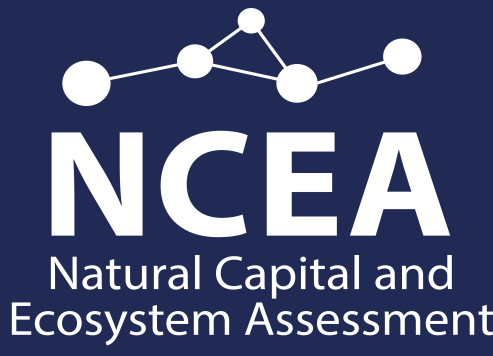


NORTHUMBERLAND FROM DUNE TO SEA



ENHANCING MARINE NATURE RECOVERY VIA A NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACH

Effective nature recovery will provide benefits for the climate, biodiversity, and society. Understanding the true value of protected sites (areas protected for nature conservation) to the ecosystem and the local community is vital to securing this recovery in a just and transparent way.

Natural England's work under the **marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) programme** has been to deliver evidence, tools, and guidance to enable the practical use of natural capital approaches in supporting recovery in marine and coastal environments. Natural capital approaches can help achieve thriving marine environments, by facilitating management which considers benefits to people, and the social, environmental, and economic impacts of decision-making.

The Environment Act 2021 sets out how the UK will recover nature for future generations. Nature recovery strategies are being implemented to address pressures and threats facing new and existing protected sites. These strategies place a strong emphasis on engaging local communities along the coast. In Northumberland, the mNCEA programme is using a natural capital approach to support building a shared understanding of the benefits of protected areas, and evidencing where these benefits can be enhanced and how they can be shared fairly across a range of stakeholders.

Follow the puffin's footsteps to explore how the mNCEA programme is supporting decision-making for the Northumberland coast...

WHAT IS A NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACH?

A natural capital approach considers the intrinsic and monetary value of the environment. It considers the ecosystem as a whole and recognises that a healthy functioning ecosystem supports human health, wealth, and wellbeing; and that the economy, society, and natural world are inextricably linked.



Map key:

- Berwick to St Mary's MCZ
- Northumberland Marine SPA
- Northumbria Coast SPA
- Lindisfarne SPA
- Farne Islands SPA
- Coquet St. Mary's MCZ

(MCZ: Marine Conservation Zone; SPA: Special Protection Area)

From dune to sea, the Northumberland coast is rich with cultural heritage and wild natural beauty.

From the seabird colonies of the Farne Islands, to the people living in the seaside towns of Amble and Blyth, the Northumberland marine and coastal ecosystem has great value to all who call it home.



NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACHES FOR NATURE RECOVERY

The mNCEA programme has helped identify the benefits and value of protected areas in Northumberland and other coastal regions around the English coast, including Cornwall and Yorkshire.

How does understanding natural capital benefits support advice?

- By summarising the range of benefits & values derived from the environment in a particular place
- The mNCEA has developed best practice guidance for supporting nature recovery strategies
- This approach can support advice that makes the link between marine recovery and enhanced benefits for all stakeholders

LOCAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

In December 2024, Natural England ran a natural capital workshop with the **Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership (BNMNP)**. This supported an update to the partnership's management scheme and delivery plan and helped to bring collaborative, locally-led values into decision-making.

The workshop identified six core benefit themes of marine protection:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Cultural & recreational
- Climate regulation
- Cultural, scientific, & educational
- Sustainable seafood
- Flood protection

The workshop explored the benefits associated with protected areas, and highlighted where the partnership and other decision-makers can integrate thinking about enhancing these benefits when they evaluate and renew delivery plans for the local marine area.

MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS TO ENHANCE BENEFITS

At the workshop, stakeholders explored a number of interventions that could enhance the benefits of marine protection:

- Habitat restoration & flood protection
- Knowledge-building via education & citizen science
- Promoting & enabling behavioural change
- Managing & reducing commercial/human pressures
- Species recovery & reintroductions e.g. raptors or native oysters
- Promoting local sustainable livelihoods

DECISION-MAKING FOR NATURE RECOVERY

A recent Natural England report on **marine recovery and restoration practice**, has highlighted the challenges associated with funding, licensing, data availability, and monitoring for marine nature recovery, and emphasised the importance of collaborative partnerships and connections between land and sea.

Collaborations with partnerships including the BNMNP is helping Natural England understand how Protected Site Strategies can be implemented which enhance the benefits of Marine Protected Areas.

The lessons learnt in Northumberland and across Natural England's mNCEA projects have helped create **best practice guidance for undertaking a natural capital assessment**, and can inform our understanding of the role that natural capital approaches have in delivering a comprehensive evidence base to support decision-making for marine nature recovery.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

LNRS are locally-led plans for growing and recovering nature based on short- and long-term priorities.

The mNCEA programme has conducted marine natural capital assessments to map and identify the value of a healthy marine environment for both people and nature. Assessments can identify priority species and habitat areas for conservation, and aid in developing targeted marine equivalents to LNRS which maximise ecosystem and species recovery.

Benefits of protected areas identified by the Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership (BNMNP)

With mNCEA support, the BNMNP are developing an **interactive Story Map** to share the benefits associated with the Coquet to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zone.



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