Name of Method: Ecosystems analysis

Summary of Method: Ecosystems analysis considers the full range of ecological resources and their interactions with the environment. The main element of the approach is to identify the functions of the various flora and fauna within the ecosystem, together with the relationships between them. The method can apply to general models that investigate such links, or as an umbrella term for more complex mathematical models.

Advantages of Method: Depends on the detail of the model in use, but provides information on the links between the various ecological receptor together with data on the potential implications that a change in one receptor may have on another.

Limitations of Method: Depends on the detail of the model used, with the more basic models tending to be faster and cheaper and not require specialised software. The more detailed the model, then generally the more time consuming and expensive to use.

References: Oakwood Environmental Ltd, 1999. Strategic Cumulative Effects of Marine Aggregate Dredging.
Paramor, OAL, Scott, CL, and Frid, CLJ, undated. European Fisheries Ecosystem Plan: The North Sea Ecosystem. EU Project number: Q5RS-2001-01685.