

SEMINAR
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Hosted by A/P Peter Todd



A blast from the past: using historical approaches to explore long-term changes in marine fisheries

By **Ruth Thurstan**

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Human-induced ecological changes span much longer periods of time than formal monitoring data. To understand the scale of past change, we therefore need to seek data from alternative sources. Marine historical ecology is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks to understand what marine ecosystems looked like in the past, how we have interacted with these ecosystems over time, and the outcomes of this. Focusing on marine fisheries, I will highlight some of the historical sources that have shed light on past fisheries, the changes that have occurred, the challenges that arise when conducting historical ecology research, and the ways in which these data are being integrated into contemporary management.

Ruth recently started a lectureship at Exeter University in the UK, at the University's Cornwall campus. Her research focuses upon the scale and drivers of changes in marine social-ecological ecosystems over the last 200 years, and how insights into these changes can inform contemporary management of our coasts and seas. She is interested in the outcomes of our interactions from local to global scales and across multiple time periods, and currently chairs the International Council for Exploration of the Seas Working Group on the History of Fish and Fisheries. This line of work has taken her from the UK to Australia and back again, and she counts herself lucky to work with ecologists, fisheries scientists, historians, and palaeoecologists, as well as natural resource managers and fishery stakeholders, all with the common aim to improve natural resource management of our seas.

