



St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve (VMR)

Georgia Conolly
Marine Ranger

Supported by:



Aim

- Introduce you to the VMR, how it came into being and its aims
- To give you an overview of how the VMR is managed and my role as a Marine Ranger
- Highlight some achievements and issues



















Why is the marine life so rich?

- It's all about location!
 - Geology
 - Strong tidal stream
 - No rivers / large cities nearby discharging sediment/pollution into the sea
 - Geographic situation (North Atlantic drift)





When and why did the VMR come about?

- Diving got into full swing in the 50's and 60's and by the 70's large numbers were visiting at weekends



- Most diving took place from the harbour wall and was very visible to the local residents and fishermen.
- Many divers took 'one for the pot'
- Relationships reached rock bottom, with all the following playing their part:
 - Taking of lobsters, crabs, sea urchins
 - Swimming/diving across the harbour entrance
 - Parking pressures
 - Nudity in the car park
 - Anecdotal evidence of raiding of creels

- A 'look but don't touch' policy was introduced in late 1970s by some visiting divers
- 1984 VMR designated and VMR Management Committee formed from the whole range of interested parties e.g. fishermen, divers, government & conservation organisations



- Aims:
 - Conserve marine wildlife
 - Raise awareness of marine environment
 - Promote responsible recreation

Alongside a sustainable fishery
- Code of conduct

- Fishing industry diversified
- 25,000 dives every year in VMR
 - Diving = £3.6 m to local economy, fish landed in Eyemouth = £3.4m
- Originally warden role more policing to enforce code of conduct, now emphasis shifted to educational/community work



Issues...

- Resources – staff and money
- Static gear reserve – opportunistic squid fishery sept – nov
- Creels slashed?
- Is the creel fishery sustainable?



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