



BLUE
Horizons

Conference Programme
20 - 21 January 2025



Monday 20th January

9am - Registration Opens

Opening of Conference	9.30am	Dawn Miskelly (Ulster Wildlife CEO) & Owen Lyttle (DAERA Marine Division Director)	
Keynote	9.50am	Shelagh Malham (Bangor University)	
Marine Spatial Planning	10.30am	Heather Ritchie	Transboundary Cooperation in Areas of Undelimited Maritime Borders: Finding a Solution for Lough Foyle?
	10.50am	Billy Hunter	Mapping seabed carbon storage and fishing pressure to support Northern Ireland's Blue Carbon Action Plan

11.10am - 11.30am Break

Marine Spatial Planning	11.30am	Ben McAteer	Adaptive capacity and learning in EU marine policy implementation
	11.50am	Rebecca Kavanagh	Co-Existence in Ocean Governance
	12.10pm	Discussion Panel	Robert Walsh (NIMTF), Pia Schuchert (AFBI), Ruairi Gallagher (Fjordstrong), Clodagh McGrath (North Channel Wind)

12.40pm - 1.40pm Lunch and Poster Session on Level 5 Gallery sponsored by Belfast Harbour

Innovation in Marine Science	1.40pm	Suzanne Beck	Harmonising Sounds and Sight: Utilising Passive Acoustic and Visual Monitoring for Harbour Porpoise Conservation in Northern Ireland
	2.00pm	Molly Crowe	Exploring links between macroalgal detritus and marine decomposer communities using ITS2 metabarcoding
	2.20pm	Eugene O'Kane	Mapping of potential sand eel habitat using machine learning to enhance seabird conservation
	2.40pm	Jonathan Victor Ellis	Investigating the connectivity between cod populations in the Celtic Seas to inform fisheries management

3.00pm - 3.20pm Break

Innovation in Marine Science	3.20pm	Christine Morrow	An introduction to the Marine Biodiversity Data Portal - NI
	3.40pm	Mánus Cunningham	Developing a protocol for the sustainable aquaculture of serrated wrack <i>Fucus serratus</i> (Phaeophyceae)
	4.00pm	Patrick Bailie	Seaweed Bioactives Supplemented Animal Feeds. Green Chemistry Methods of Seaweed Extraction
	4.20pm	Joanne Hanna	Innovative evidence gathering for sustainable coastal management
	4.40pm	Craig Syms	Improving empirical estimates of impact and recovery on the sea floor: collaborative approaches
	5.00pm	Discussion Panel	Jon Houghton (QUB), Matt Service (AFBI), Ross McGill (Loughs Agency)

5.30pm - 7pm Networking Wine Social

Tuesday 21st January

9am - Registration Opens

Keynote	9.30am	Donal Griffin (Fair Seas)	
Restoration and Conservation	10.10am	Rebekah Bajkó	Coastal Roots: The history of seagrass in Northern Ireland
	10.30am	Heidi McIlvenny	Exploring the Cultural Value of Seagrass Ecosystems: Preliminary Findings from Strangford Lough
	10.50am	Saeideh Baghanian	Assessing Wave Attenuation through Buoyancy and Flexibility of Coastal Vegetation: Experimental Insights and Applications for Marine Conservation
	11.10am	Jon Davies	ReMeMaRe – Roadmap for the future and lessons learnt

11.30am - 11.50am Break

Restoration and Conservation	11.50am	Julia Sigwart	Conservation genomics for <i>Modiolus modiolus</i>
	12.10pm	William Sanderson	Everything, everywhere, all at once: where are we with European oyster restoration, and how can it move to scale?
	12.30pm	Jonathan Heath	A method for estimating anchor scour pressure on seabed ecosystems from automated identification system (AIS).
	12.50pm	Jade Berman	First coastal realignment scheme in Northern Ireland... take two

1.10pm - 2.10pm Lunch and Poster Session on Level 5 Gallery Sponsored by Belfast Harbour

Restoration and Conservation	2.10pm	Libby Keatley	Insights from DNA barcoding of Northern Ireland's marine invertebrates and its implications for marine conservation
	2.30pm	Ruby Free	Assessing The Impact of Vessel Distance and Speed on Humpback Whale Behaviour – How Cetacean Protection Can Restore Marine Ecosystems
	2.50pm	Jane Clarke	Holding government to account in the marine environment
	3.10pm	Discussion Panel	Erin McKeown (RSPB), Jose M. Farinas-Franco (ATU), Annika Clements (QUB), Mathieu Lundy (Ulster Wildlife)

4pm – 4.30pm Poster Prize Giving and Conference Close



Help revive our seas Join today!

At Ulster Wildlife, we're leading the way in championing marine nature-based solutions as part of a toolkit to help restore marine ecosystems and deliver wide-ranging benefits for people and wildlife.

Through evidence-based projects, we aim to recover vital marine habitats and species, including restoring native oyster populations, pioneering seagrass restoration, and strengthening saltmarsh conservation.

Beyond hands-on conservation, we're advocating for broader marine protection through political engagement, participation in expert working groups, and public outreach to inspire action.

Join today and together we can help bring nature back – on land and at sea ulsterwildlife.org/join



Saltmarsh © Peter Cairns 2020



Seagrass meadow © Bernard



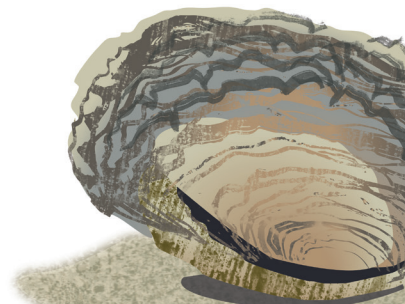
This conference was kindly supported by DAERA



The poster session was kindly sponsored by Belfast Harbour



Belfast Harbour strives to incorporate nature-based solutions into its operations while actively protecting and conserving both land and sea across its diverse 2,000-acre estate. In 2023, it collaborated with Ulster Wildlife to create the first native oyster nursery in a commercial shipping channel and continues to work with Ulster Wildlife to improve the area's biodiversity.



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