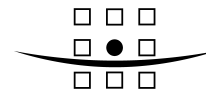


Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative (SSMEI) SSMEI - Berwickshire Pilot Proposal - Technical Annex



Scottish Executive

June 2005
Final Report
9P1968



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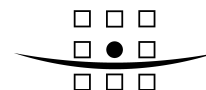
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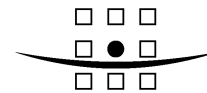
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**The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and
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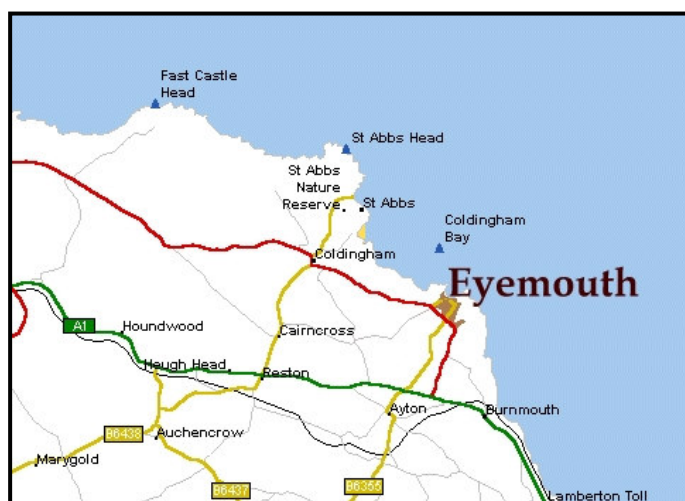
1 NATURE AND ACTIVITIES

1.1 Nature

For the purpose of this study the Berwickshire coastline is considered to include Cockburnspath, Coldingham, Burnmouth, Reston and Ayton and St Abbs (Figure 1). It has, however, been agreed through consultation that the pilot should initially focus on Eyemouth and St. Abbs.

A broad range of coastal and marine habitat types are distributed along the coastline including rocky reefs, cliffs, cliff top maritime grassland and scrub-woodland. The area has diverse maritime grassland plants, scrub and scrub-woodland on cliff tops. The Berwickshire coast falls within a wider area designated as a marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and European Marine Site (EMS) features of which include intertidal and sub-tidal reefs, sea caves, marine algal and faunal communities, intertidal sand and mudflats, and grey seal breeding areas. The Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC) considers the reefs off Berwickshire Coast to be an outstanding feature in a European context.

Figure 1: Berwickshire pilot site



Source: <http://www.eyemouth.com/map.htm>

The coastal cliffs, seabird colonies and dramatic scenery has provided social and economic benefits through the development of leisure activities which attracts 80,000 visitors each year, ranging from walkers to keen naturalists and 35,000 recreational divers. Tourism within this area is increasing annually by 8%.

The coastline provides outstanding habitat for seabirds and attracts many species of breeding seabirds totalling nearly 80,000 individuals that regularly frequent the site; these include internationally important Guillemots and nationally important Kittiwake Razorbill and Shag populations.

Harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphin are believed to be regular visitors to the area, with dolphins from the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) recorded as far south as Eyemouth (Wilson *et al.*, 2004).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Around the Berwickshire coast there are 5 areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that are relevant to the pilot scheme (Table 1.1). The sites are notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Table 1.1 List of SSSI's designated around Berwickshire Coast

SSSI	Area (ha)
Berwickshire Coast (Intertidal)	205.35
Burnmouth Coast	168.70
Pease Bay Coast	64.80
Siccar Point	5.70
St Abbs Head to Fast Castle	257.30

Of particular relevance is the St Abbs Head to Fast Castle site, designated for a combination of both biological and geological features and covering a total area of 257.3 ha.

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast, European Marine Site (EMS)

The study area falls largely within the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast (BNNC) EMS, which includes the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated under the Habitats Directive and the St Abbs to Fast Castle Head Special Protected Area (SPA), designated under the EC Birds Directive.

The BNNC SAC is designated for its reefs, sea caves, intertidal sand and mud flats, and grey seal breeding and moulting sites. The SAC includes the entire coastline of the pilot study area and, in Scotland, extends seaward to include areas of known reef and sea caves out to 1 nautical mile.

St Abbs Head to Fast Castle SPA includes 10 km of cliffs reaching over 150 m in height that is comprised of old red Sandstone and Silurian rocks. The site is important for large numbers of breeding seabirds, mainly auks and gulls, which feed outside the SPA in surrounding marine areas. The site holds 23,200 pairs of breeding seabirds and 21,600 pairs of breeding waterbirds on a regular basis (Birdlife International, 2004) and is regarded as nationally important for breeding Cormorants (305 pairs, 1989, 4%) and Kittiwakes (19,800 pairs, 1987-1995, 4%), and for wintering Eider duck (1,210 birds, 1995-1996, 2%). The main bird species are summarised in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 List of selected bird species that are present around Berwickshire Coast

Species	Season	Year	Number
European shag	Breeding	1995	430
Common guillemot	Breeding	1993	20,800
Razorbill	Breeding	1993	1,470

Source: BirdLife International

The area is recognised by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area (IBA). IBA status affords it no legal protection but the IBA framework has been instrumental in guiding statutory agencies in their selection of existing SPAs.

National Nature Reserve

The St Abbs Head National Nature Reserves (NNR) was designated in 1983, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The NNR designation is underpinned by SSSI designation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The NNR extends along the coast from St Abbs to Fast Castle Head and is designated for its impressive cliff scenery which supports large colonies of breeding kittiwakes, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills, shags and puffins (National Nature Reserve Scotland, 2004). The management plan for St Abbs Head NNR is mainly controlled by the National Trust Scotland with SNH and the SWT who oversee the decisions.

St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve

St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve (VMR) was established in 1984, extending from Eyemouth to Thrummy Carr, extending offshore boundary to the 50m depth contour. The reserve was the UK's first voluntary marine reserve and was established in a groundbreaking act of co-operation between recreational, commercial and conservation related users of the marine environment to work towards a common sustainability objective.

The main core funding providers for the VMR are the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and Scottish Natural Heritage. The National Trust for Scotland donate all administration costs and manage the seasonal ranger.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

The LBAP for Scottish Borders area has as its aim for sea and shore habitats:

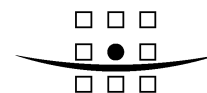
The continued development of integrated management to protect and conserve the marine habitats of Scottish Borders through partnership working.

The plan identifies key issues as being:

- Pollution in the forms of oil, sewage, and nitrates;
- Seabed disturbance , including dredging and trawling;
- Sustainable fisheries;
- Climate change; and
- Awareness building linked to partnership working.

Landscape and Other Designations

The entire Berwickshire coast is designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). AGLVs are designated by planning authorities for the purpose of safeguarding locally important areas of outstanding scenic character or quality from inappropriate development.



2. Activities audit

2.1 Fishing

The local economy of the Eyemouth and St Abbs area depends largely on the fishing industry, which provides more than 40% of employment and over 60% of income. Activity can be roughly divided into two types, mobile gear fisheries and fixed gear fisheries, with vessels undertaking both types of fisheries from Eyemouth and fixed gear vessels operating from St Abbs. In recent years, the levels of income and employment in the industry have declined.

Historically the bulk of the fishing activity in the area has focussed on Eyemouth, with the majority of vessels undertaking mobile gear fisheries, mainly trawling for whitefish, such as cod, haddock and whiting. In recent years fishing activity has shifted towards shellfisheries, particularly for prawns (*Nephrops norvegicus*) with an increase in the number of fishing boats under 10m and a decline in the number of bigger boats.

Fixed gear fishery

The inshore component (out to 1 mile) of the pilot study area is restricted to fixed gear fishing, effectively only crab and lobster creeling, undertaken mainly by small boats from Eyemouth and St Abbs, with some vessels also operating from Burnmouth. In 1994, under the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1994, prohibitions were placed on use of mobile gear such as trawls and dredges to prevent gear conflict with fixed gear users. This fixed gear reserve has become a significant component of inshore marine management in the pilot area and is an important management measure in the scheme of management for the BNNC EMS.

Mobile gear fishery

Mobile gear fishery in the pilot study area is undertaken by a small fleet of trawlers operating from Eyemouth. The fisheries undertaken are for prawns *Nephrops norvegicus* and for 'traditional' whitefish species such as cod, haddock and whiting. In recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of boats fishing for prawns and a continuing trend of decreasing vessel length.

There were moves by some vessels involved in the *Nephrops* fishery to move from the use of mobile gear to a fixed gear (creel) fishery. However, conflict with mobile gear led to this attempt being abandoned

2.2 Seafood processing

Seafood processing is present in the Eyemouth area, with businesses processing both locally-landed produce and produce imported from elsewhere in the UK and abroad. The bulk of seafood processed is shellfish production (mainly prawns) and is predominantly for export.

2.3 Recreation and tourism

Currently approximately 123,000 visitors trips are made to the Eyemouth and East Berwickshire area each year. Of these visitors, weekend monitoring at St Abbs suggests that for this limited 'honey pot' area, the majority of visitors are divers, with the nearby St Abbs head NNR attracting approximately 50,000 visitors. Overall the trend in terms of recreational visitors appears to be increasing, with numbers of divers in

particular, anticipated to increase considerably in the coming years, with the increasing popularity of the sport and improved transport links to both the north and south via recently upgraded sections of the A1.

Coastal footpaths

The area is part of the Scottish Border Walks project supported by the Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Natural Heritage, while also receiving financial aid from PESCA funding and the Rural Challenge Fund. It is hoped that the development of coastal paths in the area will lead eventually to a footpath running between Berwick and Dunbar with rail access at both ends, however, the network is still in the process of development and is by no means complete. Paths currently join all of the communities within the pilot area, although public transport limitations currently make it difficult to undertake one way trips along some sections.

The public currently use the existing path network to enjoy the natural, cultural and scenic heritage of the coastline. The presence of walking visitors is already a component of the tourism industry in the pilot study area. Expansion and development of the network in future may serve to increase opportunities for local communities in serving this sector.

Festivals

There are a number of festivals held to promote the scenery, landscape, nature conservation interests of the pilot area, including the Borders Walking Festival, and the Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Natural History Festival.

Bathing

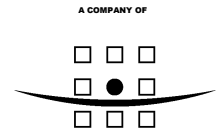
There are a number of designated bathing waters within the pilot area, used by tourists, recreational visitors and local communities. Some waters in the pilot area have suffered from poor bathing water quality in the past. However, since 1999 there has been a marked improvement due to East of Scotland Water's project putting in place improved sewage treatment systems (see Table 2.1) and efforts by the agricultural community to prevent pollution from farming activities

Table 2.1 Bathing waters survey – compliance with the Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC) during 1999 – 2003

Coastal Bathing Waters	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
St Abbs	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Good	Good
Coldingham	Good	Moderate	Good	Good	Good
Eyemouth	Fail	Fail	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Watersports

The pilot area is used by visitors and local residents who participate in a range of watersports, including sailing, kayaking, surfing and diving. Of these activities, diving has by far the greatest impact upon local communities, with St Abbs and the



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surrounding area known throughout the UK and internationally for the richness of its underwater scenery and marine biology. The bulk of diving interest has historically focussed on St Abbs, with both shore dives and boat dives popular with visiting divers from near and far, although a number of sites closer to Eyemouth are also popular.

A number of vessels currently offer diving day trips from St Abbs harbour, while nearby Coldingham offers facilities including air fills and equipment hire / purchase. More recently the operations in the St Abbs and Coldingham area have been joined by a dive centre based in Eyemouth, offering a similar range of services, including boat dives accessing the same sites as the St Abbs based vessels.

Sea angling

Vessels operating from St Abbs and Eyemouth offer charter sea angling trips for local and visiting anglers. This activity is believed to be largely focused within the fixed gear reserve and Voluntary Marine Reserve (VMR) areas.

Wildlife watching

Vessels operating from both St Abbs and Eyemouth offer boat trips to members of the public interested in viewing the scenic, bird and marine biological interests found in the pilot area. The vessels offering this service are also actively operating as diving vessels and there is some anecdotal evidence that the current demand for this service is not sufficient to support a vessel for this activity alone. This may represent an opportunity for future development.



3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE BERWICKSHIRE COAST

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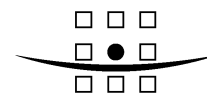
East Berwickshire has a population of approximately 7000, with around half of the population based in Eyemouth and the remainder based in seven villages and a number of smaller settlements, the largest of which are Coldingham and St Abbs. Within these communities, the rate of unemployment is generally lower than the Scottish average, however, areas of Eyemouth have been identified as unemployment hot spots.

The population is growing at a rate of 4% per annum. Within this growth is an increase in older age groups (40 – 65), reflecting attraction of the area for retirement, while there is a decrease in younger age groups (0 – 29). This change in the demographic of the communities is of particular importance to the future management of the coastal area and its communities. Scottish Borders Enterprise talks of the need for “vibrant communities” in its economic development strategy “New Ways”. Improving transport links to the north and south due to upgrading of the A1, poses a potential risk of the villages within the pilot area becoming dominated by new residents without a cultural, social or historic link to the existing communities with the potential for stifling enterprise and development in the area with knock on effects for the long term sustainability of those communities.

The economy is largely dependent on the fishing industry, despite decreases and decline in that industry in recent years. The other traditional economic driver, agriculture, is also in decline. Tourism has been identified as the area with the most significant potential to benefit the local economy, but to date the promotion of traditional tourism in the area has been limited.

The appeal of the area for water sport recreation, particularly diving, has been seen to generally increase year on year, through a mixture of word of mouth and promotion in sector specific literature. This trend has seen an associated increase in potential benefits (revenue) and also of pressures (nuisance) for the communities of St Abbs and Coldingham in particular. The degree of diving activity in the St Abbs area is thought to be largely limited by the capacity for car parking and other facilities available and it has been thought that this limiting effect, combined with weather and the work of the VMR and EMS, has limited the impact on natural heritage interests.

The recent development of a diving centre in Eyemouth, although likely to service some portion of the increasing demand for diving in the area, also shows that there is potential for expansion of this popular sport in the area. The potential for impacts on sustainable management of the marine environment must therefore be considered.



4. MANAGEMENT AT THE BERWICKSHIRE COAST

4.1 Issues and opportunities identified during initial consultations

The following issues and opportunities were identified during discussions with community representatives and managers. These issues are not ranked.

Issues:

- Declining fisheries activity and associated decline in traditional community link with marine environment;
- Limited opportunity for local users to influence management of the marine environment;
- Lack of promotion of the pilot area by existing tourism initiatives;
- Need to balance economic needs of community and increasing user pressure, with the need to safeguard the marine and coastal natural heritage through co-operative working with VMR and EMS management;
- Perceived conflict between the interests of diving visitors to St Abbs, the interests of some residents and those of non-diving visitors;
- Current limited nature of perceived direct benefits for the communities from diving and other visitors, while the perception of cost in terms of inconvenience and quality of life is high;
- Current limited nature of the explicit value which can be placed on the natural heritage within the pilot area by the communities;
- Limited facilities available to visitors to the area;
- Communities perceive a focus upon diving and natural heritage interests by “government”, with a sidelining of the communities, fisheries interests and non diving visitors;
- Security for existing initiatives in the pilot area, such as Northfield Farm visitor centre, existing diving and wildlife boat activity, and caravan sites;
- Traffic and wider visitor access management at St Abbs and Eyemouth, with St Abbs in particular experiencing periods when the existing car parking is at capacity with significant impacts upon the resident community;
- Disinterest and lack of awareness among many in local communities in the marine environment, and both its existing and its potential contribution to the local economy;
- Lack of an existing mechanism for community involvement in current initiatives regarding the future management of inshore fisheries.

Opportunities:

- Work towards development and promotion of a sustainable inshore shellfishery in the pilot area, within the framework of new regional inshore fisheries management initiatives;
- Include the marine environment within community and user initiatives;
- Safeguarding existing marine resources;
- Fresh impetus to currently moribund community development proposals, with potential to help long term sustainable use of the area, particularly those with potential to help visitor management;
- Diversification of use of the marine environment and influence of communities and users on its management;
- Integration of activity management and promotion of recreational activities between the two main harbours, St Abbs and Eyemouth could be progressed under the auspices of the pilot and more sustainable management;
- Promotion of existing tourism and recreation initiatives such as:
 - Natural Heritage boat trips;

- International Sail Craft Association (ISCA); and
- Dive boat operations.
- Further diversification of harbour focussed tourism interest, such as presence of International Sail Craft Association at Eyemouth.

Constraints:

- Lack of resources, in terms of both financial and staff resources required to address issues identified and act upon community aspirations;
- Consultation fatigue, with a history of consultation related to a number of initiatives, there is a feeling among communities that their needs and aspirations have not been acted upon to date. They have been 'let down' by previous initiatives.

4.2 Current community led initiatives in Scotland

The St Abbs VMR has pioneered a consensual approach to marine management involving conservation, community and user group interests. It has progressed the status of marine conservation in Berwickshire and more widely in the UK. The very fact that it has actively involved such varied interests in working towards a common goal is an achievement in itself. A significant element of the aim of the VMR is the achievement of sustainable fisheries within the VMR area.

The SSMEI pilot study provides an opportunity to build upon the VMR work by also considering sustainable management. It will incorporate social and economic issues for the local communities as well as environmental issues.

Scotland has a number of other community-led marine initiatives that may provide useful information to draw upon when considering the interaction and priorities of marine interest groups. These include the Wester Ross project (trailing integrated management of inshore waters in the western Highlands) and the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) promoting the conservation of marine interest features within Lamlash Bay.

An example of local communities aiming for sustainable fisheries management is the Loch Torridon *Nephrops* fishery. The Loch Torridon *Nephrops* fishery in north west Scotland is the first Scottish fishery to be awarded the Marine Stewardship Council sustainability label. A closed area was implemented in 2001 and the creel fishermen then established a company to collectively supply European markets, adding value to the landings and resulting in greater price stability and market security. Management of the Loch Torridon *Nephrops* fishery is via a voluntary management plan implemented within the closed area. The fishery achieved sustainability accreditation in 2003 and provides an example of economics acting as a driver for sustainable fishery management.

Common to all of the above initiatives is the need to involve local communities, local stakeholders and statutory management bodies in the management of the marine environment and to demonstrate clearly and practically the benefits to be gained from improved management for those communities.



4.3 Government bodies

There are a wide range of regulatory authorities and supporting legislation controlling activity in the Berwickshire coast area. The levels of organisation involved include International, UK and Scottish. This range of controlling and regulatory bodies undoubtedly adds a significant degree of complexity to the objectives of sustainable resource management. There is a complex array of legislation that supports the roles and responsibilities of the various bodies. Details of some of the main organisations responsible for controlling and regulation in the marine environment are listed in Annex 1 of the SSMEI overview.

The following bodies have roles particular to the Berwickshire Coast area:-

SNH

In the pilot area SNH is active in the management of both the St Abbs and Eyemouth VMR and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast EMS.

Scottish Borders Council

The Berwickshire Coast area has the advantage of only involving one local authority, Scottish Borders Council (SBC). As the local authority SBC is responsible for the development of strategic and local development plans and for implementing planning development controls. It has responsibility for coastal protection, including the development of shoreline management plans and a planning and management role in the coastal (terrestrial) and intertidal environments. The planning role does not currently extend into the sea below the low water mark (mean low water spring).

SBC has a long established history of involvement in management of its marine environment, demonstrated its long term support of the St Abbs Voluntary Marine Reserve and more recently, its involvement in the management of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast marine Special Area of Conservation.

4.4 Non-government organisations

National Trust for Scotland (NTS)

The NTS plays a major role in the coastal management of Berwickshire as the owner and manager of the St Abbs Head National Nature Reserve. In addition, the NTS is also active in the management of the St Abbs and Eyemouth VMR and the BNNC EMS.

4.5 Communities and stakeholders

There are 7 community councils within the wider area, however, the pilot will initially focus on three of these, Eyemouth, St Abbs and Coldingham, within which are found the bulk of the population and the majority of activity within the pilot study area.

User groups:

Fisheries:

- Eyemouth Fishermen's Association
- St Abbs Inshore Fishermen's Association; and
- Anglo-Scottish Fish Producers Organisation.

Harbours:

- Eyemouth Harbour Trust; and
- St Abbs Harbour Trust.

Recreational:

- British Sub-Aqua Club;
- Scottish Sub-Aqua Club;
- The Eyemouth Sub-Aqua Association; and
- Royal Yachting Association.

Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Partnership

The Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Partnership (the Partnership) is a partnership of public sector bodies with the local community and industry, which has grown out of a series of redevelopment actions, led by Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise Borders, as part of the New Ways Development Strategy for the Scottish Borders. The aims of the partnership include regeneration of the Berwickshire coast area, while rebuilding capacity and confidence within the local communities.

The Partnership is widely representative of the community and works closely with agencies active in the area, including SBC, the Local Enterprise Company and the Area Tourist Board to develop redevelopment strategy and action plans. It also has strong links to environmental agencies such as SNH and SEPA and initiatives such as the St Abbs and Eyemouth VMR. The Partnership's strategy for area regeneration is wide-ranging and was driven by consultation with the local community.

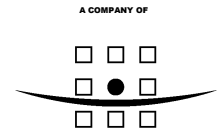
The Partnership has successfully obtained EC funding (South of Scotland European Partnership Objective 2 Programme and the European Regional Development Fund) and is providing support for small-scale community, infrastructure and business projects, in areas such as:

- Harbour redevelopment;
- Town and village improvement;
- Heritage and Countryside Information Centre;
- Events and festivals, including an annual Natural History Festival;
- Beach management; and
- Local tourism Action Plan.

4.6 Existing fora and cooperative management structures

St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve (VMR)

The St Abbs and Eyemouth VMR has been successful in the promotion of inshore marine natural heritage interests in the pilot area since 1984, involving community and users in management of activities within the reserve. There is an opportunity under the pilot to expand upon the VMRs 'traditional' nature conservation led approach, to focus more upon aspects of sustainable development and particularly sustainable fisheries, itself part of the overall VMR aim, which is:



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'To conserve the biodiversity of the coastal waters and to raise awareness of the marine environment through education and promote sensible recreational use alongside a sustainable fishery to the mutual benefit of all'.

The terms of reference for the reserve are:

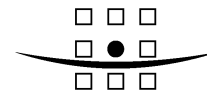
- To sustain and where possible, enhance the habitats, communities and species within the Voluntary Marine Reserve;
- To optimise the interpretation and education potential of the Voluntary Marine Reserve to user groups and visitors.;
- To encourage informed and sympathetic recreational use;
- To integrate management of the Voluntary Marine Reserve and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland European Marine Site;and
- To use the Voluntary Marine Reserve to promote marine conservation and the need for sustainable use of the marine environment.

Membership of the VMR committee is extensive and includes the harbour trusts at Eyemouth and St Abbs, fishermen's representatives, three Community Councils, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Wildlife Trust, the National Trust for Scotland, the Marine Conservation Society, and diving organisations.

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site (EMS)

The Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site and its scheme of management is the main mechanism for marine nature conservation management along the coast. The EMS management group includes 27 organisations which have a legislative role to play in the management of the marine environment of the pilot area.

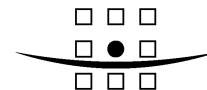
The scheme of management was developed through extensive consultation from 1998 to 2000 with statutory agencies, relevant and competent authorities and user groups with an interest in the site. It identifies human activities and operations that may have a detrimental impact upon the notified features of the site; assesses current management of these activities, and prescribes an action plan for each activity, and each relevant authority, with the current plan running until 2006.



5. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN TO DATE

Consultations were undertaken with individual stakeholders from the following bodies:

Organisation
Eyemouth Harbour Trust
Eyemouth Fishermen's Association
Anglo-Scottish Fishermen's Association
St Abbs Voluntary Marine Reserve.
Scottish Natural Heritage
National Trust for Scotland
Scottish Borders Enterprise
Eyemouth and East Berwickshire Partnership
Scottish Borders Council
Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast EMS. Project Officer
St Abbs Community Council,
St Abbs resident and member of Heritage Centre working group.



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