

# *Post Conference Report* **South West Marine Natural Capital Conference 2017**

*11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – Exeter Racecourse*



**Organised by the Devon Maritime Forum**

*in partnership with*

**SWEEP, North Devon Marine Pioneer & WWF- UK SEAS**

## Introduction

The first South West Marine Natural Capital Conference 2017 was organised and hosted by the Devon Maritime Forum with North Devon Marine Pioneer (North Devon Biosphere Reserve), the SWEEP project (Plymouth University, Plymouth Marine Laboratory and University of Exeter), and the UK SEAS project (WWF). The conference provided an excellent opportunity for leading practitioners, businesses and interested stakeholders to learn more about natural capital, the Natural Capital Approach, and the region's marine and coastal assets, as well as finding out how they could get involved with the three partnership projects that are currently commencing in the region; the South West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP), the North Devon Marine Pioneer, and WWF - UK SEAS project.

Over 150 people attended the event, from a range of professions and interests. The day was lively and informative with delegates getting involved through participation in workshops and round table exercises. Feedback from delegates about the activities was generally good; 'The interactive sessions and afternoon workshops worked well. Asking people to sit at different tables was great for networking', 'Really interesting discussion and far more relevant to my day-to-day work than expected. Some real food for thought', although some thought that more time could have been spent on the workshops and that the discussion sessions 'could have had some project specific presentations on approaches to share techniques and recommendations'. Delegate suggestions included: 'a follow-up event to keep everyone involved and up-to-date with progress' along with recommendations to consider attracting more maritime industry and tourism representatives for future work.

The Devon Maritime Forum (DMF) would like to thank the delegates who attended and made this such a worthwhile event.

Steve Gilbert, the DMF coordinator, and Steve Smith, from Icarus, were the coordinators for the event, with Prof. Ed Maltby, DMF chair, welcoming the delegates and describing the aims and ambitions for the day.

## Natural capital context

The day commenced with a very interesting and informative talk on 'what nature does for Britain' by Tony Juniper, author, campaigner and environmentalist, who discussed the value of natural capital in a world, national and local context.

This was followed by an excellent presentation from Mel Austen, Head of Science at Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML), who focussed on the Natural Capital Approach when considering management of the marine and coastal environment. This presentation was developed with Prof. Ian Bateman, Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute (LEEP) at Exeter University. Mel discussed the concepts behind natural capital, starting from the beginning, with the Sun that provides the major external input to natural capital with the Earth providing the rest; 'stocks' (assets) of natural capital produce 'flows' (services) which support life and all this needs to be considered as an entire system, not individual elements - including market and non-market values. Mel discussed real world complexity – how changing one thing affects many other things - giving marine management examples. She also gave an overview of the policies/tools that drive the management of natural capital and discussed how the pioneers will be used to test these methods.

After the talks from Tony and Mel, the delegates were asked to reflect on the Natural Capital Approach at their tables. They were asked to focus on two questions: 1. what was particularly interesting to you and 2. how can the Natural Capital Approach be implemented in the South West? The discussion points can be found at Annex A

Central to the day was the showcasing of the SWEEP, the North Devon Marine Pioneer, and UK SEAS projects and the unique opportunity to learn about and engage with the individual projects, as well as to explore the common themes, challenges and ambitions. These large scale, innovative and collaborative projects and partnerships have just started in the region, and have the aim of bringing together academics, businesses, policy makers and local stakeholders to explore approaches to and solve some of the challenges of the marine environment; especially issues associated with financing, managing, improving and conserving the marine natural environment.

The presentations below can be found on the DMF website

[www.devonmaritimeforum.org.uk/conference/south-west-marine-natural-capital-conference-2017/](http://www.devonmaritimeforum.org.uk/conference/south-west-marine-natural-capital-conference-2017/)

**South West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP)** - Martin Attrill, Director of the Marine Institute, Plymouth University

SWEEP is a partnership project that focusses on research that has already been undertaken to deliver a suite of projects that will 'place natural capital at the heart of South West business and policy decision-making'. The South West has been identified as the ideal place to undertake this 5 year National Environmental Research Council (NERC) funded Environmental Science Impact Programme (ESIP) because natural capital forms the basis for a large part of the economy.

**North Devon Marine Pioneer – using the Natural Capital Approach** - Chrissie Ingle, Marine Pioneer Coordinator, North Devon Biosphere

The Marine Pioneer is one of four pioneers nationally, each of which have a specific geographical remit the other three are: Catchment in Cumbria, Urban in Greater Manchester, and Landscape in North Devon. The pioneers will be used to test the Natural Capital Approach to management of the natural environment in line with the government's long term plan. The Marine Pioneer is delivered over two areas, North Devon and Suffolk coast. The North Devon Marine Pioneer will be working closely with the Suffolk Marine Pioneer and the North Devon Landscape Pioneer to look at sustainable marine governance for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the wider sea, along with integration across the land/sea interface.

**UK SEAS Sustainable Environments at Sea** - Jenny Oates, UK SEAS Programme Manager, WWF-UK

The UK SEAS programme aims to increase the effectiveness and sustainable management of UK Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by increasing people's understanding of the value of the marine environment; by helping reconnect people to their local seas and creating new and meaningful opportunities for people to shape management. The programme focusses on case studies in North Devon and the Outer Hebrides, with a strong focus on collaborative working. The objectives of the programme are:

1. To develop and demonstrate approaches that support effective regional management of MPAs
2. Identify and trial novel sustainable financing mechanisms
3. To share the guidance, good practise and approaches developed in North Devon and the Outer Hebrides around the UK and beyond.

## Questions for speakers

After a short break, delegates were invited to submit questions to a panel of experts including: Mel Austen (SWEEP/ PML), Martin Attrill (SWEEP/ Plymouth University), Chrissie Ingle (Marine Pioneer/ Biosphere Reserve), and Jenny Oates (UK SEAS/WWF). Although all the projects are still in the very early stages it was apparent from the questions asked that there was real interest, not only in understanding the different projects themselves but how

they interconnected and also the combined legacy of the projects. The questions asked on the day were grouped into similar *themes* by the coordinator and included:

***What will be the legacy of the programmes?***

The Marine Pioneer is one of many pioneers and the funding will stop if we can't evidence change. There will be documentation of everything SWEEP does over the 5 years of working. There is no reason why it won't carry on. We are looking at a long monitoring project in future – after the 5 years. Yes, there are mechanisms in place for monitoring. We are incredibly networked as a community - NERC. We hope to make a transformative difference.

Financing is something we are very aware of. We do have sustainable financing built in to UKSEAS and we are looking at how it can be long-term beyond the scope of the project duration. We are building a website so that tools can be applied elsewhere in the UK. We need to ensure that the pioneer is fit for purpose – to keep thinking about the wider picture and look at new ways of gaining funding.

***How will you engage industry and how will these projects be scaled up to a national level?***

This is a key aspiration. Yes, it's a challenge – we are attempting to ensure that the private sector is engaged so that they feel they have a voice from the start. If they see value in our projects they will share knowledge. We don't have many large industries in the South West, most business only have up to 10 people. We have to engage SMEs but it is difficult for smaller companies. There is already engagement from the private sector such as, South West Water, farmers addressing nutrients issue. We are also talking to people working on smaller margins. It takes longer to get smaller businesses, especially tourist based businesses, to come round. The lifecycle analysis that embraces natural capital approaches is the way forward.

Overlap of boundaries means that, yes, it may be a challenge and we need buy in from all partners to make sure this is achieved. With the two catchment wide pioneer projects it may be that SWEEP acts as a catalyst between the two.

***Sustainable finance -what is it and where do you source it and how does it relate to natural capital?***

Examples of sustainable finance are: green bonds, taxes, permits. It's about generating revenue in a non-typical way. Natural capital assessment in North Devon will be used within the case study to inform sustainable finance.

As time was limited, other questions were noted down from each table for future discussion between the project partners – these can be found at annex B

**What does natural capital mean to you?**

After lunch, the delegates were asked to return to their tables to consider the question: **what does natural capital mean to you?** This involved a round table exercise to consider five statements about natural capital in relation to each participants own understanding.

Participants were asked to score each statement from +2 (strongly agree) to -2 (strongly disagree). They were then asked to justify the score that they had given each statement.

The 5 statements were:

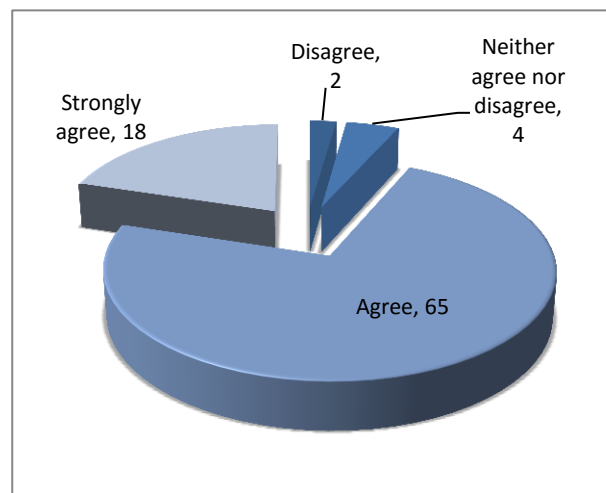
1. I understand the Natural Capital Approach
2. I use the Natural Capital Approach in my own work

3. Natural capital is the best way to get the environment taken into account in decision-making
4. The Natural Capital Approach is easy to apply to the marine environment
5. I know who to ask if I want to find out more about natural capital.

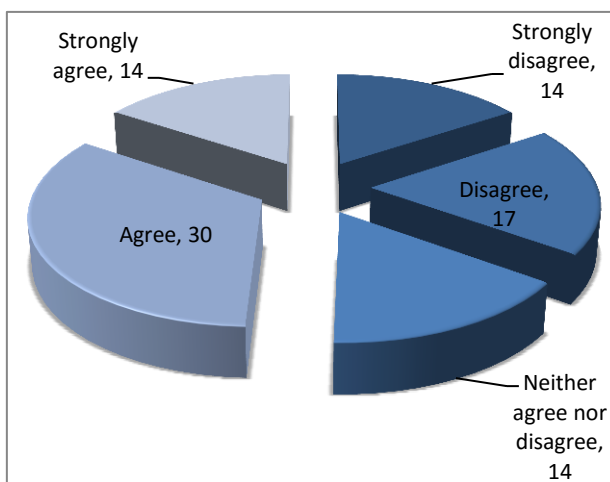
It is reasonable to assume that those attending the South West Marine Natural Capital Conference would, in the main, already have an interest in and/or knowledge of natural capital, either as part of their work or as a knowledgeable amateur and so this needs to be kept in mind when considering the responses to the statements. These responses are unlikely to be a reflection of the understanding by the general public of the Natural Capital Approach.

### I understand the Natural Capital Approach

Most of the delegates agreed or strongly agreed with this statement although many felt that, although they understood the concept, putting into practice may be more difficult - 'understand the theory but not the application', 'understand concept but not how to use it'. Some felt that there was a strong link between natural capital and ecosystems services assessment and found little difference between the two - 'How does it differ from ecosystems services', 'confused between ESA and natural capital', 'I understand ESA which is similar'. There were also concerns about giving a monetary value to the natural environment - 'seems to be all about money and economics - is this really the case?', 'disagree with the underlying connection to the economy and money', 'does giving things a monetary value remove the original intentions'. Delegates, some of whom used natural capital in their work, were interested in how it could be put into practice to enhance the environment - 'positive side is that natural capital is getting people talking, and getting it recognised', 'Like whole catchment thinking'.



### I use the Natural Capital Approach in my own work

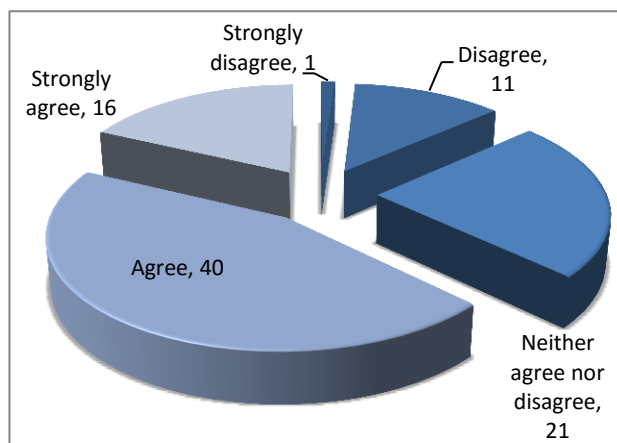


Half of the delegates strongly agreed or agreed with this statement with some being specific about how they used the Natural Capital Approach in their own work - 'Marine Planner', 'especially use it for planning and advocacy', 'research for policy'. It was felt by some that the Natural Capital Approach may be being used indirectly - 'under a different name - intrinsic appeal, sustainable harvesting, etc.' 'practices exist but they aren't labelled as natural capital', 'water clean-up and tourism (water-based) are examples of natural capital'.

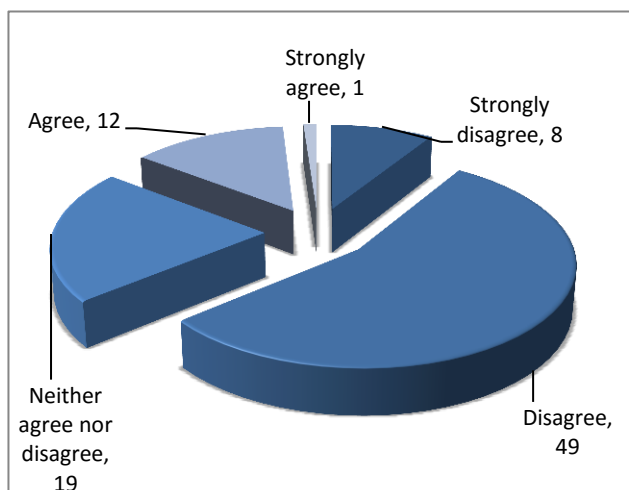


### Natural capital is the best way to get the environment taken into account in decision-making

56 delegates agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and 12 delegates disagreed or strongly disagreed, although there was a concern from both sides that there was a risk to relying on economics and that 'greater good' and intrinsic values were just as important. Of those that agreed some stated that there is 'always going to be a better way' and that this was the 'least worst method'. It was seen that if it was backed by good science and a strong evidence base that it could help draw down funding, assist decision makers and complement other methods.



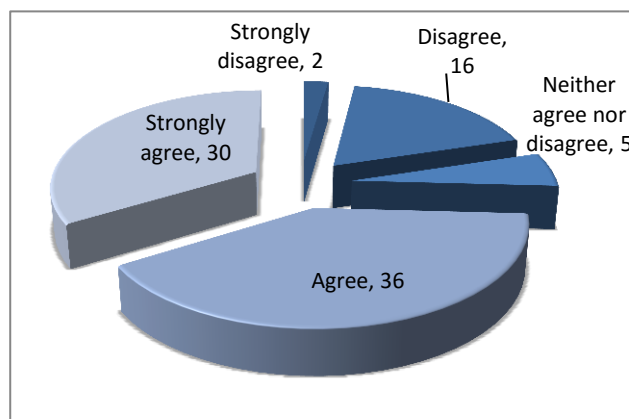
### The Natural Capital Approach is easy to apply to the marine environment



57 delegates disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, especially when compared to the Natural Capital Approach when applied to the terrestrial environment. The delegates cited public ownership, geographical context and baseline data as an issue. Those that felt that the Natural Capital Approach could be applied to the marine environment, felt that there were links to the terrestrial environment and the land sea interface, with one stating that it could 'bridge the language barrier between scientist, decision maker and grass roots aspect'

### I know who to ask if I want to find out more about natural capital.

66 delegates agreed or strongly agreed with this statement with 18 disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Those that disagreed were concerned with where they should focus: 'google search no good - too much un-sifted information', 'everyone has different lens', 'sounds like the need to ask a lot of people a lot of things'. Those that agreed stated that they were able to ask colleagues within their own organisations as well as the experts from the conference. They also considered the Natural Capital Committee, Ecosystems Knowledge Network, Local Nature Partnerships and AONBs as a source of information.



## Natural capital - discussion groups

Delegates were invited to participate in workshops covering a range of subjects in relation to the projects presented and management of the wider marine environment. The workshops were well attended with key points from each workshop summarised in annex C. The workshops will be used to define work plans, co-operation, additional outcomes and future stakeholder engagement.

The subjects were:

### **Financing for Marine Protected Areas**

This WWF led workshop investigated sustainable finance mechanisms for marine management from around the world and discussed if/how these could be applied or adapted in a UK context. It was also an opportunity to find out more about WWF's planned work on sustainable finance for Marine Protected Areas as part of the UK SEAS project and how to get involved.

### **Engaging the Public with the Marine Environment**

The WWF led a discussion around the best ways to inspire and engage the general public on all things marine. Through exploration of current communication styles and channels that are being used, participants deliberated over what works and what doesn't – and why. There was also a discussion on innovative ideas of how to engage the public.

### **Evidence for Marine Planning**

It is important that there is a robust evidence base for the marine planning process, and this discussion led by Mel Austin from Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) and Neal Gray from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) looked at what information local organisations hold that could support the South West Marine Plan.

### **Natural Capital and Decision Support Tools**

This workshop was an introduction to tools being developed within SWEEP to support decisions on the management of marine natural capital and included a discussion of what kind of information and outputs are most useful.

### **Natural Capital and Ecosystem Service Valuation**

This workshop was an introduction to work being undertaken within SWEEP to support ecosystem service valuation, including the opportunity discuss what kind of information and outputs are most useful.

### **Data and Evidence**

This workshop, led by Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) and SWEEP, gave an overview of the data and evidence requirements to support management decisions for biodiversity conservation. It gave participants the opportunity to consider questions about supporting research needs, particularly when thinking about food provision and linked livelihoods and how evidence can be gathered through citizen science and also how and to whom it needs to be communicated.

### **The Landscape Pioneer and how it links to the Marine Programme**

This workshop gave an overview of the land and estuary-based research being undertaken within SWEEP by the University of Exeter, with discussion on joining up the two Pioneer programmes and "catchment to coast" management more generally.

### **Natural Capital Approach to Regional Fisheries Management**

The North Devon Marine Pioneer has a vision for sustainable, locally managed fisheries which reflects the Government's vision of localism. This discussion looked to how this could be achieved in North Devon, including discussions on current best practice, using stakeholders for gathering evidence and governance structures, along with links to other industries.

## **Coastal Processes**

This workshop was an introduction to the hydrodynamic and morphological complexities of the South West coastline and how SWEEP is hoping to bring greater understanding of these dynamic systems to all stakeholders. The workshop discussion focussed on: data driven decisions, what is known and what is needed, and how you can represent the complexities of the coastline to predict shoreline evolution and storm events. There was also a discussion on temporal and spatial coastal management: short term changes and long term trends.

## **Next steps**

Participants were invited to indicate which projects they would be willing to be contacted by in the future. This was to ensure continued stakeholder support for the North Devon Marine Pioneer projects, SWEEP and WWF - UK SEAS. The Marine Pioneer partnership will look to find ways to encourage participation from tourism and the maritime sector for the future programme of work that will be undertaken in North Devon and the wider area.

This report and delegate feedback from the South West Marine Natural Capital Conference 2017 will be used to help guide work within the Marine Pioneer, SWEEP and WWF- UK SEAS project



