

Nature in brief

7: Marine Planning



Summer Isles— © Jamie Grant

In a period of increasing demand for space and resources at sea and a decline in the health of marine ecosystems there is an urgent need for a **new direction in marine management**.

In essence, **marine planning** is a process of analysing and allocating the distribution of human activities in marine areas. Effective marine planning is **ecosystem-based**, integrating ecological, social and environmental goals and objectives toward **sustainable development**.

It can provide a clear, easily accessible mechanism for stakeholder involvement in the planning and management of activities at sea, helping to **reduce conflict** and providing **space for marine wildlife** to recover and thrive.

The need for a comprehensive system of marine planning led to the introduction of wide-ranging powers under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. There are **international obligations** too - marine planning will help Scotland achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Scotland's first **National Marine Plan** should be in place after public consultation between July and November 2013. At the local level **Regional Marine Plans** will be developed by Marine Planning Partnerships.

Importantly, this is just the start. Marine planning should be a **dynamic process** that is influenced and changed by emerging knowledge and stakeholder input.

What the Scottish Wildlife Trust would like to see:

- **Ecosystem-based Marine Planning** aimed at **reversing the decline of marine health** and achieving and maintaining Good Ecological Status under the MSFD
- **A timely and fully inclusive process** for developing Regional Marine Plans, including conservation interests.
- **Cross-border collaboration** in developing and managing plans across administrative boundaries.
- **Partnership working** to ensure integration of terrestrial and marine planning systems.
- **Sustained financial support** for Marine Planning Partnerships to develop, monitor and review Regional Marine Plans.
- **Coordinated long-term monitoring of the marine environment** to support marine planning decisions, and improved access to marine data.

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