



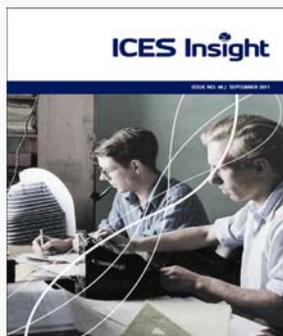
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ICES Annual Science Conference 2011 is Baltic-bound

What to expect at ICES ASC 2011

ICES Annual Science Conference (ASC) 2011 will take place between 19 and 23 September at the Gdańsk Music and Congress Center in Gdańsk, Poland, situated at the mouth of the Vistula River, where it joins the Baltic Sea.

Naturally, the Baltic region will be very much in focus at this year's Conference, alongside wider topics of the *ICES Science Plan* and the marine research themes shared by ICES and PICES (North Pacific Marine Science Organization). In all, there will be 19 theme sessions and many more meetings and events to keep participants busy throughout the week.

In addition to the Baltic, the theme sessions will cover topics such as climatic influences on fisheries, upwelling and physical processes in the coastal zone, plankton ecology and foodweb processes, habitat mapping and spatial management, biophysical and fishery modelling, new technologies in the application of the ecosystem approach, integrating top predators in ecosystem management, marine renewable energies, and comparative dynamics of large marine ecosystems.

We already have a large number of early registrations, but of course [registration](#) is still possible, either online or at the venue in Gdańsk.

Lectures

The Opening lecture of this year's Conference will feature [Jan Marcin Węśławski](#), from the Institute of Oceanology PA, Department of Marine Ecology, Sopot, Poland. His talk is entitled "Practitioners Faster than Scientists – Marine Nature Conservation".

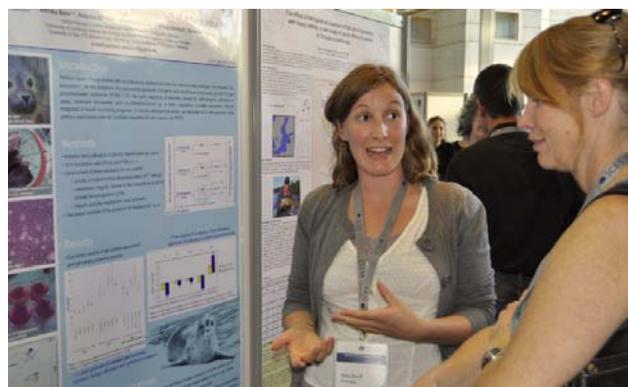
This year's invited Plenary speakers are [James E. Cloern](#), from the US Geological Survey, Menlo Park, California, who will speak on "Phytoplankton as Indicators of Ecosystem Response to Global Change at the Land-Sea Interface" and [Ragnar Elmgren](#), from the Department of System Ecology, Stockholm University, Sweden speaking on "Ecosystem-based Management for the Baltic Sea – Historical Development and Future Challenges".

Poster Session

The poster session is a great opportunity to find out more about current marine science research and to network with people from around the ICES community. The Poster session takes place on Tuesday 20 September, 18:00 – 20:00. Posters will be on display for the duration of the conference. The Best Poster Award will be presented at the closing session on Friday 23 September.



ICES ASC 2011 takes place in Gdańsk Music and Congress Centre.



Vera Korff, lead author of Best Poster 2010, explains her work to a conference participant.

Business meetings at the ASC

Alongside the lectures, theme sessions, poster presentations, and other social events at the ASC, many ICES business meetings will take place. All SCICOM Steering Group meetings are open to conference participants, and the Steering Groups welcome and encourage participants to attend. The Steering Group meetings provide the ICES community with the opportunity to evaluate the implementation of its *Science Plan* and take action in relation to its research priorities. This year, SCICOM have also introduced some new meetings, less business-oriented and more topic-based, where presenters will consider a range of issues. You can find the programme for all [SCICOM meetings](#) here.

Awards

The ASC provides ICES with the opportunity to recognize individuals for the contribution they make to marine science. The Outstanding Achievement and Prix d'Excellence awards will be presented at the Opening Session on Monday 19 September.

The Best Paper and Best Poster awards will be presented at the Closing Session Friday 23 September. In addition to these awards, we are introducing three new Early-career Scientist Awards, which will focus on quality of presentation (for Oral Presentation, Poster Presentation, and Best Newcomer). More information about ICES Awards and the selection criteria can be found [here](#).

Data Centre 2011

ICES Data Centre will take a supporting role this year. Members of the Data team will help upload theme-session presentations. Remember, the preferred route for the electronic presentations is via the SharePoint address, which will be supplied to all presenters. In the foyer, an electronic poster will report on progress made by the Data Centre since the ASC in Nantes last year.

Virtual ASC

If you would like to have a preview of the conference centre and the surrounding area of the Ołowianka Isle on which it is situated (or maybe you won't be joining us in Gdańsk and would just like to have a peek), then follow this [link](#), and you will be transported to the Gdańsk Music and Congress Centre for a virtual walkabout.

Are you following us on Facebook? On [ICES Facebook](#) page, we set up an event page for the [ASC](#). We will provide live updates as needed here – any changes in schedule, important notices, etc. You will also be able to post updates yourself and leave comments and suggestions. It would be great to receive feedback about how you are enjoying different sessions and the ASC in general. If you are not already following us, sign up and keep up-to-date with all of the latest news.

Don't forget that you can tweet about our [Pecha Kucha](#) evening. Follow us on Twitter @ [ICES2011PK](#).

Looking forward to seeing you in Gdańsk!

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Baltic research is central to this year's ASC

Some highlights to look forward to in Gdańsk

Gdańsk is one of the major ports of the Baltic Sea, and it goes without saying that a major focus of this year's ASC will be on the Baltic region. Some theme sessions highlighting research in this area include the following.



Conference participants at last year's ASC in Nantes.

Session C. Harmful algal blooms in the Baltic Sea

Conveners: Bengt Karlson (Sweden) and Emil Vahtera (USA)

Session C will report on blooms and monitoring frameworks, as well as their importance for human activities and economy: aquaculture, tourism, and fisheries.

Session R. Integration of multidisciplinary knowledge in the Baltic Sea to support science-based management

Conveners: Sakari Kuikka (Finland), Michael Gilek (Sweden), Kari Lehtonen (Finland), and Markus Meier (Sweden)

This theme session looks at important themes for the Baltic as a coastal and a (nearly) closed system. Session R builds on the work of Session C and looks at the numerous ecological threats and economic risks in the Baltic. How do we face the challenge of integrating the knowledge available in support of management actions? Risk assessment offers us a new tool for this purpose.

Session H. Recruitment processes: early life history dynamics – from eggs to juveniles (Joint ICES/PICES theme session)

Conveners: Richard D. M. Nash (Norway), Ed Houde (USA), and Rick Brodeur (USA)

Session J. Climate- and fishery-related influences on marine ecosystems at regional and basin scales

Conveners: Webjørn Melle (Norway) and Erica Head (Canada)

Sessions H and J will consider a wide range of topics: Baltic cod, herring, and sprat stocks, spawning areas identified or confirmed ("areas of economic importance" for fisheries), key events identified that govern year-class strength, regional specifics – for instance, recovery of eastern and western cod stocks, and climate change, as well as regional specifics to be considered for management decisions. A special and interesting case is the walleye Pollock in the Barents Sea.

Session M. Assessment and management of large marine ecosystems

Conveners: Michael O'Toole (Ireland), Kenneth Sherman (USA), Gotthilf Hempel (Germany), and Yvonne Walther (Sweden)

This session looks at the LME concept and its use as a science framework, based on natural ecosystem units to support political decision-making processes. Examples used in the session highlight HELCOM, MSFD, the UN Regular Process (ICES will convene a meeting on this process during the ASC), specifically the role of ICES science. The focus, however, will be primarily on the Baltic LME.

Session S. Extracting energy from waves and tides – what are the consequences for ecosystems, physical processes, and other sea users?

Conveners: Jonathan Side (UK) and Michael Bell (UK)

This is a new and emerging use of the ocean. The session will look particularly at wind farming and gas pipelines. What are the environmental impacts and reconciliation of interests, for instance, with gas pipelines and fishing grounds using MSP as a tool?

One (non-Baltic) session that promises to stir some lively debate is a joint ICES/PICES Session:

Session A. Atlantic redfish and Pacific rockfish: comparing biology, ecology, assessment, and management strategies for *Sebastes* spp

Conveners: Benjamin Planque (Norway), Paul Spencer (USA), Christoph Stransky (Germany), and Steve Cadrin (USA)

This session looks at the evolution of rockfish and its populations, which are important for fishery management. New genetic tools are being used to discriminate between populations, tools that confirm/reject previous assumptions/discriminations made for fishery purposes. A lively debate is already taking place in *ICES Journal* on this subject in two recent papers (Cadrin *et al.*, 2010 and Mashrov *et al.*, 2011).

You can read more about individual sessions [here](#).

You will find the programme for all ASC events and theme sessions [here](#).

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Out and about with your fellow scientists

ASC 2011 offers opportunities to mingle every day

Evening events

The Welcome reception will take place Monday evening at 19:00 in the Gdańsk Music and Congress Centre, hosted by the Mayor of Gdańsk and the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

On Tuesday evening, the annual Poster Session will begin at 18:00 for two hours in the Gdańsk Music and Congress Centre. This is a great opportunity to talk to your fellow scientists and hear explanations of their latest work.

Wednesday evening sees an exciting quick-fire presentation session, with our [Pecha Kucha evening](#). Have a look at our [article](#) in which the organizers explain about the background of this session. It promises to be an entertaining evening.



The Four Colours will provide entertainment at the Conference Dinner.

The [Polish Maritime Museum](#) will host the ASC Conference Dinner on Thursday evening. Tickets cost €45. You can look forward to an evening with the best of Polish hospitality. Music will be provided throughout the evening by the [Four Colours](#), a notable string quartet from Gdańsk. Find out more about the evening and book your tickets for the event [here](#).

Take a tour

Our Gdańsk hosts are very proud of their region, its nature, and history. Therefore, they invite all 2011 ASC participants to indulge in a little sightseeing. The following tours have been organized.

Tuesday 20 September, 10:00 – Gdańsk City Walk. Experience the history of the medieval Hanseatic city of Gdańsk. A local guide will lead you through hundreds of years of history. The tour lasts approximately 2.5 hours.

Wednesday 21 September, 9:30 – Malbork Teutonic Castle Tour. Designated an UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997, this unique structure has no equal in Gothic architecture and was once the seat of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. The tour lasts approximately 6.5 hours.

Thursday 22 September, 9:30 – Delta of Vistula, natural and anthropogenic processes. Take a tour east of Gdańsk, towards the mouth of the Vistula and enjoy the many nature reserves. The tour lasts approximately 6.5 – 7 hours.

All tours will start and end at the Gdańsk Music and Congress Centre, and tickets can also be booked there. Please have a look on the [ASC webpage](#) for more information about these excursions.



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Why Beverton and Holt went to Lowestoft

Supplementary material to our *ICES Insight* article



Ray Beverton and Sidney Holt at Lowestoft in 1949.

In the 2011 issue of *ICES Insight*, Emory Anderson remembers Raymond Beverton and Sidney Holt on the upcoming occasion (in 2012) of the 55th anniversary of the 1957 publication of their book, *On the Dynamics of Exploited Fish Populations*, the most-cited fishery science reference of all time.

You can read the full article, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants", [here](#).

As a little appetizer, Emory Anderson offers some sidelights about why these two brilliant scientists became employed at the Lowestoft Fisheries Laboratory.

Ray did his first two years at Downing College, University of Cambridge between 1940 and 1942, intending to be a chemist and taking courses in physics, mathematics, and chemistry, but not biology. From 1942 to 1945, he worked at the Operational Research Group developing polystyrene and latex for the insulation of coaxial cables for radar. Upon his return to Cambridge after the war, Ray took zoology as a required third major subject. His zoology professor, Sir James Gray, having been asked by Michael Graham, the newly appointed Director of the Lowestoft Fisheries Laboratory, for an able young graduate to work on the exploitation of North Sea cod, told Ray, "Why don't you spend a few months at Lowestoft before you come back to do your final year? They'll have to rebuild, they have quite a few people, and they need some people with some reasonably quantitative skills".

Ray met Graham in late summer 1945, was given a copy of Graham's book, *The Fish Gate*, and within a month went to sea in the Arctic on a filthy, smelly, rust-covered Grimsby trawler that had just been decommissioned from wartime minesweeping. Ray suffered badly from sea sickness and wrote three letters of resignation during the voyage but never submitted them. In spring 1946, he returned to Cambridge for his final year; by the time he had finished, he knew that fishery research was what he wanted to do.

Sidney Holt arrived at Lowestoft in spring 1946, a few weeks before Ray returned to Cambridge. Sidney had just graduated with first-class honours from the University of Reading. During his time at Reading, he had favoured veterinary science as a career, with medicine as a second choice, but his family lacked the necessary financial resources for the years of study for either profession. In late 1945, Sidney spoke with Professor Charles O'Donoghue about career options. O'Donoghue, who had once worked for the Canadian Fisheries Research Board, suggested fishery research, and the thought of outdoors, hands-on-work appealed to Sidney. Consequently, he did his senior thesis on the topic of the natural history of the tench (*Tinca tinca*).

In the meantime, O'Donoghue spoke to someone in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food saying that he would have a top-notch graduate who might be good researcher material. After graduation, Sidney was summoned to London and interviewed by two men in tweed suits, E. S. Russell (Director of the Lowestoft Fisheries Laboratory, 1921–1945) and Michael Graham (Director of the Lowestoft Fisheries Laboratory, 1945–1958). He was offered a job at Lowestoft, but was told to

first read two books, *The Overfishing Problem* by Russell and *The Fish Gate* by Graham. A few weeks later, he reported to Lowestoft.

Shortly after arriving at Lowestoft, Sidney was also ordered to sea aboard a research vessel, not to the Arctic, as in the case of Ray Beverton, but to the southern North Sea. He too was prone to sea sickness and generally disliked this component of fishery research. Ray and Sidney met briefly before Ray returned to Cambridge for his final year of study. When Ray returned to Lowestoft in summer 1947, with an MA and first-class honours in zoology, he and Sidney began work on their *magnum opus*, an effort that culminated ten years later in the 533-page publication that has become the most famous quantitative fish population dynamics text of all time.

Read more about Beverton and Holt's time at Lowestoft in the new edition of *ICES Insight*—available now to download from [ICES Publications](#).

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It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it

Pecha Kucha 20-20: the ultimate presentation challenge

New ideas, discoveries, research – we want to inform and inspire with our presentations. But often they only inspire “zzzzz...” in the audience and sweaty hands and gastric distress in the speaker.

“Pecha Kucha 20-20” is changing that around the world.

Pecha Kucha is a simple concept that originated in Japan, in which presenters are restricted to 20 slides and 20 seconds to speak per slide. Such limitations ensure that all redundancy is eliminated.

At ASC 2009 in Berlin, Martin Pastoors and Sarah Kraak looked at ways to improve presentation style. Three speakers made presentations and were given comments on their style, with tips and guidelines for improvement. At ASC 2011, Pastoors and Kraak will present the [Pecha Kucha evening session](#).

Pastoors first discovered the Pecha Kucha format in a book by Garr Reynolds, *Presentation Zen*. The underlying concept is that, with time restrictions, you must engage your audience quickly, clearly, and directly.

Many presenters rely on the scientific-training mode, a traditional presentation method learned at university in which presentations are prepared like articles or papers. Speakers try to give as much information as possible, and often, their main message gets lost amid the data, leaving an audience without a complete grasp of the message.

Pecha Kucha encourages presenters to consider different ways to get their message across, presenting it with more communicative force.

However, presentations are not a one-man show. Kraak has discovered that, as a member of the audience, it is possible to help the speaker to be more engaging by showing interest, for example through eye contact and filling up the room from the front rows. As she points out, “The onus is not only on the speaker, but also on the audience, to make conference sessions worthwhile”.

Pastoors that Pecha Kucha will be a challenge for ASC participants but hopes the challenge will be fun. “I’m looking forward to seeing the different formats inspired by the challenge and how participants cope with the rigors of this very concise style of presentation. I imagine that some will fall into the trap of overloading slides with text, trying to keep track of where they are in their talk. But this option will ultimately fail”.

Pastoors points out that slides should engage the audience while reinforcing the speaker’s message. He emphasizes the visual over the textual. Raising an eyebrow, he says, “Of course, the audience always appreciates an occasional joke”.

Pastoors and Kraak hope that this session will change the way people prepare and deliver presentations. The strict time limit encourages conciseness, ultimately forcing presenters to stick to the main point, and allowing audiences to grasp the meaning more easily.

The gauntlet has been thrown down. If your interest is piqued, feel free to present on any topic.

One option, according to Pastoors, is reformatting your ASC presentation to Pecha Kucha style. If you



Are you up to the challenge? Join us 21 September for Pecha Kucha night!

are not presenting at the ASC, choose a subject that is important to you. A mixture of scientific and not-so-scientific will make for a topical evening.

Remember, there will be no questions after presentations, but Pastoors and Kraak hope that the evening results in plenty of discussions and buzz! And they encourage tweeters to tweet live from the event. @ICES2011PK

If you would like to participate, register with sarah.kraak@marine.ie.

You can read more about good presentation style on Garr Reynolds' blog [here](#). Maybe a tip or two will inspire you to take the ICES Pecha Kucha challenge.



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ICES Report on Ocean Climate 2010

Latest Cooperative Research Report now available



CRR 309 IROC 2010.

The Cooperative Research Report (CRR) 309, “ICES Report on Ocean Climate” (IROC) is hot off the presses and also available for download from ICES [website](#).

The report is produced annually by the Working Group on Oceanic Hydrography (WGOH), in order to circulate information on sea temperature, salinity, and atmosphere from sustained observations at standard sections and stations throughout the North Atlantic. The report’s primary focus is observed variability in the upper ocean.

The North Atlantic is considered unusual in having a relatively large number of locations at which oceanographic data have been collected repeatedly for many years or decades; the longest records go back more than a century. First published in 1998, the IROC is regarded as one of ICES most prominent publications.

The IROC came to life following the tradition of the WGOH members presenting their “National Reports” in the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to Bill Turrell, first editor of the IROC, a number of the group’s members thought it would be a good idea to pull all of the time-series together into a single climate report.

Turrell recalls, “This was the era when global warming and climate change were just beginning to move up the policy agenda in marine management. It was also a time when funding for long-term datasets was very fragile”. At that time, oceanographic research focused primarily on processes, and those involved in monitoring were considered “old hat and irrelevant”. However, the WGOH thought that a regular climate status would show the relevance of monitoring to climate studies, allow the wider ICES and academic communities access to oceanographic time-series, and thus it was hoped, persuade funders and ICES institutes to keep the time-series going.

Although the group was not encouraged to produce the report, they forged ahead. The IROC first appeared as an Annex to the WGOH Report, but after a few years it emerged in its own right, in the format in which it appears today.

ICES will launch a further climate-related report at the ASC in Gdańsk, CRR 310, “ICES Climate Change Status Report”, which will be available for purchase.

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Introducing the new ICES Spatial Facility

ICES Data Centre launches new system

To support area-based science and marine spatial planning, ICES in cooperation with STZ Geoinformatik has implemented the ICES Spatial Facility web system. The system is both for the ICES community and the wider public. The ICES Spatial Facility allows ICES expert groups and others to upload and share their spatial data products and metadata descriptions. The front page of the system allows quick access to the most commonly used reference layers, such as the “ICES Statistical Areas” and “ICES Statistical Rectangles”. The system includes services such as web map services (WMS), web feature services (WFS), and catalogue web services (CWS), which allow easy access to spatial resources and metadata from client applications.

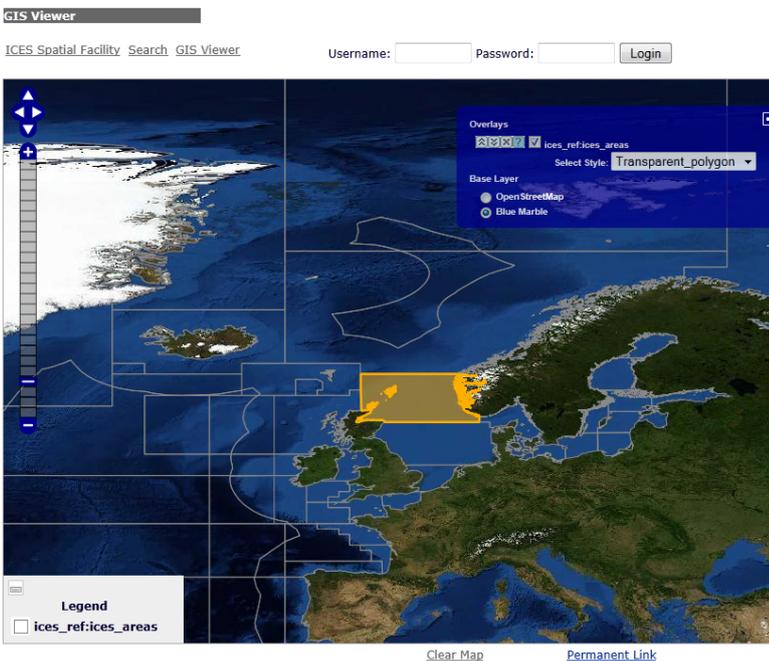
The ICES platform is built on the open-source structures GeoServer and GeoNetwork, and uses standards generally adopted by the user community and that are also in line with the INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC), for the sharing of spatial datasets and metadata.

The facility includes upload functionality, search capabilities, and an online viewer for the spatial datasets.

The ICES Spatial Facility can be accessed [here](#).



ICES Spatial Facility.



GIS viewer.

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Symposium on Integrated Coastal-zone Management

Søren Anker Pedersen reports on a “systems approach framework”

The 2nd International Symposium on Integrated Coastal-zone Management (ICZM) was hosted this year between 3 and 7 July by the Institute of Marine Research, in Arendal, Norway, and co-sponsored by ICES. More than 140 scientists, engineers, managers, and policy-makers presented and discussed recent advances and innovative ideas in coastal development and management.

ICZM is defined as a decision-making process focused on sustainable use, development, and protection of seaside terrestrial and coastal marine areas and their resources. The ICZM concept was born in 1992, during the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

The coastal zone includes both coastal waters and the terrestrial area that interacts with the coastal waters and separates the marine and terrestrial environment. The coastal zone thus offers myriad goods and services ranging from production to protection. Despite its relatively small coverage in the percentage of global surface area, this zone is highly productive and sustains high biodiversity.

Growing pressure from increasingly diverse human activities coupled with the impacts of climate change threaten the functional integrity of these coastal ecosystems. A multidisciplinary approach to understanding drivers, pressures, and impacts in the coastal zone requires effective integration of data and information with policy and management.

Competing claims to the coastal areas of a given nation are nothing new, but they are likely to intensify in future. Currently, approximately 60% of the world’s population lives within 60 km of the coast, but at the current rate of growth, this percentage is predicted to increase to 75% within just two decades. In addition, the growing importance of tourism worldwide will increase pressure on coastal-zone resources. Aquaculture, yet another competitor for coastal resources, is also increasing as capture fisheries stagnate or decline globally.



Participants at the 2nd International Symposium on ICZM held recently in Arendal, Norway.

Competition for resources can result in either cooperative or conflicting responses. For coastal resources, the expansion of the aquaculture industry represents the reallocation of common resources, such as coastal and sea areas, into private hands – converting once common areas into private areas from which others are excluded. In addition, aquaculture can affect those resources that remain held in common – wild fish stocks (particularly salmon), the seascape, and the coastline.

One key idea behind the concept of ICZM is to create cooperative management solutions for the use of the areas, making them sustainable, not only ecologically but politically as well. A range of plans may be ecologically sustainable, but for any plan to work, stakeholders must be invested in it. This implies that stakeholders, whether local fishers or local municipalities, should have access to and understanding of the problems and issues with which they are confronted and the choices with which they are faced.

Many conference participants (and several presentations) were from the EU-integrated project [SPICOSA](#). The project encompassed 18 study-site applications and involved 54 partners. The project developed a “system approach framework”, which aims at incorporating the ecological, social, and economic dimensions for the assessment of policy options for the sustainable management of complex coastal-zone systems.

Keynote speaker Tom Hopkins, Science Coordinator of SPICOSA, asked why we are moving so slowly towards sustainability. The answer to the question, who is responsible for sustainable development, is *no one* and *everyone*. Hopkins feels that this may give us a clue as to why progress is sluggish.

According to Hopkins, “We are starting to study complex socio-environmental systems, and it is clear that many are degrading to higher entropic states. We also understand that they are capable of reorganizing to lower entropic states and that this capacity depends on the health and diversity of the system’s components and on the initial conditions of the recovery. Although science has documented the degradation cycle, the societal response is too weak and the scientific experience is still incipient such that we don’t have comprehensive, systematic plans to reverse these degradation trends and start the transition to sustainable development. This is a social problem where everyone comes in, and everyone needs to cooperate. The chain of interacting components that constitutes the circle of responsibility necessary for a sustainable society may start or end with appropriate science and public awareness, but in between, we must overcome resistance to change in the societal components, in order to make the cycle complete”.

According to Hopkins, the SPICOSA project has demonstrated the value of using the systems approach for jump-starting this reorganization process. Hopkins explained that it would require accelerating two coupled trends that are already in place, an expansion to complex-systems science, and a more interactive relationship between science and society. In this regard, Hopkins described how the systems approach was applied to policy issues in 18 European coastal sites and what was learned about how scientific research, coupled with local societies, can better address coastal issues and guide coastal management for the transition to Sustainable Development.

The proceedings of the second ICZM symposium are relevant to [ICES Science Plan](#). For example, the lessons learned from SPICOSA may provide a promising mechanisms by which the systems approach tool can enrich scientific advice for sustainable resource management.

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Implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

A chat with Gerjan Piet

Gerjan Piet was Chair of the Workshop on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Descriptor 3+ Exploitation of commercial fish/shellfish, which was held between 4 and 7 July at ICES Secretariat.

What did the workshop focus on?

This workshop, as well as the task group that came before it, is intended to develop the Descriptor 3 for the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive. We are sort of taking up from where the task group left off. ICES has taken it upon itself to provide guidance to the Member States on best scientific practice to develop this descriptor further, and we've just had the first of two meetings. Unfortunately, participants from certain parts of Europe were missing, but of course, that's always how it is.



Gerjan Piet, Chair of the Workshop on the MSFD (right) in discussion with Claus Hagebro, Advisory Programme (left) and Eugene Nixon, ACOM Vice-Chair.

This first meeting was intended to be a sort of scoping meeting, where everybody was able to bring up whatever issues they felt were relevant and needed to be addressed for this descriptor to be developed. We tried to get some perspective from the various regions. We have discussed a way forward and, at this stage, I think we have a reasonable idea of what needs to be done before the next meeting.

Between this meeting and the next, a few Member States will take it upon themselves to apply this approach to their region, of course with a specific Member-State flavour to it. We will have at least four case studies, covering the Baltic, the North Sea, the Celtic Sea, and the Mediterranean. This covers some of the main Marine Strategy Framework Directive Regions. We'll apply the method there; these will be case studies as a "proof of concept".

What will probably happen is that we'll run into a number of issues that need to be resolved. So people will bring their information to the next meeting, and we will try to resolve things, so that in the end we have specific examples and guidance from the Member States on how to develop this descriptor.

Was the approach agreed at this meeting, or is it based on what was done by the task group beforehand?

I think the approach was really agreed at this meeting. But, it's very much building on the task group. The process is sort of developing. It's certainly not conflicting with anything we set out in the task group. It's just somewhat more detailed and taking things a bit further.

When is the next meeting?

Early October. We had originally planned for early September, but with the summer holidays and everything, it hardly left us any time to actually do the work.

Will all of the Member States meet again in October or just the smaller group?

No, no, everyone is welcome. Ideally, representatives from every Member State will be there, but of course it's up to them. The ones who will be there are the ICES core group who are working on this, as well as people from the Commission. Participants from the European Environment Agency, NGOs, and the Regional Sea Conventions may be there as well.

Have you agreed on what good environmental status (GES) is?

That is always the tricky bit. No, we haven't, and that's also not going to happen. What we will do, because this is a scientific exercise, is try to take science as far as possible. So, we will deliver the method, we will deliver the data in order to calculate indicators, suggest reference levels, suggest all kinds of methods that could be used in order to say this is GES or this is not GES. But in the end, that is not our decision. The decision is up to Member States, but ultimately, they need to be consistent.

For example, in the North Sea, the Netherlands and UK should use the information we provide in the same way. I mean there is no point in the Netherlands saying GES is such and such and the UK saying something different. But, it's certainly not up to us. Once we have completed the scientific part, and if time allows, we will consider a few options. We will say, "Okay, if you approach it like this, this will be the outcome, and if you approach it like that, there'll be a different outcome. But, we are not going to take the decision. Again, it's not up to us.

Just helping them to decide?

That's what we do. We're a very helpful bunch.

When will the work conclude? Will there be an endpoint?

I certainly hope there is an endpoint! We intend to have a report ready in early December. We aim to complete the work in two meetings, but there is the possibility of a third meeting. However, by early December there needs to be a report. Prior to that we will have an early draft, and I think we agreed with the Commission that we will present our progress and get their feedback before we finalize things in the report.

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Grammar Slammer

Bill Anthony says, grammar is a weighty subject

Here is a letter received recently at the Grammar Slammer offices.

Dear Grammar Slammer,

I think your feature is great and should receive lots of prizes, especially ones with large amounts of money attached. Recently, I submitted an article to a reputable scientific journal. In the article, I wrote “Studies are *presently* being conducted...”. The editor, who I suspect of having only one arm, changed it to “Studies are *currently* being conducted....” I think this is pretty nasty, considering that I’m only trying to express my creativity. Doesn’t everyone know that “*presently*” and “*currently*” mean the same thing?

–Bob

Dear Bob,

You’re absolutely right. “Grammar Slammer” should be showered with awards. Otherwise, the rest of what you have to say is wrong and will remain wrong until the end of the world or until North Americans learn to spell “doughnut” without skipping half the letters (donut), whichever comes first.

Lucky for you, we have Grammar Experts (motto: “We Can’t Agree On a Motto”) who understand the complex issues involved in the *currently* vs. *presently* kerfuffle.

You assume that the two adverbs can be used interchangeably. But in formal scientific writing, it just isn’t so. *Currently* means “at the present time”. *Presently* means “after a short time; soon”.

For example, “The news that half of all adults will be obese by 2030 *currently* makes the purchase of stock in elastic-making firms an appealing investment”.

Imagine this one spoken by a butler. “Your burrito, cheeseburger, bag of chips, ice cream sandwich, cheesecake, steamed dumplings, strawberry milkshake, and a second burrito will be served *presently*”.

Admittedly, this definition of *presently* is a particularly British preference. In North America, dictionaries may give as the preferred definition “at the present time; now”. But as I’ve said before, ICES style cleaves strictly to British grammar and usage.

By the way, don’t let any of the above put you off using *present* in the sense of “being here now”, which is correct. For example, “the *present* report”, or in my case, “the *present* cheeseburger”.



We just love to receive your letters here at Grammar Slammer, especially the ones full of praise!

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