



Sea Scotland Conference
15-16th June, 2016, Discovery Point, Dundee

Conference Summary

Overview

Sea Scotland conference 2016 focused on marine planning policy in Scotland and was organised by a partnership of 7 organisations engaged in the fields of marine science, policy and planning. The event was well-received by approximately 100 delegates from a variety of sectors and interests, and secured the participation of local, national and international expert speakers. Following the conference there was broad appetite from delegates and the steering group for a further event in the *Sea Scotland* theme, which is planned for 21st June 2017.

The key recommendations from across the spectrum of presentations and sessions were:

- Marine planning should work to a clear vision, spatial where possible, and be bold and ambitious
- Efforts should continue to improve the evidence base on which planning decisions are made and understand the baseline conditions marine plans should work to;
- Challenges remain in identifying and obtaining adequate resourcing to deliver marine plans – sharing resources and collaborating is crucial to help meet some of these gaps;
- Local interests, including industry and communities, should be encouraged to engage early in marine planning and decision-making processes.

Background

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Scottish Ministers to produce a National Marine Plan and includes provision for the development of more localised Regional Marine Plans. Scotland's Marine Atlas was produced in 2012, fulfilling s.5(4)(b) of the Act to '*prepare an assessment of the condition of the Scottish marine area*' to inform development of the National Marine Plan, published in 2015. Two of Scotland's eleven Marine Regions (designated in 2015) are at various stages of producing their Regional Marine Plans. With human use of Scotland's seas increasing and becoming busier, it is imperative that these Plans are ecosystem-based and robust, contributing toward the delivery of sustainable development as well as environmental protection and enhancement. The Scottish Government are seeking to take a progressive approach to marine planning and, while there is progress to be made and challenges to overcome, the developing programme of science and policy has generated a large amount of interest from the wider marine community.

As such, Scotland has seen an increase in the level of engagement on marine planning over the last 5-10 years, including academic research (e.g. 'CORPORATES', University of Aberdeen), community engagement (e.g. East Haven Together) and large-scale cross-stakeholder projects (e.g. Celtic Seas Partnership). The Marine Alliance for Science and Technology Scotland (MASTS) also established a Marine Planning and Governance Forum in 2015 to support dialogue and research needs for marine planning in Scotland. Despite this growing momentum, platforms for high-level cross-sectoral engagement on this subject in Scotland are sparse and there are few broad opportunities for Scottish science, policy, community and industry to come together to focus on Scotland's approach to marine planning and conservation (cf. Coastal Futures conference, London). With this in mind,

and building on previous marine planning events, Scottish Environment LINK's Marine Group developed the initial concept of *Sea Scotland* and a number of Scottish marine planning-related organisations came together to form a steering group to drive the project. The steering group members are: MASTS; Scottish Environment LINK; Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH); Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Scotland; Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh. The high-level objectives of the conference were as follows:

Aim: To collaboratively organise a national event in Scotland in 2016 to inform a progressive approach to marine planning in Scotland.

Objectives:

- Generate a broader understanding of:
 - the concept, process and practicalities of marine planning
 - the role of marine planning in sustainable development
 - how marine planning offers opportunities for environmental enhancement or recovery, including win:wins for economy and society
 - integration of marine, coastal and terrestrial elements of planning
- Bring together 100+ stakeholders, including regulatory authorities, to focus on the legislative framework which supports the implementation of marine planning, and look beyond the National Marine Plan to the delivery of Regional Marine Plans
- To generate and deepen a sense of community amongst practitioners and stakeholders, creating a constructive platform for dialogue in the field of marine planning.

Content

This summary captures a two-day programme of presentations, panel discussions and interactive workshops at *Sea Scotland 2016* about the on-going marine planning agenda in Scotland and wider, which took place from 15th to 16th June 2016 in Dundee, Scotland. A full delegate pack containing speaker biographies, presentations and workshop abstracts is available to download on the conference [website](#). The conference was managed via a dedicated online app, which not only meant the conference could be completely paperless, giving delegates full electronic access to resources and information, but it also enabled interactive engagement throughout the conference via live polls and submitting questions for speakers.

The theme on day 1 was '*a vision for the sustainable development of Scotland's seas*' and this began with a keynote talk by **Charles Ehler** (Ocean Visions Consulting), who pioneered much of the early development of marine spatial planning as a discipline and has published extensive guidance on its practice. Charles' talk focused on the need for 'Blue Seas Thinking' and how important it is to have a vision for a marine plan, noting that the vision itself is not the plan but that it is needed to inform it.

The basics of marine spatial planning can be understood by answering four simple questions:

1. Where are we now? (the baseline)
2. Where do we want to be? (the vision)
3. How do we get there? (the plan)
4. What have we accomplished? (monitoring and evaluation)

Charles's talk was followed by a presentation from Professor **Colin Moffat** (Head of Science, Marine Scotland Science) who discussed the Scottish vision for marine planning: *Clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas; managed to meet the long-term needs of nature and people*. Colin provoked thought on questions that need to be addressed as part of that vision: how do we differentiate between natural and anthropogenic variation? Is the current baseline where we want to stay? Do we look to previous baselines or set a new one? These are challenges that planners and managers must account for as plans are developed.

Joyce McMillan (Honorary President of Scottish Environment LINK) gave a perspective from an environmental NGO viewpoint, discussing the key role of NGOs informing and facilitating the support of their members – civic society – to make their voice heard on environmental issues. The health of the marine environment is, after all, vital to all life.

A business perspective on marine planning was then offered by **Alex Adrian** (The Crown Estate) who highlighted that marine planning must recognise the evolving nature of business needs, but that accountability must also be built into the planning process.

The final talk of this session was given by **Hannah Grist** (Scottish Association for Marine Science) on a UK-wide project *Capturing Our Coast*, a national citizen science project designed to mobilise public collection of marine data. Hannah described the importance of involving the general public in science in this way, particularly in local coastal communities, as it makes people feel empowered to contribute to programmes and policies that affect the way their environment is managed.

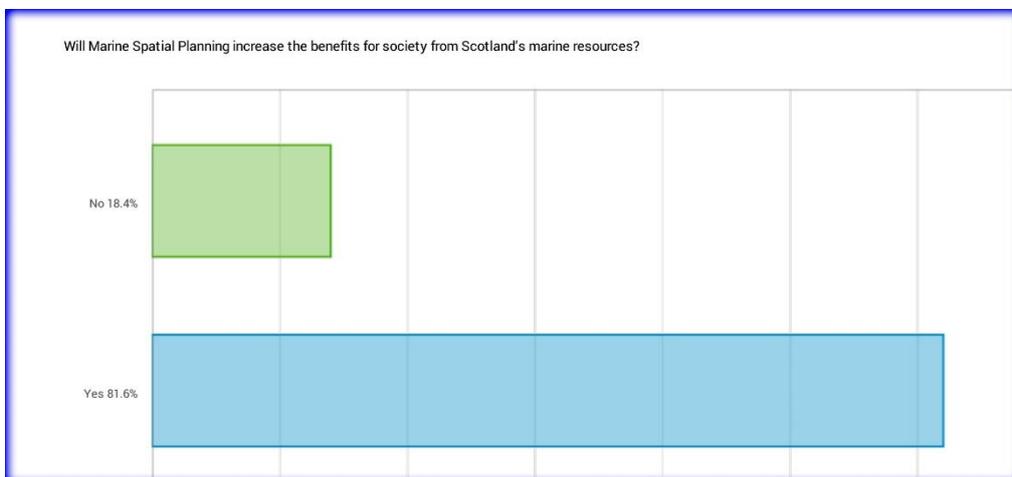
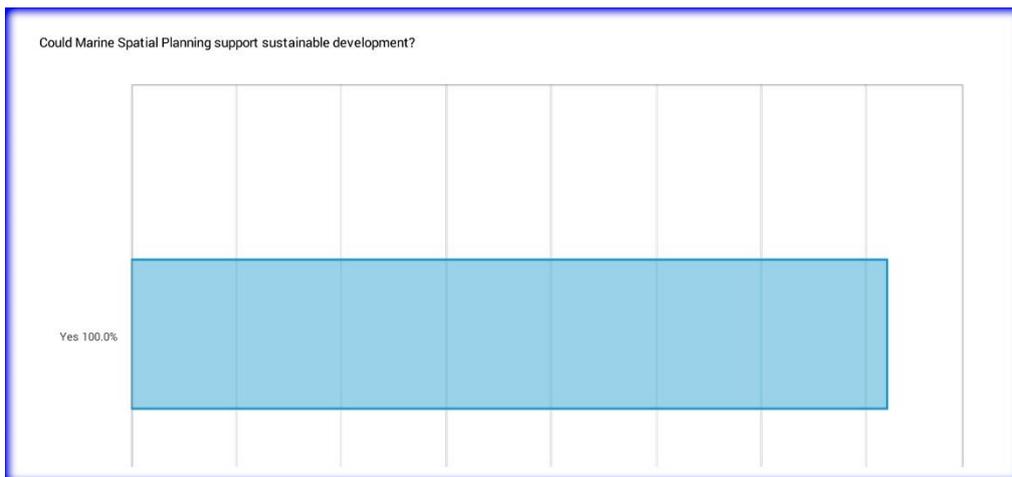
The second session of day 1 took the form of a 'Question Time'-style panel discussion, involving five representatives from different backgrounds: **Alec Taylor** (WWF), **Cathy Tilbrook** (SNH), **Tavis Potts** (University of Aberdeen), **Simon Collins** (Shetland Fishermen's Association) and **Nick James** (LUC), and was chaired by **David Patterson** (MASTS). Each panellist briefly presented their viewpoints on the following three questions:

1. *Is the health of our marine area good enough?*
2. *Could Marine Spatial Planning support sustainable development?*
3. *Will Marine Spatial Planning increase the benefits for society from Scotland's marine resources?*

These questions were based on work by the late Professor Laurence Mee (Director of SAMS) under the broad theme 'How good is good?'¹ and the session was dedicated to his memory. The panellists discussed a range of views, including whether marine planning is a silver bullet or chocolate teapot (or perhaps a silver teapot!), how baselines have shifted and what that depends upon, and how marine planning will tie in with Scotland's rich heritage in traditional industries such as fisheries. Delegates participated in a lively discussion with the panel and voted on the three questions before

¹ Mee, L. D., Jefferson, R. L., Laffoley, D. D. A., & Elliott, M. (2008). How good is good? Human values and Europe's proposed Marine Strategy Directive. *Marine pollution bulletin*, 56(2), 187-204.

and after the session. The outcomes of the vote on both occasions were 1) no; 2) yes, and; 3) yes – although not all were unanimous!



Day 1 was rounded off by a much-anticipated reception on board the *RRS Discovery* itself where, despite the dreich weather, delegates continued their conversations enjoying a glass or two of local Scottish fruit wine², followed by a welcoming buffet dinner.

Day 2 of *Sea Scotland* focused on the theme '*Marine Planning in Practice*', which was opened with a keynote talk by **Jeff Ardron** (Commonwealth Secretariat), who has over 25 years' experience in marine governance and planning. Jeff talked about how the terms we use to describe sustainable marine management approaches have evolved over time, from 'coastal zone management' to the more recent 'blue economy' and reflected on what is the 'holy grail' we are seeking? He discussed examples of how different countries around the world are working towards a 'blue economy' and what lessons could be learned for Scotland.

The delegates then heard from **Tim Stojanovic** (University of St Andrews) who presented on one of his current projects evaluating marine planning governance criteria for Scotland. Tim highlighted the difference in approach of Scotland, where marine planning is more devolved and is led largely by regional planning officers, and England, where the national Marine Management Organisation takes more of a lead. He concluded with a list of criteria that could be used to develop a governance baseline: efficacy, efficiency, ethics, effectiveness and elegance.

Martyn Cox (Marine Scotland) then presented one of the key tools which currently supports marine planning in Scotland: *National Marine Plan interactive (NMPi)*, an online spatial data mapping tool, which provides the user with access to a comprehensive set of marine environmental and sectoral data. Martyn also led a live demonstration sessions on the NMPi during the breaks for the remainder of the day, allowing delegates to ask their questions and explore more specific data.

The morning session was brought to a close by a talk from **Shona Turnbull** (Highland Council, Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Pilot Plan), **Rachel Shucksmith** (NAFC, Shetland Marine Plan) and **Fiona Mills** (Clyde Marine Planning Partnership, Clyde Marine Plan). The three speakers each reflected on the lessons learned so far from developing marine plans in their respective regions, including seeking opportunities to explore shared resources and the need for clear governance.

After a coffee break, delegates broke out into four concurrent workshop groups, each of which was exploring a project or theme relating to marine planning in practice. These were:

1. The National Coastal Change Assessment (**Alistair Rennie**, SNH)
2. Seafloor integrity – are we fishing our seabed beyond environmental limits? (**David Bailey** and **Charlotte Hopkins**, University of Glasgow)
3. Engaging with the general public – when, how and why? (**Deborah Peel**, University of Dundee; **David Wood**, Planning Aid Scotland; **Esther Brooker**, Scottish Environment LINK)
4. Future trends (**Sam Tedcastle** and **Sarah Young**, Celtic Seas Partnership)

² <http://www.cairnomohr.com/>

Summaries of the outcomes of these workshops can be found on the *Sea Scotland* website [here](#).

The afternoon session focused on current research and was started by a series of ‘flash talks’ by PhD and MSc students from Scottish universities who are conducting their research in marine planning-related subjects. **Stephanie Weir** (Heriot-Watt University) is exploring the concept of property regimes and rights at sea and how this relates to the way activities are managed. **Rhys Howell** (University of Edinburgh) is researching social responses to marine energy and how this affects the way local communities may engage in development processes. **Marwin Buresch** (University of Edinburgh) described the work he anticipates undertaking for his MSc thesis on proposals for a Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area around the Fair Isle, which was recently consulted on, and the potential environmental and socio-economic benefits of the project.

The student talks were followed by a presentation by **Chris Leakey** (SNH), discussing a paper that had been recently published on [the Ecosystem Approach and Tool for Marine Planning](#). This paper explores the various tools available to marine planners and how they affect the extent to which the ecosystem approach is incorporated into marine plans.

Jasper Kenter (SAMS) then presented on methods for involving communities in marine planning processes and decisions and described a number of projects in which he has been, or is currently involved on this theme, such as incorporating the ‘Community Voice Method’ in two Marine Conservation Zones in England. Jasper highlighted the different degrees of participation, from tokenism to functional participation to partnerships, and reflected on the importance of local participation.

Finally, delegates heard from **Sarah Brown** (Clyde Marine Planning Partnership) on the outcomes of a recent initiative to gather data on Scottish marine tourism activities: the [Scottish Marine Recreation and Tourism Survey](#). This survey is the largest of its kind in Scotland and seeks to fill data gaps identified by the National Marine Plan to help inform Regional Marine Plans going forwards.

The conference was summed up and closed by **Anna Donald**, Head of Planning Branch at Marine Scotland and National Marine Plan lead. Anna reflected on the contributions of the speakers and delegates alike, and encouraged the continuation of progressive and productive efforts as the Scottish marine planning process goes forward.

Outcomes and feedback

The steering group regard *Sea Scotland* 2016 as an overall success in many ways, including the extent to which the event achieved the objectives, the content and delivery of the sessions, the participation of the delegates and the general smooth running of the conference. Furthermore, *Sea Scotland* 2016 has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from delegates in the form of verbal comments and via the post-conference evaluation survey, which was run through the app and received approximately 25 entries. There is clear appetite from both the steering group and conference delegates for further events under the *Sea Scotland* theme.



One main point of feedback was that some focus on particular issues or specialist areas would have been useful to elicit some more challenging discussion to complement the high-level focus of the presentations and sessions. Furthermore, some delegates suggested that more input from a broader range of industry sectors (e.g. ports management, fisheries) and representatives of local community group interests would be valuable.

Future plans and opportunities

The steering group have met and evaluated *Sea Scotland* 2016 and, based on the outcomes of the conference and delegate feedback, are organising a second conference in 2017. Suggestions from delegates will be considered and acted upon, as well as other practical lessons learned from the running of the 2016 event.

The steering group welcome any expressions of interest for collaboration on future *Sea Scotland* conferences, or suggestions of topics or speakers for the programme of the next event.

The Sea Scotland steering group comprises Scottish Environment LINK and their Marine Group Members, MASTS, SNH, and the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh.