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North Devon Marine Pioneer

Pioneering approaches to fisheries management: Fisheries research and management plans

The challenge

- To provide the evidence base for a more ecosystem-based approach to managing fish and their habitats in the Bristol Channel. To help with the prioritisation and promotion of research needs of the North Devon Marine Pioneer area.
- For a locally focused ecosystem approach to fisheries management that enables us to understand the ecology of fish stocks in the region, changes to current marine management structures will be needed.
- An ecosystem approach aims for decentralised management that involves all stakeholders and balances local interests with wider public interests. The operational boundaries are defined by users, managers, scientists and local people working together.
- In order to define the most appropriate scale for fisheries management, we need to review the needs of local people as well as the ecology and current management of key target species.

Our aims

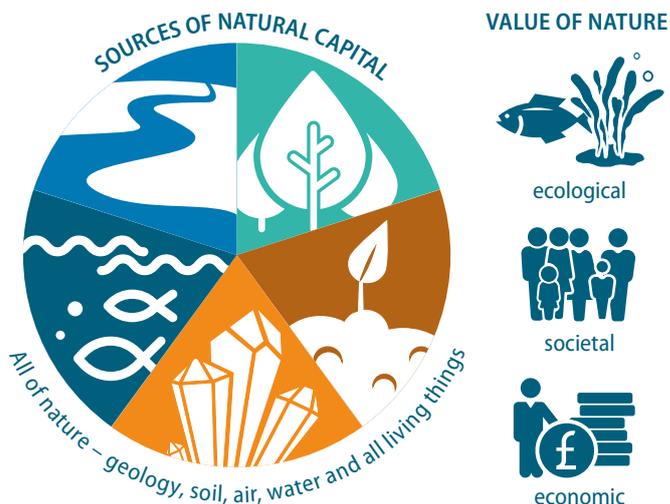
- Define the ecological baseline by collating existing evidence on commercially important fish stocks for North Devon. Review the ecology and stock status of key species to identify suitable species for a more regional/local approach to management.
- Understand the current system by identifying what current activities impact on fish stocks, taking an

ecosystem approach that considers all industries and activities, pathways of impact, current management and relevant legislation.

- Set the path to local management by exploring what additional evidence we need to better be able to manage fish stocks at the local level, and developing a strategy for collecting data on each species to inform future projects and collaborations.

A fully comprehensive ecosystem-based approach [includes] all the interactions the target fish stock has with predators, competitors and prey species; the effects of weather and climate; the interactions between fish and habitat; the effects of fishing on species and habitat.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee¹



An ecosystem approach involves the integrated management of land, sea and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, involving all stakeholders.

In practice

This project will produce fisheries research and management plans that provide:

- accessible evidence to support the delivery of an ecosystem approach and natural capital decision making in the North Devon area
- an analysis of knowledge gaps and research priorities, focused on refining our understanding of the geographical distribution of key species
- shared knowledge across national and international platforms.

The future

- We aim to identify at least two options for management/research initiatives, along with potential funding sources, to be delivered beyond the lifetime of the North Devon Marine Pioneer.
- We will produce comprehensive fisheries research and management plans for the north coast of the Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) district, along with guidance on how to replicate the project in other IFCA districts.

Project partners

Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

North Devon Biosphere

Blue Marine Foundation

¹ JNCC (2014) 'The Eco-System based approach'. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.



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This North Devon Marine Pioneer project contributes to the policies of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, *A Green Future*, through:

- using a natural capital asset and risk register
- applying a natural capital approach to marine licensing, planning, fisheries and management of Marine Protected Areas
- implementing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

This project is a contribution to the North Devon Marine Pioneer (northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/marinepioneer.html)

