

> BETTER DATA, BETTER SCIENCE,
IMPROVED DECISIONS <

SeaZone



CHARACTERISING OUR HISTORIC SEASCAPES

The marine environment is defined not only by the natural processes which shape the coastal, intertidal and marine zones, but also by past and present human activities which determine its historical character and archaeological significance.

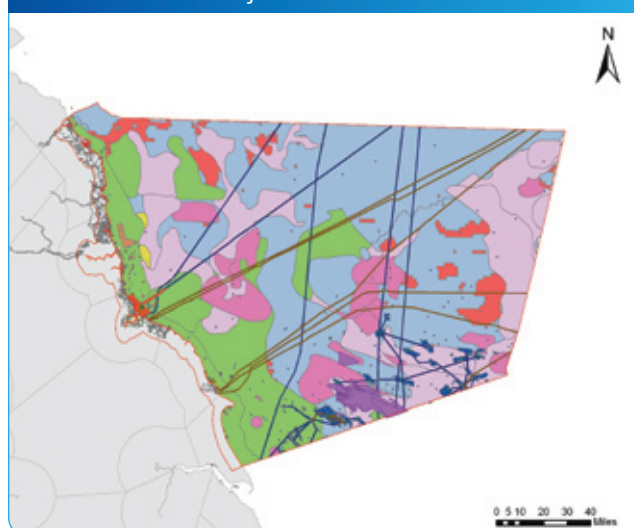
Historic Seascape Characterisation (HSC) presents an archaeological interpretation of the historic cultural dimension of our coasts and seas to identify and map areas whose present character has been shaped by similar dominant cultural processes. In doing so, it complements a closely similar approach, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), already widely implemented by English Heritage on land.

After rigorous development and testing, a nationally-applicable method for characterising England's historic seascapes using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was published in 2008. The GIS mapping of historic seascape character can be interrogated in many different ways. It is supported by a series of text descriptions which can also be delivered to wider audiences as part of a non-GIS based multimedia resource.

The resulting product is designed to raise public awareness of the considerable pressures and changes already affecting our landscape perceptions. It will support and inform the management of our coasts and seas by offering an understanding of the past and current cultural processes that have shaped our perceptions of them.

HSC and HLC offer a stronger basis for shaping sustainable seascapes and landscapes for the future. In a broader sense too, the methods' comprehensive coverage of cultural processes and human activities characterised allows HSC to enrich our perspective on parts of the coast and sea which are familiar to us.

>> Characterisation Project Area



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Demonstrating the Method

SeaZone and Maritime Archaeology Ltd (MA Ltd) have been commissioned by English Heritage to undertake the first application of the HSC method via the "England's Historic Seascapes: Demonstrating the Method" Project. Financed by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), this project combines a demonstration in applying the method while contributing the first instalment of a National HSC database to be maintained by English Heritage.

Delivery

SeaZone and MA Ltd are using in-house expertise in GIS, HSC and database development to apply the National HSC methodology in close communication with English Heritage's Characterisation Team. This will be applied across a sufficiently substantial area of North East England to provide effective practical demonstration of the method's operation and capabilities.

This work is being delivered through the construction of a robust GIS and related database to guide data analysis, coupled with a multimedia resource which will facilitate use by other specialists and wider dissemination. The worked example provided by this project will apply the National HSC Method and encourage clarity and consistency in its future implementation. It will provide a practical demonstration of the method's fitness for purpose across a range of applications, to promote and optimise the benefits of using HSC.

Applications of HSC

The development of coastal and marine HSC will have immediate benefits for:

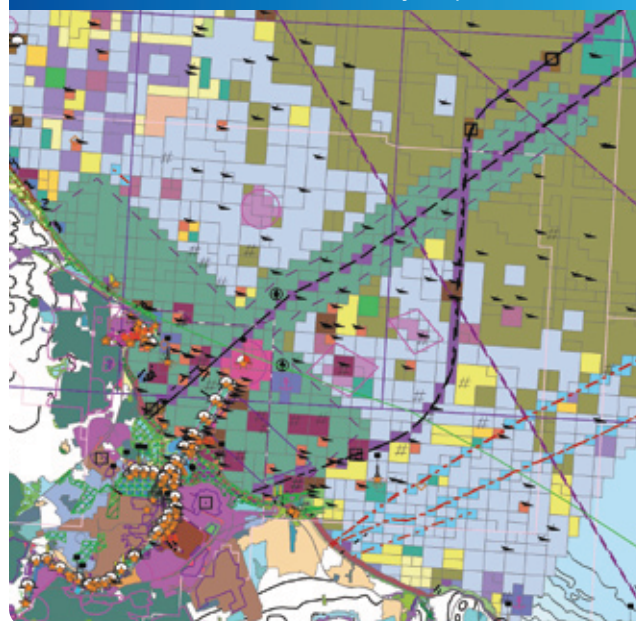
- Management of change in the marine historic environment e.g. by enabling contextualised responses to draft licence areas for marine aggregate extraction
- Contributing directly to the development of marine spatial planning initiatives
- Working at a recognisable scale with other planning agencies such as those concerned with the natural environment
- Use in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) particularly as an indicator of coastal change
- Round two Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) revision process
- Development control in the inter-tidal, near-shore and marine zones
- Outreach and education

Further Information

The results of the project, run over eleven months, will be disseminated via a stakeholder seminar in August 2009.

For further information on the project and the stakeholder seminar, please contact Olivia Merritt at SeaZone. To access the English Heritage website for further information on the HSC programme go to <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.001002003008006>

>> Trial results overlaid with SeaZone HydroSpatial



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>> For more information

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