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I am the Science Manager at the Secretariat of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), appointed in February 2008.

Prior to my appointment to CCAMLR I was a research scientist with the British Antarctic Survey from 1991 - 2007. I started with BAS as a zoological field assistant at Bird Island, South Georgia where I was 'resident' from September 1991 to April 1994. During my time at BAS I was Project Leader for the core-funded Ocean Ecosystems and Management programme and completed a secondment as a polar science and policy advisor to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I have a PhD from Liverpool University and have successfully supervised three PhD students and numerous Masters and Honours students. I am an author of over 80 peer-reviewed publications and 2 books. My work interests are on the use of science in the conservation of the Antarctic and on the interface of science and policy. Working in the CCAMLR Secretariat is a fantastic place to see this interface in action and to learn how science can be delivered most effectively. Since 2014 I have been an Adjunct Professor at the College of Marine Sciences, Shanghai Ocean University; I am also an honorary research associate at UTAS.



### ***Introduction to Theme 1: Assessments***

An assessment is “the act of making a judgment about something”, usually in order to guide decisions about what actions should be taken. In the case of the Southern Ocean, there is an increasing awareness of the need to define a process to make such a judgement about the state of the ecosystem. The assessment process is more than simply collecting lots of information about the ecosystem, it requires a method of defining how to use data with different characteristics, from multiple sources, to produce an easy to interpret index of ecosystem status. This index can then be applied to historical, contemporary and predicted data to examine how that system has changed, and how it might be expected to change in the future. The MEASO 2018 conference will showcase Southern Ocean ecosystem science, the ongoing challenge will be to determine how it can be synthesised into an index to provide key messages about the status of that ecosystem.

While such a process would be expected to include aspects of the status (and trends) of habitats, key species and ecosystems in the Southern Ocean, making the task appear unrealistically complex, including the expectation of a need to include all aspects of the ecosystem is likely to impede progress. The challenge will be to identify what needs to be included in an assessment, this needs to be guided by pragmatism about what data are available, what can be collected and what can be predicted by models. Importantly, to achieve the successful engagement of the science community and policy-makers, it is essential to be realistic in the expectation of what an assessment is likely to provide. The key challenge now for the scientific community is to determine what is currently achievable in taking an ecosystem assessment from the conceptual to the practical.

