Notes & News: Ocean prosperity - Ireland - Pope and marine EBM - Letter to editor

Reports offer roadmap for sustainable ocean prosperity

A new coalition has produced a series of reports to inform decision-makers on effective ocean and coastal resource management strategies. The research describes best practices for how reforms in governance and management can reduce poverty while achieving economic gains, increasing food production, replenishing fish, and conserving ocean health for future generations.

Called the Ocean Prosperity Roadmap, the collection of reports is a result of work from The Economist Intelligence Unit, Environmental Defense Fund, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, California Environmental Associates, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and the University of Washington. The reports are at www.oceanprosperityroadmap.org

Reports outline opportunities for Ireland from "blue economy" and MSP

A set of new reports from the Government of Ireland identifies economic opportunities to come from developing a "blue economy" based on sustainable growth of maritime industry and the institution of a national MSP process. Produced by the Government's Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group, the reports provide support for an integrated marine plan for Ireland (Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth) that was published by the Government in 2012. The reports also outline and recommend a MSP framework for Ireland. The new reports are at www.ouroceanwealth.ie/publications

Pope gives nod to marine EBM concepts in environmental encyclical

In June 2015, Pope Francis released an encyclical - a letter sent to all bishops of the Roman Catholic Church - that expressed his views on an array of environmental issues, including ocean health. The Roman Catholic Church has more than 1.2 billion members worldwide. The encyclical's ocean sections are below, representing passages 40-42 in the document. These passages touch on several aspects of marine EBM, including the interconnectedness of upstream and downstream ecosystems:

"Oceans not only contain the bulk of our planet's water supply, but also most of the immense variety of living creatures, many of them still unknown to us and threatened for various reasons. What is more, marine life in rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, which feeds a great part of the world's population, is affected by uncontrolled fishing, leading to a drastic depletion of certain species. Selective forms of fishing which discard much of what they collect continue unabated. Particularly threatened are marine organisms which we tend to overlook, like some forms of plankton; they represent a significant element in the ocean food chain, and species used for our food ultimately depend on them.

"In tropical and subtropical seas, we find coral reefs comparable to the great forests on dry land, for they shelter approximately a million species, including fish, crabs, molluscs, sponges and algae. Many of the world's coral reefs are already barren or in a state of constant decline. Who turned the wonderworld of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of colour and life?" This phenomenon is due largely to pollution which reaches the sea as the result of deforestation, agricultural monocultures, industrial waste and destructive fishing methods, especially those using cyanide and dynamite. It is aggravated by the rise in temperature of the oceans. All of this helps us to see that every intervention in nature can have consequences which are not immediately evident, and that certain ways of exploiting resources prove costly in terms of degradation which ultimately reaches the ocean bed itself.

"Greater investment needs to be made in research aimed at understanding more fully the functioning of ecosystems and adequately analyzing the different variables associated with any significant modification of the environment. Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family. This will require undertaking a careful inventory of the species which it hosts, with a view to developing programmes and strategies of protection with particular care for safeguarding species heading towards extinction."

For the full encyclical, go to http://bit.ly/EnvironmentEncyclical

Letter to the Editor: For marine EBM to work, we must recognize major political and economic changes

Dear MEAM:

As always the MEAM newsletter is good reading. But I have a deep concern regarding your recent retrospective on progress in marine EBM (MEAM 8:4). The discussion
seems to take no account of the major political and economic changes going on in the world. A main feature of these, beginning in the days of Reagan and Thatcher and progressing through the collapse of the USSR, is essentially the wholesale privatisation of the Commons, nationally and globally. Giant corporations now control the use of most natural resources, and the possibility of national, international and local authorities having much say - especially to coordinate, innovate, conserve, restore, and advance - is very much diminished, and this process continues. Thus so much of the discussion here about integration, coordination, rationalisation is pie in the sky.

Those who wish to see EBM advance in reality really need to revise their thinking about method and look at the ongoing transformation of the world economy and actual authority. Personally, as a socialist, I would prefer to see this transformation not happening but, still, I think people of goodwill have to look reality in the face and act according to what they see.

Sidney Holt
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