



**Marine Ecosystems
Research Programme**

MERP/Scotland Policy briefing

March 2017

On March 24th Paul Somerfield, Mike Heath and Tom Webb travelled to Victoria Quay in Edinburgh to inform those working for the Scottish Government and their advisors about ongoing and planned work in MERP, especially work proposed in the new Workpackage, and to discuss how it is relevant to Scottish policy needs. Peter Evans joined the briefing remotely. Participants included people from Marine Planning and Policy, Marine Scotland Science, Marine Analytical Unit, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Various areas of work within MERP were discussed including; Linking and enriching biodiversity data to assess the state of marine ecosystems and developing virtual marine ecosystems for conducting management scenario experiments. Discussions were focused on understanding the maps of bird and cetacean distributions which are statistical interpolations of survey data using independent variables to guide the interpolation.

In the modelling work clarification was required over the definition of inshore and offshore waters used in the StrathE2E model, as each term has different meanings for different stakeholders. There was much interest from the team from Edinburgh on ecosystem effects of the discard ban and subsequently publications were circulated on that topic.

Key lessons to take away from the briefing were in how the programme team project and explain their scientific work to stakeholders. It is important to highlight not only the potential relevance to the day to day work of stakeholders but also show how the work could have important future strategic impact.

Meeting participants

Marine Planning and Policy

David Palmer
Martyn Cox
Lynsay Ross
Oana Racu

Marine Scotland Science (Aberdeen VC)

Colin Moffat
Bill Turrell
Nick Bailey

Marine Analytical Unit

Ed Ross
Sarah Payne

Fisheries

Jim Watson

Ben Dipper

Aquaculture

Paul Haddon

SNH

John Baxter

Marine Ecosystem Research Programme

Peter Evans

Mike Heath

Paul Somerfield

Tom Webb

For further information about the Marine Ecosystem Research Programme visit <http://www.marine-ecosystems.org.uk/>