

Qualitative and quantitative research into public engagement with the undersea landscape in England

In October 2006, we announced that we would be running a Marine Campaign as part of our work on marine conservation and in particular Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

What was done

We commissioned Chris Rose of Campaign Strategy Ltd to help us to identify, commission and analyse the appropriate research to inform the development of our Marine Campaign. As a result, we commissioned two key pieces of market research. The first was a qualitative review in December 2007-January 2008 of public perceptions of the marine environment which was undertaken on our behalf by John Scott and his team at KSBR Brand Futures and Pat Dade and Les Higgins at Cultural Dynamics. The second was a quantitative poll of 3000 members of the public, undertaken by Cultural Dynamics and GMI. Both pieces of research employed the values modes methodology.

Chris Rose has analysed this research alongside other relevant research and this analysis forms the basis of his report on Qualitative and quantitative research into public engagement with the undersea landscape in England.

Results and conclusions

The combined results of the quantitative and quality market research show that there is effectively no public awareness of the English undersea landscape as a place. Negative feelings about the undersea environment dominant public thinking and create a powerful barrier to communicating about undersea landscapes. Attempts to drive and build broad public support for MPAs or marine conservation using information about issues or by telling

people these places are important is ineffective. However, there are communication routes which circumvent the negative reactions and which involve showing people the English undersea landscape in an experiential way.

Natural England's viewpoint

It is clear from the work undertaken that there is no sense of place in relation to the undersea environment and that public awareness of the English marine world is very limited or negative. The work undertaken by Chris Rose, KSBR and Cultural Dynamics is enabling us to formulate and target our messages to address that issue.

We hope this report will be of use to other organisations engaged in building public support for marine conservation and might inform their communication strategies. This work also illustrates the application of values modes methodology to environmental conservation and the importance of understanding how motivations affect behaviour.

Selected references

- CALDINI, R. 1998. Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion. Collins Revised Edition.
- KSBR. 2008. Marine Protected Areas: Qualitative Value Modes Research. URL: www.naturalengland.org.uk [Accessed August 2008].
- ROSE, C. 2005. How to win campaigns. Earthscan.

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Further information

For the full details of the research covered by this information note see Natural England Research Report NERR019 - *Qualitative and quantitative research into public engagement with the undersea landscape in England*.

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