




# Posters

Posters can be viewed in the Drayson Room during the breaks and evening reception

| Abstract # | Name | Surname | Organisation | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Stephen | Hall | Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Seabed 2030 | Closing the mapping gap |
| 2 | Jerome | Curoy | JBA Consulting | Integrating Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal and Socio-economic Resilience |
| 3 | David | Lamb | OceanOS Earth | Seeing the Whole Ocean: AI approaches to Climate, Fisheries and Policy |
| 4 | Kelly | Haynes | The Environment Agency | Local knowledge, national impact: Citizen science empowers collective action for healthier rivers and coasts |
| 5 | Jamie | Davies | Marine Management Organisation | Blue Belt Programme: Long-term sustainable financing opportunities in the UK Overseas Territories |
| 6 | Phoebe | Holding | APEM Group | Brown crabs – hard or soft? An innovative partnership between academic researchers and the fishing industry with the shared goal of sustainable fisheries management. |
| 7 | Jacques | Villemot | Rewilding Britain | Offshore wind for a wilder future |
| 8 | Rose | O'Neill | Campaign for National Parks | Seabeds to summits: National Parks at land, coast and sea |
| 9 | Kate | Jury | National Trails UK | Coastal Wildbelt: A national initiative to unlock and support projects and partnerships to deliver for people and nature, |
| 10 | Joshua | Bishop | Risk & Policy Analysts | Tides of Change: Climate, Communities, and Coastal Economies |
| 11 | Sophie | Day | University of East Anglia and North Norfolk District Council | When coastal erosion transcends generations – planning for the future of graveyards at risk |
| 12 | Emma Jane | Greenway | Natural England | Marine Net Gain: Evidence Development for Marine Nature Recovery |
| 13 | James | Ward | Office for Environmental Protection | Plans, Progress and Prospects: Holding government to account on marine targets and commitments |

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| Abstract # | Name | Surname | Organisation | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Miriam | White | University of Plymouth's Centre for Coastal Communities | Exploring the Impact of Place on Coastal Youth Future Expectations |
| 15 | Georgia | de Jong Cleyndert | Cumbria Wildlife Trust/North West Wildlife Trusts | The Irish Sea Network: Lessons in transboundary collaboration for marine conservation |
| 16 | Maisy | Fuller | University of Plymouth | National Marine Parks: Turning the Tide of UK Coastal Management |
| 17 | Freyja and Nicola | Thomson-Alberts and Bridge | Ocean Conservation Trust | Mobilising Ocean Action Through Data-led Insights |
| 18 | Charlotte | Lyddon | University of Liverpool | Coast-R Network+ and the Resilience Coastal Communities and Seas Programme |
| 19 | Ciara | Taylor | Marine Conservation Society | Local, place-based, partnership working in Wales: Lessons learnt from the Marine Conservation |
| 20 | Robert | Walsh | Northern Ireland Marine Task Force | Northern Ireland's Progression to Achieving Marine Nature Recovery - NIMTF's Recommendations |
| 21 | Hannah | Tidbury | APEM Group | What lies beneath: rapid invasive species monitoring in support of blue growth |
| 22 | Chantal | Lyons | Mindfully Wired | Building a bycatch mitigation trial around a collaborative core in the North Sea |
| 23 | Eloise | White | Intertek Metoc | Spatial Planning for Sustainable Offshore Growth |
| 24 | Rada | Pandeva | Thalassophile Project/ University of Exeter | Thalassophile Project: Universally Accessible Marine Science & Ocean Literacy |
| 25 | Elizabeth | Brett | Marine Management Organisation | Place-based decision-making in the marine area – the story so far. |
| 26 | Pamela | Buchan | University of Exeter | Public Participation in Marine Decisions: The Case of Offshore Wind. |

# Poster Abstracts

## 1 - Closing the mapping gap

**Stephen Hall,** Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Seabed 2030
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Since 1903 the General Bathymetric Chart of the Ocean has been underway to create the first global map of the ocean floor - with over 360 million square kilometres to cover it's a monumental undertaking. By 2016 only 6% had been mapped to modern standards (at least one depth measurement in an area the size of a football field) and the Nippon Foundation of Japan stepped forward to fund 'Seabed 2030' - an accelerator programme to help complete the GEBCO map. Since then, we have upped the area covered to 27.3% of the seafloor through voluntary donations of data from industry, government, academia and equipment manufacturers. As no-one can can manage what hasn't been mapped, the global map is there to enable marine spatial planning, digital twins, tsunami propagation modelling, improved homeland security and much more. In this talk Head of Partnerships Steve Hall will describe Seabed 2030 & GEBCO, explain how we work with our global network of partners, the rising role of marine autonomous systems and crowdsourcing to fill gaps in mapping, & encourage delegates to share data for the benefit of humankind.

## 2 - Integrating Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal and Socio-economic Resilience

**Jerome Curoy,** JBA Consulting
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The escalating challenges associated with climate change and biodiversity decline necessitate immediate action and innovative strategies. Consequently, governments globally, particularly in the UK, are enacting a range of environmental and climate policies. These include the Net Zero Strategy, the Biodiversity Net Gain initiative, and efforts like the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 initiative. A critical element of these initiatives is the adoption of Nature-based Solutions (NbS). NbS provide cost-effective and sustainable approaches to environmental restoration, yielding diverse benefits such as enhanced socio-economic resilience, reduced flood risks, carbon sequestration, and improved water quality. Often, the feasibility of restoring NbS habitats is supported using habitat suitability modelling which primarily focuses on environmental parameters such as bathymetry, salinity, nutrient availability, or light availability datasets. However, the feasibility of an NbS should consider the broader context of coastal areas to deliver optimum resilience for both the environment and coastal communities and further enhance the success of a restoration project. In alignment with this, JBA Consulting is developing a modelling methodology that explores a systems approach aimed at implementing the most suitable NbS habitat or suite of habitats integrating some of the most relevant benefits, including flood risk management, carbon reduction, biodiversity enhancement, and socio-economic advantages. This poster presents some of the results from a coastal study in East Sussex, combining Blue

Carbon habitats feasibility with their socio-economic benefits or constraints, thereby highlighting priority areas for restoration efforts. These outputs are aimed to assist local authorities and coastal managers in achieving optimal benefits for all stakeholders.

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## 3 - Seeing the Whole Ocean: AI approaches to Climate, Fisheries and Policy

**Author:** David Lamb, OceanOS Earth
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Ocean management faces increasingly complex, interlinked challenges. Yet data on climate, fisheries, and policy often sit in silos, processed too slowly to inform timely action. Fisheries records can take years to be analysed, while climate-driven shifts such as rising sea temperatures, marine heatwaves, algal blooms, and changing fish migrations unfold in real time. Policy responses, meanwhile, remain fragmented across jurisdictions and mandates. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) illustrate the problem: they protect defined habitats but rarely capture wider ecosystem dynamics, migratory species, or displaced fishing activity. This presentation introduces Ocean OS, a foundational geospatial-AI platform developed to integrate and accelerate access to ocean data. Ocean OS brings together diverse sources, from regulatory returns and satellite feeds to ecological surveys, into a single, interpretable system. The result is a shared evidence base that supports faster, adaptive management across government, industry, and NGOs. By providing real-time, system-wide insights, Ocean OS helps move decision-making beyond anecdote, whether around fish stock recovery, shifting species ranges, or climate impacts, and towards transparent, evidence-led policy. It demonstrates how data science can help bridge the gap between research and implementation, providing the tools and shared understanding needed to translate ocean ambition into coordinated action. In doing so, Ocean OS supports the transition to climate-ready, resilient, and collaborative ocean governance.

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## 4 - Local knowledge, national impact: Citizen science empowers collective action for healthier rivers and coasts

**Author:** Kelly Haynes, Environment Agency
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The Environment Agency is supporting citizen science and empowering communities to actively participate in monitoring and protecting their local water environment. Through collaborative data collection efforts, local communities are contributing complementary sources of environmental intelligence, particularly in environment planning. Working with water stakeholders including local communities the Environment Agency produced its first ever Citizen Science Technical Advisory Framework which offers a practical structured way to guide the development of citizen science and assess existing initiatives based on their purpose effort, and data quality. This framework is part of our work with partners to transform local observations into trusted, actionable environmental insights that inform catchment management and national policy. When combined with a weight of evidence approach, it allows citizen science data from different levels and scales to be considered alongside professional monitoring, modelling, and historical records, building a more complete and trusted evidence base. Through embedding this tiered framework, we will be able to better understand how to bridge the data-to-policy gap. By promoting inclusive participation while ensuring the rigour and traceability required for regulatory confidence, this will support a maturing partnership between communities and regulators. Shared stewardship is essential for building resilient, informed, and engaged communities capable of safeguarding natural resources. Recent reviews have highlighted the growing importance of citizen science and confirmed that, with proportionate assurance, it can support the evidence base underpinning regulation and policy.

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## 5 - Blue Belt Programme: Long-term sustainable financing opportunities in the UK Overseas Territories

**Author:** Jamie Davies, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
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In 2016, the UK Government launched the Blue Belt Programme with the ambition to support the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) to deliver world-class marine protection across some of the planet's most remote and biodiverse waters. Ten years on, there is the opportunity to reflect on how that ambition has been realised. Protecting vast marine areas with limited local capacity and increasing pressures from climate change, pollution and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing presents unique challenges. The Blue Belt Programme has worked closely with UKOTs, UK Government departments, international partners, and the private sector to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance accountability, and build local capacity for effective marine management. Focusing on large scale ocean protection and drawing on case studies from across the Overseas Territories we will showcase how, through collaborative working, legal reform, and innovative surveillance, robustly managed marine protected areas are possible, even in geographically isolated regions. We will also reflect on efforts to influence international and regional regulatory

frameworks that support UKOT marine protections. Finally, we will explore how the lessons learned and tools developed over the past decade can be scaled to support broader global marine conservation ambitions —demonstrating that with the right partnerships, frameworks, and innovation, ocean sustainability commitments can be turned into lasting impact.

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## 6- Brown crabs – hard or soft? An innovative partnership between academic researchers and the fishing industry with the shared goal of sustainable fisheries management.

**Author:** Phoebe Holding, APEMGroup
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Achieving long-term sustainable management of marine resources requires cross-sector collaboration and shared stewardship. This is vital when balancing conservation with the economic viability of the seafood industry and local community livelihoods. This poster presents outputs from a DEFRA-funded Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) project that demonstrates this approach, through management of one of the UK's most commercially important species, the edible brown crab (Cancer pagurus). The project brought together academic researchers and the local fishing industry to co-develop a method to identify and prevent landings of 'soft-shelled' brown crab – brown crab that have recently moulted – a critical life stage for reproduction. They are biologically vulnerable, with poor meat quality and yield, yet can be legally landed for use as fishing bait under the Shellfish Act 1967. Following concern from the fishing industry regarding the impact on crab stocks, the crab and lobster fisheries management plans (FMPs) 2023 detailed an early intervention to prohibit landings of soft-shelled brown crab for bait. However, no definition of a 'soft-shelled' crab exists. Therefore, the project trialled durometers (tools that measure hardness) as a novel method to quantify shell hardness, informed by local fishers' traditional expertise and knowledge. Over 3000 crabs were sampled during commercial operations in Devon. The study identified durometer score thresholds that could support compliance monitoring and considered economic implications for meat yield. This work highlights the value of industry-led research, whereby local fishers' expertise directly shaped data collection and interpretation, building the foundation for effective and equitable fisheries management.

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## 7- Offshore wind for a wilder future

**Author:** Jacques Villemot, Rewilding Britain
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Offshore wind energy is a cornerstone of the UK's climate strategy, with a target of 43-50 gigawatt (GW) in operation by 2030 - a major uplift from the 15GW currently operational. Such a significant industrialisation of our seas is not going to come without trade-offs and balancing these to ensure we maximise the potential benefits of these developments is crucial. During their lifecycle, wind turbines present a range of impacts - from disturbance to collision risks for seabirds or displacement of fish populations - but also offer opportunities for nature and people. Indeed, the sector promise an array of new jobs and investments while the structures themselves often operate as de facto Marine Protected Areas and artificial reefs for marine life. Well balanced, offshore wind can help Britain lead the way in a new model of coexistence - where human infrastructure supports ecological recovery, where marine rewilding creates new economies as well as new habitats, and where people feel empowered in shaping the seascapes of tomorrow. Based on the findings of a new innovative report, Rewilding Britain will present a pathway for marine rewilding with community regeneration at its heart enabled by offshore wind. We will introduce tools to engage coastal communities and support their economic growth. We will discuss how offshore wind can enable community driven large scale marine restoration projects and the removal of pressures across large areas to support marine recovery. We will finally touch on how to ensure this happens without greenwashing or offsetting without ecological uplift.

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## 8- Seabeds to summits: National Parks at land, coast and sea

**Author:** Rose O'Neill, Campaign for National Parks

In the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the ocean was left out. Since then, more than 370 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have been designated across British seas, yet effective coastal and ocean management remains challenged by complex land–sea designations, competing stakeholder interests, inequitable governance, and limited levels of ocean literacy amongst key sectors and communities. In order to transform coastal and ocean management, we must challenge conventional approaches. National Parks at land, coast and sea present an emerging framework for shared stewardship. They offer a place-based, partnership-driven model that can connect people and nature, strengthen ocean literacy, and support more equitable planning and governance of our blue spaces. By uniting landscapes and seascapes under a common vision, National Marine Parks can enhance community well-being, support coastal resilience, and provide a unifying platform for integrated management.

Over the past year, progress in developing the National Marine Parks movement has accelerated: gaining cross-party political support, generating cross-sector interest, and advancing new research into the feasibility of National Parks at land, coast and sea. This presentation will outline the latest national thinking, emerging opportunities, and actions driving this rapidly evolving movement — whilst considering how this model can shape the next generation of coastal and ocean governance.

**Additional authors**

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## 9 - Coastal Wildbelt: A national initiative to unlock and support projects and partnerships to deliver for people and nature, together

**Author:** Kate Jury, National Trails UK
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Coastal Wildbelt is a national initiative advocating for both people and nature along England's dynamic coast—amplifying its importance and influence. Over the past two years, we've scoped how to unlock the potential of the land that stretches around our coastline—linking our King Charles III England Coast Path, with the land down to the sea at low tide, and the spaces beyond. Our incredible 2700-mile National Trail and its associated coastal margin of almost 250,000ha is a living landscape, rich in wildlife, heritage, and opportunity. This is a place where people can connect with the coast, and where vital habitats, natural landscapes, and communities can thrive together. Coastal Wildbelt never separates the King Charles III England Coast Path from the awe-inspiring landscapes it meanders through. Connecting rural with urban, hotspots with hidden gems and land with the sea. We advocate and inspire the connections between people, places and sectors, and support boundary pushing partnerships to flourish so that the coast can become a celebrated space of even greater significance. Hear about some of our fantastic case studies and mechanisms that are bringing Coastal Wildbelt to life across England - from test and trial pilots to Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and existing partnerships who are opening new doors with cross-sector stakeholders to create shared visions for people and nature, together.

**Aknowledgements**

Protected Landscapes Partnership; South West Coast Path Association; Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership.

## 10 - Tides of Change: Climate, Communities, and Coastal Economies

**Author:** Joshua Bishop, Risk & Policy Analysts Ltd
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This poster presents emerging insights form three projects that Risk & Policy Analysts (RPA) have completed, or are working on for the Defra-funded Resilient Coasts FCRIP project, and Coastwise CTAP project. These projects are seeking to develop pioneering new approaches to coastal adaptation on the rapidly eroding East Anglia Coastline. The rapid erosion in the region presents escalating risks to communities, infrastructure, and local economies. The three pieces of work presented in this poster demonstrate the innovative approaches being developed to offer scalable tools, modelling frameworks, and community-focused insights to strengthen long-term coastal resilience, with the long-term ambition to inform future national policy.

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## 11 - When coastal erosion transcends generations – planning for the future of graveyards at risk

**Author:** Sophie Day, University of East Anglia and North Norfolk District Council
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As climate change accelerates coastal erosion, its impacts are no longer abstract or distant. They are emotional, deeply rooted in place and transcend past, present and future generations. In North Norfolk, the Coastwise project is exploring the urgent and sensitive challenge of managing graveyards at risk. Within just a 21-mile coastal frontage, we have three sites at risk. Around the country there are many more. Graveyards are active sites of remembrance central to the culture and history of coastal communities. Often, they are both centuries old and still in use, embody personal and communal memory, heritage, and identity. Their impending loss and how to identify next steps and practical options is not merely a logistical issue, but a theological, pastoral and spiritual one. Coastwise is working to prepare communities at risk of coastal erosion and generate national learning to support the eventual mainstream delivery of coastal adaptation and transition. This presentation will examine the types of options that need to be considered sooner rather than later to plan for the future of at-risk burial grounds. This work is informing how real communities, local authorities, and heritage bodies can start to work together to navigate the moral, spiritual, and practical complexities of these situations. Key themes include intergenerational stewardship, legal and ethical frameworks, and the importance of proactive engagement with local voices. This work takes a compassionate, forward-looking and holistic approach to coastal transition planning — one that honours the past while responsibly preparing for an uncertain future.

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## 12 - Marine Net Gain: Evidence Development for Marine Nature Recovery

**Author:** Emma-Jane Greenway, Natural England
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Marine Net Gain (MNG) is a concept supporting the UK Government's ambition to help nature recover and improve environmental outcomes of marine developments. It aims to reverse biodiversity decline and promote nature recovery in England's marine environment by ensuring that developments leave the marine environment in a demonstrably better state than before, working with industry-led approaches and emerging standards to support planning and marine recovery. Natural England have recently published a suite of evidence projects to inform these marine recovery initiatives. These projects address three core questions: what interventions are needed, where they are most needed and therefore how do we plan, and how to measure ecological losses and gains. The Marine Net Gain Assessment Frameworks (MNGAF) project explored methods to quantify and compare marine ecological losses and gains. Working with technical experts and stakeholders, this project started to build consensus around robust methods to demonstrate marine recovery. The Marine Irreplaceable Habitats (MIH) project, in collaboration with the Marine Biological Association and Plymouth Marine Laboratory, mapped irreplaceable habitats in English waters. Using a scoring system, MIH produced a heat map to help inform future planning and prioritisation of viable marine recovery interventions. Finally, the Pilot Development Project explored the challenges and opportunities for developing a suite of pilot projects to test principles of Marine Net Gain and Marine Recovery across different marine environments and industries, evaluating practical implementation pathways and empowering developers to deliver measurable and accountable nature recovery outcomes

**Additional authors**
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## 13 - Plans, Progress and Prospects: Holding government to account on marine targets and commitments

**Author:** James Ward, Office for Environmental Protection (OEP)
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The Office for Environmental Protection's (OEP) mission is to protect and improve the environment by holding government and other public authorities to account. We seek to achieve this through our four main statutory functions. Amongst these is our scrutiny of Environmental Improvement Plans (EIP) and targets for England and Northern Ireland. We must provide annual reports to both Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly which assess Government and

the Executive's progress in delivering the current EIP. Our reports take an integrated assessment approach, drawing together available knowledge, evidence and analysis to provide an assessment within and across environmental domains, across geographic scales, and timescales. Our reports assess past indicator trends, progress towards achieving the targets and commitments set out within EIPs over the given reporting period, and the prospects of achieving them. This includes an assessment of marine targets, including good environmental status of marine waters under the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010, and the Environment Act 2021 target for Marine Protected Areas. Our assessments are then also used to inform wider research priorities, and other statutory functions, including the scrutiny of law, the provision of advice, and enforcement against failures to comply with environmental law. Through all of our work we prioritise positive outcomes and maintain an active dialogue with the government to achieve them. This presentation will highlight how we use these reports to hold government to account, focusing on our fourth progress report for England, due in January 2026.

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## 14 - Exploring the Impact of Place on Coastal Youth Future Expectations

**Author:** Miriam White, University of Plymouth's Centre for Coastal Communities
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A number of coastal communities experience a myriad of socio-cultural, health, and economic challenges due to their geographical remoteness and decades of policy neglect. This sustained underinvestment has led to high levels of multiple deprivation and social exclusion, particularly impacting coastal youth. The Southwest continues to exhibit the widest educational attainment gaps in the UK and low rates of social mobility despite presence of the 'brain drain'. While the development of the blue economy and growing emphasis on place-based policy can provide much-needed opportunities to drive structural and relational change, the legacy of being under-resourced has left a lasting impact on the perceptions and mental models that shape how coastal communities view themselves and their futures. Without understanding and addressing these mental models, transformative change cannot be sustained. Focusing on the mental models component of the Six Conditions of Systems Change framework, this research explores how growing up in coastal locations shapes young people's future expectations. The study adopts a mixed-methods design, adapting the Adolescent Future Expectations Scale to measure educational, career, and wellbeing expectations, followed by arts-based interviews where participants create Educational Rivers. This provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect on their educational journeys, vocalise their future expectations and their perceptions of the factors that shape them. Through these stakeholder-informed insights, the project aims to inform best practice in Blue Economy and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) interventions, supporting efforts to retain local talent, address regional brain drain, and develop sustainable livelihoods in coastal regions.

## 15 – The Irish Sea Network: Lessons in transboundary collaboration for marine conservation

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The Irish Sea Network (ISN) is a partnership of ten Wildlife Trusts and the Sustainable Water Network, Irish Wildlife Trust and Northern Ireland Marine Task Force working across six nations surrounding the Irish Sea. Established in 2020, the ISN has built a collaborative forum to share knowledge, advocate for better management, and address growing pressures on this ecologically and socio-economically important sea. The Network has gained valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of transboundary marine conservation. The Irish Sea is a highly connected system, where management in one jurisdiction often impacts ecosystems and communities beyond its borders. Yet, fragmented governance and differing priorities hinder cohesive action. Although 36% of the sea is designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), only ~5% have fisheries management and less than 0.01% are fully protected, falling far short of 30x30 goals. Meanwhile, 36% of fish stocks are in critical condition, highlighting the urgent need for a just transition to sustainable fisheries. Marine Spatial Planning processes are advancing across the six nations but remain misaligned, with limited prioritisation of nature. The ISN calls for cross-border collaboration and ecological recovery to be embedded within plans. A key lesson is the undervaluation of the Irish Sea. Raising its profile and engaging coastal communities are vital for building stewardship, reducing conflict, and ensuring equitable transitions in the face of growing industrialisation. The ISN demonstrates the importance of regional networks in connecting local voices with cross-national advocacy, providing a model for collaborative, nature-focused marine management.

## 16 - National Marine Parks: Turning the Tide of UK Coastal Management

**Author:** Maisy Fuller, University of Plymouth
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Human activities are driving the loss of global marine biodiversity. Traditional conservation approaches often fail to address this, as they overlook the interconnectedness of ecological and social systems. In response, holistic models that integrate biodiversity conservation with human wellbeing are gaining traction. National Marine Parks (NMPs) represent a new model of such management in the UK. Unlike traditional Marine Protected Areas, NMPs are non-statutory initiatives that incorporate existing designations while broadening their scope to promote human-nature connections and deliver ecological, social and economic benefits. This research provides an assessment of the benefits of the UK's first NMP, Plymouth Sound NMP. Eight workshops were held with over 40 stakeholders, including NMP staff and volunteers, statutory

bodies and local organisations, both those directly funded by the NMP and others in the wider nature and heritage network. These explored participants' perceptions of how the NMP altered ecosystem services and the associated impact across communities and environments. Cultural services emerged as the most immediate and widely impacted, with the NMP promoting marine citizenship and emotional connection to place. These were viewed as central to the Park's sociocultural value. While the NMPs influence on regulating, supporting and provisioning services remain aspirational, there is strong collective enthusiasm for the NMP to act as a catalyst for their future delivery. Findings identified opportunities to strengthen governance, broaden stakeholder engagement and integrate catchment-based planning. Identification of these key intervention points enables this research to support the co-creation of an inclusive, evidence-informed framework for future NMPs.

**Additional authors**
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## 17 - Mobilising Ocean Action Through Data-led Insights

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The Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) is a people focused ocean conservation charity. This poster presents two key programmes for the charity that emphasise the need for data-led insights into the human-ocean relationship. **Ocean and Society Survey (OSS)**: By mapping public ocean perceptions across different audiences and countries over multiple Survey iterations (until 2030), we can track changes in people–ocean connections and ocean literacy. This enables the global ocean community to iteratively refine their understanding of what drives peoples'/communities' engagement in place-based solutions. These insights can guide the design, facilitation, and coordination of effective engagement pathways, communication strategies, and decision-making toward measurable, solution-focused action. It moves the needle from managing the ocean to managing our own behaviour. A selection of results from the UK OSS will be presented. Delegates will be provided with links to the OSS platform so that they can access the live datasets themselves. **Blue Mind Hub (BMH):** BMH is an OCT initiative that uses Blue Mind Theory to encourage Ocean empathy, recognising individual's role in Ocean health, and the role of the Ocean in human health. BMH uses social prescribing in Plymouth to support individuals living with poor mental health, using Ocean based activities to improve wellbeing, with 55 participants since 2023. Using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), the mean score prior to the programme was 39.22, indicating low wellbeing in participants. At the end of the 8-week programme, the mean score was 51.94, indicating wellbeing improvement to general population levels.

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## 18 - Coast-R Network+ and the Resilience Coastal Communities and Seas Programme

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The Resilient UK Coastal Communities and Seas (ReCCS) programme is a £14.8M UKRI/DEFRA investment consisting of the Coast-R Network Plus (led by the University of Hull) and four research projects situated around the UK. Coast-R's role is to draw the programme together, championing the outcomes, benefits and opportunities, assisting with finding commonalities across projects and looking at specific cross-programme challenges such as stakeholder engagement. Coast-R will build an inclusive and collaborative community of practice working to develop and grow knowledge, action and resilience for UK coastal communities and seas. Our poster showcases the opportunities and activities that we will be undertaking over the next four years with our partner universities, demonstrating how our objectives and cross-cutting themes will help us to: **1**. Champion and coordinate research and knowledge exchange across and beyond the ReCCS Programme **2.** Develop and support transdisciplinary research capacity around coastal and marine resilience, through the Flexible Fund **3.** Scale and embed effective place-based interventions into policy, practice and knowledge mobilisation We will also highlight opportunities for engaging with the network+ activities, including our flexible fund opportunities, and our ongoing programme of online workshops and webinars which are open to all members of the network+ - there will also be an opportunity to sign-up to the network if Coastal Futures delegates have not already done so.

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## 19 - Hiraeth Yn Y Môr & Natur am Byth! Môr - Restoration through partnership

**Author:** Ciara Taylor, Marine Conservation Society
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This poster will focus on how using an ocean literacy framework and community co-design within the Hiraeth Yn Y Môr (HYYM) project, led to positive impacts on the health of local communities and marine heritage. HYYM was a two-year Marine Conservation Society project, co-led with the North-East Wales communities of Prestatyn, Rhyl, Kinmel Bay & Towyn. It aimed to grow ocean literacy to support the sustainable management of Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area and increase community health and wellbeing. With the local community, we co-designed activities focused on growing ocean literacy. Using the ten dimensions of ocean literacy, we worked closely with people to understand what mattered to them and motivated

them to act. Wellness was identified as an important factor and became one of three key themes, alongside learning and taking action. We measured change in ocean literacy using pre and post activity surveys, with questions adapted from the Wales National Ocean Literacy survey. We found that wellness activities resulted in the biggest growth in ocean literacy, informing our understanding of what is most effective. Participants also indicated behaviour change, with 100% of participants intending to carry out pro-ocean behaviour in the next 12-months. The UN Ocean Decade Challenge 10 paper states “the challenge we face is not how to manage the ocean, but how to manage ourselves”. We come a step closer to a sustainable future, by understanding that a focus on wellbeing can lead to increased ocean literacy, and therefore healthier communities who act for their ocean.

**Additional authors**
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## 20 - Northern Ireland’s Progression to Achieving Marine Nature Recovery - NIMTF’s Recommendations

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Northern Ireland (NI) policies and frameworks, including the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Strategy Review, the Blue Carbon Action Plan (BCAP), and developing conservation strategies for Seabirds (Seabird Conservation Strategy and Action Plan) and Elasmobranchs (Elasmobranch Conservation Strategy), must demonstrate urgent action and accountability to tackle the region's severe nature crisis. NI currently ranks 12th worst globally for biodiversity loss. Effective action requires transitioning policies from guidance to robust conservation implementation, driven by ecosystem-based approaches. Key actions involve prioritizing the protection and creation of crucial blue carbon habitats, e.g. seagrass and saltmarsh, which have seen drastic declines (e.g., 92% loss of seagrass meadows). Implementation must also address immediate threats, including mitigating coastal pollution from unsatisfactory storm overflows and regulating bottom-impacting activities like dredging and trawling. Accountability is central to achieving policy success. This demands the implementation of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) targets across all objectives, ensuring measurable progress. Governance must be strengthened through mandatory cross-departmental collaboration overcoming the 'silo mentality' where environmental responsibility often falls solely under DAERA. All actions require a clear lead ensuring ownership and delivery. This requires Governments providing adequate, sustained, and ring-fenced funding for monitoring and restoration. Robust enforcement is critical, necessitating the sufficient resourcing of existing measures and the exploration of modern monitoring technology, such as Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM). Finally, transparency must be improved via regular, public updates on MPA condition assessments and management progress. NIMTF will address how policies translate to the practicalities for NI to achieve action and accountability.

## 21 - What lies beneath: rapid invasive species monitoring in support of blue growth

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The systematic observation of marine life to assess ecosystem health and the impact of human activities, such as new developments, is crucial for understanding the implications of these activities and the subsequent development of effective mitigation measures. There is a close association between economic developments, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the introduction and spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), especially biofouling organisms. Robust monitoring in and around locations associated with such activities is vital to inform INNS risk assessments and subsequent management actions. Within this session, we present novel, rapid approaches for the detection and monitoring of INNS at coastal and marine development sites. We discuss the benefits and limitations of current methods, including novel technologies/approaches, and consider how data can be pooled and analysed to inform baseline status and track changes in distribution, abundance, and species composition. Building on this, we consider how outputs are currently utilised to inform risk assessment processes and identify suitable targeted mitigation measures. Recent case studies will be used to highlight the importance of robust data collection and analysis protocols, as well as achieving stakeholder buy-in, driving sustainable blue growth whilst protecting biodiversity.

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## 22 - Building a bycatch mitigation trial around a collaborative core in the North Sea

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Programmes to monitor and mitigate bycatch of sensitive marine species must be a fit for the local contexts in which they are carried out, if they are to be effective and long-lasting. In this spirit, Clean Catch was established by Defra in 2020 to play an integral role in helping the UK Government's policy objective to minimise and, where possible, eliminate bycatch of sensitive marine species. Clean Catch has built on its experiences from scientific trials in Southwest England to closely co-design a new trial focusing on seabirds with the Eastern England Fish Producers Organisation (EEFPO) and its Peterhead-based fleet. The EEFPO responded to a collaboration call-out from Clean Catch after proactively testing bird-scaring lines to avoid accidental capture of seabirds. The trial's co-design process itself has been iteratively

calibrated to the EEFPO's context, involving both vessel crew and owners from the start, and accommodating the nature of the fishery including when and how vessels operate. In this talk, Clean Catch will share knowledge and insight on: Strategies to communicate and engage with fishermen and fishing industry representatives; Navigating challenges and capitalising on opportunities for collaboration across national borders (in this case, England and Scotland); How the North Sea trial's co-design process has laid strong foundations for success; How Clean Catch's local experiences from the North Sea trial can inform strategies for collaborative action on bycatch across the UK.

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## 23 - Spatial Planning for Sustainable Offshore Growth

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The UK's first subsea cable was laid in 1850, when the ocean space was far less complex than it is today. Modern marine development must now navigate a host of constraints including fisheries, shipping and navigation, physical processes, marine ecology and archaeology, alongside increasing spatial pressures from Marine Protected Areas, aggregate extraction sites and other infrastructure. With 15 GW of offshore wind already commissioned in the UK and another 50 GW in the pipeline, it is essential to apply effective marine spatial planning tools and conceptual design strategies to futureproof projects and ensure a reliable and sustainable marine energy infrastructure network. Our 15-minute presentation will take a multi-sector approach to explore the current and future status of UK marine spatial planning. We will:

- Showcase existing and planned marine infrastructure.
    - A single visual of all projects clearly illustrates the extent of spatial squeeze.
- Highlight key development constraints. o Including environmentally sensitive areas, aggregate zones, and other critical considerations.
- Present tools and initiatives supporting spatial planning.
    - Such as The Crown Estate's Marine Delivery Routemap, screening tools, and planning guidelines.
- Explore sustainable solutions for futureproofing infrastructure - considering international marine spatial planning practices.
    - Including designated cable corridor routing, energy islands, repurposing of existing infrastructure and considerate sighting for future projects.
- Share lessons learned from Intertek-led projects.
    - Emphasising early stakeholder engagement, flexible design envelopes and effective GIS use to mitigate future risks.



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## 24 - Thalassophile Project: Universally Accessible Marine Science & Ocean Literacy

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The Thalassophile Project is an EU-funded and UN Ocean Decade-endorsed initiative dedicated to making marine science and ocean literacy accessible to all, with a particular focus on d/Deaf and visually impaired communities. Rooted in the belief that the Ocean connects and welcomes people from all backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life, the project seeks to address the gap in accessible and inclusive Blue Education resources. By bringing together partners from marine research, accessible pedagogy, and adult education, Thalassophile Project embeds inclusivity at every stage of its design. Guided by a Common Accessibility Framework and grounded in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the project's pilot activities — including educational episodes, a curated resource database, and user-friendly factsheets — showcase practical ways to create equitable, engaging learning experiences for diverse audiences. These efforts demonstrate how accessible ocean literacy can empower communities, inspire stewardship, and support the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Ocean Decade. This interactive poster will present key outcomes from the project, inviting participants to explore accessibility challenges and opportunities within marine science and ocean literacy. Through multisensory elements, it will foster dialogue, encourage reflection, and equip ocean professionals and practitioners with practical strategies to integrate inclusivity into their work — helping ensure that coastal environments and the people who care for them can thrive together.

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## 25 - Place-based decision-making in the marine area – the story so far

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There is a large body of evidence recognising the benefits of more localised, integrated and co-developed plans and strategies that deliver for communities, the environment and the economy. Since 2022, the MMO and NE have been exploring how such approaches could benefit the work of both organisations. Building on MMO1375 (presented at Coastal Futures in 2025), we have developed an approach to identify smaller geographical areas for a local marine plan pilot. We used activity data, stakeholder information and existing layers of governance, both terrestrial and marine-focused, to identify these areas. We applied the approach in the north west to develop some detailed maps for engagement and feedback. Concurrently, Natural England has

been looking at how local strategic plans for marine nature recovery might develop (including presenting at Coastal Futures 2024 on lessons from Local Nature Recovery Strategies). New policies have the potential to direct more resource into nature recovery actions but without appropriate strategic planning we do not have a mechanism to target such resource where it will have the most effective outcomes. Identifying the appropriate scale to develop such plans is the natural first step. The MMO and NE are working together to use the lens of marine nature recovery to test our approach to identifying the appropriate scale for locally led strategic planning. This is a research project, exploring the possibility of such plans and considering how they integrate with statutory marine plans. Our poster will tell the story of progress and thinking in this area of work.

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## 26 - Public Participation in Marine Decisions: The Case of Offshore Wind

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Planning for a sustainable marine future depends on decisions that people trust and can take part in. The University of Exeter and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) are working together on a new project to strengthen public participation in marine decision-making, focusing on offshore wind as a fast-moving and highly visible sector. The project is delivering a systematic review of how people are involved in marine planning and consenting, following the Centre for Environmental Evidence's ROSES standard. It brings together government, regulators, industry, academics, and community representatives through a steering group that is co-designing the review process and sharing expertise across sectors. This group is already shaping practical insights into what meaningful participation looks like in marine contexts, and how lessons can transfer across the land-sea boundary into wider planning practice. By mapping actual participation across planning, licensing, and project stages, the review is identifying where engagement works well, what voices are missing, and how planning systems can better reflect social as well as environmental priorities. It directly responds to the 2024 University of Exeter–MMO recommendation to review consultation processes for their inclusivity and effectiveness and the Environmental Audit Committee's recent recommendations to improve stakeholder engagement to deliver good marine environmental governance. We introduce the project, share early insights from the steering group, and explore how transdisciplinary working and shared stewardship can help modernise marine planning – making space for people as well as infrastructure in the ocean we all depend on.

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