

SG92 Ecopath Modelling Training Course
Karen Alexander, SAMS

Karen Alexander from SAMS attended the Ecosystem Modelling for Fishery Management course using Ecopath modelling software at ICES, Copenhagen on 26-30 August 2013. Karen received a small grant from MASTS which contributed towards the costs of attending this course.

So what is Ecopath? Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) is a free ecological/ecosystem modelling software suite. It consists of three components: Ecopath (a static, mass balanced snapshot of the system); Ecosim (a time dynamic simulation module); and Ecospace (a spatial and temporal dynamic module primarily designed for exploring the placement and impact of marine protected areas). The software has been used to address ecological questions, evaluate the ecosystem effects of fishing, explore management policy options and model the effects of environmental changes. In this five-day workshop, users learnt to use EwE version 6 for strategic evaluations as part of fishery management. The course included time-dynamic and spatial modelling, and ecosystem level management strategy evaluation.

The funding has led to a number of outputs. Attendance at this course provided CPD training for Karen, and has been used to up-date lectures used in the Ecopath with Ecosim course which is run at SAMS (which is offered to, and has been attended by, MASTS PhD students). The software is always improving, and new techniques are introduced that need to be updated in the course. Additionally, updating understanding of the Ecopath with Ecosim software and its potential applications has enabled the development of new research ideas based on alternative ways to use this software to investigate 'hot topics' such as marine renewable energy and aquaculture (key issues under the MASTS Productive Seas theme). Karen would like to thank MASTS for their generous support.