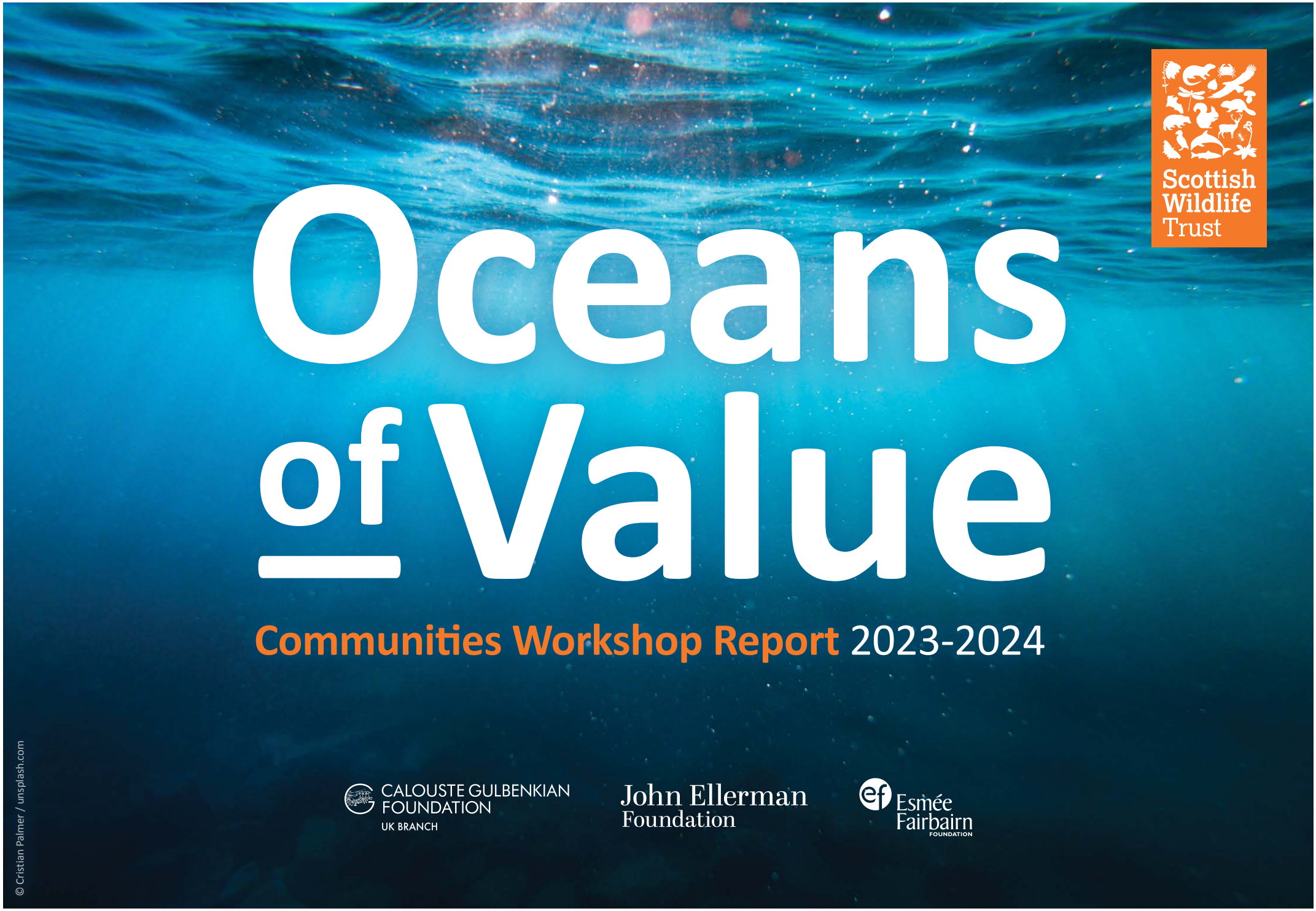

Oceans of Value

Communities Workshop Report 2023-2024

Scottish Wildlife Trust

CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION UK BRANCH

John Ellerman Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

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Introduction

The Scottish Wildlife Trust's Oceans of Value project, which took place between 2019-2024, focused on the seas surrounding the Orkney Islands. This project took an innovative approach to the challenge of capturing the range of values that are placed on the marine environment.

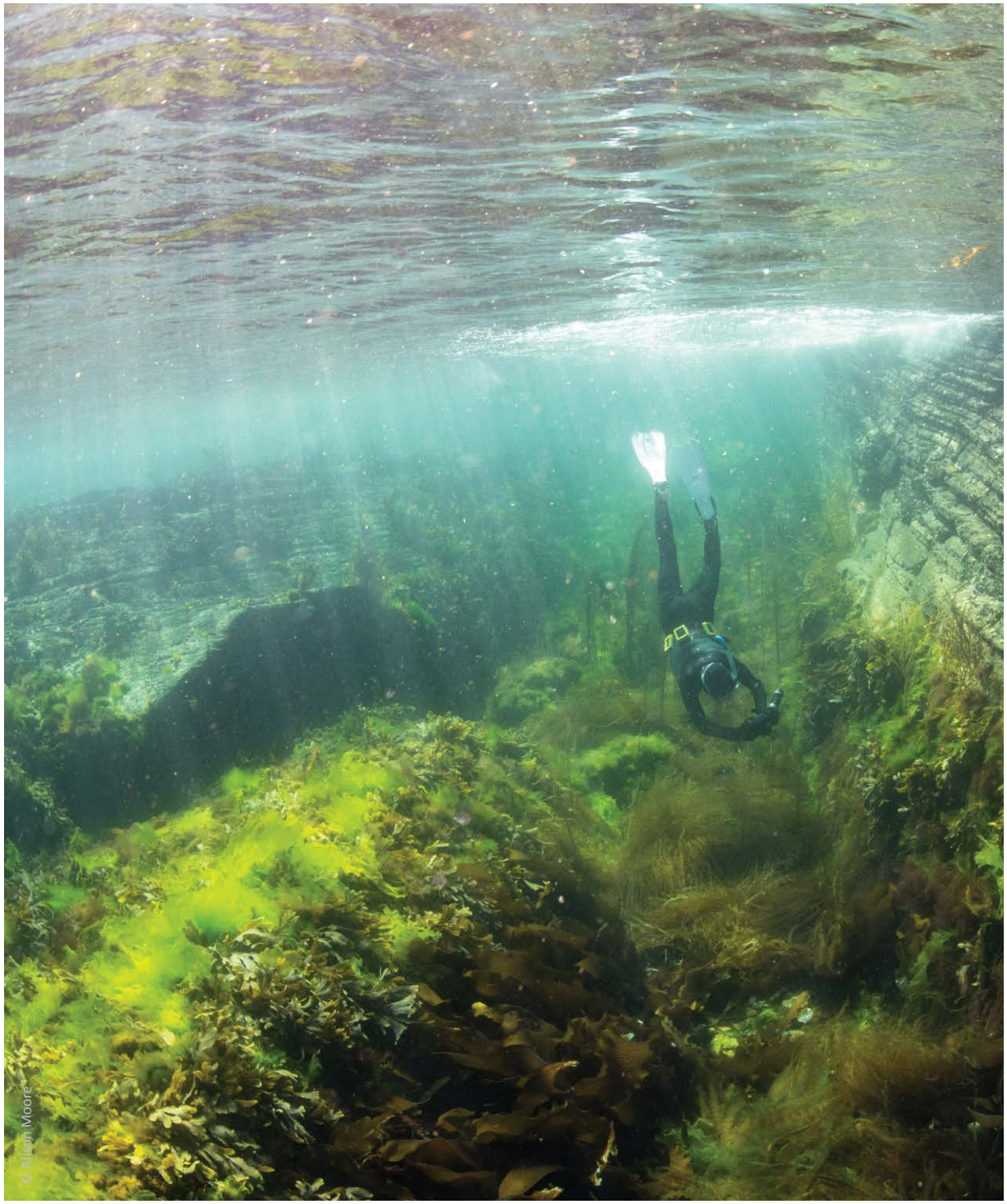
"We do lots of practical stuff, but how do we influence? What are the processes?"

As was intended, the findings have been invaluable in shaping the content of the draft Orkney Regional Marine Plan, as well as influencing the ways in which local decision-makers engage communities in marine-planning processes.

The Oceans of Value project compared two different approaches to identifying key values associated with the marine environment. Firstly, a Natural Capital Assessment was conducted, the first of its kind for a marine region. This quantitative research method identified the key assets and ecosystem services the marine environment provides in Orkney and assessed ecosystem health. The second method was a qualitative study using a social science approach called the Community Voice Method (CVM). This consisted of semi-structured interviews with 26 community members across the Orkney Islands. Interview transcripts were analysed to identify key themes. These themes were used to create the *Oceans of Value* film, which provided opportunity for further conversations with wider Orkney communities at public workshops and screenings.

Despite interviewees talking at length about their opinions on marine-related issues and their own relationships with the sea, when asked if they would take part in the development of Orkney's Regional Marine Plan, the majority of people said that they would not participate.

Ariane Burgess (MSP for Highlands and Islands) sponsoring the Scottish Wildlife Trust Parliamentary event: Amplifying Community Voices in Marine Policy in February 2024 ©Scottish Wildlife Trust



Introduction (continued)

At the Trust, we reflected on this response which led us to the following unanswered questions:

1. What barriers do individuals experience to participating in marine policy conversations, with both local councils and the Scottish Government?
2. What support would communities like to see, that would empower them to better take part in marine decision-making processes and conversations?
3. How do other communities across Scotland value the marine environment, and what does future marine use and protection look like to them? Are there any shared priorities or regional differences?

Given the current development of a new National Marine Plan (NMP2), the Trust saw an opportunity for the regionally focused workshops to be applied more broadly across Scotland, to answer these questions with the intent of empowering communities to get involved in shaping the development of this national policy framework. Consequently, the Trust took the film on a roadshow around Scotland and this report focuses on the discussions had at the 14 community workshops, identifying key themes and next steps.

Methods

Between January 2023 and March 2024, the Scottish Wildlife Trust offered Oceans of Value workshops to any community within Scotland who wished to take part.

These workshops were comprised of a screening of the *Oceans of Value* film followed by the opportunity to reflect upon the opinions raised. Through a series of questions and wider conversations, community members were encouraged to add their own voices to the discussion, including how they value the marine environment, perceived issues facing the marine environment, barriers experienced to participating in marine decision-making processes and support they would like to see to better engage in these conversations.

The workshop questions posed were adapted from the CVM process alongside input from local community-led or community-serving organisations, the Scottish Government's Marine Directorate and Young Sea Changers Scotland. The workshops were conducted using a semi-structured method whereby the workshop coordinator had key questions to use as prompts to allow participants to lead on topics for further discussion.

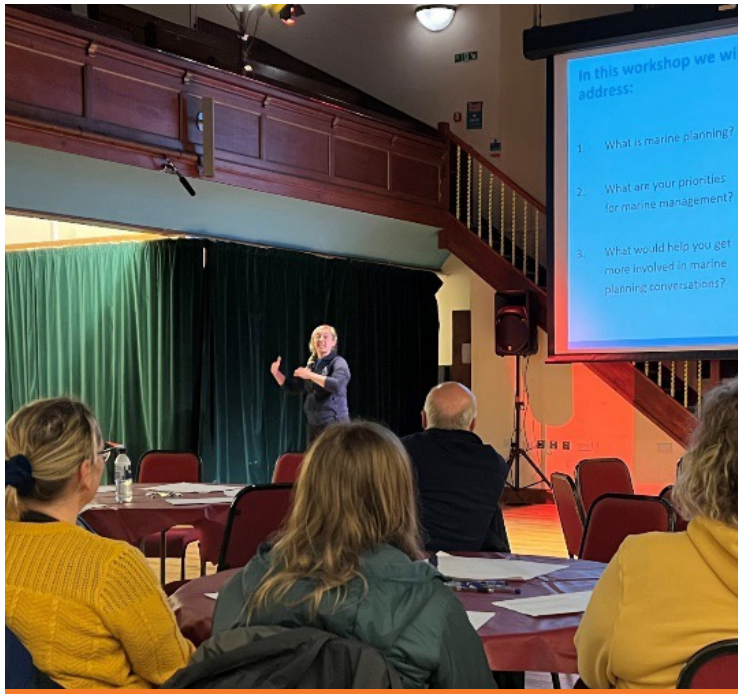
The main discussion questions were as follows:

- What do you think are the key issues facing the marine environment?
- How should we use and protect Scotland's marine environment?
    - Locally
    - Nationally
- Are there any barriers that exist for you in engaging with marine planning conversations?
- What support would help you in getting involved in marine planning conversations?

Methods (continued)

Feedback from all workshops was captured via a combination of written and audio content, which was analysed using the software NVivo12. This analytical approach enables the organising of qualitative data, to identify which key themes were most frequently raised by communities. This methodology is therefore praised in reducing any conscious or unconscious bias that the data handler may hold.

As with the CVM process, we felt that this methodology was important to employ, to ensure community feedback was communicated in a transparent way that is separate to the values of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Consequently, the thoughts and opinions expressed in this report have been recorded and anonymised from participants during workshops and do not reflect the views of any one individual or organisation.



Elouise Dalziel (Living Seas Policy & Engagement Officer) hosting an Oceans of Value workshop during the Orkney Nature Festival ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Ullapool Sea Savers, Stuart McMillan (MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde, and Basking Shark Nature Champion), the Marine Conservation Society and Scottish Wildlife Trust staff at the Trusts parliamentary event: Amplifying Community Voices in Marine Policy ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Key themes and learning

Summary

A total of 555 people took part in *Oceans of Value* film events. This included:

- 355 community members across 14 community workshops, covering 7 of the 11 Scottish Marine Regions (Figure 1, Table 1)
- 3 film screening only events (i.e. no post-film workshop) in 2023, at the Sea Scotland Conference (Edinburgh), the Coastal Communities Network Conference (Stirling) and at the festival 'Fringe by the Sea' (North Berwick)
- 1 event in Holyrood, Scottish Parliament to disseminate the project and workshop findings to decision makers in February 2024

Across all 14 workshops, community members emphasised the following:

- The importance of local involvement in marine planning, provided this was accomplished in a transparent and meaningful way that did not feel like a box-ticking exercise
- From previous MPA consultations people praised in-person engagement, particularly the physical map being taken around local communities
- Consultation fatigue was as a clear trend but communities provided potential solutions such as simple updates on status of the consultation (like the NMP2 newsletters) or clear webinars explaining the process and feedback from Government on exactly how any of their opinions had been incorporated into any policies following consultations

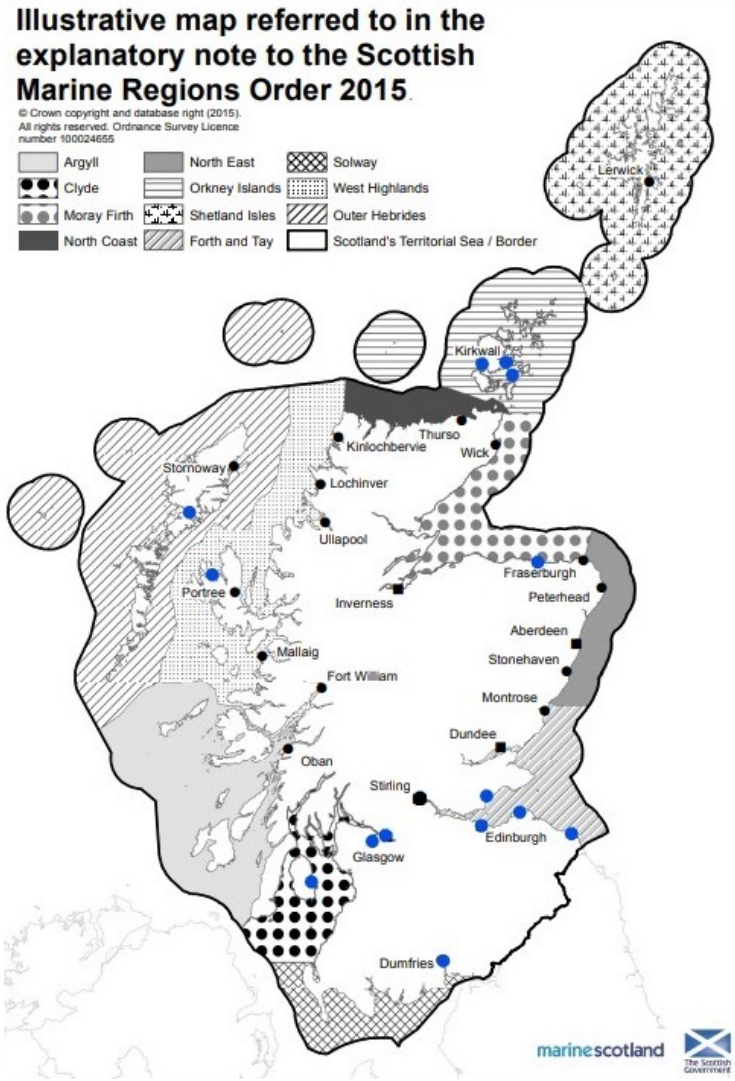


Figure 1: Map of Scotland's Marine Regions, with blue dots indicating the Oceans of Value community workshop locations (which spanned 7 of the 11 Marine Regions). Map source: Marine Directorate, Scottish Government

Key themes and learning (continued)

Date	Location	Marine Region	Additional comments
November ‘23	Dumfries	Solway	In partnership with the Solway Firth Coastal Partnership, online event
February ‘24	Edinburgh	Forth and Tay	In partnership with the National Museum of Scotland, as part of the community film event with panel discussion ‘Voices of the Sea: From Orkney to Oceania’, in-person event
November ‘23	Eyemouth	Forth and Tay	In partnership with Berwickshire Marine Reserve, in-person event
April ‘23	Glasgow	Clyde	Delivered upon request for the Scottish Wildlife Trust’s Glasgow Local Group, in-person event
August ‘23	Kinghorn	Forth and Tay	In partnership with The Ecology Centre, for the Scottish Wildlife Trust’s Next Door Nature Pioneers cohort, in-person event
January ‘23	Kirkwall	Orkney Islands	The first community workshop to take place after the local film’s launch, in-person event
March ‘24	Lamlash, Isle of Arran	Clyde	In partnership with the Community Of Arran Seabed Trust, in-person event
May ‘23	North Berwick	Forth and Tay	In partnership with the Scottish Seabird Centre, in-person event
December ‘23	Macduff	Moray Firth	In partnership with East Grampian Coastal Partnership and Macduff Marine Aquarium, online event
March ‘24	Paisley	Clyde	Delivered upon request to the Paisley Natural History Society, in-person event
May ‘23	St Margaret’s Hope, Orkney	Orkney Islands	Part of the Orkney Nature Festival, in-person event
May ‘23	Stromness, Orkney	Orkney Islands	Part of the Orkney Nature Festival, in-person event
October ‘23	Tarbert, Isle of Harris	Outer Hebrides	In partnership with the North Harris Trust, in-person event
April ‘23	Waternish, Isle of Skye	West Highlands	In partnership with Kaly Group, in-person event

Table: 1: Summary of the 14 Oceans of Value community workshops including date, location, marine region, and additional comments.

Key themes and learning (continued)

Despite the strong appetite from communities to be involved in marine decision-making, it was clear that most individuals experienced significant barriers to doing so; these barriers are summarised in the list below:

- [the communities own] perceived lack of knowledge in marine planning and therefore a lack of confidence to engage
- feeling ignored or unwelcome
- the language used is complex
- the time required to prepare
- the accessibility of the information needed to grasp the issues (eg lengthy, complex frameworks)
- a lack of accessible opportunities to contribute (eg engagement format, location)
- not knowing if and when it's appropriate to contribute
- concern over the hidden agenda of the organiser
- a lack of faith in whether taking part is worthwhile

As for overcoming these barriers, Figure 2 highlights some of the changes communities want to see in addressing these challenges.

It was emphasised that communities seek significant systemic changes in how marine decision-makers engage with them (see Figure 2). From passionate pleas to despondent dismissals, communities were clearly united in a desire to see a shift whereby local voices are valued and are at the heart of marine planning processes.

The importance of educating young people was highlighted in all 14 workshops, with participants encouraging active

Figure 2: Findings from the Oceans of Value Key Recommendations leaflet.

incorporation of current marine issues into the curriculum or integrated at a teacher training level. Popular conversation threads were the education of local communities, to give people the confidence to take part in marine consultations, and clear signposting as to how local communities can be involved in addressing marine issues. People can be overwhelmed by the number of organisations all working on the same topic and would like clear direction on who to contact within their local region.

Key themes and learning (continued)

Key issues: Overview

Across the 14 coastal community workshops, participants were asked what key issues they think are facing the marine environment. Figure 3 below highlights these answers, from the most prevalent perceived issues at the top of the chart to the issues raised the least at the bottom of the chart. The top three issues raised by communities were; fishing, a perceived lack of leadership and interest from Government and businesses; and pollution. These were closely followed by the twin climate and nature crises as well as consultation processes themselves. The opinions of communities on these top six marine issues are explored in more detail over the next few pages.

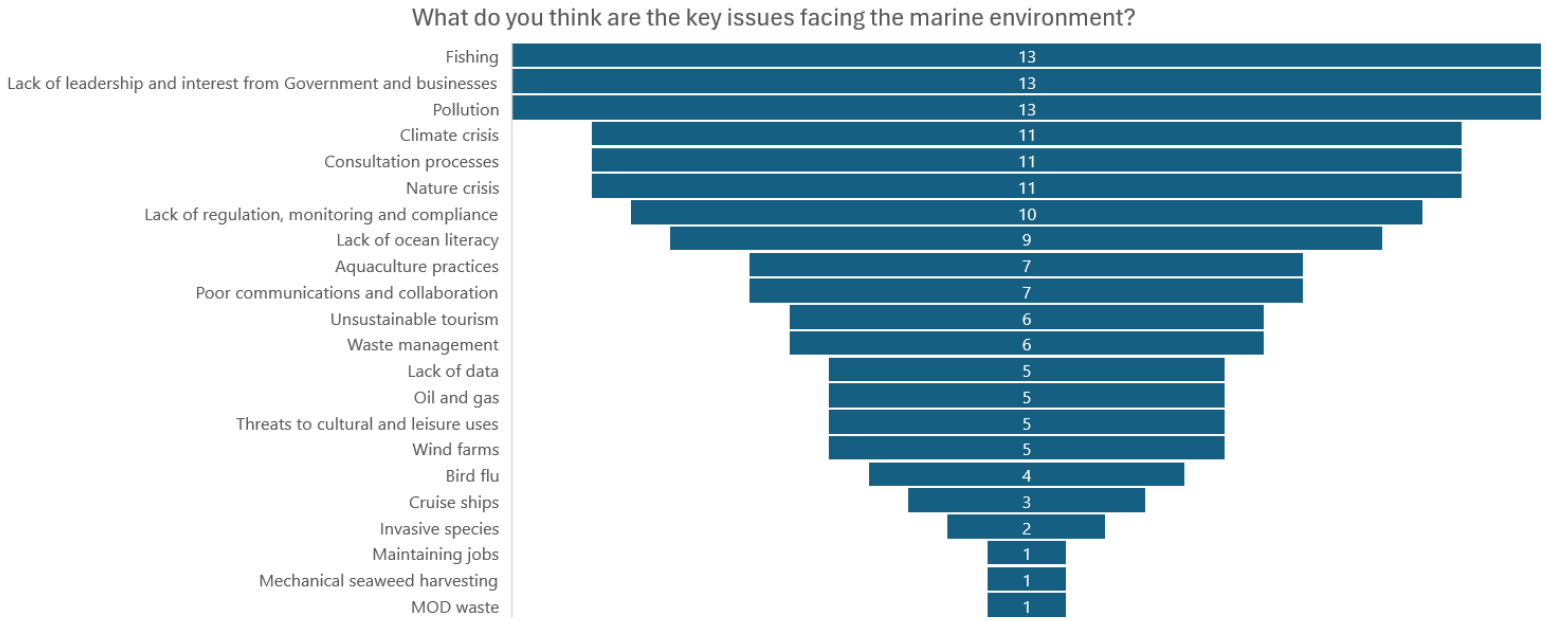


Figure 3: Key issues facing the marine environment, as raised by participants across the 14 community workshops (numbers within each row describe the number of workshops that each point was raised in).

Key themes and learning (continued)

Thematic analysis

1. Fishing

Fishing is an important industry to Scotland and to its communities, from job and food provision to maintaining ways of life that reflect our rich cultural heritage. Throughout these community workshops, fishing was flagged as one of the greatest issues impacting our marine environment. In particular, a great deal of concern and frustration was raised over large-scale commercial fishing methods relating to their "damaging and unsustainable practices" (particularly those associated with dredging and trawling), how they "out-compete local fishers who depend on fishing for their livelihoods" and how they breed "factory ships" whereby communities "experience the many negative impacts and none of the benefits". Participants observed that fewer fishers are working locally likely due to the decline in fish stocks.

Concerns were raised about the long-term effects of overfishing and scallop dredging on seabed health, with discussions about the recovery process and challenges in regulating these activities. Fishers noted that they are catching less than they used to and that their "working environment is being polluted". To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"I live in Saltcoats and I see the dredgers around the bay, I've seen videos of the damage these dredgers cause, raking the sea bed, and it's absolute carnage. It's horrific."

"fishing policies need to be flexible and reactive. There is too much of a delay in polices being enforced. By the time polices take effect, the science that informed them is already out of date. Locally, so many fishing villages no longer fish"

"I'm from Ullapool, when you're looking at the size of longliners and the overfishing and bycatch they cause - fishing is a massive issue because there is just far too much of it going on."

"I've been going to Arran all my life, as a wee boy I used to go swimming and fishing as well. We used to catch fish by the bucket full. I've seen commercial fishing boats where fishers put sack cloths over the name of the boat to hide the boats name and avoid identification. All the places where I used to fish, there's nothing there now."

"As well as scraping of the seabed and damage caused to marine ecosystems there, the indiscriminate nature of what they catch is a problem."

"Creel fishermen are scared of having their fishing area taken away from them. The elephant in the room is that it is the dredgers and bottom trawling that is the problem. Government needs to give explanations to coastal communities."

"In the past, fishers have be disincentivised from taking part in waste recycling due to associated costs to businesses. Fishers shouldn't be penalised for doing the right thing and bringing this in."

"I know it's a massive problem, commercial fishing. People who fish to survive, that's different."

"From the beach cleans I've done, I feel the vast majority of especially ropes, nets, things like that have come from Scotland and from our own fishing fleets."

"Local fishing communities need to be protected. They are part of the marine environment and have an interest in sustainability of the fisheries."

Key themes and learning (continued)

2. Perceived lack of leadership and interest from Government and businesses

Communities discussed at length how the Scottish Government, as well as large businesses, have the potential to enact transformative change that positively impacts people and nature. A wide-spread opinion across workshops was that one of the biggest issues facing the marine environment is not a direct, physical impact in our seas but a perceived lack of political will from people in positions of power and influence.

Communities expressed a "mistrust of Government and lack of faith that they have locals' best interests at heart" and when prompted to reflect more deeply on this, revealed that "diverging priorities" were an issue in not trusting ocean health to be prioritised.

- The need for policy changes to regulate manufacturing businesses was highlighted. For example, one workshop participant highlighted that "certain items shouldn't be manufactured unless they are recyclable. For example the problem of nylon - if it's used in a fishing net, which is quite common, the whole net can't be recycled."
- Emotive words such as "overwhelming" and "scary" were used when discussing the future if we fail to better regulate human activities at sea.
- Community members noted that a lack of leadership could relate to decreases in funding and investment for local councils. Furthermore, it was stated that a "crucial attitude change" is necessary from central decision-makers, to shift from a "large-scale exploitation" marine mindset.

To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"If the council don't listen, the problem is the people in the council. People have found they have stood for council and can't change it."

"Capitalisation - profit-led, large-scale industry and technology that does not benefit local communities or the environment"

"Monetisation of everything at sea"

"Plastic pollution is our responsibility and the responsibility of big companies. Is it being recycled properly? This can hinder our motivation if big companies aren't doing anything."

"Out of sight, out of mind of policymakers."

"Individual people can only do so much, only Governments and businesses can actually have major impact"

"There's a lack of a coherent strategy from UK and Scottish Governments, in fact negative policies from UK Government especially."

"The HPMA consultation is something that has caused frustration and confusion, if policy-makers and the scientific community support these designations, why haven't they been approved? Are business interests interfering with the democratic process?"

"we need to break the lobby of greed"

"There's a lack of political will and apathy"

"The economic model we currently use is too focussed on growth and waste."

"Apathy is a big problem. That it's just lip service, decisions have already been made and they are going to ignore any opinions anyway."

Key themes and learning (continued)

3. Pollution

"Plastic is so obvious as you can see it but it needs to be an international effort."

"the majority of local crews do care – it is their working environment that is being polluted"

"In my experience, the main problem with offshore development is noise pollution. Whales and dolphins communicate, hunt, see their world almost entirely through sound. Studies show crabs and lobsters find it distressing, they walk away and try and hide."

"Need policy changes, certain items shouldn't be manufactured unless they are recyclable. eg the problem of nylon - if it's used in a fishing net, which is quite common, the whole net can't be recycled. There are all sorts of issues like that that communities know about."

Plastic pollution sparked a lot of emotion, with words used such as "horrific", "overwhelming" and "distressing".

Communities observed an increase in plastics washing up on the shores, especially from other remote countries, and shared a "sense of helplessness" in attempting to deal with this via beach cleans as well as a "fear towards its extent". Communities discussed the importance of policy making in banning single-use plastics and in "creating a circular economy to promote reuse and recycling".

It was recognised that the Scottish Government have a major role to play in addressing this problem; "ENGO's and people help but its endless. We can't stop it locally, it comes in from the Gulf Stream. It needs to go to government level". From beach cleaners to wild swimmers, the prominence of microplastics/nurdles was also discussed with concerns for their impact on marine life.

Pollution from land-based activities, such as fertilisers from agriculture and in particular sewage outflows was raised across many workshops.

Noise pollution was discussed in relation to offshore developments and its effects on wildlife, from large marine mammals to small crustaceans. There was consensus regarding the need to tackle underwater pollution; divers and other marine users insights were considered "crucial in understanding the hidden impacts beneath the water's surface".

To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"I've done a lot of beach cleans in a lot of different places and some of the coves up north of Scourie, they've estimated 20 tons on each little bay. It's horrific."

"There used to be more general waste on beach cleanups, but now plastic is overriding everything, especially microplastics"

"Plastic pollution is the most visible, isn't it? And you feel it's more tangible, that you can get your hands on and literally you can pick it up. Compared to chemical pollution or whatever"

"the need to tackle invisible, underwater, unseen pollution – there's fear towards its extent and a sense of helplessness"

"You could literally walk from one edge to the other (of the bay) without getting your feet wet, by just walking over this massive plastic. Phenomenal."

"Nuclear pollution from Chapel Cross and Sellafield"

"pollution from fertilisers and sewage outfalls from land-based activities"

Key themes and learning (continued)

4. Climate crisis

Communities emphasised the need for urgent climate actions. It was discussed how Scotland's seas have a role to play in tackling the climate emergency, however they are also being impacted drastically by climate change. Communities stressed that decision-makers have a responsibility to prioritise ocean health in marine management decisions.

Communities highlighted that they are experiencing very concerning, and at times alarming, climate change impacts. Wild swimmers reported that the temperature increases are noticeable, communities discussed experiencing more regular and more severe storms, particularly around the Moray Firth and Solway coasts, which are destroying coastal access paths, ripping apart sewage pipes and eroding important sand dune habitats. Coastal flooding and the impacts of storm damage are of big concern to those living by the sea.

Participants emphasised the importance of understanding the cumulative impacts as climate change interacts alongside the existing issues caused by a combination of different human activities. For example, seabed degradation: "if you've lost seagrass and you've lost native wildlife from the seabed, it can then mean that extreme weather has a bigger impact on the shore".

To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"Understanding the combination of effects as climate change interacts alongside the existing man-made issues."

"Warming seas leading to increases in jellyfish and algal blooms which I think is a massive worry."

"Storms - on the East Coast, there was metres and metres of sewage pipes all just destroyed and caved in. The sand dunes are just being dragged away."

"climate change affecting the composition of marine life which affects the whole food chain."

"I think climate change in general is the biggest challenge that the human race has ever or will ever face. I feel that if we don't do something about it very soon, things aren't going to go well for us"

"We lost half of the coastal path between Roseisle and Findhorn. It just went overnight and the whole beach just changed."

"settlements so close to where the coastline is being eroded, that's arguably the most scary"

"Definite movement of plastics due to the changing currents"

"summer was really bad, wasn't it? There was a massive spike in temperatures which was pretty scary"

"Any changes to the Gulf Stream could have catastrophic implications locally and globally"

"Green technologies - competing uses for limited space"

Key themes and learning (continued)

5. Consultation processes

"Feeling like you won't be heard or taken seriously"

"Key issue is a faceless Government"

"Lack of safe space to express my views"

"I have been involved and tried to engage in marine planning. I have also written to my local MSP. As a scuba diver what I am seeing is not matching the rhetoric. Apparently 36% of Scotland's seas are protected but I can't see this. <1% seems to be protected and that is because local people were watching and reporting. Wrote to MSP twice and got the exact same letter back, just got sent the party line. He probably didn't even see the letter, I am thinking of going to see him and taking both letters."

Participants stressed the importance of including local voices and knowledge in marine planning. They advocated for a broad and inclusive consultation process that values decades of hands-on experience from individuals involved in the marine environment. However, it was repeatedly raised that the current consultation processes aren't inclusive to communities, who sought changes in format; "the idea of something more casual like a BBQ on the beach or something – my son would like to be involved but something more casual is more likely to get him to come along. Something more fun would help" and "not everyone has or wants to use the internet. If I can do it online sometimes, I keep putting it off because I can do it anytime." Language was discussed "make it simple. It's got to be simple, people are rushed, busy. Give them a moment to contribute".

Consultation processes were described using words such as "intimidating". One participant said "it's not easy to respond to consultations online – you only get to answer questions asked and don't get a chance to talk about other relevant things." It was raised that "people who have an agenda come to consultations" therefore they are not truly representative of the full range of opinions found within the community and there was scepticism over engaging when hidden agendas could be influencing decisions.

To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"'often the so-called experts and those making the decisions are not necessarily those who have experience on the ground. Decisions made by those above haven't asked those who know from years of experience'

"The public not knowing what they can get involved in regarding marine planning conversations"

"Even with the best community engagement, decisions need to be explained based on key factors and issues. Otherwise, the engaged community may feel it's input has been ignored, and may not engage again in the future. So, explain decisions as a balance of pros and cons."

"Not knowing where to go to find out where I can take part"

"Accessibility of opportunity. Opportunities seem to just be very bureaucratic."

"Feeling like I may not have anything helpful to offer"

"Concern that those approaching me to help may have an agenda of which I am unaware"

Key themes and learning (continued)

6. Nature crisis

The nature crisis was considered by communities to be a significant threat facing Scotland's marine environment. Community members expressed concerns over the rapid rates of species declines, such as "plankton depletion and subsequent effects on seabirds and fish populations". Sudden, unexpected changes in species distributions are being noticed, with worry that these changes will only become more frequent and apparent due to climate change. Habitat destruction was raised, with unsustainable and destructive fishing practices also a concern.

This led to discussions on the value of protective measures in legislation, after which it became apparent that there is a wide-spread lack of awareness of what a Marine Protected Area is - some participants thought everything in the area was protected. From Orkney to Skye to the Moray Firth, many locals talked passionately about the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), celebrating their pioneering successes in community-led marine protection using words such as "tremendous" and there was aspiration to see similar initiatives spread across other communities around Scotland; "we've seen there's been numerous studies, especially by the people at Arran's COAST, who have implemented a no-take zone. The fact that you actually get more fish in the long run, because in that no take zone they then have a chance to catch up, then they spread out into other areas which increases the amount of fish overall."

To the right is a word cloud alongside a selection of quotes, that highlight some of the most frequently used words and a variety of opinions:

"As a bird watcher, it's worrying that birds and sand eels are being affected so obviously by warming"

"There's no point in plans or laws or rules if you can't enforce them, and I don't think there's the political will to enforce them."

"the volume of dead sea birds in recent years; bird flu and more recently starvation due to climate related issues, possibly lack of prey or having to travel greater distances to find food due to changing patters with ocean life."

"Changing species distributions eg high temperatures and the huge numbers of basking sharks that were spotted in the Moray Firth and blooms of plankton. There's a need for policy considerations and public education"

"Sustainability of species-environment changes"

"Fish having unusual migration patterns, meaning marine mammals and seabirds have disrupted feeding and breeding patterns"

"Biodiversity is becoming important to lots of people"

"biodiversity loss"

"plankton depletion, and subsequent effects on seabirds and fish populations"

"With climate change, everything's moving north. The drop in wildlife can impact tourism."

"Knock-on effects from losing wildlife (eg economically)"

Key themes and learning (continued)

Regional analysis

Across the 14 workshops, there were some clear geographical differences in terms of the perceived key issues facing the marine environment. These differences are apparent in Table 2, which highlights the marine issues raised per workshop location.

Solway

In Dumfries, the discussions focussed on waste management regarding the pervasive issue of plastic pollution as well as concerns over military and nuclear waste. Locals related to references of fishing industry waste, stating "in the Solway there isn't an available system for fishers to recycle waste cost-free at harbours. The responsibility falls on local councils to set up recycling schemes like this, and so some areas have it and some don't depending on the council's priorities".

Open water swimmers at Portpatrick shared observations of visible plastics and it was noted that rubbish is increasingly coming from land-based sources (eg locally and nations across the Irish Sea). Participants had concerns over Ministry of Defence WW2 dumping and washing up from Beaufort's Dyke as well as recent military activity and testing at Dundrennan /Luce Bay. Locals were not sure which areas are affected and as such whether local marine areas are dangerous, asking "could the MOD provide resources or investment to help with cleaning up areas".

Threats to cultural and leisure uses were emphasised; from wind and kite surfing events to the Skiff World Championship, from "many local artists finding inspiration" to the Riding of the Marches. Nevertheless, a growing disconnect with the marine environment was a concern; "Like Orkney, less people are connected to the sea than they were historically… it means that for politicians, it doesn't come up in their surgeries and they appear uninterested in these issues." Participants emphasised "a lack of ocean literacy across the wider public and even local council which can hinder progress".

"Like Orkney, less people are connected to the sea than they were historically… it means that for politicians, it doesn't come up in their surgeries and they appear uninterested in these issues."

Forth and Tay

In Edinburgh, marine issues were predominantly viewed through a more national and global lens. Climate change dominated the conversation, in particular a lack of urgency from decision-makers in tackling this effectively. Concerns included coastal erosion, flood defences, extreme weather events and "changes in global temperature affecting wildlife and us". Emphasis was also placed on the issue of how we as a society have been taught to value the marine environment, with a desire to see a shift in mindsets "Scotland has lost its marine identity. We've begun to see our seas only through an economic lens, rather than considering our social, cultural and historic ties. We're losing our nature connection". Dredging, trawling and a "lack of communication between fishing sectors" were also issues shared by participants. It was acknowledged that "issues are trans-boundary" and as such "global collaboration and region-specific conversations/ solutions are needed".

In Eyemouth, the issue of overfishing was discussed at length in this workshop, with concerns that "short-sightedness" will have dire future consequences. Some participants felt that their voices in marine decision-making conversations were not valued as much as those from fishing industries,

Key themes and learning (continued)

with worries expressed that communications with areas of this sector have become "hostile". Various forms of pollution were mentioned as issues that need addressing, from oil leaks to plastic pollution, underwater noise impacts to farm run-off (with reference to a concerning recent *E. coli* incident in Coldingham Bay, a well-loved leisure space for local communities). Concerns over a "lack of a coherent strategy from UK and Scottish Governments" in tackling climate change were raised, including reflections on "negative policies from UK Government especially".

In North Berwick, participants discussed the importance of Government and businesses to show leadership in tackling issues facing the marine environment; "It's our responsibility and the responsibility of big companies, is it being recycled properly? This can hinder our motivation if big companies aren't doing anything." Marine litter was a topic of great discussion, with many feeling overwhelmed by the scale of the problems and also the scale of the solutions required, again looking to decision-makers to lead the way "Why do we need to buy different types of plastic food container. If there's one type of plastic we can put it in. People don't have the time to sort it out. We need a global thing. More rubbish bins along the seafront. More places for people to put their rubbish".

The issues and also solutions that ecotourism presents led to interesting discussions on the "importance of getting it right for the environment and people's jobs – that links back to economics and other drivers".

A lack of meaningful communication opportunities with decision-makers was raised as a big issue by workshop participants, who sought to be engaged in accessible and inclusive ways; "It all seems to be out there and you don't get the solid economics, someone coming round, having meetings like this…Not everyone has or wants to use the internet".

Clyde

Within the Glasgow workshop, aquaculture was the primary topic of conversation with participants sharing their impression that a lot of fish are riddled with sea lice and that conditions are diseased and overcrowded. With regards to fishing, participants discussed issues surrounding scallop dredging with concerns over the indiscriminate nature of seabed damage this causes. Trawling, overfishing and discarded fishing gear were also flagged as issues requiring action. In the case of the latter, participants shared their worry for "neglected ropes and fishing gear that pose a threat to marine life" which led to a wider discussion on the impacts of plastic pollution. It was stressed that to achieve sustainability we should "balance the needs of conservation with the economic needs" and that "a coherent set of principles and policies" is required to do so. Participants mentioned that a greater public awareness of marine issues coupled with increasing marine threats makes achieving sustainable seas "difficult but essential".

In Lamlash, a lack of ocean literacy from the public and decision-makers was discussed at length as leading to several problems for the marine environment, including perception "of the ocean as a never-ending resource" and a "failure to recognise that we need to recover the marine environment". This led to an in-depth discussion on marine management

Key themes and learning (continued)

issues; for example, it was observed that we currently have "a focus of management on just what we have now" whereas we need to adopt more adaptive management practices. Conversations on Marine Protected Areas and No-take Zones were interesting given the local context to this, with participants very vocal in wanting these to be extended as well as see "more MPAs that are developed along with communities". Locals who have taken part in marine planning conversations before emphasised how much work this takes, more so than it should in their opinion since "planning laws are biased in favour of developers eg Coul Links". An appeal for "better fisheries management" was made by many, with harmful fishing methods such as trawling and dredging raised as significant concerns which led to people speaking in favour of re-instating a "long overdue" inshore limit which prohibits these practices. It was shared that "we should decrease the unsustainable methods of fishing to prevent the complete collapse of stocks and all other wildlife affected".

Locals felt that councils and Government should "compensate fishers to encourage more sustainable methods", and that the issues of illegal fishing and pollution incidents should be tackled through better monitoring. "More protection of the marine environment" was sought, with interesting points made on "redefining what the word protection actually means. By integrated thinking rather than purely sectional".

Climate change impacts now and in the future were a topic of great concern, as was pollution where it was suggested that Arran could "harness the power of tourism and tourists – direct interest, enthusiasm and funds to the right places".

In Paisley, marine protection was a big topic of conversation within the group, with people reflecting on the HPMA consultation process as "something that has caused frustration and confusion, if policy-makers and the scientific community support these designations, why haven't they been approved? Are business interests interfering with the democratic process?".

Participants shared their feelings that there is currently an insufficient level of monitoring, policing and enforcement of regulations for vessels, with some sharing first-hand accounts of witnessing illegal fishing practices. Others spoke on their observations of visiting the same coastal spots over decades, having seen a steep decline in fish abundance during this time. Dredgers in particular were highlighted as problematic, with comments including "as well as scraping of the seabed and damage caused to marine ecosystems there, the indiscriminate nature of what they catch is a problem".

West Highlands

In Waternish, a lack of adult education on the marine environment and marine-planning processes was seen as a significant issue facing the marine environment, as it stops people acting responsibly and advocating for healthy seas.

Poor communications between marine users was also raised as an issue, with reference to tensions still persisting as a result of the Highly Protected Marine Area consultations; "now people are very careful about what they say and they are worried about the backlash" and "fishermen are very upset in Skye". With regards to these consultations, comments included "I think in the news there was a lot of scaremongering", "There should be HPMA's but further down

Key themes and learning (continued)

"This is the main barrier to engagement; I am being heard but not listened to"

the line", "The HPMA webinar was hugely helpful, but the person that attended didn't do the consultation as they can't read through 20 policies. They sent an email instead" and "Creel fishermen are scared of having their fishing area taken away from them. The elephant in the room is that it is the dredgers and bottom trawling that is the problem".

Community members shared a lot of admiration for what the Community of Arran Seabed Trust has achieved. They reflected on the inaccessibility of consultation processes which are "too complex and time consuming" and how "marine users like tourists are dismissed as non-residents and can't have their say". Concerns were raised over "intimidation from other local people" and that "certain individuals can be very aggressive with community consultations".

Outer Hebrides

Conversations in Tarbert centred largely around the impacts of the marine environment being "over-used for commerce" and the many impacts of this on island communities, from past to present.

Plastic pollution as well as dredgers and trawlers "fishing far too close to shore" were topics of conversation throughout the workshop. Several people spoke passionately about the power of a decentralised decision model which empowers community-led marine decision-making. With regards to working with marine decision-makers, words such as "mistrust" were used and it was stressed that marine "use should be to the benefit of the people and sustainable for the wellbeing of our wildlife. Communities should be fully engaged with this".

Moray Firth

In Macduff, issues around fishing impacts, from overfishing to habitat destruction, were prominent topics of discussion. Frustration was expressed around a perceived lack of adequate fishing measures, with comments such as "at this point we're taking one step forward, two steps backwards".

The severity of plastic pollution also brought lots of personal reflection from the group; personal experiences of encountering large amounts of plastics on beaches brought forth emotional words such as "horrific" and "flabbergasted". It was stressed that there are "certain areas which are renowned for certain forms of pollution" and as such regional planning measures were considered important.

Climate change conversations encompassed past problems, present concerns and future fears eg "We lost half of the coastal path between Roseisle and Findhorn. It just went overnight and the whole beach just changed" and "storms are potentially just going to get worse with climate change as well, if we're going to get more extreme weather events".

There were feelings that the marine values and issues of the area are not given as much attention as they deserve, with comments such as "the Moray Firth gets forgotten when people talk about Scotland and coast and marine in general". This led to a conversation on bathing water quality, whereby despite extensive recreational and tourism activities in local coastal waters, community members felt that there was a significant lack of monitoring; "the massive increase of people using the Moray Firth for recreation, whether it's wild swimming, snorkelling, diving, paddle boarding, wildlife watching, all of these kind of hobbies have skyrocketed in

Key themes and learning (continued)

the last couple of years. I feel like we're missing out slightly on maybe some of the extra protection monitoring reporting that happens elsewhere in the country. It just seems to be a lack of that kind of official designation or monitoring compared to other, more traditionally busy places, like Portobello and Troon and all your big seaside kind of towns, even Aberdeen. But even as soon as you leave Fife it starts to drop off on the map, doesn't it?".

Orkney Islands

The workshop in Kirkwall led to interesting discussions on fishing practices, with issues highlighted such as overfishing, destructive methods and factory fishing vessels. Participants commented on the problem of "outdated tech" on shipping and fishing vessels and concerns were raised over different types of marine pollution from chemical to physical. When discussing interactions with decision-makers, it was mentioned that a "faceless Government" where people didn't know who to speak to led to "miscommunication between locals, institutions and Government" and that a "lack of action" was challenging to accept.

In St Margaret's Hope, locals reflected on and related to the opinions of other Orcadians who took part in the *Oceans of Value* film. It was clear that participants considered communication barriers a prevalent issue facing the marine environment, with feedback such as "This is the main barrier to engagement; I am being heard but not listened to."

A lack of monitoring, compliance and penalties for vessels was raised as an issue locally, with some saying "Even when things are reported, nothing happens. We need active GPS running in the background".

Community members were keen for improved communications with marine decision-makers, stating "they need more information out in the public domain of what is going on at the moment". The impacts and value behind consultation processes were challenged too; "we often lost the key meaning of what consultation is for, the people organising it are just fighting fires, but we feel sorry for people because there is no way of venting."

Participants in Stromness also agreed with the themes highlighted within the *Oceans of Value* film; "The three key issues in the film (plastic pollution, fishing and climate change) were absolutely right". The waste discharge of cruise ships was emphasised as an issue locally, as was climate change impacts such as coastal erosion.

Participants were concerned that there is a lack of good scientific communication, which is necessary for people to understand both the problems and the solutions. Regarding consultations, words such as "fatigue" and "overload" were used, with concerns that they have "no idea what happens with that information after the consultation". The importance of international cooperation was stressed in tackling global issues, with people wanting to know whether these conversations are happening and if so, what are the impacts.

Key themes and learning (continued)

	Dumfries	Edinburgh	Eyemouth	Glasgow	Kinghorn	Kirkwall	Lamlash, Isle of Arran	North Berwick	Macduff	Paisley	St Margaret's Hope, Orkney	Stromness, Orkney	Tarbert, Isle of Harris	Waternish, Isle of Skye
Fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Lack of leadership and interest from Government and businesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pollution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Climate crisis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultation processes	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature crisis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of regulation, monitoring and compliance	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of ocean literacy	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Aquaculture practices	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Poor communications and collaboration	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Unsustainable tourism	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓
Waste management	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Lack of data	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
Oil and gas	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Threats to cultural and leisure uses	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Wind farms	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Bird flu	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-		-	-	-	-	✓
Cruise ships	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓
Invasive species	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Maintaining jobs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Mechanical seaweed harvesting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
MOD waste	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Key issues facing the marine environment, as raised by participants across the 14 community workshops.

Future use and protection

Workshop participants were also asked an open question as to how we should use and protect Scotland's marine environment. Communities interpreted this question in several ways, raising actions they want taken forward immediately as well as those they would like to see happen in the future. The results, illustrated in Figure 4 below, place ocean literacy support as the most popular answer from the 14 community workshops.

In addition to seeking more leadership from Government and businesses "to make the right choices for a sustainable future", it was interesting to see that communities placed high importance on improving relationships between communities-Government. This was often raised in light of the Highly Protected Marine Area consultations and media coverage, which sparked a level of mistrust that some communities haven't healed from.

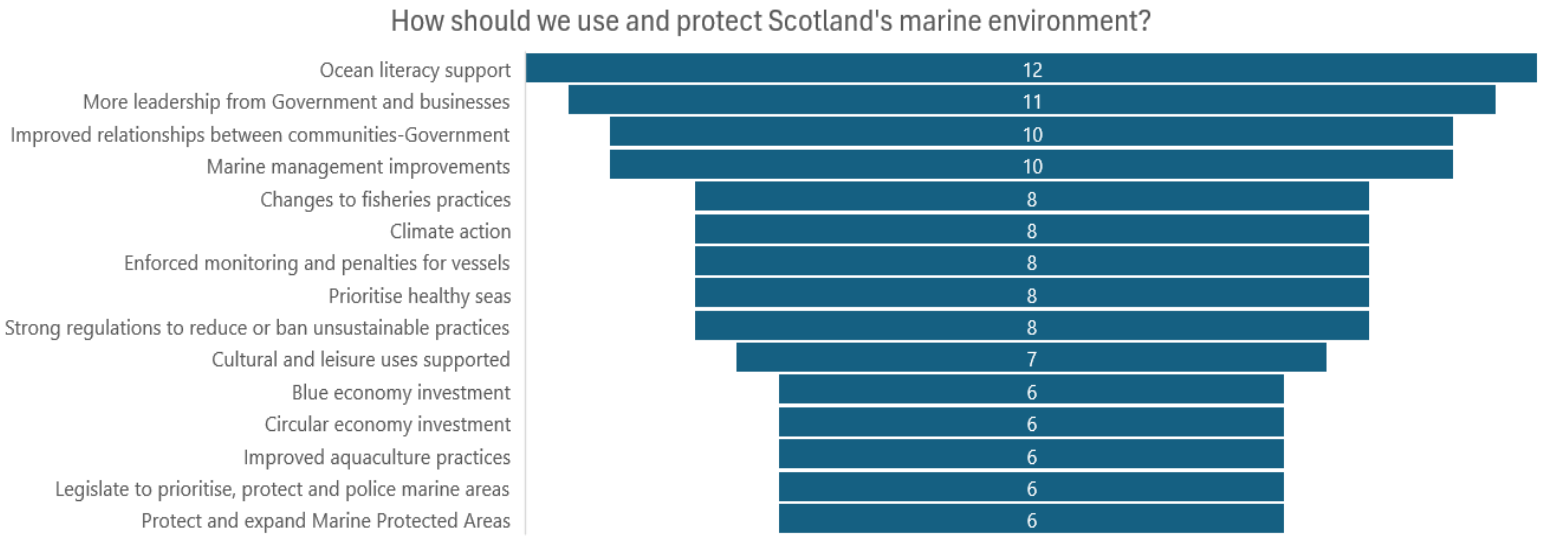


Figure 4: Answers to the question 'How should we use and protect Scotland's seas?', as raised by participants across the 14 community workshops (numbers within each row describe the number of workshops that each point was raised in).

Future use and protection (continued)

Ocean literacy support

Ocean literacy is defined by the UN as an understanding of the ocean's influence on us and our influence on the ocean. As such, the two goals of ocean literacy are to firstly provide marine education which will support individuals in co-designing and co-delivering solutions in addressing marine issues and secondly promote global stewardship of our blue planet which restores our connection to the ocean.

In 2022, the Scottish Government published a report titled '*Ocean Literacy in Scotland: headline findings report*' which details the extent to which over 3000 survey respondents understand the benefits that the marine environment provides them, as well as capturing information on marine attitudes, behaviours, engagement, barriers and how visits to blue spaces impact wellbeing. The scope of this survey was much broader than the focus of this reports community workshops, however commonalities were apparent. For example, in the case of both the ocean literacy survey and the community workshops, participants recognised that knowledge gaps exist for them in understanding marine concepts and plastic pollution is perceived to be one of the greatest issues facing Scotland's marine environment.

Across the community workshops, it was discussed how a lack of knowledge and understanding of marine issues, marine planning processes and also the opportunities that exist to influence change exists. It was emphasised that this can lead to low confidence which ultimately disincentivises community members from taking part in marine decision-making processes.

Young Sea Changers Scotland and the Scottish Government's Marine Directorate leading a marine policy activity for young people at the Scottish Seabird Centre ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Future use and protection (continued)

"It is important to connect people meaningfully with (their marine area) if we expect them to have an interest in using and protecting it."

Communities across Scotland (including island communities surrounded by the sea) stressed that before supporting people to take part in marine decision-making, a societal disconnect with the sea exists which must be addressed. One participant stated "It is important to connect people meaningfully with (their marine area) if we expect them to have an interest in using and protecting it." Several people shared that seaside access and activities are often seen as experiences for privileged individuals, that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not have equal access to these spaces despite living in the same geographic area. This reflects the findings of the Scottish Government's 2023 research report titled '*Inequalities in access to blue coastal space*'. The report was comprised of an international literature review of public access to the coast, a nationally representative survey on blue space access with over 2000 Scottish adults participating and qualitative research with both occasional and non-users of the coast to better understand access barriers and potential solutions. The community workshop feedback echoes that of the report in highlighting groups less likely to access the coast, from those living in socio-economically deprived areas to young people.

Young people are therefore another marginaised group with unequal access to this asset, with some youth workshop participants sharing that they do not have a strong interest in going out in nature by the coast. Within workshop discussions, a young person shared that due to ageing populations being highly prevalent in many coastal towns, often coupled with very little youth presence, they felt disincentivised to visit such areas.

In 2021, Scotland was used as a case study in assessing young people's views, awareness and participation (current and potential) in marine decisions and strategies (Devenport et al., 2021). This study surveyed over 340 young people aged between 11 and 26 years old. As the individuals who will inherit the consequences of decisions made today, a high level of concern was indicated by survey participants towards the future of Scotland's seas, and an appetite to engage with the decision making process despite current levels of participation being low. The need to empower young people to take part in decision making was highlighted, with ocean literacy cited amongst other solutions.

As well as the importance of ocean literacy support for communities, it was suggested that ocean literacy support is required for politicians and other marine decision-makers to provide a more holistic, open-minded approach to marine planning that will "influence decision-makers to make the right choices for a sustainable future".

Listed below is a summary of ocean literacy support measures that community members advised that they would like to see. All of these quotes have been anonymised.

Future use and protection (continued)

"If people had access to the right information and were supported more in becoming more knowledgeable, they could feel more empowered to take part and have their say"

Marine education and training – for communities and decision-makers

"Education for councillors and marine planning officers"

"Help people see what's unique about our marine area and how we actually benefit from our seas"

"Preservation of local knowledge"

"Indigenous Gaelic culture fully integrated into the environmental conversations as they have long traditional knowledge and were robbed of the sea and land by colonisation"

"Reach out to communities that don't live by the sea and help them connect"

"Provide more information/educational material on the subject"

"Information about opportunities to get involved as a lay person, what can I do to make a difference (i.e. think about the different people on Arran you are consulting)"

"Training on planning issues"

"Promote healthy, sustainable seas and educate people on how to do this"

"Promote art, poetry, music inspired by the sea – a festival of the sea"

"If people had access to the right information and were supported more in becoming more knowledgeable, they could feel more empowered to take part and have their say"

"The *Oceans of Value* film helped me think – having a medium that is visual/audio/music/beautiful photography inspires, opens minds, and gives energy to then discuss afterwards."

"Be proud and shout about its positives as well as its negatives"

"It's a complex puzzle and shouldn't just be educating kids but also people like us"

"Need local rangers or someone to signpost the right person to talk to (like a marine biologist local people can go to answer questions about their local marine environment) so they feel more confident in their marine knowledge and feel like they can join in marine consultations"

Seaside experiences

"Use popular beaches for pop up summer events to promote sustainable use of coasts"

"Create seashore hubs where rangers are around during summer months, to lead beach goers in nature walks and litter pics as part of their trip to the beach"

"Getting more people out enjoying the coast in a sustainable way, better for their health and mental wellbeing, good to foster more of a connection with the ocean and then people care more about protecting it"

"Promote responsible wild swimming and other sea exploration to foster a sense of belonging, kinship and responsibility towards blue spaces. Invite people from local community, particularly those of lower income and under-represented voices such as children"

"Improved connections between people and our seas, especially for disadvantaged groups"

Future use and protection (continued)

Consumer and behavioural changes

"Need a mindset shift in consumers and to encourage good seashore habits like taking litter home or doing mini beach cleans"

"Make food labels more transparent"

"Look at our behaviours. Just caring isn't enough"

Youth engagement

"Education – marine issues on the national curriculum"

"Schools make climate change part of the curriculum. Make it fundamental."

"When teachers are enthusiastic about marine issues this is fed through to children who then discuss their learnings with adults. Teacher training could include key marine issues"

"Encouraging outdoor learning for children and young people to better understand the environment"

"Focus on young people, with a focus on schools that are disadvantaged and less likely to have access to the ocean."

"Involve our toddlers, children and young people in consultations and add on what they say"

"More ways and opportunities for young people to get involved – ways to make marine science more accessible, also more investment in career opportunities"

"Help primary kids like me"

"Kids are educating the parents – they're coming back with the things, that's really important."

"Education and from a very early age. In primary schools they can do projects which are part of the curriculum and the children are really very, very engaged (eg plastics being ingested by fish). That education can't start soon enough, that's the future, it's really important to enthuse children"

"STEAM projects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) that bring all parts of the curriculum together are a great way to engage people with these marine issues, it's all part of grass-roots education programmes, because if you don't have young kids engaged that's a loss because there's too many young kids that care"

"More films of this kind (like *Oceans of Value*) shown in schools so that children are made aware early in life."

"Engaging schools to discuss diet (over dependency of fish and meat) – learning to use more plant-based foods"

Scottish Wildlife Trust Young Leaders snorkelling along the East Lothian snorkel trail, one of the Scottish Wildlife Trust's self-led snorkel trails. With over 80 snorkel sites included in the network, each regional trail highlights great snorkel spots in the area as well as local facilities, businesses and community groups - all for a great day out ©Scottish Wildlife Trust Young Leaders

Future use and protection (continued)

Community-Government initiatives

"More organised initiatives to clean beach plastic. Engage with community"

"Hearing the voices of ordinary people who are involved"

"More work with local communities so people in isolated areas can gain and understanding and positive way to engage and feel they are making a difference"

"Custodians for the future – to make it a bit better for our descendants"

"A podcast with local marine community – comparing the sea base of culture to contemporary notions of the marine ecosystem"

"More political and joined-up campaigning to exert pressure on Scottish Government to protect the marine environment against 'money-making"

Scottish Wildlife Trust Young Leaders at the Parliamentary event: Amplifying Community Voices in Marine Policy ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Rebecca Crawford (Marine Policy Officer, Scottish Wildlife Trust) presenting Oceans of Value findings at the Sea Scotland Conference 2023 ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Future use and protection (continued)

"I think a lot of the time when these consultations happen, when we want to do things right, they sadly end up going wrong or people don't welcome them because they haven't been consulted properly. They haven't been given the opportunity to or they haven't been empowered to be able to, and to put across those opinions."

Relationships with Government

Regarding future use and protection of Scotland's seas, the next most pressing issue raised by community participants was to see stronger leadership from, and improved relationships with, the Scottish Government. It is relevant to note that these workshops ran between 2023-2024, around the time when the Highly Protected Marine Area (HPMA) consultations were taking place. Consequently, some of the media surrounding this consultation was speaking to a divide between decision-makers and communities, whether that was a correct assessment or not.

The strength of feelings from those both supporting and opposing the proposed policy was widely apparent. However, regardless of positions on this issue, it was clear that many were united in their belief that the consultation process was insufficient in providing early and meaningful opportunities to understand and constructively influence this proposal. Some communities expressed that the process was quite damaging to their trust in marine decision-makers as a whole.

Nevertheless, communities were passionate about working with local and national bodies who were willing to listen and provide opportunities to facilitate open dialogues in dynamic ways. A focus on relationship-building was also emphasised as crucial between different marine sectors. Communities stressed we need "integrated thinking rather than purely sectional".

The following are some recommendations that community workshop participants would like to see in building stronger and positive relationships with marine decision-makers.

Leadership in supporting communities to tackle marine issues

Volunteer burnout - "it's difficult for normal people to cope with the scale of issues and they are fatigued. Caretaking shouldn't be seen as fun hobby, Council and Government involvement is very important and will continue to be even more so given the severity of the issues"

"Local council and government leading on pro-actively tackling marine issues, instead of relying so heavily on the goodwill of volunteers"

"Better control of big corporations etc. to enforce they take their responsibilities seriously and act on them"

The Oceans of Value community workshop in Lamlash, Isle of Arran, hosted in partnership with the Community of Arran Seabed Trust ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Future use and protection (continued)

"(lack of investment) also gives the message that it's a sort of nice to do thing rather than, you know, an essential part of actually caretaking our planet. Like it's a sort of fun hobby"

Change consultation processes

"Focus on good scientific communications - the ability to be engaging, informative, very funny and serious, warm and compassionate"

"Wider reach – community groups not necessarily linked to the sea, local group talks, schools, pubs, anywhere people young and old. Frequent"

"Explore alternative formats accessible online surveys, TV programme with text surveys"

"Keep questionnaires short"

"Host open events with catering etc."

"In person engagement – at different, local locations and at different times"

"The Scottish Government recently did really well in ending sand eel fishing, let's see more of that, campaigns the public can get behind"

"People who don't contribute to consultation etc. could be encouraged to do so if the feedback loop was improved between communities and Government"

"Marine users like tourists are dismissed as non-residents and can't have their say"

"More events like this [an *Oceans of Value* film and workshop event]"

Legislation with long-term goals in mind

"Value biodiversity and environment over profit and short-sighted goals"

"Think ahead at potential detriment to current quality of life. Government needs to step up and legislate to protect"

"If/how the industry can make a just transition, can they be supported to actually make that transition and what it would look like? How do we get there? How can we set realistic targets to move towards that? It seems to be sometimes the conversation kind of spirals and we end up back where we started"

"Prioritise, and legislate to prioritise, health of ecosystems"

"Lessons from Lamlash Bay no take zone"

Louisa Hooper (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), Eileen Armstrong (South Skye Seas Initiative), Jo Pike (Scottish Wildlife Trust CEO), Caitlin Turner (Young Sea Changers Scotland) and Bally Philp (Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation). Parliamentary event panel discussion on the opportunities and challenges to community involvement in marine decision-making ©Scottish Wildlife Trust

Future use and protection (continued)

"Go out, don't expect people to come to you. Use existing community networks eg wild swimming groups"

"We should use it sustainably, being practical for what's needed rather than what's wanted."

"Protect special areas in the sea like SSSIs on land"

"More positive direction by Scottish Government. The no-take zone has been in place since 2008 and not one vessel has been charged with illegal fishing. There has been a few incursions, latest incident with divers with scallops, in the zone area"

"Start to take responsibility for rejecting plastic use and using biodegradable alternatives"

"Ensure decisions are based off of data and ensure the perspectives and experiences of locals who have observed the changes first hand over decades are considered"

"There's lots of land-based protection like SSSIs etc. – need equivalent for seas/rivers/lochs etc."

"We need to recover the health of the marine environment – biodiversity, sea beds, ecosystems. This needs to drive decision-making and policy"

Partnerships with other countries to share learning

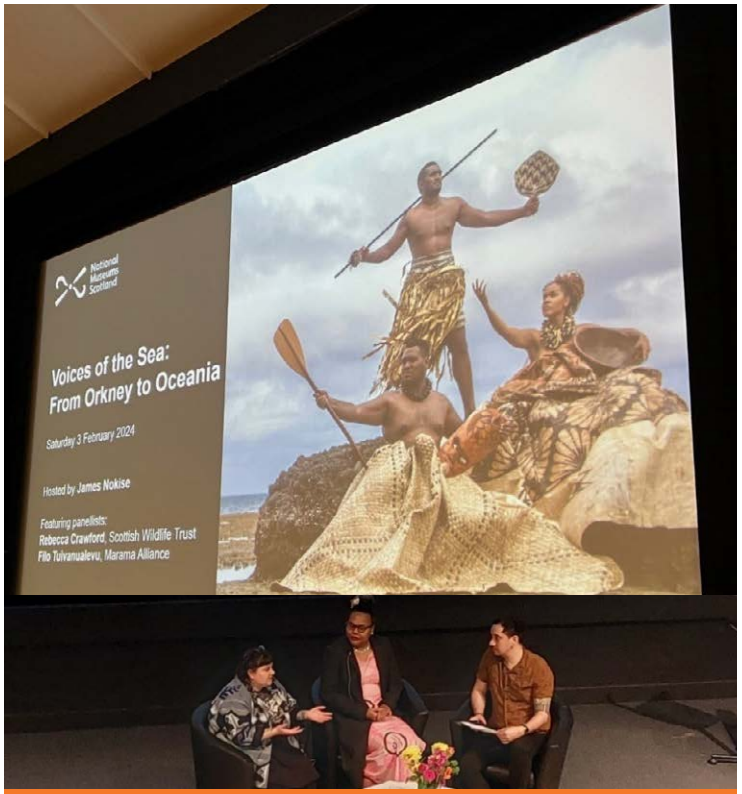
"International collaboration instead of competition"

"Internationally" – ocean is a connected environment"

"Promote the successes/what works."

"The New Zealand government handed the Maori the fishing rights under the revised Waitangi Treaty during the 1970s. Locally, the Maori are very involved in preserving the fishing rights, there are exclusion zones there and they work"

"I loved the comparison between Orkney and Fiji [during the event Voices of the Sea: From Orkney to Oceania, which connected Orcadian island voices with those across the Pacific to emphasise the challenges and successes of community-led marine action]



Rebecca Crawford, Filo Tuivanualevu (Marama Alliance) and James Nokise at the National Museums Scotland event Voices of the Sea: From Orkney to Oceania.

Next Steps

The Trust has learned a great deal throughout this series of community workshops around Scotland, particularly in facilitating dialogue between communities and decision-makers.

Over the next few pages are four key areas that emerged from workshop analyses, that communities stressed were important to getting involved in marine decision-making conversations: support, accessibility, being heard and representation.

We intend to build upon these areas within our new project, Sea the Connection, running from October 2024 to October 2027. As such, we will continue to work alongside communities across Scotland and marine planners, to pursue our goal of amplifying community voices in marine policy.

Next Steps (continued)

Next Steps (continued)

Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks again to everyone who shared their time, expertise and enthusiasm with us throughout these Oceans of Value events. It was a real privilege to listen to and learn from your diverse insights. As well as all those who took part, we would like to thank all the inspiring community groups and organisations who champion community-led marine initiatives all across Scotland. Listed to the right are those who worked alongside the Trust to offer these events:

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Oceans of Value

Find out more about our work!

livingseas@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

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