

Abstract:

River Basin Management and Biological Monitoring – A UK and European perspective of the interaction between science and regulation

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Biological monitoring of rivers became a useful tool in river basin management in the UK in the early 1970s and became really useful with the development of the Rivers Communities Project of the 1990s. This success translated into the development of the European Water Framework Directive which put ecological classification at the heart of river basin management in Europe. With this success came challenges of developing a common view across the 28 EU Members states of what the objective of “good ecological status” meant for rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters.

This talk will cover:

- the interaction between science and regulation in the UK and Europe in the context of the development of biological monitoring, especially for rivers
- the efforts to overcome the hurdles of: regulatory compliance, uncertainty, consistency and comparability and the resultant benefits of this work
- some of the challenges of communication when science and understanding move faster than regulation and
- a forward look to the new challenges to biological monitoring and regulation posed by ecosystem services and natural capital.