

UK Marine Natural Capital

"Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things." (World Forum on Natural Capital)



Examples of Current UK Marine Natural Capital

Policies, Plans, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

and

Projects and Forums

links embedded where possible: please click an item to be taken to its source

	<p>Scotland's Blue Economy Vision to 2045</p>	<p>Solway Firth Partnership - SMILE Project</p>	<p>Scotland</p>
	<p>Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045</p>	<p>Natural Capital Innovation Zone</p>	
	<p>Scotland's National Marine Plan (2015)</p>	<p>Scottish Blue Carbon Forum</p>	
	<p>Climate Ready Scotland 2019-2024</p>	<p>Scottish Forum on Natural Capital - Marine Natural Capital Forum</p>	
	<p>Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022)</p>	<p>Scotland (MNCFS)</p>	
		<p>Scottish Nature Finance Pioneers</p>	
	<p>(Draft) Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (2018)</p>	<p>(Draft) NI Marine Natural Capital Project (MANACA)</p>	<p>Northern Ireland</p>
	<p>(Draft) Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland (2022)</p>		
	<p>Welsh Marine Evidence Strategy 2019-2025</p>	<p>Blue Carbon Programme</p>	<p>Wales</p>
	<p>Welsh National Marine Plan (2019)</p>	<p>Marine Monitoring Programme</p>	
	<p>Environment (Wales) Act 2016</p>	<p>Wales Coast and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru)</p>	
	<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</p>	<p>Sustainable Management of Natural Resources</p>	
	<p>Natural Resources Policy (2017)</p>	<p>Blue Recovery</p>	
	<p>Biodiversity Deep Dive (2022)</p>	<p>National Peatland Action Programme</p>	
	<p>State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2020</p>		
	<p>Environmental Improvement Plan 2023</p>	<p>Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme (mNCEA)</p>	<p>England</p>
	<p>25 Year Environment Plan (2018)</p>	<p>Natural England's Natural Capital Atlases</p>	
		<p>Natural Capital Approach Case Studies (JNCC Report)</p>	
		<p>Sussex Kelp Restoration Project</p>	

Summary: Marine Natural Capital in the UK

In response to national and international policy and legislation, natural capital concepts are increasingly being employed by statutory nature conservation bodies and governments throughout the United Kingdom. However, the language used and approaches to these concepts can vary between groups. The purpose of this document is to create a common platform of natural capital understanding across all parties by providing examples of how some such policies, plans, strategies and forums incorporate natural capital approaches into their wording. The Natural Capital Committee (NCC) has produced a [list of definitions](#) which can further facilitate clarity in natural capital work.

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and Scotland's Blue Economy Vision

In Scotland, economic prosperity and social equality are couched in the context of a thriving marine environment. This concept is central to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and Scotland's Blue Economy Vision. The former sets out 5 Priority Actions for 2030 to help protect and restore Scotland's terrestrial and marine biodiversity to "drive a sustainable economy and support thriving communities". By 2045, a stated outcome of the Biodiversity Strategy is that "natural capital will be embedded in policymaking". Scotland's National Marine Plan helps frame the country's Blue Economy Vision which defines six outcomes, all of which embody natural capital themes. The first outcome, the "Natural Capital Outcome", aims to ensure that the marine environment, and the resources and services it can provide, is "safeguarded for present and future generations" by adopting an ecosystem approach to manage marine activities. The Blue Economy Vision also strives for healthier, regenerated communities through fairer access to ocean-derived benefits and emphasises the need for existing and emerging industries to be resource efficient, innovative and internationally competitive while operating to meet net zero and nature-positive commitments.

Scotland

Northern Ireland's Marine Plan and Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland (both currently in draft)

Similarly, the draft Marine Plan and the draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland both advocate for an ecosystem-based approach that bolsters economic growth and promotes the delivery of social and cultural benefits from the marine environment for future generations. However, while the draft Environment Strategy explains the natural capital approach, the draft Marine Plan does not mention the concept.

Northern Ireland

The Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, the Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) and the Biodiversity Deep Dive

Established by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and acknowledging that Wales's natural assets underpin the country's human health and well-being, Natural Resources Wales have adopted a "sustainable management of natural resources" approach to "enhance ecosystem resilience and the benefits they provide". By using this approach to deliver the WNMP, which reiterates the need to protect ecosystems to conserve both the physical and intangible benefits that humans derive from them, and whose stated objectives include "achieving a sustainable blue economy", Wales will also make headway towards the seven well-being goals laid out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The recent cabinet statement from Julie James MS expresses plans to also incorporate recommendations from the "Biodiversity Deep Dive" to implement spatial direction through the WNMP. Objectives of the Biodiversity Deep Dive include restoring habitats, protecting them from destructive fishing methods and getting them to favourable condition - all of which would help secure natural capital and the flow of benefits to humans

Wales

The 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP) and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP 2023)

The 25 YEP places a strong emphasis on the execution of a natural capital approach to achieve its environmental, economic and social targets. It stresses that the value of nature cannot always be quantified or given a monetary value, nor does it need to be, and as such affirms that the natural capital approach is simply a tool to aid in decision-making. The plan recognises that marine ecosystems do not adhere to territory boundaries and that healthy ecosystems are required to maintain the flow of benefits derived from them. It therefore states the need to work with bordering and international countries to protect natural assets and secure natural capital. Furthering the 25 YEP, the EIP 2023 reiterates that human health and prosperity rely on "thriving ecosystems" and reports English natural capital to be worth an estimated £1.8 trillion. As such, the EIP 2023 lays out how England will ensure its natural assets, and hence natural capital, are protected and restored.

England

While the term natural capital is not always explicitly used, visions of maintaining or enhancing healthy ecosystems that promote economic, social and cultural benefits are aligned with natural capital approaches and are a common goal throughout the UK. Identifying these shared values allows conversations around these themes to continue, knowledge to be shared and progress towards achieving these visions to be made.