

Decommissioning & wreck removal: Why? What? How?



Why? – Stewardship

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Vision

“a network of healthy, resilient ecosystems supporting expanding communities of native species across large areas of Scotland’s land, water and seas.”

- **We champion**

Policy work, major projects, Living Landscapes etc.

- **We demonstrate**

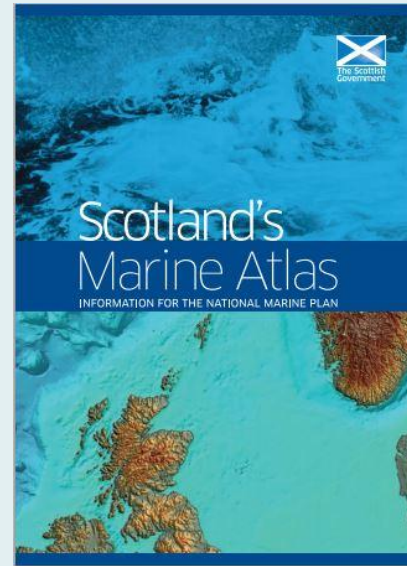
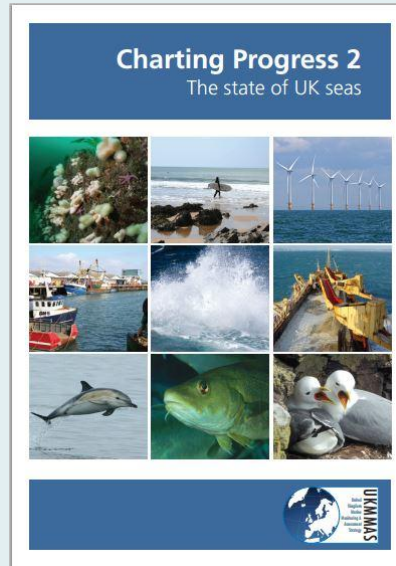
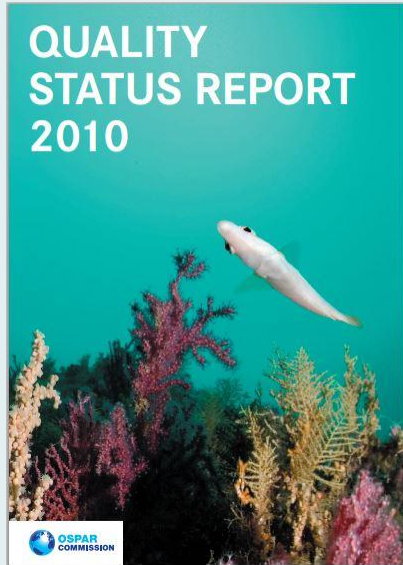
Over 120 wildlife reserves in Scotland

- **We inspire**

Adult & children’s groups, events & schools

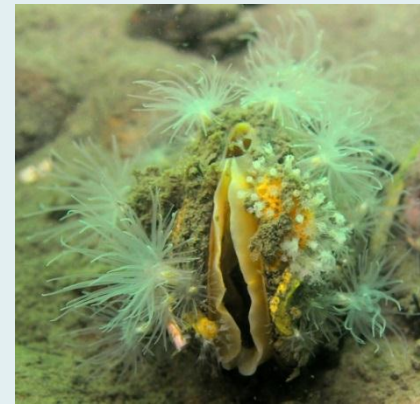
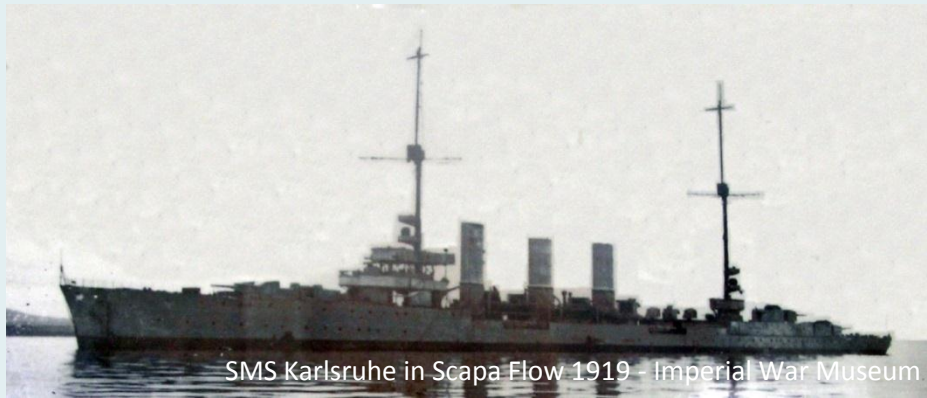


Where are we now?



- Scotland has a long history of marine resource exploitation
- No remaining 'pristine' ecosystems
- 2 widespread pressures: fishing and climate change
- Can ultimately lead to an irreversible degradation of marine ecosystems and the services they provide
- Policy responses: MSFD, MPAs, CFP, Marine Planning

SMS Karlsruhe – Scapa Flow



- Potentially the most species rich horse mussel bed recorded to date and at least the third largest in Scotland
- The presence of the wreck for nearly 100 years is likely to have contributed its protection as it presents an obstruction to potentially damaging trawling or dredging activities
- Future management should take into consideration the role played by the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- Conservation potential of a network of archaeological sites in the area for marine biodiversity?

Why remove rigs?



- OSPAR Decision 98/3 prohibits the dumping or leaving wholly or partly in place of disused installations
- Over 90% of installations in OSPAR Region must be removed
- Doesn't allow for assessment of contribution to marine ecosystem of the presence of installations.
- Given the variety of structures and habitats does a blanket approach provide the optimal environmental, economic or social outcome in all cases?



MCP01, Total (2009)

Offshore wind



DECC guidelines:

- Case-by-case but ‘ideal’ programme involves removing the whole of all disused installations and structures
- 5 exceptions including new use , such as “enhancement of a living resource”*
- E.g. may be a case for leaving scour protection “to preserve any marine habitat established over the life of the installation”



Scottish Wildlife Trust Policy on Decommissioning



- Recognises limited evidence to support any changes to OSPAR 98/3 derogations
- Accepts the possibility of re-evaluating the status quo in favour of a more flexible, case-by-case approach
- Prepared to support pragmatic solutions based on holistic assessment of likely impacts
- Supports the exploration of opportunities for novel funding mechanisms for environmental aims
- Research priorities on the role of structures in the ecosystem, impact of cuttings, contribution to spread of non-native species
- Urges caution on judging the value of habitat on the basis of species richness alone (hard vs. soft substrate)

Alternative approach?



- Living North Sea Initiative (LiNSI)
 - Multi-stakeholder project – involving researchers, industry and NGOs
 - Aims to contribute to improving the health of the North Sea ecosystem and to develop a funding mechanism for recovery plans
 - Initially exploring potential for ecological re-use of man-made structures such as O&G platforms
 - None of the organisations involved have committed themselves to any specific proposals; the agenda is still entirely open
- Scotland’s Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas
 - “Government must give further consideration to whether it may be appropriate for selected parts of UKCS oil and gas structures to be left in place and used for other environmentally advantageous purposes.”

Conclusions



- Seas in a depleted state after long history of human pressures and impact (good or bad) of man-made structures unknown
- > 90% O&G installations must be removed – high cost, impact on environment, safety, other users - should we accept the status quo or encourage a re-evaluation?
- Could an alternative approach provide a catalyst for ecosystem recovery – e.g. derogation for biodiversity or a fund?
- Collaboration between all stakeholders required to support holistic debate on the future of O&G decommissioning – informed by science
- Must be mindful of consistency (O&G, Renewables, Wrecks)