

OHI+ South West England: Cornwall



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Summary

Cornwall was the joint third highest performing region in the OHI+ assessment (66; Fig. 1). Nine of fourteen assessed goals for Cornwall scored above the OHI+ South West central index score (Figure 2). Cornwall has relatively healthy fisheries (63) and artisanal fishing opportunities (82), and intact coastal habitats (83). Cornwall was one of the only regions supporting coastal habitats providing carbon sequestration ecosystem services that scored above the assessment average and were subject to monitoring above the regional average frequency (75% sites monitored between 2013 and 2018). Cornwall scored poorly for the Landscapes sub-goal (36; Table 1), which measured total area designated to protect valued aesthetic, cultural and recreational landscapes. The stability and growth of the region's marine-related jobs and wages were below the South West assessment index score.

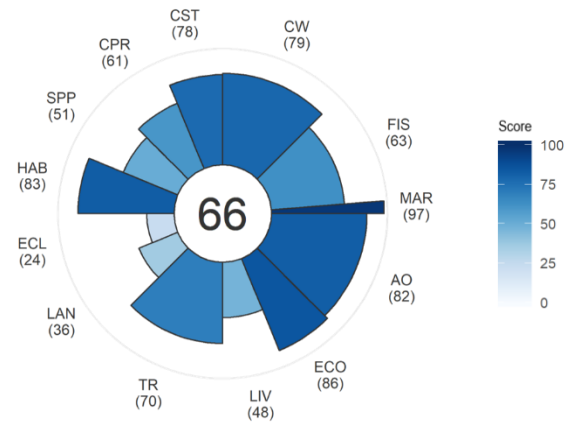


Figure 1. Cornwall goal[†] and central score.

High scoring goals and datasets

Carbon Storage (CST). This sub-goal, measuring the condition, extent and monitoring of coastal habitats such as saltmarsh and mudflats that provide carbon sequestration services, was scored highly (78) for the region. Over 90% of assessed saltmarsh and mudflat habitats were considered to be in 'Favourable' status.

Unlike most regions in the OHI+ assessment, 75% of these sites were surveyed at least once in the past six years (2013 - 2018).

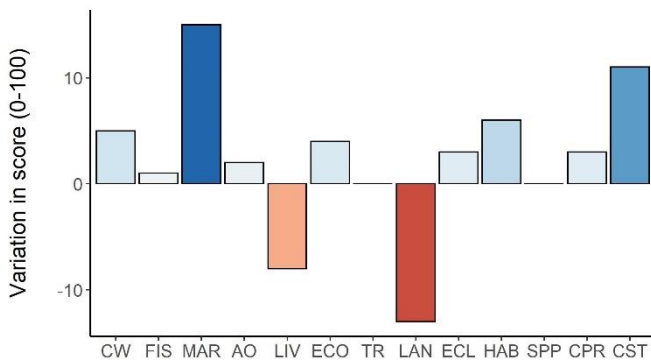


Figure 2. variation from the South West OHI+ central index score by goal. [†]CW (clean waters); FIS (fisheries), MAR (mariculture), AO (Artisanal Opportunities), ECO (Economy), LIV (Livelihoods), TR (Tourism), LAN (Landscapes), ECL (Ecological Features), HAB (Habitats), SPP (Species), CPR (Coastal Protection), CST (Carbon Storage).

Fisheries (FIS). The Fisheries sub-goal score for Cornwall (63) was above the South West average score (62). Landings in Cornwall (2018) were by far the largest of any of the assessment regions (>18,600 tonnes), making it a key region of interest for the sub-goal. While the score reveals scope for improvement, it shows Cornwall's landings were mostly comprised of stocks fished

within (or at least close to) biological limits or were ‘recommended’ species by the Marine Conservation Society.

Low scoring goals and datasets

Landscapes (LAN Designated Areas). The lowest score for Cornwall relative to the South West average was the Designated Areas: Landscapes sub-goal (Figure 2; 36). The region has approximately 35% of its inshore area (1 km inshore to 3 nm offshore) designated for the purpose of protecting areas valued for aesthetic, cultural and recreational reasons. This is the third lowest proportion of total area of any OHI+ region. Cornwall is however the largest region in the assessment, with a coastal area of 2584 km² and the longest coastline (1082 km using mean high water), so its total designated area of 898 km² represents the largest actual area in the South West.

Livelihoods (LIV). Cornwall performed poorly compared to the South West average for the Livelihoods sub-goal (Table 1). Cornwall’s marine-related jobs (e.g. boat building and repair, fish processing) are estimated to have peaked in 2015 (for years 2014 – 2018) and subsequently contracted by 4.4% as of 2018. This recent decline, coupled with the region’s per capita mean annual wage increases in 2018 falling below the yearly mean Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 2.5%, resulted in the low score for the sub-goal.

Recommendations and limitation

Designated Areas. Cornwall scores below the South West average for designating culturally important sites (*LAN*), and above average (21) but below accepted policy targets (30% coverage) for areas protecting ecological features (*ECL*). The expansion of Cornwall’s marine protected area network should therefore be considered.

Livelihoods. Despite recent (2015 – 2018) declines in marine-related jobs, the long term trend reveals Cornwall’s marine-related jobs remain 6% higher than 2010 levels. This decline should therefore be closely monitored but may not be an immediate cause for concern.

Habitats. Given the general favourable condition and recent surveying (2013 - 2018) of Cornwall’s saltmarsh and mudflat habitats, a shift in monitoring and restoration efforts to other habitat types may help to improve outcomes. Of the total coastal sand dune sites under SSSI designation in the region, only 24% are assessed as being in ‘Favourable’ condition and 29% monitored in the six year prior to the OHI+ assessment year (2018). Regular, standardised monitoring of marine habitats (i.e. seagrass, maerl and kelp) would also be beneficial for building a more comprehensive picture of the state of Cornwall’s sub-tidal habitats of key biodiversity importance.

Mariculture (MAR). The Mariculture sub-goal was hindered by a lack of data and the scores were considered a weak indicator of the state of the industry. Cornwall has the largest total area licensed for mariculture in the South West (>100 km² in 2019). As the industry develops and open-source production data become available, the OHI+ could be adapted to better understand the industry.

Table 1. Cornwall's best (green) and worst (red) performing goals compared to the OHI+ central index score.

GOAL	STATUS	TREND	PRESS.	RES.	FUTURE	SCORE	SW SCORE	DIFF.
Mariculture	94	1	83	81	100	97	82	15
Carbon Storage	79	-0.1	60	76	77	78	67	11
Habitats	83	0	69	76	83	83	77	6
Species	57	-0.3	82	77	44	51	51	0
Livelihoods	50	0	72	44	45	48	56	-8
Landscapes	35	0	68	92	37	36	49	-13