



# Ecosystem-Based Maritime Spatial Planning in Europe and how to assess it

**Vanessa Ryan, WWF Finland**

Maritime Spatial Planning, towards good environmental status of the Baltic Sea  
4<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum, 1.6.2021



## Marine Biodiversity in Dangerous Decline, Finds New Report

May 06, 2019 | Lauren Kubiak



*The World's Oceans Are in Danger, Major Climate Change Report Warns*



State of the ocean will 'ultimately determine the survival of our species': UN Special Envoy

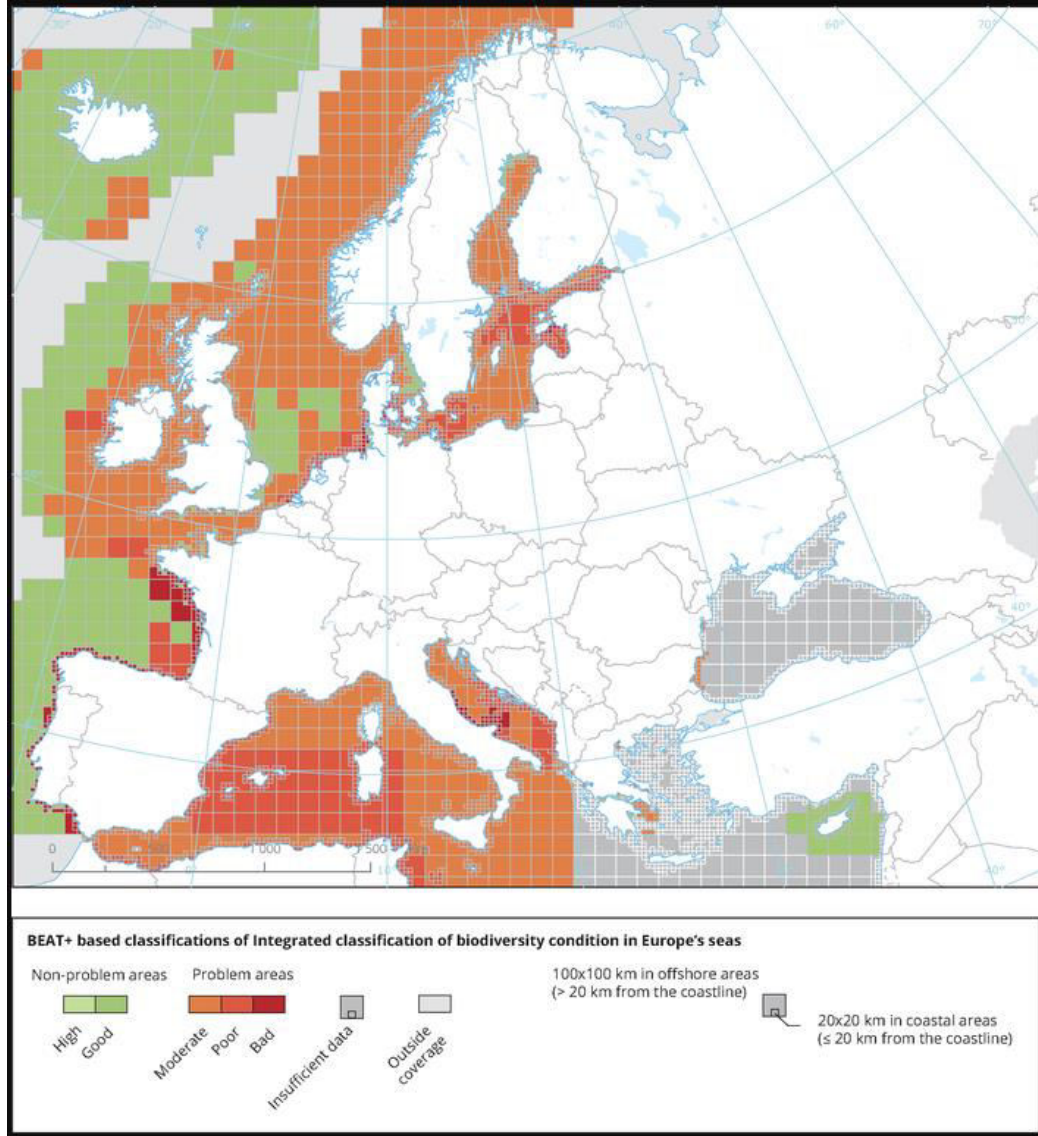
Regulators missing pollution's effect on marine life, study finds

Chemicals and plastics, not just overfishing, threaten aquatic food chain with 'disaster', report warns

# The state of the oceans

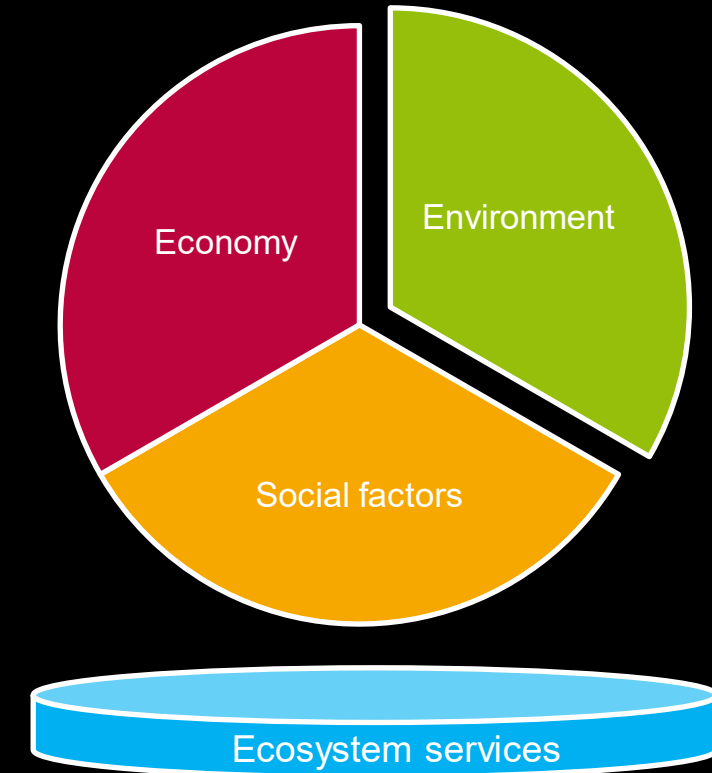
- We are facing the huge challenges of biodiversity and climate crises
- Marine areas are not sustainably managed
  - Only around 13% of the world's oceans can be regarded as wilderness<sup>1</sup>
  - Less than 8 % covered by marine protected areas
  - Less than 3% fully protected

<sup>1</sup>Jones et al., 2018, Current Biology 28, 2506–2512



# MSP as a solution?

- More than 1/3 of the human population lives less than 100 km from the coast





# EBM?

An ecosystem-based approach in planning how we use and access our seas acknowledges that **the carrying capacity of marine ecosystems against human pressures is finite.**

The approach considers the **marine space as an integrated system**, providing a variety of uses and services including marine protection.

This safeguards important ecological areas, reduces negative pressure on the marine ecosystem as a whole and ensures that there is space for nature in the maritime spatial plans.

EB MSP is a transversal goal.

"Achieving Ecosystem-based marine spatial plans", WWF 2020







# Assessing marine spatial plans

- Assessing before implementation is critical
  - Are we on the right track?
  - Transparency/public consultations?
  - EU commission obligation
- How do we turn the objectives and requirements of the MSPD into concrete and measurable assessment indicators?



#### Land sea interaction (article 7)

Identification and analysis of land sea interactions: the relevant coastal uses and activities have been identified and their effects on the marine environment analysed

Integration of the maritime dimension of some coastal uses or activities and their impacts in the plans: measures have been proposed to address those effects through the marine spatial plans

Identification and consistent articulation with other relevant policies such integrated coastal zone management or the Water Framework Directive-related legislations

#### Thriving Nature (articles 3, 5, 6 & 8)

Effective SEA, in line with the Strategic Environmental Assessment directive provisions

Environmental impact assessments for projects falling within the MSP process, in line with the Environmental Impact Assessment directive, associated with proposal and appropriate measures to address them based on the mitigation hierarchy

Application of the precautionary principle and the principle of preventive action

Cumulative impact assessment of all activities at sea on the marine environment ensuring that planned activities in combination do not exceed the carrying capacity of the sea or limit achievement of Good Environmental Status

Appropriate sensitivity mappings and reflections of sensitive areas in the drafting of the plan

Baseline environmental studies and identification of ecosystem services and functionality

Integration of a coherent, well-connected and representative network of marine protected areas and areas of ecological importance in the plan as well as ensuring connectivity through respective provisions outside MPAs, in line with the Biodiversity Strategy spatial targets, and associated with management plans

Identification of areas suitable to restoration activities followed by restoration plans

Adoption of a long term perspective and especially identification of how MSP can support adaptive conservation strategies to cater for spatial changes in ecosystems (e.g. migration of species, change of critical conditions for habitats), including the further exploration of the potential for including climate refugia in MSP and explanation about how the MSP contributes to the NECP for instance through strengthening the capacity of the ocean to store carbon

Ensure that maritime spatial plans are in line with and support environmental provisions and objectives of relevant interconnected policies, such as Birds and Habitats directives, the MSFD, the CFP, and the Biodiversity Strategy, i.e. MSP foresees MPA network covering at least 30% of the marine area, with 10% strictly protected and proposing where needed high biodiversity areas to be added to MPA network

#### Sustainable Blue Economy (articles 3, 5 & 6)

Baseline economic studies and economic impact assessment

Definition of clear economic objectives, focusing on sustainable development and aligned with the sustainable blue economy and finance principles as well as with the timeline and objectives of interrelated policies

MSP foresees areas for offshore renewable energy development that are sufficient for just energy transition and climate goals, and are located in areas compatible with biodiversity recovery and resilience

#### Social aspects (articles 3, 5 & 6)

Social, political, cultural baseline studies and appropriate impact assessments for local communities

Clear political, social and cultural objectives associated with measures and obtained through an open and participative consultation process

#### Policy coherence (article 6)

Identification of and alignment of the plan with the relevant interconnected policies at national, EU, regional, international level, of their targets, and timeline

#### Coexistence and distribution (articles 5 & 8)

Identification of spatial and temporal utilization of maritime space for different sea uses and activities

Analysis of ocean uses interactions and reduction of conflicts that can potentially lead to social tensions, accidents/pollution events, especially, ensure that no conflicts occur between maritime sectors and area based conservation management measures

Identification of sustainable multi-purpose uses

[WWF EPO Guidance oaper, 2021: Ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning in Europe and how to assess it](#)





#### Public participation (article 9)

A comprehensive public consultation involving all relevant stakeholders has been run by public authorities, results and outcomes are made publicly available and inputs from public consultation are taken into account in the drafting of the plan

Transparent decision making process, including the public sharing of relevant documents used to make decisions and information on compliance assessments and the subsequent action plans

Relevant stakeholders and authorities, and the public concerned have access to the plans once they are finalized

#### Data & knowledge (article 10)

The plan is based on the best available data, including trends on marine species and activities and the ecosystem's capability and capacity to recover from human induced changes. In the face of data gaps, new data collection processes are set up to support the drafting of the plans and the precautionary principle applies

High quality spatial data is shared publicly and utilized across administrative and sectoral borders, tools are devised to translate this data into actionable information fit for planning purposes, and end users can evaluate the usability and quality of spatial data and maps

#### Cross-border cooperation (articles 11 & 12)

Cross-boundary mechanisms in planning, for instance through joint MSP working groups and regular communication across countries including sharing information on plans, planning priorities and MSP procedures; as well as for sharing processes of monitoring and harmonising evaluation across regional seas, and preferably all EU seas

Large-scale cross-border mapping of major ecological features and future human activities as well as aggregated cross-border assessments of sea uses, coastal construction and development, and cumulative impacts

Consistent plans across borders coherent with major ecological features

#### Competent authorities (article 13)

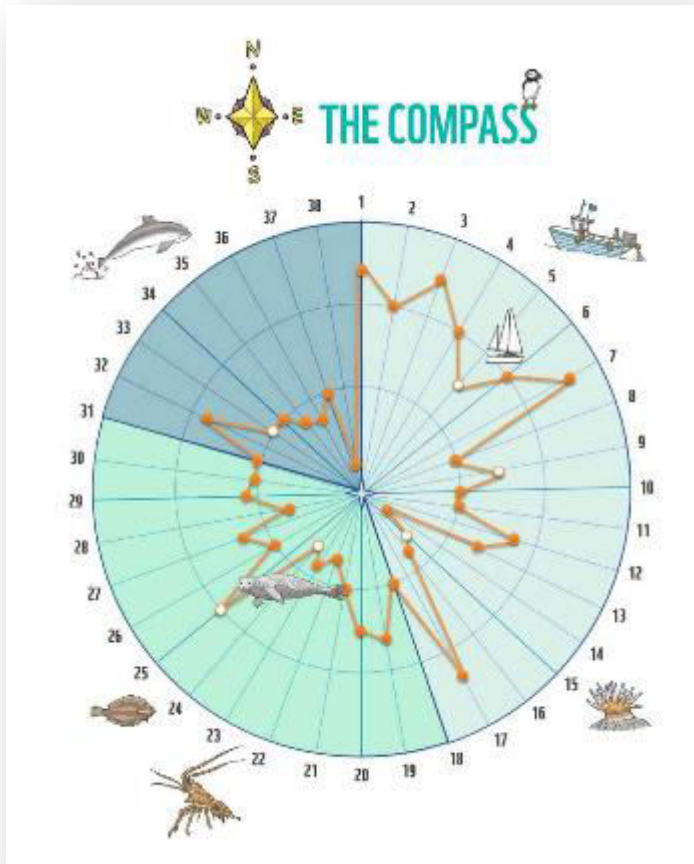
The planning authority/ies are officially designated and include a balanced representation of government powers from the various administrations involved in the MSP process (Ministries of Environment and/or the Sea, Transport, Energy, Economy, etc.). They have dialogues with relevant authorities of different sectors involved and impacted by the MSP process and nature conservation agencies and have the capacity and mandate to enforce the plan



Indicator		
No/Not achieved	Partly/Partly achieved	Yes/Achieved
Justification		
Scoring		
Score: 0	Score: 0.5	Score: 1

# Assessing marine spatial plans

- List of indicators
- Scoring
- User-friendly presentation
- Example taken from WWF UK compass card on marine protected areas management



- 1 Identify important areas for species & habitats
- 2 Identify stakeholders & their interests
- 3 Set up stakeholder participation process
- 4 Assess condition of important areas for species & habitats
- 5 Create socio-economic baseline
- 6 Identify pressures impacting species & habitats
- 7 Set MPA boundary based on areas of ecological importance
- 8 Establish zoning for activities
- 9 Establish management rules for zoned areas
- 10 Create a management body to set and monitor strategy
- 11 Create a management committee to implement the strategy
- 12 Establish environmental MPA objectives
- 13 Established socio-economic MPA objectives
- 14 Identify benefit sharing rules
- 15 Develop alternatives for displaced activities
- 16 Create clear lines of responsibility for governance
- 17 Ensure the MPA has legal status
- 18 Publicly communicate about the MPA
- 19 Support an active & inclusive stakeholder engagement process
- 20 Develop a management plan
- 21 Ensure adequate MPA staff
- 22 Ensure adequate infrastructures and equipment
- 23 Enforce management rules
- 24 Create a business plan fund long-term MPA management
- 25 Capacity build skills needed to run the MPA
- 26 Create education programme linked to MPA objectives
- 27 Monitor biological, social and economic factors
- 28 Monitor management activities against performance
- 29 Build a sense of responsibility for the MPA by stakeholders
- 30 Demonstrate the authorities take responsibility for the MPA
- 31 Effectively implement the management plan
- 32 Sustain & build on community involvement
- 33 Demonstrate that MPA is achieving objectives
- 34 Demonstrate that MPA is improving ecological condition
- 35 Demonstrate that MPA is providing socio-economic benefits
- 36 Report progress to the community
- 37 Update management plan/rules based on monitoring data
- 38 Create sustainable income stream to cover management costs





Thank you!

[www.wwf.fi](http://www.wwf.fi)

[vanessa.ryan@wwf.fi](mailto:vanessa.ryan@wwf.fi)

For more information on  
EBM MSP please read  
our [report](#)