

The Channel habitat atlas for marine resource management (CHARM): an aid for planning and decision-making in an area under strong anthropogenic pressure



The eastern English Channel, the narrow channel of water separating northern France and southeast England is an area of intense human use of the array of resources concentrated into its relative small area. The vulnerability of living resources and their habitats brought together French and British maritime experts within a common project (called CHARM): to create an atlas of marine resource habitats in the eastern English Channel so as to provide planners and decision-makers with the necessary information to help managing the use of its living and non-living resources. This multidisciplinary and richly illustrated atlas provides abundant information on the legal framework and physical environment; benthic invertebrates, fish and their habitats; fishing activities; and a first attempt at developing a trophic network model (using ECOPATH software) and a marine conservation planning exercise (using MARXAN software, at a spatial resolution of 25 km²). Although most of the data used were collected elsewhere, some were collected especially for the project. Similarly, most of the analyses performed on the data were entirely original for this

geographical area. The CHARM atlas has significantly improved the knowledge about the eastern Channel while contributing to the recognition that such holistic or multidisciplinary approaches to exploited marine systems are necessary to efficiently and durably manage their resources use.

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