

South-West Marine Ecosystems Conference

Draft 5th January 2026

Understanding Ecosystem Change, Past, Present & Future

April 23rd, 2026 - Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Programme Timing

8.30 Doors open – registration – refreshments

9.30 **Understanding the Past Changes to South-West Marine Ecosystem to better understand the future**

The team leading this session will include: **Bob Earll, Abigail McQuattors-Gollop, Libby West & Keith Hiscock and others**

9.30 - 10.30 **Presentation:** The presentation will include a comprehensive review of over 35 major marine ecosystem changes that have taken place in the south-west over the 20th & 21st centuries including those from natural systems and from human activity. Changes prompted by climate, oceanography, natural variations, including disease, as well as human activities such as fisheries and pollution will be used to illustrate the nature of change. The presentation will include contributions from over 20 different experts and will be presented by three narrators. This information will be made available to delegates.

10.30 - 11.30 **Discussion:** The presentation will be followed by a detailed discussion with the active engagement of the audience of the points arising looking to explore the relationships between events. A range of outputs will be prepared after the event.

11.30 – 12.15 First break (45 mins) sandwiches and refreshments

12.15 **Highlights of 2025:** This will be a review of the main highlights of 2025 for all the thematic topics that SWME covers including: oceanography, plankton, seabed & seashore, fish, birds, seals and cetacean, marine planning, MPAs, fisheries, marine development and plastic pollutions

13.15 Second break 45 mins – Cakes & Refreshments

14.00 – 16.00 **Understanding Future Change to the Marine Ecosystems of the South-West**

The team leading this session will include: **Bryce Stewart, Lissa Batey, Lillian Lieber, Dan Barrios-ONEill and others**

The format of this part of the programme will include:

- Coverage of issues which we can be relatively certain about e.g. the development of floating offshore wind, plastic pollution, ocean acidification and changes to coastal environments.
- Reflections on lessons from the past changes to south-west ecosystems
- Active involvement of the audience in visualising likely threats, impacts and opportunities
- A range of outputs are envisaged, not least pointers to what we need to better understand

16.00 - 18.30 **Presentations & Wine Reception**