

Abstract

The continuum Estuary-Bay of Seine: the need to an ecosystem-based management

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Estuaries and coastal zones are conflicting processes reflecting their positions at the interface between terrestrial and marine environments. The estuary of the Seine is an example of a continuum between its upstream part (the watershed and its inputs in the hydrological system) and the downstream part (the Seine Bay and the eastern part of the English Channel). It is concerned by a lot of human activities and stakeholder interventions. As other European estuaries, the Seine estuary degradation started in the middle of 19th, but it remains an important area for biodiversity, fish and bird food web. The Seine estuary and the eastern part of the Bay of Seine are subjected to heavy historic anthropogenic pressures and new human activities, including harbour extension, aggregate extraction, harbour deposit of dredged sediment, offshore wind mill. Nowadays, harbour projects continue to maintain the existing ecological compartments of the Seine estuary and are still studied independently. Reforms of the Coastal Areas and Lakeshore Conservatory status, the creation of a 'National Marine Protected Areas Agency', the 'Water Framework Directive' and the 'Marine Strategy Framework Directive' should be insured a better integration of the natural patrimony protection in the Integrated Coastal Zone Management process. Nevertheless, there is a paradox between the declaration of the French State, which takes part through its Ministries, prefectures and decentralized services, to encourage a Global Management Plan of the Seine Estuary, and territorial approaches operated by the managers of the estuary such as the 'Grand Port Maritime' 'Réserve Naturelle de l'Estuaire de la Seine'. As an ecologist, my talk is to analyse the actual contrasted situation and to promote to take into account all the functionalities of such complex interface to share an ecosystem-based management process.