

Background

The Solent Marine Sites Scheme of Management Annual Monitoring identifies trends in disturbance to birds from a range of activities. The SEMS AMR has given a generic action to:

Explore the use of mapping to identify bird sensitive hotspot areas at risk from recreational activities.

This paper pulls out the main activities identified that may be causing disturbance to birds that impacts the species health.

The paper is to be used to identify how areas most sensitive to disturbance from these activities can be mapped.

Activities that may cause intertidal disturbance

Of the 17 activities monitored by SEMS annually, there are 5 activities where there is particular concern about disturbance to birds, shown in Table 1 below. The table also shows which relevant Authorities reported it as an issue in 2021.

**Table 1
Activities which were reported to having some impact on inter-tidal bird disturbance in 2021**

Activity	Relevant Authorities reporting an issue
Fishing – Shore based activities	ChHC, LHB, SxIFCA, EBC, HCC, SCC
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	ChHC, LHB, BRM, EBC, WSCC, NE, CDC, MMO, IOWC, GBC, FBC, HCC, WCC
Land recreation - Walking (not dog walking)	ChHC, LHB, EBC, NE, CDC, MMO, IOWC, GBC, FBC, HCC, WCC
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	ChHC, LHB, BRM, EBC, NE, MMO, QHM, NFDC, RHHA, HCC, WCC
Light Aircraft	EBC

Source: 2021 SEMS AMR

Key to organisations

- Chichester Harbour Conservancy (ChHC)
- Langstone Harbour Board (LHB)
- Beaulieu River Management (BRM)
- Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC)
- West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
- Natural England (NE)
- Chichester District Council (CDC)
- Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- Isle of Wight Council (IoWC)
- Gosport Borough Council (GBC)
- Fareham Borough Council (FBC)
- Hampshire County Council (HCC)
- Winchester City Council (WCC)
- New Forest District Council (NFDC)
- Portsmouth International Port (PIP)
- River Hamble Harbour Authority (RHHA)
- Queen's Harbour Master (Portsmouth) (QHM)
- Gosport Borough Council (GBC)

Fishing – Shore Based Activities

This relates particularly to Bait Digging and Hand gathering. The Solent Forum is working in partnership to develop a Mudflat Disturbance Strategy. The University of Portsmouth (using TEMITH data in particular) and Chichester Harbour are mapping the extent of these activities and introducing management measures. It is hoped that this approach is rolled out to other sites in the Solent. The Forum have produced a MyMaps dataset to show the areas in the Solent where there has reported to be disturbance by a number of sources including Chichester Harbour, SEMS, Hampshire Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Bird Aware.

This strategy will particularly benefit from a mapping layer which shows the intertidal areas in the Solent most sensitive to bird disturbance.

Land Recreation (walking with or without dogs)

This activity is reported to cause the greatest disturbance. This disturbance is being mitigated by the Bird Aware initiative, and a full monitoring project will begin in 2022 to measure its effectiveness.

The Bird Aware rangers annually monitor activities over the Solent coastline and is an important source of disturbance data. Natalie Hinds is working on a Bird Sensitive Areas map.

Recreation - non-motorised watercraft

The widespread use of paddleboards, canoes and kayaks in the Solent enables people close access intertidal areas and these sports have become very popular in recent years. The Solent Forum is running a project called Impacts and Management of Paddlesports in the Solent (IMP Solent). The project aims to: *Develop the evidence base on the impacts of paddle sports on the Solent's designated habitats and species, in particular birds, as explore suitable management options, using Chichester Harbour as a case study.* Part of this project is identifying areas where Paddlesports take place.

This project will particularly benefit from a mapping layer which shows the intertidal areas in the Solent most sensitive to bird disturbance.

Light Aircraft

This was only mentioned in Eastleigh. Bird Aware data shows little evidence of damage in the winter to birds; however NEG is tasked with checking if summer disturbance to nesting birds is a problem.

This task will benefit from a mapping layer which shows the areas in the Solent most sensitive to bird disturbance.

Mapping intertidal sensitive areas

Work is required to bring together a small group including NE, Southern IFCA and Bird Aware (and others) to evaluate data held on the above activities and in particular to understand if any areas coincide with intertidal areas where bird populations may be particularly threatened by limited food supply/disturbance and where breeding takes place.

It is intended that this exercise is taken over one or two workshop sessions at a high level to produce some high-level guidance on how to prioritise areas in the Solent. The Solent Forum will facilitate, and key Relevant Authorities provide their expertise.

The output would be an annotated map.

The following factors need to be discussed:

- Make up of group. Include RSPB?
- Number of meetings/workshops required
- Whether paper maps can be used to highlight areas of concern
- To what extent disturbance of different species is mapped
- What background information required before the meeting
- An understanding of the temporal use of sites would be useful. Winter/Summer/nesting
- Whether there is a need to also look at sub-tidal disturbance
- Consider displacement

Sources of Information that may be useful

Coastal Partner work on Ed Rowsell work on high tide roosts (Ed Rowsell) – Solent Shore Bird Strategy

Magic Map

Bird Aware – bird sensitive areas map – Natalie Hinds to send information

NE Marine GI team – may be able to generate maps

Solent Waders Brent Goose Strategy Maps

Local Specific Knowledge – list who