

Towards Ecosystem-Based Protection of Marine Environments

Investigating the scope for marine reserves in Northern Europe under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

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ESRC Symposium on Marine Conservation and Governance: MPAs and beyond

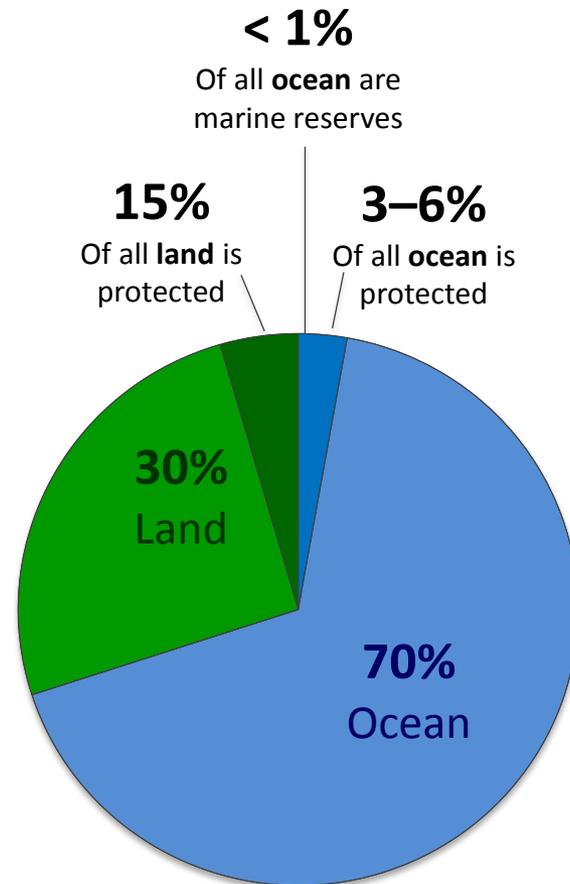
24 September 2015

Research built on thesis for the fulfilment of the Master of Science in Environmental Management and Policy, Lund University, 2014



Why did I conduct this research?

- MSFD first to enforce EBM approach
- Spatial measures mandatory (Art. 13.4)
- Current MPA coverage
- **Marine reserves:** *Closed for all extractive or otherwise to the environment harmful activities.*



INTRODUCTION

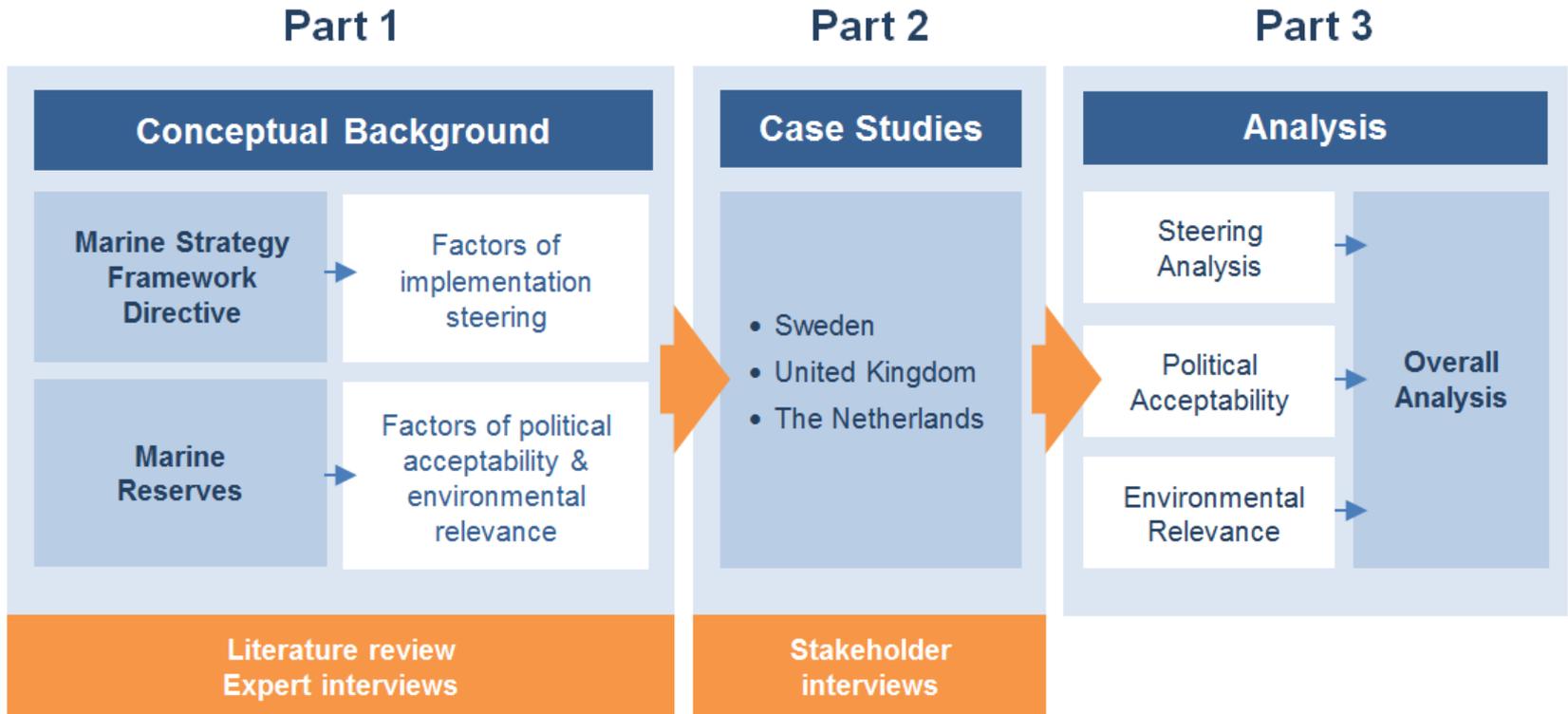
Why did I conduct this research?

Aim *To improve the understanding of how the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is influencing marine spatial protection in Northern Europe*

Investigate the scope for marine reserves as a policy instrument for achieving the EBM objectives of the Directive



How did I approach it?



KEY RESULTS

Case studies



| | Sweden | The UK | The Netherlands |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| MPAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 designation types • 6.3% of marine waters (lowest in Baltic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 designation types • 9.5% of territorial waters, limited coverage offshore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 designation type • One area fully implemented; 5 pending |
| Of which marine reserves today? | None | 3 small areas | None (not accepted) |
| Adopts spatial measures under MSFD? | No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance structure imposes time and resource constraints • Eutrophication | No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets Art 13.4 differently | Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two areas for seafloor protection |

The MSFD steering

| Key factors | Confirmed? | Comments |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Regulatory vagueness | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New MPAs required or not? • Lack of definitions |
| Regulatory overlap | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFP obstructing MPAs in EEZ • Maritime Spatial Planning Directive causes concern • Natura 2000 – not optimal for marine environments |
| Scientific uncertainty and lack of knowledge | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hinders authorities' ability to justify spatial measures • Hinders adoption of socio-economic valuation • Precautionary principle not operational at national or local level |
| Dependence on political will | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Determined by structural national priorities |



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Marine reserves as a policy instrument

| Environmental relevance | Confirmed? | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| Limitations relating to the nature of the instrument |  | Marine reserves have not been discussed as an option |
| Scientific uncertainty and lack of knowledge |  | Need for data, pilot areas and empirical examples |
| → Uncertainty about environmental relevance | | |
| Political acceptability | | |
| Political will |  | Low at governmental level; higher with authorities |
| Socio-economic consequences |  | Unacceptably high coercion; risk of conflict; fear for 'dead hand' |
| → Low political acceptability | | |

Ways forward?

Stakeholder participation

- Kosterhavet marine national park (SWE) success story

Designation in low-activity areas?

- Sweden and Scotland
- Scientific relevance?
- Long-term perspective?

Marine reserves as scientific baseline areas?

- Easier politically
- Network thinking?

Ecotourism

- Reconcile economic and ecological objectives
- Preconditions?



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Conclusions

MSFD

→ delivers limited progress for spatial protection

Marine reserves

→ no scope under the MSFD

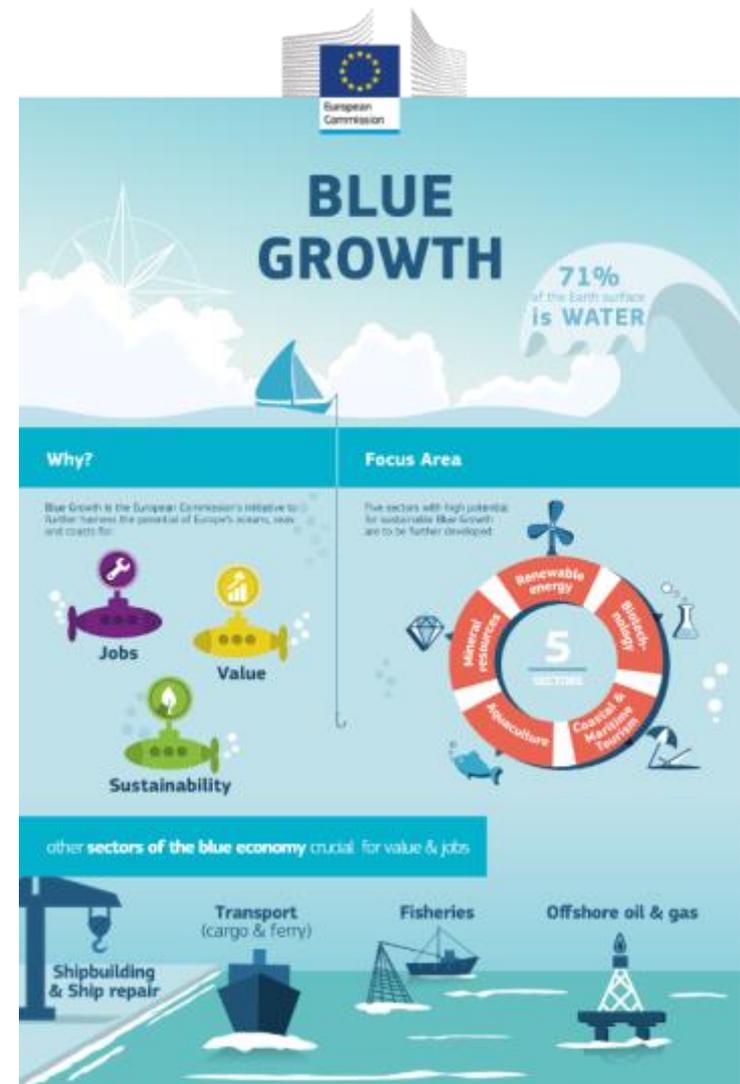


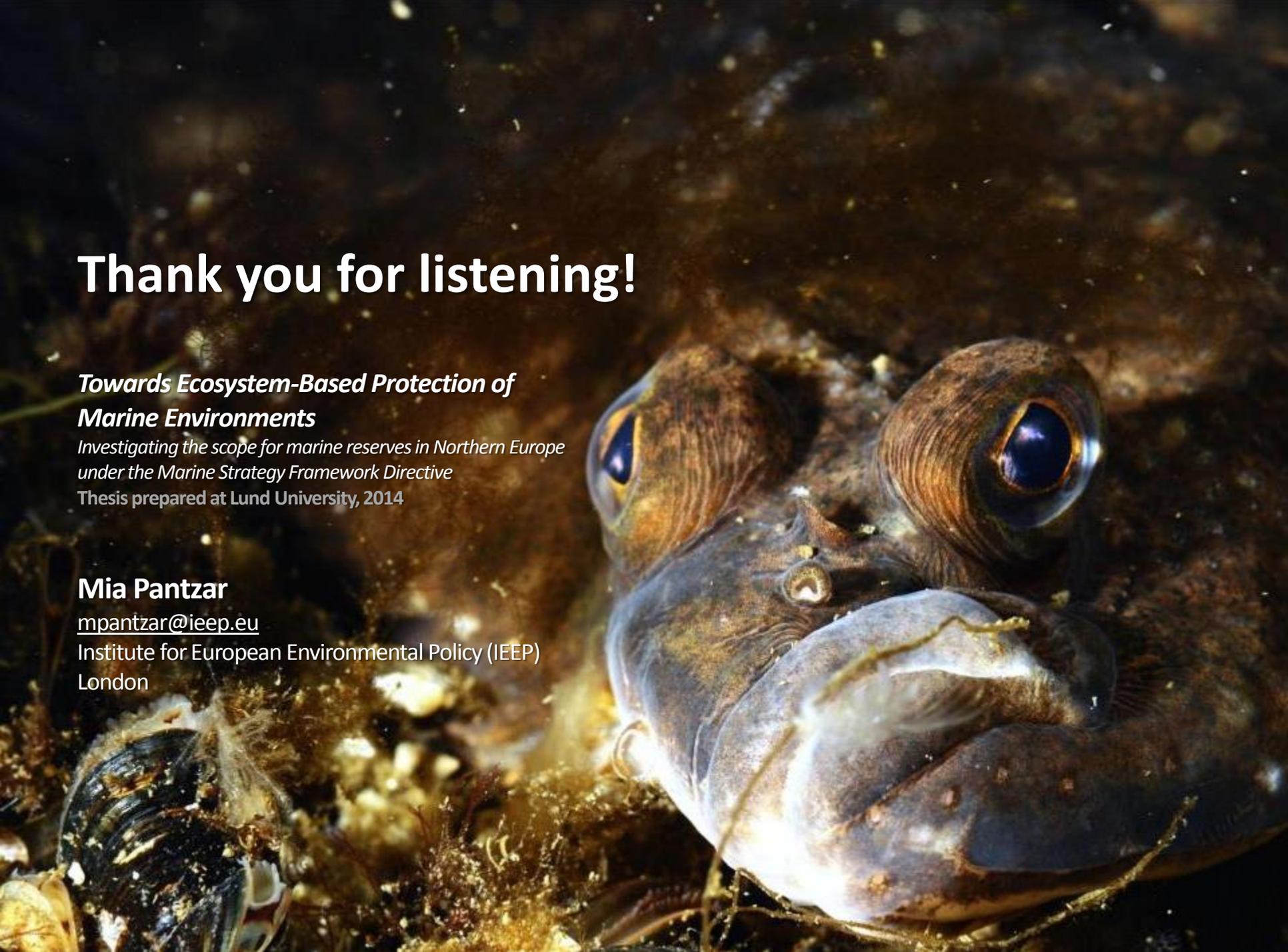
Recommendations

1. Manage/enforce existing protection first!
2. Address lack of scientific data
3. Improve balance between exploitation and conservation
4. Strengthen ecosystem credentials of Natura 2000

Points for discussion

- EU and national focus on the Blue Economy
- What will happen to marine conservation objectives under the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive?





Thank you for listening!

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Thesis prepared at Lund University, 2014

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