

Curriculum vitae: Dr. Robert Blyth-Skyrme

Contact Details

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Professional Experience

2008 – present. President, Ichthys Marine Ecological Consulting Incorporated, USA
Managing Director, Ichthys Marine Ecological Consulting Ltd, UK

Ichthys Marine is a marine fisheries and environmental consultancy. Its clients include Intertek Moody Marine (sustainable fishery certification), UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (fisheries science), COWRIE (offshore windfarms and fisheries interactions), Natural England (inshore fisheries management) and the Countryside Council for Wales (commercial and sport fisheries management and policy). My main areas of interest include:

- Providing expert advice on UK, US and global commercial fishing and recreational angling policy, management and science.
- Providing marine environmental science, policy and management advice, including on marine protected areas and on working with fisheries stakeholders.
- Working with organisations, groups and individuals to establish more sustainable approaches to marine fishing activities.
- Providing background research services for marine fisheries and environmental management projects.

2005 – 2008. Senior Marine Fisheries Specialist, Natural England.

Natural England is the statutory advisor to UK Government on nature conservation in England and English waters. Selected key responsibilities and achievements included:

- Led and developed Natural England's marine fisheries programme, including advising UK Government on commercial fishing and recreational angling research, policy and management.
- Provided thought leadership on major national work programmes, including the Marine Bill, the North Sea MPA project, the MPA Campaign and the UK Scallop Strategy.
- Acted as organisational lead on marine fisheries at Governmental and stakeholder meetings.
- Led on the development of sustainable solutions to national level marine fisheries and conservation casework, in accordance with relevant European and national legislation.
- Developed and negotiated sign-off of a Memorandum of Understanding between Natural England and the Shellfish Association of Great Britain, the national shellfish industry trade body.
- Drafted Natural England's marine fisheries and aquaculture policy statement.
- Managed two national marine fisheries policy and evidence specialists.

2004 – 2005. Deputy Chief Fishery Officer (2004-05) and Environment Officer (2004), Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee.

Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee manages inshore fisheries and their environmental impact in eastern England. Selected key responsibilities and achievements included:

- Line-managed the senior research, environment and fisheries patrol vessel staff, and co-managed the activities of sixteen Fishery Officers and three patrol and research vessels.
- Established links for commercial fishers to funding opportunities that led to ≈£5M of fisheries infrastructure development proposals in the Eastern Committee's District.
- Provided the Committee with briefing and expert environmental input at quarterly meetings.
- Acted as Senior Prosecuting Officer for the preparation of legal casework.
- Developed and conducted a public consultation on the future of commercial and recreational fishing in the Stour and Orwell Estuaries, the first UK development proposal of its kind.
- Developed evidence and represented the Committee at a major Public Inquiry.

1999 – 2000. Researcher, Marine Fisheries Group, Port Erin Marine Laboratory.

The Port Erin Marine Laboratory was the teaching and research laboratory of Liverpool University. Selected key responsibilities and achievements included:

- Designed high-precision, temperature-controlled experimental systems to support and refine annual egg production stock assessment methods for commercial fish species. This work supported the research efforts of four laboratories.
- Captained the fast inshore research vessel for fisheries sampling (beam trawling, seine netting and gill netting) and dive sampling activities.
- Advised higher degree and post-doctoral researchers on experimental design and set-up.
- Developed commercial hatchery techniques for marine fish species new to aquaculture, including Atlantic cod, haddock and Dover sole.

1998 – 1999. Fish Biologist, Selonda Aquaculture, Greece.

Selonda Aquaculture is one of the leading bass and sea bream farming companies in Europe. Selected roles and responsibilities included:

- Ensured broodstock, egg and larval husbandry by all staff was of the highest standard.
- Provided a lead management role as one of the team of 5 lead hatchery staff members.
- Supported larval rearing research initiatives to reduce hatchery costs.

1996 – 1997. Senior Hatchery Assistant, Mannin Seafarms Ltd.

Mannin Seafarms was one of the pioneering marine aquaculture hatcheries in Europe, producing Atlantic halibut and European turbot juveniles. Selected roles and responsibilities included:

- Worked within a small team on all areas of hatchery operation, including night call-out.
- Managed the live feed production and broodstock husbandry operations.

Education

2001 – 2004. PhD in Marine Fisheries, University of Wales, Bangor.

Doctoral thesis entitled “Biological and socio-economic implications of a gear restriction fishery management system.”

I investigated the structure and function of the Inshore Potting Agreement, a gear-restriction fisheries management system that operates off the south coast of England. The project included both ethnographical and classical empirical elements, and I was able to form strong relationships with members of the commercial fishing and recreational angling industries in order to successfully complete the research. I published the results in international journals and presented findings at major international scientific conferences.

1997 – 1998. MSc in Aquaculture, University of Stirling.

Master’s thesis entitled “An ethnographical description of the fish and fisheries of two floodplain sites in Bangladesh.”

This MSc was an intensive course which covered all aspects of freshwater and marine aquaculture. My thesis involved the detailed analysis of stakeholder interviews with fishermen and farmers from different regions of Bangladesh. A number of potential local solutions to management and development issues were identified through this work. The results informed a Department of Foreign Investment and Development outreach programme.

1993 – 1996. BSc (Honours) in Marine Biology, University of Liverpool.

Bachelor’s thesis entitled “Long term changes in great scallop (*Pecten maximus* L.) populations in the Irish Sea.”

This course covered all major aspects of marine biology. My thesis required extensive collection and analyses of biometric data to determine trends in scallop stock status in relation to historic fishing pressure. A number of phenotypic differences were identified between beds that were attributed to patterns of fisheries exploitation over time.

Publications

- **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.** (2010). Developing guidance on fisheries cumulative impact assessment for windfarm developers. Report for COWRIE Ltd, London. 7 pp.
- **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.** (2010). Options and opportunities for marine fisheries mitigation associated with windfarms. Final report for Collaborative Offshore Wind Research Into the Environment contract FISHMITIG09. COWRIE Ltd, London. 125 pp.
- **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.** (2008). Natural England's draft policy on marine fisheries and aquaculture. Natural England, Sheffield, England. 12 pp.
- Kaiser, M.J., **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.** *et al.* (2007). Evidence for greater reproductive output per unit area in areas protected from fishing. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, V. 64, pp.1284-1289.
- **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.**, *et al.* (2005). The use of public funds in the fishing industry: an English Nature policy paper. English Nature, Peterborough, England. 6pp.
- **Blyth-Skyrme, R.E.**, *et al.* (2005). Conservation benefits of a temperate marine protected area vary with fish life history and biology. *Conservation Biology*, V. 20, pp.811-820.
- **Blyth, R.E.** *et al.* (2004). Implications of a zoned fishery management system for marine benthic communities. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, V. 41, pp. 951-961.
- Bergmann, M., Hinz, H., **Blyth, R.E.**, *et al.* (2004). Using expert knowledge to identify possible 'Essential Fish Habitats'. *Fisheries Research*, V. 66, pp. 373-379.
- Fox, C.J., Geffen, A.J., **Blyth, R.E.** and Nash, R.D.M. (2003). An evaluation of the temperature dependent development rates of plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa* L.) eggs from the Irish Sea. *Journal of Plankton Research*, V. 25, pp. 1319–1329.
- **Blyth, R.E.** *et al.* (2003). An example of conservation and exploitation achieved through a voluntary management system. *UBC Fisheries Centre Research Reports*, V. 11, pp. 409-426.
- **Blyth, R.E.** *et al.* (2002). Voluntary management in an inshore fishery has conservation benefits. *Environmental Conservation*, V. 29, pp. 493-508.

Other Responsibilities

2007 – 2008. Member of the Environment Agency's Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee for the Anglian region of England.

2006 – 2008. Seconded 2 days per week to the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to support the development of the Fisheries 2027 Vision, the RSA Strategy, and fisheries aspects of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009).

Conference Presentations

2009: Oral. British Wind Energy Association 31st annual conference, Liverpool.

2006: Invited Oral. Second International Seminary on MPAs, Á Coruña, Spain.

2006: Invited Oral. Coastal Futures Annual Conference, London.

2005: Invited Oral. CMS: Recovery and restoration of marine habitats, London.

2003: Invited Oral. Shellfish Association of GB centenary conference, London.

2003: Oral. American Fisheries Society: Effects of fishing on benthic habitats, Tampa.

2002: Oral. Society of Conservation Biology annual meeting, Canterbury.

Additional Information

- Citizenship: British (US Legal Permanent Resident)
- Driving licence: Full car, no endorsements
- I have over 100 days of at-sea fisheries research experience, including on scientific survey and commercial trawl, scallop, gillnet and potting vessels.
- I am a PADI Divemaster, with tropical and temperate (drysuit) diving experience.
- I am an experienced small-boat handler, and owned and operated angling vessels for 10 years.