



The Importance of Marine Spatial Planning for Marine Ecosystems

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Talk outline

- Setting the scene
- Why does planning matter to RSPB?
- MSP - the key
- Challenges



What is our Natural Wealth?

- ~5 million breeding seabirds in Scotland
- 45% of EU breeding populations
- **All** of Britain's Leach's petrels, arctic skua and great skua
- 98% of Britain's tysties
- 97% of Britain's fulmars



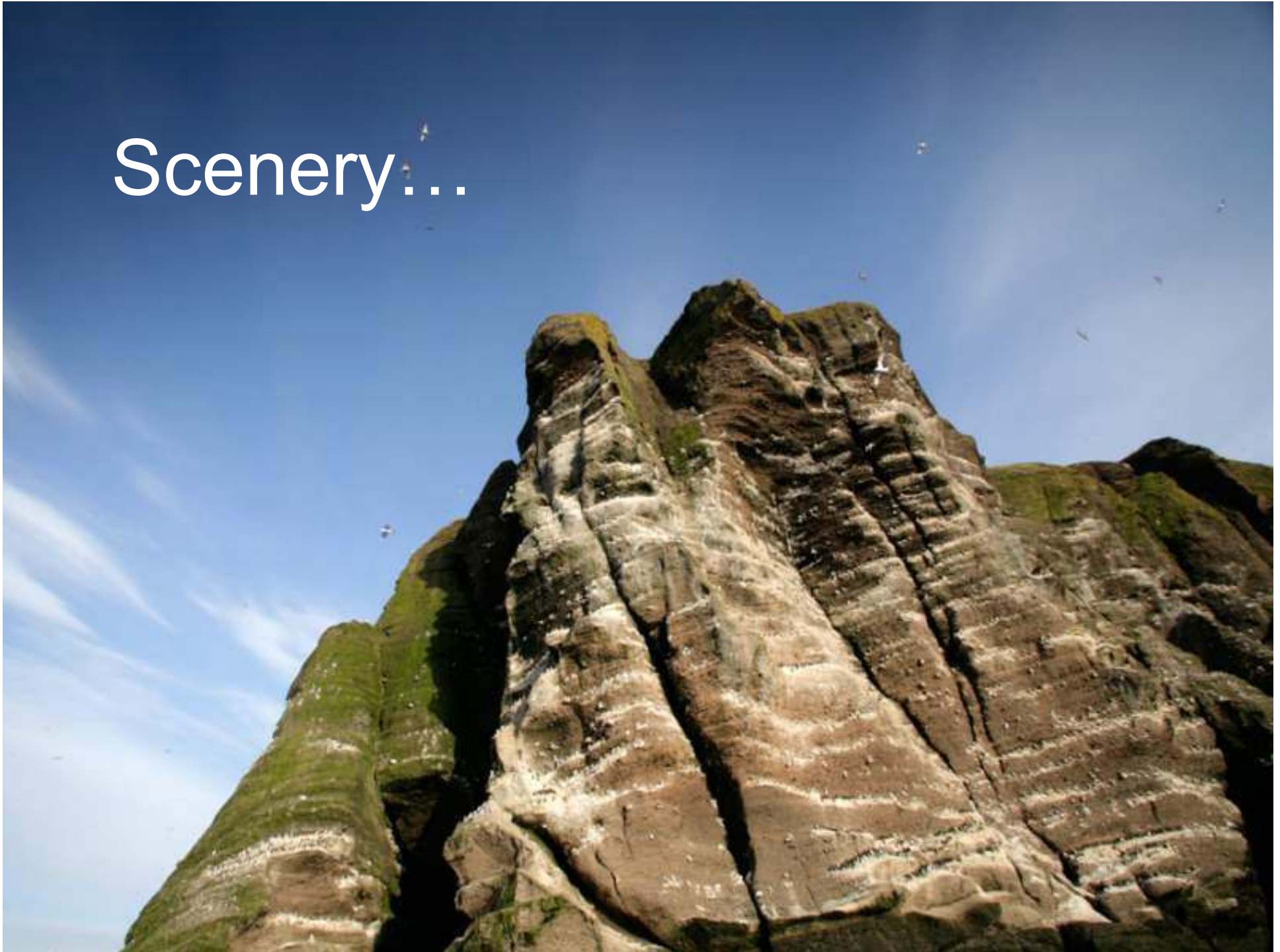




- Most of the UK's maerl beds and coldwater coral communities.



Scenery...



The 'engine house'

- 66% of the UK's fish landings
- 90% of UK's farmed fish
- Wildlife tourism >£57m in revenue/yr
- Over 80% of the value of Scotland's ecosystem services derive from estuaries/territorial waters (£14billion!)



Not pristine...

- ..we know that much. Seriously depleted
- To take just one example:
- Seabirds – lots of bad years...2009 quite a good year
 - significant #s of terns in northern isles
 - auk #s up on many reserves



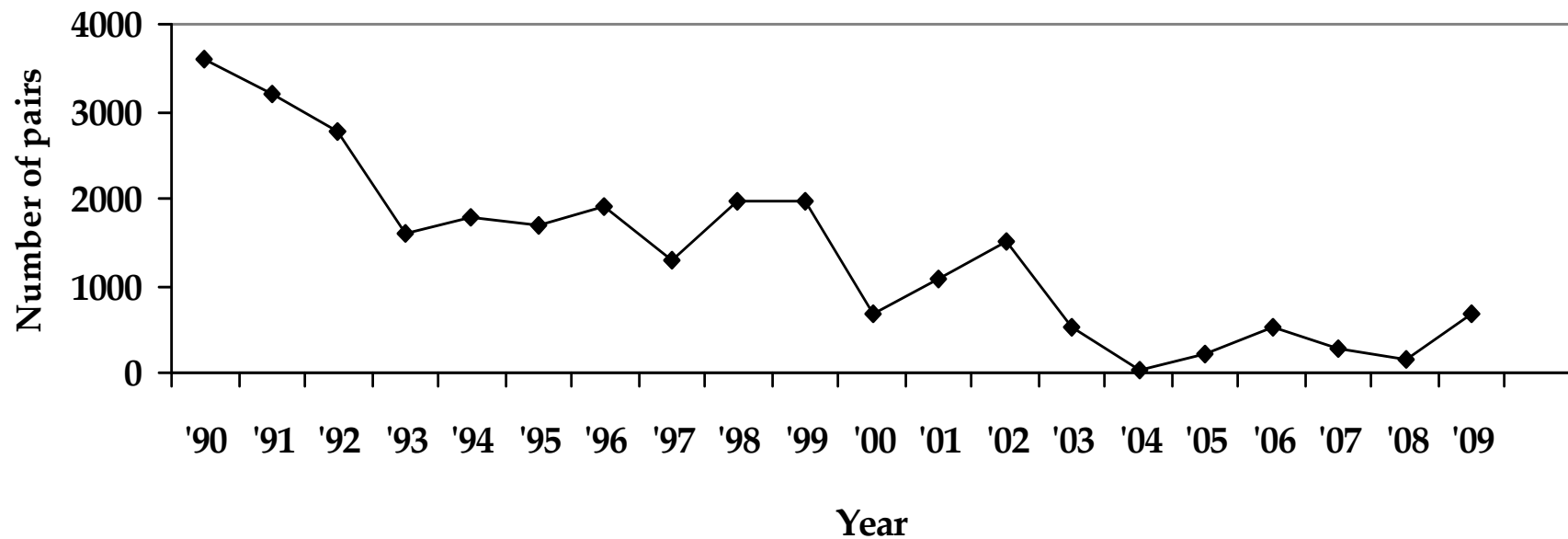
It's all relative...

- This is set in the context of chronic decline
- Fowlsheugh reserve kittiwakes:
 - 1992 - 34,872 nests
 - 2009 – 9,454 nests
- >70% decline
- At real risk



Arctic Tern - North Hill, Orkney

Breeding Arctic Tern, North Hill



Not pristine...

- Declines in maerl beds, flameshell reefs, common skate...
- North Sea cod can theoretically live for more than 20 years, breed first at 4 years old. Currently few old fish left, far less breeders - 93% of those now caught are immature, average age 1.6 years
- Litter on Scotland's beaches is almost double that of 10 years ago (MCS Beachwatch Report 2006)



Ecosystems

- Some developments don't rely on functioning ecosystems *per se*
- The sea itself is the common currency for most users
- Sustainable use of the sea **more reliant on healthily functioning ecosystems than on land**



The ecosystem-based approach

- Oft-used buzzword
- What does it mean?
- Conservation of ecosystem structures (physical), processes (nutrient cycling, hydrographic etc.) and interactions (eg. Between species) through sustainable use
- “The environment can be no afterthought, but must be part of the equation of growth. Without the environment, there will be no growth.”



•Pic from ScotGov website
scotland.gov.uk

MSP is the key

- The title of my talk – the importance of MSP for marine ecosystems...how important? Very!
- Makes the ecosystem-based approach operational, puts sustainability at the heart of the process.
- **A strategic approach** to identifying cumulative effects of different sectoral uses in relation to carrying capacity
- Framework for integrating policies, objectives and targets across all sectors, which respect environmental limits
- Environment becomes the baseline from where we work









Other benefits...

- Influential participation of stakeholders – at a level that delivers accountability – community of ‘ownership’
- Replace reactive, sectoral approach
- Improve data collection
- Greater steer and confidence in future investments
- Improve speed, quality, accountability and transparency of decision making.
- A forum for conflict resolution



Why does planning matter to RSPB?

- Poor developments – potential for adverse effects on birds/biodiversity (and also can adversely affect industry public perception)
- Good planning – developments can enhance biodiversity and people's quality of life
- Help planners to find solutions – right thing in the right place



Marine Planning in particular...

- Users of the sea are increasing, pressure on the sea increasing
- Upcoming marine renewables industry – targets in the Climate Change Act
- Marine (Scotland) Bill sets the framework, but applications coming before MSP in place: case-by-case basis.



Marine Protected Areas

- Various commitments in OSPAR, MSFD, Marine (Scotland) Bill
- Ecologically-coherent network
- Existing gap in range of wildlife that can be protected
- Habitats and wildlife of national importance;
common skate
black guillemot
flameshell reefs



What else makes MSP key?

- Numerous obligations to take the ecosystem approach – MSFD, CFP, OSPAR, WSSD...
- The alternative – maintain the status quo, take an *ad hoc* approach – likely to perpetuate the problems that are becoming apparent



Challenges

- Lessons learned from land
 - multiple use areas limited
 - @ sea more common.
 - Temporal variation too.
 - more intensive competition and need for sole occupation – single highest bidder often determines use
- Mobile fauna and protected areas



Habitat & distribution – mobile fauna

- Distribution of appropriate habitat leads to relatively straightforward designation of protected areas.
- At sea, more difficult to anticipate adverse effects on mobile fauna



Kittiwakes

- In **good** food years, drop off the colony and feed nearby
- In **bad** food years, head out on a bearing for Tromso and return days later!
- Offshore areas are being looked at...



BUT...not a barrier

- Further research - tagging
- For less mobile fauna/habitats the process is easier
- Benefits of MPAs for fisheries **and** wildlife e.g. sandbanks for sandeels, maerl beds as nursery grounds for commercial sp.



Other win:wins

- Aquaculture among marine renewables?
- Guard vessels for renewables industry?



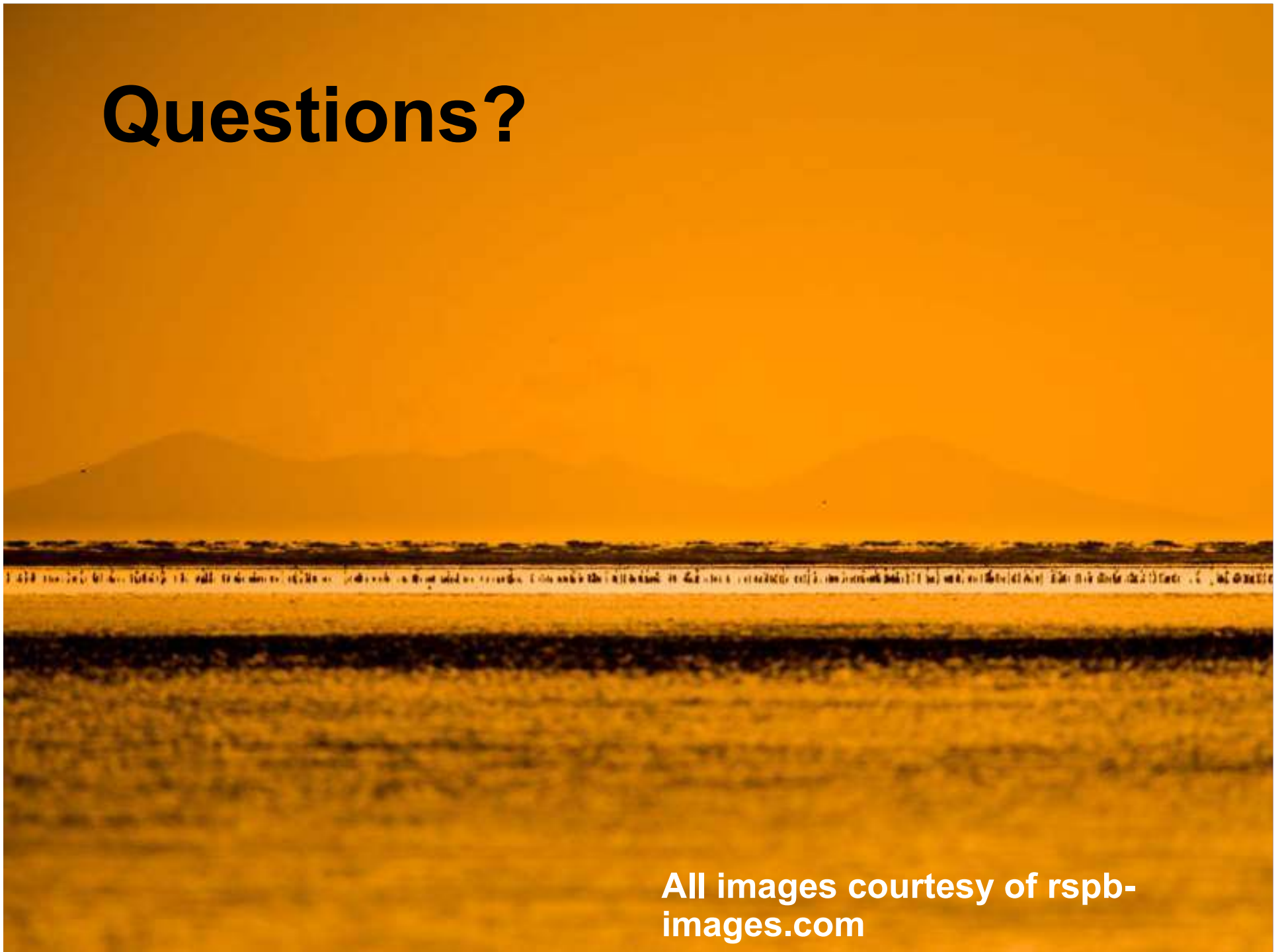
Why is MSP important for marine ecosystems?

- Current system is reactive and not holistic – increasing ‘users’ and cumulative impact is not well accounted for.
- Putting the ecosystem approach – and thus sustainability – at the heart of planning – ensuring we respect environmental limits
- Environment is a ‘user’ as well – designation of key areas for wildlife/habitats as MPAs
- And of course, not only beneficial for the environment





Questions?



All images courtesy of rspb-images.com