

Glossary of Terms

The definitions included here are relevant to the context of the BC Marine Conservation Analysis project's use of these terms. Some definitions do not necessarily apply more broadly.

Areas of high conservation value - areas that are important to effectively representing and conserving marine biodiversity.

Areas of importance to human use – areas that are important to marine user groups. The BCMCA project team is inviting user groups to help identify the areas that are important to them.

Biodiversity - the variety of species and ecosystems on earth and the ecological processes of which they are a part, including ecosystem, species and genetic diversity components.

Conservation - the protection, maintenance and rehabilitation of biodiversity, allowing for the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems, and the natural resources they provide.

Conservation planning – the exercise of identifying areas important for meeting conservation objectives (e.g., biodiversity representation within a defined region) and then designing management measures to ensure that those conservation objectives are met (the BCMCA is only helping with the first half of this exercise – identifying important areas).

Ecosystem - is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their abiotic environment, all interacting as a functional unit in an area.

Engagement – the BCMCA's process of inviting the feedback and participation of user groups on the BCMCA project.

Expert workshops - The project team organized five workshops where experts on the theme of each workshop (e.g., marine mammals, marine birds) were invited to participate. At these workshops, experts identified sources of the best available ecological data for the BCMCA atlas and spatial analyses, and made recommendations to help define the parameters for analyses.

Feature (Marxan context): Features are the spatial layers to be mapped and included in site selection analyses by the BCMCA. (e.g. broad ecological units, species habitats, aquatic features, areas of ecological or human use focus).

Human Use Data Working Group – a committee of user group representatives that provides advice to the project team about the preparation and use of human use data in the BCMCA project.

Marxan – a decision support tool used around the world to identify areas that meet conservation objectives (e.g., representing biodiversity) at a minimal cost to marine users (see <http://www.bcmca.ca/Marxan.html> for more details).

Planning Unit (Marxan context): The building blocks of Marxan are the parcels of land or water that are compared to one another – these parcels are called planning units, or sometimes called analysis units. The amount of each feature present in each planning unit is recorded and used in site selection analyses.

Planning Unit Cost (Marxan context): The individual ‘cost’ of each planning unit. The ‘cost’ can reflect any relative economic, social or ecological measure and is sometimes referred to as a suitability measure. (i.e. How ‘suitable’ is each planning unit for meeting the objectives of any specific Marxan scenario).

Project team member – project team members are responsible for implementation of the BCMCA project according to a Terms of Reference drafted by members at the outset of the project (available at www.bcmca.ca). Strategic and major project decisions are taken after input from all project team members. The project team strives for consensus in all decisions.

Project team observer – An observer has been invited to the Project Team to represent a constituent group. Observers are invited to speak, question, and participate fully in Project Team meetings. However, observers can choose whether or not to be part of a decision. If they choose to be part of a decision they agree to follow the decision making procedures. Where observers choose not to attend meetings or participate in decisions, the Project Team will make the decisions necessary to move the project forward in their absence. Observers self-designate themselves as such.

Richness map – a map that results from laying multiple maps on top of one another to highlight where the areas identified on each individual map overlap with each other.

Sector – the term that refers to the broad groups of human users in BC’s marine environment that have been identified by the BCMCA. The sectors are (1) commercial fishing, (2) recreational fishing, (3) energy, (4) marine recreation and tourism, (5) shipping and marine transport, and (6) marine and foreshore tenures. Each sector may consist of multiple distinct user groups.

Spatial analyses – the process of deriving new information through the assembly and interpretation of existing spatial data. Three separate spatial analyses will be conducted for the BCMCA:

1. Identifying areas of high conservation value (using ecological data only)
2. Identifying areas of high conservation value that minimize overlap with areas important to human use (using ecological and human use data);

Targets (Marxan context): Quantitative values that define how much of each particular feature is required to meet the goals or objectives of any specific Marxan scenario.

User group – a more specific term than sector, used to refer to a set of human users that essentially all participate in the same marine activity (e.g., halibut fishing or industrial shipping or sea kayaking). There may be numerous user groups within a sector and there may be multiple representative bodies for any given user group.