



Marine Environment Classification EEZ 5 Classes (2010)

Title	Marine Environment Classification: 5 Classes
Description	Several spatially-explicit data layers describing the physical environment define the MEC. A physically-based classification was chosen because data on these physical variables were available or could be modelled, and because the pattern of the physical environment is a reasonable surrogate for biological pattern, particularly at larger spatial scales. Classes within the classification were defined using multivariate clustering methods. These produce hierarchal classifications that enable the user to delineate environmental variation at different levels of detail and associated spatial scales.
Source	The development of the Marine Environment Classification began in 1999 with a series of consultative workshops that established the need for a spatial framework of New Zealand's marine environments. A steering group was assembled by MfE to oversee the development of the Marine Environment Classification. The purpose of the steering group was to ensure that the classification would provide a suitable management tool. The steering group membership was made up of people from the Department of Conservation, SeaFIC, NIWA, regional councils and MFish. Specifically the steering group was required to: 1. discuss and define the needs of users and the scope of the Marine Environment Classification and decide on the approach for its development 2. agree on the processes and techniques for the development of the classification system 3. review the outputs at various stages of development of the classification and where necessary choose from among options for subsequent development stages. A second group of experts was involved in the detailed design and technical development of the classification system. The experts contributed to each of the following development phases: 1. choice of approach to design and development of the marine classification system and spatial resolution (mapping scale) 2. candidate environmental variable selection 3. development of environmental variables 4. validation of environmental variables 5. classification definition and tuning 6. testing.
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