

# OHI+ South West: South East Devon



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## Summary

South East Devon was the lowest scoring mainland region in the OHI+ assessment (60; Figure 1). The region scored below the South West main index for seven of 13 goals/sub-goals, notably Designated Areas, Biodiversity: Habitats, Carbon Storage and Coastal Protection. Aside from the Mariculture sub-goal, which was limited by data availability and has a minimal contribution the central score, the region scored marginally above the South West average for Economies, Clean Waters, Tourism and Recreation and Artisanal Opportunities a (Figure 2).

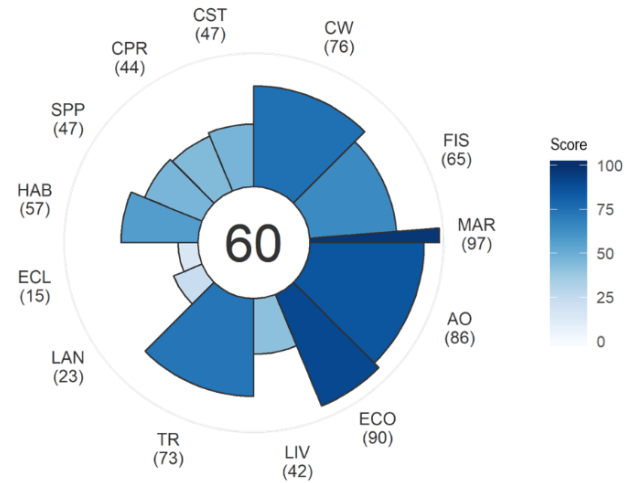


Figure 1. South East Devon goal<sup>†</sup> and central score.

## High scoring goals and datasets

**Artisanal Opportunities (AO).** This goal (86) scored above the South West average (Figure 2), due to increases in the Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) of under ten-meter vessels between 2012 and 2016. The AO goal uses a ‘within-region’ benchmark; assessing the region’s current status against its recent past performance. While improvements have occurred within the region, CPUE (0.07 tonnes per kilowatt day fished (‘days at sea multiplied by engine power to give a total of kilowatt (KW) days of effort’)) was the lowest across the assessment area and the region reported the lowest proportion of landings from the

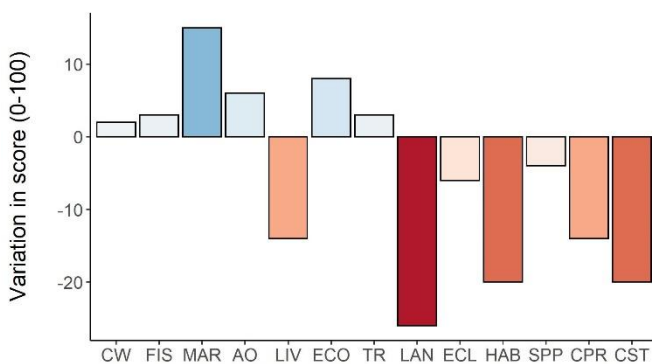


Figure 2. variation from the South West OHI+ central index score by goal. <sup>†</sup>CW (clean waters); FIS (fisheries), MAR (mariculture), AO (Artisanal Opportunities), ECO (Economy), LIV (Livelihoods), TR (Tourism), LAN (Landscapes), ECL (Ecological Features), HAB (Habitats), SPP (Species), CPR (Coastal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

under ten vessels (8.9% of total catch) in 2018 when compared to other regions.

**Tourism (TR).** South East Devon experienced the highest visitor density of any region, resulting in an above average Tourism & Recreation goal score. This goal was, however, reliant on data from 2014 due to limited data availability. The calculated score may not represent more recent patterns.

**Mariculture (MAR).** South East Devon’s Mariculture sub-goal score was greater than the assessment average for south west England. The

region has the third largest total area (34 km<sup>2</sup>) licensed for mariculture production as of 2018. However, this goal experienced problems of limited data availability due to the small number of producers that means production data are not disaggregated by region.

### Low scoring goals and datasets

*Designated Areas (Landscapes).* South East Devon received particularly low scores for this goal, with only 11% of its inshore area designated for ecological protection and 22% for cultural, aesthetic or recreational purposes. Comparatively, neighbouring South West Devon is one of the better performing regions for these sub-goals, with 30% and 53% respectively.

*Biodiversity: Habitats (HAB).* Whilst the region's mudflats and saltmarsh are all considered to be in favourable or recovering condition, it has the poorest monitoring rates in the OHI+ assessment. As of 2018, none of the region's littoral or supralittoral sediment SSSI units had been assessed within six years, with several surveys 10 years old. Lack of timely monitoring reduces the certainty in the favourable condition assessments and the region consequently received reduced scores. South East Devon's soft benthic habitats also received low scores as the region is estimated to experience some of the highest levels of disturbance from bottom towed fishing gears in the assessment area. Trawl intensity, calculated from Global Fishing Watch data, increased from an average of 3 fishing hours per day per km<sup>2</sup> in 2014 rising to 8.9 hours per km<sup>2</sup> in 2018.

### Recommendations and limitation

*Fisheries.* The OHI+ would greatly benefit from an increase in maximum sustainable yield (BBMSY) assessments for commonly landed species. Over 60% of South East Devon's 14,000 landed tonnes of seafood in 2018 came from species that had no BBMSY assessment available, making assessment of landings more reliant on sustainability criteria from the Marine Conservation Society. Although landings for most regions were comprised of a greater proportion of fish species with BBMSY assessments, the availability and standardisation of BBMSY metrics for an increasing number of stocks would improve confidence and comparability in the Fisheries goal score. These assessments could better assist management of Devon's biological stocks, including scallop species (king scallop (*Pecten maximus*), queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*)) and common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), which represented 32% of the region's landings in 2018.

*Designated Areas.* South East Devon would benefit from the expansion of its network of protected areas to address the low coverage of 11%. The current extent of protected areas in South West Devon, which is greater (30%), may have been prioritised in Devon due to more conspicuous distribution of vulnerable habitats or species. However, improvements in coverage in SE Devon could help the management of seagrass sites, as well as saltmarsh and mudflats habitats that support rare wading and migratory birds and RAMSAR sites. These sites should be considered a priority for increased monitoring, with the region's SSSI littoral sediment sites not having been surveyed for over eight years (mean= 8.3 ±sd 0.92 years as of 2018).

**Table 1.** South East Devon 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	81	81	100	97	82	15
Economies	92	-0.1	49	49	89	90	82	8
Artisanal Opp.	83	-0.1	39	70	88	86	80	6
Habitats	66	-0.4	68	75	49	57	77	-20
Carbon Storage	56	-0.5	61	75	39	47	67	-20
Landscapes	22	0	68	92	24	23	49	-26