



Published on *Marine Ecosystems and Management (MEAM)* (<https://meam.openchannels.org>)

Notes & News: Ireland releases integrated marine plan - Report on theory and practice of MSP - FAO guidelines for responsible recreational fisheries

Ireland releases integrated marine plan

The Government of Ireland has released an integrated marine plan to support sustainable development of its ocean resources and ensure that government departments work together more efficiently and effectively on marine issues. The plan, titled "Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth", sets out three goals - a thriving maritime economy, healthy ecosystems, and strengthening the country's maritime identity - as well as 39 action items to help meet those goals. The plan is at www.ouroceanwealth.ie/Pages/default.aspx.

Report on theory and practice of marine spatial planning

Released to the public in draft form a few months ago, the final version of a report by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility provides a summary of marine spatial planning (MSP) worldwide. The report describes available tools, barriers to use, and innovative methods. Drawing from examples, the report discusses the potential that MSP has to align conservation and development interests while protecting vital ecosystems and the services they deliver. The report "Marine Spatial Planning in the Context of the Convention on Biological Diversity" is at www.cbd.int/ts. (The title of the draft report was "Synthesis Document on the Experience and Use of Marine Spatial Planning".)

FAO guidelines for responsible recreational fisheries

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has released technical guidelines for the management of sustainable recreational fisheries. Recreational fishing is prominent in many coastal ecosystems of industrialized countries, and its importance is increasing rapidly in transitional economies as well. The new FAO guidelines provide detailed sections on policy and institutional frameworks (tailored to policy-makers), management actions and strategies (tailored to fisheries managers), recreational fisheries practices (tailored to individual recreational fishers), and recreational fisheries research (tailored to researchers and managers). The 176-page guidelines are at www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2708e/i2708e00.htm.

World Risk Report: Degradation of reefs and wetlands creating greater risk

Widespread degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems is leading to significantly increased risk for coastal populations, according to the latest annual assessment of global risk levels. The World Risk Report 2012 - produced by United Nations University, The Nature Conservancy, and Alliance Development Works - calculates the relative risk level experienced by each country worldwide. The level was determined by the extent to which communities are exposed to natural hazards such as droughts, storms, or earthquakes, and also by their degree of vulnerability.

"Where protective reefs, mangroves, and wetlands have degenerated or even completely disappeared, the forces of nature impact with far higher force on inhabited areas," said Peter Mucke of Alliance Development Works. Added co-author Christine Shepard of The Nature Conservancy, "Coral reefs, oyster reefs, and mangroves offer flexible and cost-effective first lines of defense [against natural disasters], as well as other benefits like healthy fisheries and tourism that sea walls and breakwaters will never provide." The report is at www.worldriskreport.com.

Guidelines on controlling invasive lionfish

A new manual by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides the first guidelines for coastal managers to control the spread of invasive lionfish. Native to Asia, the lionfish has no natural predators in waters of the southeastern US, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean regions. As a result, it is spreading rapidly while preying on native fish species. With the ability to remove up to 60% of prey fish from a given habitat, the lionfish poses a substantial threat to the region's marine ecosystems. "Invasive Lionfish: A Guide to Control and Management" is available at <http://lionfish.gcfi.org/manual/>

Guidance available for educators on Ocean Frontiers movie

For educators who want to use the film *Ocean Frontiers* to teach about marine spatial planning and ecosystem-based management, there are now formal discussion materials available to supplement the movie. A discussion guide walks university-level professors through concepts in the film, suggests questions for classes, and recommends readings. A separate resource guide supports secondary-level educators with summaries and teaching tips. The guides are at <http://ocean-frontiers.org/discussion-guides/>.

Website enlists the public to identify seafloor habitat, organisms

In one of the latest examples of crowdsourcing environmental research, the new website Seafloor Explorer asks the general public to help identify marine life and habitats in seafloor images from the northwest Atlantic. A collaboration between oceanographers and social scientists, the website guides visitors through a brief tutorial on what habitats they see (sand, gravel, cobble, and more) and what organisms are present (scallop, fish, seastar, crustacean). Once trained, the visitors are directed into a database of 100,000 images taken by the HabCam habitat-mapping underwater vehicle. The purpose of the project is to provide greater understanding of the region's seafloor ecosystems and create habitat maps at a resolution much higher than scientists would have been able to generate without the manpower this project provides. The website is www.seafloorexplorer.org.

Source URL: <https://meam.openchannels.org/news/meam/notes-news-ireland-releases-integrated-marine-plan-report-theory-and-practice-msp-fao>