



Marine Protected Areas workshop

Understanding the risks to European Marine Sites

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Overview



Assessing risks to European Marine Sites posed by human activities.

Seeking views and involvement of others, especially Relevant Authorities.

- Why is this required
- Current mechanisms
- Initial preparatory work
- Assessing risk on individual sites
- Implications for management
- Links to other work



Key Drivers

- Defra desire to approach risks to sites in a more strategic and proactive manner

Natural England's Strategic Direction 2008-2013:

- "Our marine environment is better understood, valued and protected" (Outcome 1.3)
- "The use and management of the marine environment is more sustainable" (Outcome 3.3)

Given wide range of pressures it is vital to be able to develop a comprehensive understanding of risks.



Further drivers and benefits

- Contribute to River Basin Management Planning
- Improve knowledge base for advice, at both local and strategic level
- Enable development of a more risk-based approach to monitoring, and effective use of resources
- Contextual information can inform condition assessment
- Inform future reports on State of Natural Environment and Charting Progress II



Not being undertaken with the aim of stopping existing activities, but to help ensure they are managed appropriately.

How is risk currently managed?



- Regulation 33 packages: advice on operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance
 - High level advice
 - Vulnerability to generic operations
 - 7-8 years old
- Plans and projects - managed by RAs with NE advice (Regulations 48 and 50)
- Ongoing activities - managed by RAs through existing powers, usually within a Management Scheme (Regulations 3 and 34)
- Awareness of risks captured at the site level or across individual sectors
- ***Remains a need for an updated, more strategic review of risks affecting European Marine sites***

Stages in undertaking a strategic review of risks to EMSs



January 2008 Natural England initiated a strategic review of all risks.

Three stages:

1. Broad assessment of all activities which could pose risk (largely complete)
2. Review of potential effects from fishing methods (complete)
3. Detailed site assessments in liaison with relevant authorities (1st phase until December 2008)



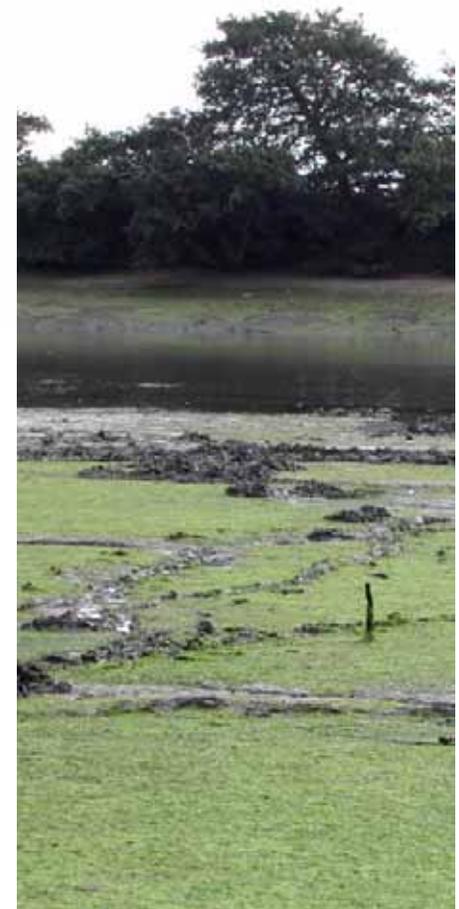
1. Broad assessment

Review of *all* activities potentially posing risk to EMSs

How?

NE officers completed a structured questionnaire. This focussed on the 'degree of certainty' that activities are affecting feature condition.

- 32 out of 42 EMSs assessed
- Coastal squeeze highlighted as issue in 37%
- Pollution highlighted as issue in 30%
- Commercial fishing / aquaculture highlighted as potential issue in 43%
- Other activities highlighted as *potential risks* included:
 - recreation, bird disturbance, bait digging, coastal development, invasive species and capital/maintenance dredging.



2. Assessing risks from fishing methods



Independent review of potential effects from commercial fisheries on EMSs by Dr Stephen Lockwood.

How?

Integration of; **(i)** Information on effects of 28 fishing methods, **(ii)** Generic feature sensitivity and, **(iii)** Expert knowledge regarding where fisheries occur.

35 of 42 EMSs were potentially subject to pressures from commercial fishing. Of these 35:



- 20 sites where one or more fishing activities could pose a high ***potential*** risk

- Beam trawling potentially affecting 10 sites
- Scallop dredging potentially affecting 6 sites
- Cockle suction dredging potentially affecting 4 sites

- 8 sites with a medium risk

- 7 sites with only a low risk



3. Site specific risk assessment

More detailed, systematic appraisal of risk for each site, takes account of feature sensitivity and existing management.

How?

- i. Area staff undertake initial review
- ii. Discuss with RAs to validate / improve assessment
- iii. *If necessary* discuss & agree any alterations to management

Ongoing process

- Trialled for Fal & Helford and Flamborough Head EMSs
- For example at Fal & Helford:
 - Pacific oyster farming, and anchoring recreational craft identified as posing a high risk, and discussions initiated on suitable management responses.
 - Pollution, commercial shipping and other fisheries posed medium risk
- Process now rolled out nationally
 - Phase 1 (June to December) focuses on sites identified by broad assessments as subject to higher risk

Implications of risk assessment results?

For high / medium *final* risks NE and RAs responsible may need to consider whether further actions are required:

- Awaiting NE's Review of feature condition for EMS's
- Initiating targeted monitoring
- Range of site specific management alterations
- Where similar risks identified for many sites, nationally coordinated measures may be considered

In addition:

- Outcomes from the review should inform wider assessments of the state of the marine environment
- Our assessments will contribute to wider risk assessments required under the Water Framework Directive
- Likely to be extended to include those sites currently screened out

Summary

- Multiple drivers point to the need for systematic review of risks
- Significant work completed on broad assessment, and for fisheries risks
- Site specific assessments are ongoing, aiming for completion by December 2008
- Relevant Authority involvement will be sought, and crucial to validate assessments of risk
- Actions required from the Review may include more in-depth investigation, through to alterations in management
- Outputs will feed into other work areas:
 - Review of feature condition
 - Risk based approach to monitoring

And finally... all risks need to be included.

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Questions?

Natural England's risk assessment review



• **Discussion topic for breakout groups (60 mins)**

Opportunity to discuss:

- **Will this process allow the key risks be identified? What does the group see as the benefits / concerns? Improvements? (10 minutes)**
- **What are the main risks/threats to the features of the EMSs you know best? Can you agree a general 'top 5 risks' *across all the sites* your group represents in order of priority? (15 minutes)**
- **Does the list / priority changes once existing management is considered (10 minutes)**
- **Are there any risks that you perceive are entirely unmanaged / management insufficient? Does the group agree? (10 minutes)**
- **FEEDBACK – Key points 2-3 minutes per group (~5 groups)**