

Report to the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS)

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Workshop Title: Considering Climate Change in Scotland's Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network

Location: Climate XChange, Edinburgh

Date: September, 2014

Attendees:

In attendance were representatives from the following organisations: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF); Visit Scotland; Marine Conservation Society (MCS); Sniffer; British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC); Scottish; Natural Heritage (SNH); Academic; Academic.

Key Messages:

1. A scenario-based approach was developed (e.g. feature is lost/declining/increasing/stable) to guide various high-level management approaches at a site and network level.
2. A monitoring programme would be needed to inform decisions regarding management in an adaptive cycle.
3. For MPAs to be successful under future scenarios of climate change there will be a need for flexibility and adaptation based on scientifically robust MPA network design principles.

Workshop Context:

The workshop was the concluding round of a three-round Delphi process aimed at identifying recommendations for considering climate change in Scotland's MPA process. The first two questionnaire rounds suggested that differing views of success would likely influence opinions regarding required management of MPAs, and in turn, the data requirements to support management action decisions. The growing consensus that adaptive management would be important in a climate change context was further explored in this workshop through the presentation of scenarios for the MPA designations. This allowed the participants to explore which high level management options would be feasible and acceptable in the various alternate states.

Workshop Summary:

The one-day workshop was arranged into four sections stemming from key questions and key themes emerging from the previous questionnaire rounds: success for the Scottish MPA network, monitoring considerations, management options under scenarios of change, and a summary and forecasting session.

The aims of the workshop were:

- to give participants the opportunity to reflect on the results of the previous questionnaire rounds
- to further elucidate the different opinions regarding success for the MPA network
- to identify monitoring resources and considerations for the Scottish MPA network specific to climate change

- to identify high-level management actions at a site and network level for MPAs under varying scenarios of change
- to give participants the opportunity to reflect on the research and the research

This workshop was used to identify a series of recommendations for the Scottish MPA network in the context of climate change. The Scottish MPA network followed a feature-led approach to identify a series of MPAs across the Scottish marine area and incorporated the diverse views of many different stakeholders. This approach has led to wide ranging opinions and understandings regarding the success of the MPA network. As a result, translating these ideas of success into a management approach in the overarching context of climate change is a complex challenge. In response, the reflective research approach applied, and the use of a participatory workshop, engaged a group of academic and non-academic stakeholders to discuss potential options that could be translated into an operational process for management of the MPA network.

Additional Commentary to the Workshop:

The workshop was productive in terms of discussion regarding the key issues of climate change resilience MPAs. Participants collaborated on the production of information, views and opinions for how considerations of climate change can be incorporated into the MPA network from both an academic and stakeholder perspective.

The concept of climate change resilient MPAs is still in its infancy yet the production of a series of high level management scenarios was useful in highlighting the data requirements necessary for decision making.

Outcomes and Next Steps:

The workshop results formed a thesis chapter in the completed PhD thesis “Considering Climate Change in the Development of MPA Networks” authored by Charlotte Hopkins. Dr Charlotte Hopkins, will continue to work towards the completion of a scientific paper (currently in draft format). Additionally, the workshop has given the opportunity for a number of stakeholders in the Scottish MPA process to talk about the MPA network in the context of climate change with the potential for informing further work in this area.