

SCIENCE TO INFORM AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO MARINE MANAGEMENT

Peter Taylor, Waterview Consulting

Keywords: Ecosystem-based management; area-based management; human dimensions; socio-economic; ecosystem functioning; ecosystem services

Policymakers nationally and internationally are calling for a better understanding of the impact of human activities on the coastal ocean. Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is an innovative approach that considers the whole ecosystem, including humans, rather than managing one issue or resource in isolation. However, practitioners face major obstacles to implementing EBM such as lack of money, time, understanding and information about the ecosystem or area in which they are managing. They continue to grapple with fundamental, big-picture issues regarding implementation despite a broad acceptance of the concept. Regardless of the type of decision, practitioners need the capacity to better understand ecosystem functioning and how to visualize the impacts of management actions on the environment. They need the capacity to better understand human values, attitudes and behaviors in relation to the ecosystem.

This panel of scientists will consider ways in which the science underpinning marine ecosystem-based management can be applied to decision-making at a state level. The focus will not only be on the role of science in a planning process but which scientific disciplines and cutting-edge research can be most useful to inform management. Both natural and social science-focused presentations will showcase research and tools relevant to practitioners as they think about addressing their work from a more area-based perspective. Specific research and data needs and the constraints managers face for obtaining particular scientific content and expertise will also be discussed. Lastly, presentations will specifically address the use of socio-economic research to better understand human uses of and perceptions about the coastal ocean.