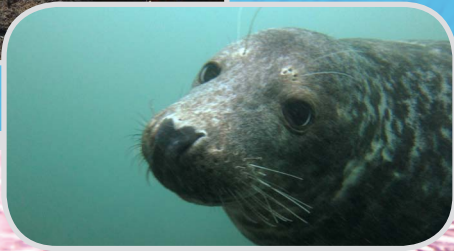
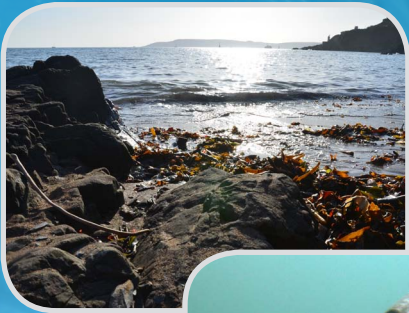


The Marine Ecosystems Research Programme (MERP) will address key knowledge gaps to improve our understanding of the UK marine environment for a wide range of stakeholders



## Project Partners

- Bangor University
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- National Oceanography Centre
- Plymouth Marine Laboratory
- Queen Mary University of London
- Queens University Belfast
- Scottish Association for Marine Science
- Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science
- University of Glasgow
- University of Sheffield
- University of Strathclyde



**Marine Ecosystems  
Research Programme**

Funded by



Department  
for Environment  
& Rural Affairs

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## To respond to environmental changes we need to improve our understanding of the UK marine ecosystem



It is becoming increasingly clear that human activities and environmental change have much wider consequences for biodiversity and ecosystem services than previously thought.



MERP will increase our understanding of marine food webs and how they respond to altering pressure, improving our ability to predict the effects of environmental change.

## Integrating marine ecosystem science to enhance our understanding of the societal benefits provided by the ocean

This 5-year programme aims to improve our understanding of how the regulation of key ecosystem services afforded by marine food webs is affected by various pressures, the scale of impacts and how biodiversity influences ecosystem function at different levels of the food web.

MERP is bringing together existing data and knowledge with targeted new data to facilitate the development of a more accurate suite of marine ecosystem models which will provide vital evidence, tools and advice for beneficiaries, such as policymakers and environmental managers.



## Exploring impacts of natural and human pressures on marine ecosystems to forecast changes in ecosystem services



Through regular interaction with a Stakeholder Advisory Group, the research and knowledge generated is tailored to meet the needs of the wide range of beneficiaries of this programme.

MERP will help advance the development and implementation of marine management initiatives, such as the Marine and Coastal Access Act, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Marine (Scotland) Act, Common Fisheries Policy and OSPAR Joint Assessment & Monitoring Programme.

**Marine ecosystems provide economic and societal benefits and services, such as providing food, maintaining biological balances, supporting leisure and recreation and bioremediation of waste. It is important to understand these ecosystem services, and the processes behind them, to develop management strategies for a sustainable future.**

### Research areas

1. Marine ecosystem data integration and macroecological analysis
2. Better understanding of poorly known processes
3. Improved representation of ecological processes in models
4. Understanding uncertainty in model predictions
5. Linking macroecology, models and ecosystem services
6. Developing the next generation of ecosystem service regulation models

