

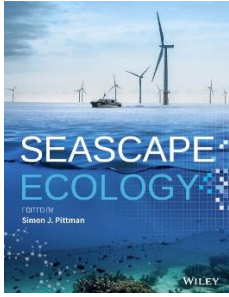
City Marine Parks: A blue urban concept for happier and healthier coastal city living

By Simon James Pittman (University of Plymouth) and editor of [Seascape Ecology](#)

Coastal cities continue to experience rapid urbanisation and population growth worldwide linked to the diverse economic and social benefits flowing from proximity to the sea. Transitioning coastal cities into 'ocean cities' is a restorative blue urban pathway to healthier, happier and sustainable city living. In a [paper](#) published earlier this year in the Marine Policy journal, a City Marine Park (CMP) concept is presented as a community-focused urban policy initiative to deepen connections between coastal cities and the ocean. The paper highlights core themes of a CMP and the diverse and wide-ranging benefits from [coordinated activities](#) that better connect the city community with its seascape. The holistic City Marine Park was defined by a cross-disciplinary team of researchers as *“an ocean and coastal space defined by collective local knowledge and recognised for its special importance for city community health, well-being and heritage, with the intention of encouraging greater prosperity and responsible enjoyment and deepening knowledge, appreciation and care for the city seascape and the broader Earth system”*.

A city marine park (CMP) is not a [marine protected area](#) as defined by IUCN because it does not have biodiversity and heritage protection or ecosystem governance as a primary goal and does not aim to restrict human activities. A CMP enables city communities to collaborate towards a shared vision of elevated status and value for the city seascape, enhanced equality of access, marine citizenship, sustainable and responsible business practice, greater social inclusivity in park activities and benefits and joined-up stewardship. The research team included experts in public health and wellbeing, sustainable business, cultural heritage, marine ecology, governance and policy from the University of Plymouth, University of Exeter, UN Environment Programme, Seascape Research CIC, Plymouth City Council, Schumacher College and University of Wales conclude that if co-created by the coastal city community and enabled by civic leaders, a CMP will form an enduring spatial nexus for progress toward healthy cities by addressing multiple interlinked global [sustainable development](#) goals.

The concept of City Marine Parks will be discussed in a special session co-convened with Tim Beatley (author of Blue Urbanism & Blue Biophilic Cities) at the [Nature of Cities Summit](#) in Paris (4th-7th June 2019). The session **Blue Urbanism: How can we enable healthier coastal cities through blue city plans, practices, and policies?** is sponsored by [The Biophilic Cities Network](#).



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