



Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)

Annual Management Report, 2024

**Prepared by the Solent Forum on
behalf of the SEMS Management
Group**



Consultation draft, July/Aug 2024

Contents

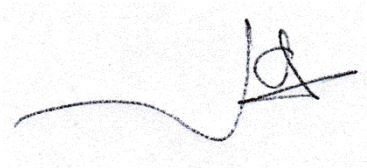
1	Foreword	3
2	Executive Summary	4
3	Introduction.....	5
3.1	Solent Marine Sites	5
3.2	SEMS Management Scheme	6
3.3	Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	7
3.4	Bird Aware Solent.....	7
3.5	LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES	7
3.6	Weather.....	8
3.7	Activity Infrastructure	8
3.8	Natural England’s Conservation Advice	9
3.9	Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE).....	10
3.10	Other Plans	10
3.11	SEMS Annual Survey Respondents.....	10
4	Activity Summary	12
4.1	Jurisdiction of Activities in the Solent	12
4.2	Summary of Changes Recorded in Activity Levels.....	12
4.3	Activity Impacts on Designated Sites	14
4.4	Annual Trend Data.....	15
5	Individual Activity Responses	16
5.1	Accidental Vessel Discharges/Emissions including Oil Spill and Clean-up	16
5.2	Boat Repair and Maintenance.....	17
5.3	Fishing (including shellfisheries).....	20
5.4	Fishing (shore-based activities)	23
5.5	General Beach Recreation.....	25
5.6	Grazing and Foraging.....	27
5.7	Land Recreation (including dog walking)	28
5.8	Littering and Removal of Litter.....	32
5.9	Mooring and Anchoring.....	34
5.10	Operation of Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Schemes (FCERM)	36
5.11	Operation of Ports and Harbours (maintenance of infrastructure).....	38
5.12	Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, paramotors, drones).....	39
5.13	Recreation (non-motorised watercraft).....	41
5.14	Recreation (powerboating or sailing with an engine)	43
5.15	Slipway and Jetty Cleaning and Maintenance	45

5.16	Wildfowling	46
6	Generic Actions	48
7	Summary of Actions	49
8	Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ).....	52
9	Map of Solent Marine Protected Areas.....	53

1 Foreword

Thank you as ever for making your contributions to this important record of how activities are impacting on our sites. As budgetary pressures become greater on us all, it strikes me that it becomes all the more important to identify where and how the impact of the use of our marine sites can be minimised. As a guide for driving policy in straightened times, evidence such as is provided here, is of vital importance.

The processes followed by SEMS evolve. Each year, we try and sharpen both the information gathered and present it in a way that is more evidentially relevant. We have often asked respondents whether there has for instance, been 'any change', to which the default answer can tend to be 'no change'. There is difference between that answer and one where there is 'no evidence'. We hope to bring that important distinction out in next year's survey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Scott', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Jason Scott
Chair, Solent Marine Sites
River Hamble Harbour Master

2 Executive Summary

In 2024, sixteen non-licensable coastal and marine activities that take place in the Solent were surveyed for the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Annual Management Scheme. In 2023 it was agreed to combine the two activity categories on walking (one with and one without dogs) for simplification. Of the thirty-one Relevant Authorities in the Solent invited to complete the survey, twenty-nine responded. Respondents were asked how participation in these activities had changed since the previous year, and whether they believed they were having an impact on SEMS. The Survey results can be accessed from the [SEMS website](#).

This Annual Management Report evaluates and discusses the survey responses, highlights existing management measures and identifies actions. Natural England evaluate whether they believe each activity is impacting the condition of SEMS sites. Those organisations holding powers and responsibilities, where specific activities are a concern in their location, will find this report useful as evidence for guiding policy and effort in addressing and managing non-licensable activities.

Supplementary information and additional resources on each of the activities can be found on the [SEMS website](#).

The past years' data shows that participation of activities in the Solent shows no change. However activities such as coastal walking, (including dog walking) general beach recreation and paddle and windsports have been at elevated levels for some time as people increasingly value the physical and mental health benefits of visiting the coast and using the marine space. There are concerns that high levels of baseline activity are having negative impacts, particularly at sensitive sites, and there is a case to look at reducing or managing activity levels at these locations. Blue Marine's Solent Seascape Project has begun to look at identifying sensitive sites in the Solent which will be a useful tool to focus future management effort.

The top three activities highlighted this year as impacting on SEMS sites include coastal walking, coastal squeeze (from FCERM projects) and littering. Table 5b summarises this data.

This Report also recognises the ongoing good work that is being undertaken by the Solent's Relevant Authorities, the trade associations, partnerships and user groups for recreational activities, to protect and conserve the Solent's designated sites. SEMS will continue to promote this work and share best practice across the Solent.

3 Introduction

This Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Annual Management Report provides an overview of how the [SEMS Management Group](#) acts to comply with the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) for non-licensable activities. It summarises, evaluates and sets actions for each of the sixteen non-licensable activities surveyed in the SEMS annual survey.

Actions to address the issues raised are discussed at the annual SEMS Management Group meeting, which takes place each September. The Solent Forum's [Natural Environment Group \(NEG\)](#) takes forward and delivers strategic actions, more localised or specific actions are undertaken by the appropriate individual Relevant Authority (RA).

3.1 Solent Marine Sites

The Solent is a complex site encompassing a major estuarine system. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive areas of intertidal mudflats, saltmarshes, eelgrass and natural shoreline transitions, such as drift line vegetation. The rich intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, shingle beaches and adjacent coastal habitats, including grazing marsh, support nationally and internationally important numbers of migratory and over-wintering waders and waterfowl, as well as important breeding gull and tern populations.

The Solent Marine Site (SEMS) Management Scheme covers the designated coast and marine space for the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA), Portsmouth Harbour SPA, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA that covers much of the marine area.

[Marine Conservation Zones](#) are designated via separate legislation and are not formally included in the SEMS Management Scheme. However, since their designation in the Solent we have included questions on these sites in the Annual Survey; we ask respondents if they are undertaking any monitoring and if they have any concerns about activities having an impact. Please see section 8 for more details.

Section 9 shows a map of the Solent's Marine Sites.

3.2 SEMS Management Scheme

In the Solent, a Management Scheme (MS) was first established in 2002 by the Relevant Authorities (RAs) opting to work together, see the [terms of reference](#). The Solent Forum provides the secretariat for the SEMS MS.

The overall MS components include an annual survey, an annual management report, an annual meeting of RAs, consultation with strategic stakeholders and agreed actions. These outputs are supported by the SEMS website, this provides more detailed resources and guidance. Figure 1 shows the timetable.

Figure 1. Solent Marine Sites Management Framework	
Annual Survey Undertaken by SEMS Management Group	<i>March to April</i>
Annual Survey Published	<i>June</i>
Annual Management Report (AMR) Prepared and Consulted	<i>June to August</i>
SEMS Annual Management Meeting: Agree the AMR and Actions	<i>September</i>
AMR Strategic Actions delivered to Natural Environment Group (NEG)	<i>October</i>

3.2.1 Relevant Authority Duties and Responsibilities

The RAs individually report on SEMS activities within their area of duty and responsibility. They provide information on activity participation change and potential impacts on designated sites by completing an [online survey](#) every spring. This survey data forms the basis of this Annual Management Report. Additionally, RAs need to have regard to the Habitats Regulations and aspire to good practice through their [normal work and roles](#).

Since 1 January 2023, all public authorities have been under an [enhanced statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity](#).

3.2.2 Natural Environment Group

SEMS RAs are automatically members of the Solent Forum's [Natural Environment Group \(NEG\)](#); other invited organisations with an interest in the natural environment can also join. NEG assists the SEMS MG in the delivery of strategic actions. The Solent Forum provides the secretariat for NEG.

3.2.3 Strategic Stakeholder Group

The Strategic Stakeholder Group (SSG) exists to ensure that stakeholders are briefed and can comment on the content of the draft SEMS Annual Management Report. They are also asked to provide feedback to the management group on key strategic issues.

3.3 Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

The MMO is responsible for assessing and managing [marine non-licensable activities](#) below the MLWM within marine protected areas (MPA) to further the conservation objectives of the site. This applies regardless of whether the MPA is within harbour authority jurisdiction. Where the MPA is within harbour authority jurisdiction, MMO liaises with the relevant harbour authority with regards to management. The MMO does not have jurisdiction over activities which take place on the foreshore. These fall within the remit of other regulators such as local authorities.

In 2024, the MMO selected six priority MPAs for marine non-licensable activity (mNLA) site assessment, one of which is the Solent Maritime SAC. Next steps will include engagement with coastal communities, taking a natural capital approach, and an assessment in collaboration with partners to ascertain the impacts of mNLA within each MPA. Once this is completed future management measures may be considered, ranging from voluntary measures to potential byelaws.

3.4 Bird Aware Solent

[Bird Aware Solent](#) is a strategic mitigation Partnership operating across the Solent, to reduce the recreational impacts on protected birds from increased local housing development. It is the public facing brand name of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership. Fifteen of the Solent's local authorities are members of this Partnership and use it to help fulfil their duties to mitigate bird disturbance from additional recreational activity created by new housing. Partners also include Natural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Chichester Harbour Conservancy.

In 2023, Bird Aware published its [Bird Aware Solent Strategy Review 2023](#). The data shows that a range of activities have increased over the review period, notably kitesurfing, kayaking, paddleboarding, walking (without a dog) and dog walking. While the number of dog walkers (and dogs) have increased, the proportion of dogs now kept on a lead has also increased.

The [Bird Aware Solent Annual Report](#) gives an overview of the work of the Partnership.

3.5 LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES

As part of the [EU Life Recreation ReMEDIES \(ReMEDIES\)](#) project, recreational activity surveys have been conducted to provide semi-quantitative evidence to inform the current understanding and create a baseline of patterns of recreational activity taking place adjacent to, or directly over protected seagrass meadows within five areas of Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

These surveys have been conducted through the months of August and September from 2021 using volunteer surveyors and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) staff. The occurrence and frequency of a number of recreational activities such as boat movements, anchoring and mooring, and activities like bait digging and dog walking have been recorded.

Key conclusions so far are:

- Patterns of recreational intensity and usage vary considerably between the five survey sites.
- Recreational boating activity was highest at Osborne Bay and Yarmouth West.
- Anchoring/mooring pressure was observed at all sites.
- Significant anchoring pressure was observed at Osborne Bay, suggesting a clear case for further engagement and/or management.
- The presence of visitor moorings at Yarmouth west appears to reduce anchoring within the adjacent seagrass.
- Levels of anchoring/mooring at Langstone Harbour and Kings Quay may require further consideration for engagement and/or management.
- Small sailing yachts were the most recorded single vessel class, although combined motor vessel class activity was similar.
- Beach recreation, dog walking and swimming were the most frequently observed shoreline recreational activities, although there were significant differences between sites.

The final survey, as part of the LIFE ReMEDIES project will be conducted in Summer 2024, although, it intended that these surveys will continue as part of the Solent Seascape Project.

3.6 Weather

Activity participation is weather dependent, particularly for watersports and more informal recreation like general beach recreation. Relevant authorities regularly report the close link between the weather and activity levels in their Annual Survey returns. It obviously follows that with better weather more people will access the coast and there will be more pressure on designated sites. The predicted long-term trend of hotter temperatures could see both an increase in visitors and additional events at the coast like beach festivals. It is recommended to continue to pre-plan and test additional measures that may need to be taken if good weather leads to an influx of coastal visitors at sensitive sites.

3.7 Activity Infrastructure

There is a distinction between how impacts are assessed from the development of facilities required for non-licensable activities, and the impacts arising from participation. Development of facilities is subject to licences and conditions such as planning permission and/or marine licensing which require a [Habitats Regulation Assessment \(HRA\)](#). The HRA will assess both the construction and usage impacts. The increased use or expansion of existing facilities could also have the potential to increase impacts on SEMS sites, for example the extension of a coastal path. SEMS does not cover the development aspects of non-licensable activities, but we do ask about plans and projects that may change activity levels as part of the Annual Survey.

3.8 Natural England's Conservation Advice

Natural England's (NE) conservation advice (CA) packages provide statutory advice which informs the SEMS MS. Most designated MPAs within SEMS have a formal conservation advice package, these are available on Natural England's Designated Sites System at:

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>.

The CA package includes Advice on Operations (AoO) which identifies pressures associated with the most commonly occurring marine activities, and an assessment of the feature/sub-feature or supporting habitat sensitivity to these pressures. This advice also helps users understand which features could be impacted by a plan or project and help screen it as part of the initial phases of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

For an activity, the risk of harm will be determined by its extent, magnitude and duration, together with the sensitivity of the feature/sub-feature or supporting habitat. Where available, site condition data is used to inform this assessment. The aim of this process is to help the initial screening to identify whether the risks posed by an activity are likely to have a significant effect on the designated sites. The CAs are used as the basis to evaluate the potential impact of each activity within this SEMS Annual Management Report. Detailed advice can be provided by Natural England upon request.

Natural England have produced formal conservation advice for all marine protected areas within the Solent.

3.8.1 Site Condition Assessments

Understanding SEMS site condition is important in supporting management decisions. Annual monitoring of activities by the SEMS MG aims to identify threats to site condition or, anecdotal signs of any deterioration, so that timely management action can be taken to avoid damage or further evidence can be collected.

The condition of EMS' are assessed by feature and reported on by Natural England every six years.

The most recent site condition can be found on Natural England's Magic Map website at:

[\(https://magic.defra.gov.uk/\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/).

Condition assessments for SEMS interest features indicate if they are in favourable condition; identifying threats which have the potential to impact their condition and therefore require further monitoring or management. In this report, site condition is referenced where further action is needed.

Condition assessments have been completed for the Solent Maritime SAC, which shows all marine features and sub features, apart from coastal lagoons to be in unfavourable condition. This unfavourable status is largely due to a few key factors:

- Elevated nutrient levels
- Elevated aqueous contaminants
- Low infaunal quality index (IQI)
- Anthropogenic pressures including trampling and anchoring

Condition assessments have also been completed for the South Wight Maritime SAC, which is in favourable condition, and for the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC which is in broadly favourable condition. Links to these condition assessments are available at:

http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/Condition_assessments/.

In 2024, Natural England published the first condition assessment for a SPA in the Solent at [Portsmouth Harbour](#). This shows the condition of the site is unfavourable with visual disturbance from recreation being one of the adverse condition drivers.

Recently, Natural England have begun to include terrestrial drivers into its advice on adverse condition/condition threat that reflect how land-based activity can impact on coastal designated sites. Drivers now include forestry, freshwater input and agriculture.

As part of the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) government has committed to ensuring that 48% of marine protected area (MPA) features are in favourable condition by 2028, and 70% by 2042, with the remaining in recovering condition.

3.9 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)

Natural England's [MENE survey](#) provides trend data for how people experience the natural environment in England. The focus of the survey is capturing how time is spent. It also seeks to capture other ways of people engaging with the natural environment, and pro-environmental behaviours.

3.10 Other Plans

Other plans also impact on the management and condition of SEMS, for example Catchment Management Plans and the South Marine Plans. The former embeds collaborative working at a river catchment scale to deliver cross-cutting improvements to water environments. The [Habitat Regulations Assessment](#) for the South Marine Plan details a wide range of pathways and impacts of activities.

3.11 SEMS Annual Survey Respondents

Out of the 31 Relevant Authorities (RAs) who were invited to complete the 2024 SEMS survey 29 responded. Table 1 shows the list of respondents. Table 2 identifies the types of RAs which responded.

Table 1. Relevant Authorities who completed the 2024 survey

Associated British Ports (ABP)	New Forest District Council (NFDC)
Beaulieu River Management (BRM)	New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)
Chichester District Council (CDC)	Portsmouth International Port (PIP)
Chichester Harbour Conservancy (ChHC)	King's Harbour Master (Portsmouth) (KHM)
Cowes Harbour Commissioners (CoHC)	Portsmouth City Council (PCC)
Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC)	River Hamble Harbour Authority (RHHA)
Environment Agency (EA)	Southern IFCA (SoIFCA)
Fareham Borough Council (FBC)	Gosport Borough Council (GBC)

Natural England (NE)	Hampshire County Council (HCC)
Havant Borough Council (HBC)	Sussex IFCA (SxIFCA)
Isle of Wight Council (IoWC)	Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC)
Langstone Harbour Board (LHB)	West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
Lymington Harbour Commissioners (LHC)	Wightlink Ferries (WL)
Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Winchester City Council (WCC)
Southern Water (SW)	Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners (YHC)
Organisations who did not respond: Portsmouth International Port (PIP), Southampton City Council (SCC)	

Table 2. The type of Relevant Authority who responded to the Survey

Authority Type	
Government Agency	3
Harbour Authority	7
IFCA	2
Local Authority	12
Other	2
Private Company	3

4 Activity Summary

Section 4 summarises the annual survey findings of the sixteen activities covered by SEMS. Detailed observations and actions for each individual activity are set out in section 5.

4.1 Jurisdiction of Activities in the Solent

Table 3 illustrates how many relevant authorities (RA) recorded that a particular activity takes place within their jurisdiction.

Table 3. Activities that fall within the jurisdiction of SEMS Management Group members		
Activity	Percentage of SEMS RAs with jurisdiction	Response
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	57%	17
Boat Repair and Maintenance	43%	13
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	53%	16
Fishing (shore-based activities)	60%	18
General Beach Recreation	53%	16
Grazing and Foraging	23%	7
Land recreation (incl. walking with dogs)	57%	17
Littering and removal of litter	73%	22
Mooring and Anchoring	53%	16
Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes	50%	15
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	53%	16
Recreation - light aircraft	30%	9
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	57%	17
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	53%	16
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	47%	14
Wildfowling	23%	7

4.2 Summary of Changes Recorded in Activity Levels

Respondents were asked whether, since the last survey in spring 2023, each activity had increased, decreased, had no change since the previous year or they had no data. Table 4 summarises the data. The mode value of the responses has been highlighted in green.

Table 4. Summary of reported changes in activity levels from spring 2023 to spring 2024					
Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	0	1	14	3	18
Boat Repair and Maintenance	1	0	9	3	13

Table 4. Summary of reported changes in activity levels from spring 2023 to spring 2024					
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	1	0	14	2	17
Fishing (shore-based activities)	1	1	13	4	19
General Beach Recreation	3	1	8	4	16
Grazing and Foraging	1	0	3	3	7
Land recreation (incl. walking with dogs)	1	1	11	5	18
Littering and removal of litter	1	0	14	7	22
Mooring and Anchoring	0	3	14	0	17
Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes	3	0	9	3	15
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	1	0	15	1	17
Recreation - light aircraft	0	0	7	4	11
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	1	1	10	6	18
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	0	3	10	4	17
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	0	0	14	1	15
Wildfowling	0	0	8	0	8

4.3 Activity Impacts on Designated Sites

Respondents were asked whether they thought that the activities surveyed were having an impact on the features of the Solent Marine Sites. Tables 5a and 5b summarise the data. The mode value in Table 5a has been shaded green.

Table 5a. Activities Impacting on Designated Sites by Total Responses				
Activity	Yes	No	Total Responses	Org Names (where Yes)
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	3	15	18	MMO, ChHC, IOWC
Boat Repair and Maintenance	1	12	13	ChHC
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	4	13	17	GBC, EA, SxIFCA, ChHC
Fishing (shore-based activities)	5	14	19	NE, SxIFCA, ChHC, EBC, FBC
General Beach Recreation	6	10	16	MMO, HCC, NE, ChHC, EBC, FBC
Grazing and Foraging	2	5	7	MMO, ChHC
Land recreation (incl. walking with dogs)	12	5	17	WCC, GBC, HCC, CDC, NE, WSCC, ChHC, IOWC, EBC, PCC, NFNPA, FBC
Littering and removal of litter	13	9	22	ABP, LHC, MMO, LHB, WCC, GBC, HCC, EA, ChHC, IOWC, EBC, PCC, FBC
Mooring and Anchoring	6	11	17	MMO, LHB, NE, ChHC, IOWC, FBC
Operation of FCERM	10	5	15	ABP, LHC, MMO, LHB, GBC, EA, CDC, NE, ChHC, IOWC
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	2	15	17	ChHC, IOWC
Recreation - light aircraft	2	9	11	ChHC, IOWC
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	8	10	18	LHC, LHB, GBC, HCC, NE, ChHC, EBC, FBC
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	7	10	17	MMO, LHB, GBC, NE, ChHC, EBC, FBC
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	1	14	15	ChHC
Wildfowling	1	7	8	ChHC

Table 5b. Activities Impacting on Designated Sites by Percentage of Responses

Activity	Yes	No	Total Responses	Percent 'yes'	Percent 'no'
Land recreation (incl. walking with dogs)	12	5	17	71%	29%
Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes	10	5	15	67%	33%
Littering and removal of litter	13	9	22	59%	41%
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	8	10	18	44%	56%
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	7	10	17	41%	59%
General beach recreation	6	10	16	38%	63%
Anchoring and mooring	6	11	17	35%	65%
Grazing and Foraging	2	5	7	29%	71%
Fishing (shore-based activities)	5	14	19	26%	74%
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	4	13	17	24%	76%
Recreation - light aircraft	2	9	11	18%	82%
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	3	15	18	17%	83%
Wildfowling	1	7	8	13%	88%
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	2	15	17	12%	88%
Boat Repair and Maintenance	1	12	13	8%	92%
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	1	14	15	7%	93%

4.4 Annual Trend Data

Since 2019, we have collated trend data on the levels of activity change from data obtained via the SEMS survey. The mode response has been no change across this time period for all activities. We will continue to collate this data to look for future changes. Please note this does not mean that these activities are not widespread and/or elevated, as we know that the Solent is heavily used for recreation and can exceed carrying capacity at peak times.

5 Individual Activity Responses

Section 5 reviews and evaluates each of the sixteen different activities covered in the report. There are three sections under each activity:

1. Summary of the survey response from 2024.
2. Discussion and evaluation. This includes sections written by Natural England on any potential impacts of the activity and whether it is currently impacting on sites. The final section details existing management measures.
3. Actions.

In the action section, actions are dated as to when they were first proposed, or are ongoing, the lead and partners and the progress made. The Natural Environment Group (NEG) takes on strategic issues that affect the Solent widely and reports on these via its biannual meetings.

5.1 Accidental Vessel Discharges/Emissions including Oil Spill and Clean-up

Activity includes accidental discharges and/or emissions from all types of vessels, including exhaust fumes, wastewater, sewerage, oils, lubricants, and chemicals, including oil spill and clean-up.

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	0	1	14	3	18
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
			Yes	No	Total Responses
			4	13	17

5.1.1 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that it is not possible to prevent all accidental discharges, such as small leaks, and port and harbour authorities have published Oil Spill Contingency and Waste Management Plans. They raised that large spills could be catastrophic and need to be dealt with promptly and diligently. There is a move towards using electric and alternative fuels for marine vessels, such as LPG, this will help to minimise oil and diesel discharges.

Respondents highlighted the now very public issue of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) spills into the rivers and sea directly causing impacts. There are increasing numbers of pump out facilities in the Solent to address boating blackwater discharge. Landside sewerage failures can cause localised water quality issues and this has happened in the Solent.

Potential Impacts

Materials such as oil are of concern in the marine environment due to their buoyancy and easy transport from one location to another on currents, and the damage it can cause to fish and seabird populations. PAH contamination can also lead to the lowering, temporarily or more permanently, of oxygen levels in the water.

Although there is insufficient evidence on the impacts of features within SEMS, it is known that wading birds can be directly impacted by contamination with hydrocarbon, and the accumulation of hydrocarbons caused by feeding on contaminated fauna can cause changes in migratory and breeding behaviour. Most effects are probably linked to chronic exposure to relatively low levels of pollutants.

CSO discharges are a regulated activity and work is underway to monitor and reduce these discharges. There is increasing concern from emerging contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products from wastewater treatment works and CSOs and how these impact on habitats and species.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Natural England do not consider this activity to be having an impact on the SEMS sites when considered alone. However, elevated contaminant levels are one of the reasons identified as causing Solent Maritime SAC to be in unfavourable condition. Therefore, Natural England support continued review as highlighted in the management measures section of this report.

Management Measures

The SEMS MG members, who have jurisdiction under this activity, already have policies and procedures in place to address accidental discharges. Regular emergency spill exercises help to keep equipment and skills up to date. Information on procedures is available on the relevant authorities' websites and other publications such as harbour guides.

The Blue Green have resources on [oil and fuel spills](#) for boating including best practice guidance and awareness raising posters.

For more resources and information please see: [Solentems - Accidental vessel discharges/emissions incl. oil spill and clean-up](#).

5.1.2 Action

No specific activity action required.

5.2 Boat Repair and Maintenance

Activity includes vessel maintenance and repair on land or afloat, including hull cleaning. Please also consider the vessels, machinery and vehicles associated with this activity.

Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	0	1	14	3	18
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
			Yes	No	Total Responses
			1	12	13

5.2.1 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that this activity is not closely monitored, so it is difficult to evaluate change. Only one respondent thought this activity is impacting on designated sites.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy noted that microplastics and glass fibre particles from old boats have been found throughout the harbour. Brighton University are studying this issue.

Some respondents report that they encourage the use of [The Green Blue](#) environmental campaign and resources. The Solent Forum has developed guidance on [marine invasive species and biosecurity measures](#) which includes the maintenance of recreational craft.

Washdown and filtration systems have been installed at Beaulieu, Cowes, and three marinas on the River Hamble. Harbour Authorities do provide guidance to their customers on best practice on hull cleaning.

Commercial vessels are generally taken to specialist shipyard repair facilities outside of the Solent.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's draft Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from boat repair/maintenance that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance, contaminants and the introduction or spread of invasive non-native species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are considered to be sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, the construction of boat repair/maintenance facilities may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as physical change or loss of habitat, smothering and siltation.

Boat repair/maintenance has the potential to introduce invasive non-native species (INNS) into the marine environment and it needs careful management. Recreational craft have been identified as one of several vectors by which INNS can be introduced to new areas. There is currently no direct legislation that requires businesses to take steps to deal with INNS, although the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 requires the prevention of spreading of INNS from a site where they are known to be present. People need to be aware that the spread of INNS can occur from any watercraft movement; this may be exacerbated as climate change allows species to extend beyond their current range.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Whilst Natural England do not consider this activity to currently be impacting on SEMS it does have the potential to increase the presence and spread of Invasive Non-Native Species which has been listed as an adverse condition reason for the Solent Maritime SAC. Natural England advises that harbours and marinas should promote best practice. In addition, abandoned vessels have the potential to create permanent loss of habitat and lead to the release of microplastics and other debris.

The release of TBT into the marine environment from antifouling has historically been of concern in the Solent. Changes in antifouling practice means that this has now become a legacy issue, however, levels of TBT are still reported above Threshold Levels, particularly in the upper parts of Southampton Water, suggesting that historical TBT is still present in sediments and slowly leaching into the wider environment. Environment Agency monitoring indicates that there is a declining trend of TBT with contamination limited to hotspots.

In addition, elevated contaminants levels are one of the reasons for unfavourable status of SEMS, this includes copper and other derivatives which have replaced TBT. The Environment Agency report that copper has never caused failures of WFD water bodies within SEMS, and it is not currently undertaking any investigations into copper sources. However, previous work showed that copper concentrations were elevated in the Hamble estuary compared to elsewhere in the SEMS, probably linked to the high density of boats in the Hamble. More recent evidence indicates that copper in the Hamble has declined, suggesting that measures to reduce contamination are working and should be continued.

For more information please see the Open data, Water Quality archive at: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/landing> and the Open data, Biosys archive at: <https://data.gov.uk/data/search?q=biosys>

Management Measures

[The Green Blue](#) initiative produces detailed guidance and undertakes education programmes on how to minimise the environmental impacts from boat maintenance and repair. This work includes an [environmental facilities map](#). It includes guides on:

- Antifouling
- Cleaning on board
- Sewage
- Oil and fuel
- Washdown

The Solent Forum in partnership with Natural England has prepared Biosecurity Actions plans for the Solent. See: [Solent Forum - Solent Biosecurity Planning](#).

For more resources and information please see: http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Boat_repair/.

5.2.2 Action

Action (ongoing): All to continue to promote and share best practice in addressing the potential environmental impacts of boat repair/maintenance, including [preventing marine invasive spread](#). Partners/lead: Harbour authorities and all others who have this activity in their area of responsibility.

5.3 Fishing (including shellfisheries)

Activity includes anchored nets or lines, electrofishing, traps, pelagic fishing (or fishing activities that do not interact with seabed), hydraulic dredges, dredges, demersal trawl, demersal seines, diving, and sea angling.

5.3.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	1	0	14	2	17
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	4		13		17

5.3.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Sussex IFCA reported that, as a result of the oyster beds remaining closed to dredging in the past year, there has been no oyster dredging activity taking place within Chichester Harbour. There has been no increase in sea angling, netting or potting intensities within Chichester Harbour or the surrounding area and any impact is very low due to low intensities. They continue to monitor fishing activity on routine patrols in the Sussex IFCA district. Trawling activity remains prohibited within Chichester Harbour under the [Sussex IFCA Nearshore Trawling Byelaw](#). Chichester Harbour Conservancy are aware of some illegal netting activity in the harbour; the impacts are unknown due to limited data on when/how often this activity occurs.

Southern IFCA report that overall fishing activity remains consistent throughout the Solent, with a slight increase in activity targeting the scallop fishery due to the apparent high productivity. The scallop fishery within the Solent is managed under the [Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw](#). Activity in the Solent clam fishery remains lower due to limited access to areas as a result of shellfish bed classifications and a preference for engaging in the scallop fishery for those with the appropriate vessels/gear. In 2023, Southern IFCA introduced the [Net Fishing Byelaw](#). Within the Solent, there are two Net Restriction Areas (Langstone Harbour & Portsmouth Harbour), two Net Permit Areas (Southampton Water and the River Hamble), and 18 Net Prohibition, (Southampton Water, the Solent, and the Isle of Wight). Maps and coordinates for these areas can be found within the [Net Fishing Byelaw](#).

The Environment Agency have on-going concerns in relation to migratory salmonids and netting (though this links strongly to the freshwater designations, the activity occurs within these areas). The only fishery which they regulate is the Beaulieu Seine net, this is now regulated under byelaw rather than net limitation order. The other relevant activity is the fyke net fishery for European Eel which operates within designated sites. All other aspects of fishing are regulated by Southern IFCA. The Agency noted that there has been an increase in intertidal seagrass in Portsmouth Harbour, probably linked to the byelaw stopping shellfish dredging.

Langstone Harbour Board noted that recent discoveries of plentiful shellfish beds elsewhere in the Solent meant fishers were not using Langstone. The Board have improved facilities for fishermen in the Harbour via a UK Seafood Fund grant.

Eastleigh BC commented that permitted inshore netting at the mouth of the River Hamble is likely to have a negative impact on estuarine fish species (e.g. mullet sp.). Levels of illegal setting of nets in the Hamble is unknown but probably does occur.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from shellfish dredging that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations within SPAs. These include above water noise and visual disturbance. A number of designated bird species within SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, shellfish dredging may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed and penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed.

There are concerns over the impacts of discards on marine ecosystems, including changes in population abundance and demographics of affected species, altered species assemblages and food web structures. However, discards also provide important food resources for some scavenging species, including seabirds. Pelagic/mid water trawls, drift nets, pelagic seines and long lines can result in the entanglement and bycatch of a range of fauna.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

SIFCA are currently in a period of Formal Consultation on a proposed new Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (BTFG) Byelaw as a result of updates to the Marine Protected Area Network, the introduction of new MCZs, and the provision of an updated evidence base from Natural England which became the best available evidence used to inform the review and provided updates on MPA feature condition and extent. Natural England will continue to support this process and will continue to work with local IFCA as new fisheries develop.

Management Measures

Southern IFCA's [Bottom Towed Fishing Gear \(BTFG\) Byelaw 2016](#) prohibits areas for bottom towed fishing gear across the District. During 2023 Southern IFCA undertook a review of bottom towed fishing gear (BTFG) in MCZs, SACs and SPAs across the District. The BTFG Byelaw 2023 was submitted to the MMO/Defra for quality assurance and consideration in October 2023. Details on the review can be found on the [Southern IFCA website - Ongoing Reviews](#).

The [Southern IFCA Net Fishing Byelaw](#) creates Net Prohibition areas, Net Restriction Areas and Net Permit Areas within the Southern IFCA District. Net fishing is prohibited in Net Prohibition Areas. Net fishing within Net Restriction Areas is subject to seasonal and/or gear restrictions and net fishing within Net Permit Areas is managed by a permitting system. The Byelaw requires all nets used in the District be marked, provides a definition for different net types and use and introduces provisions related to using a net within a bass nursery area.

[The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw](#) came into force on the 1 November 2021. It introduces a single coherent management tool for the purposes of managing the sustainable harvesting of bivalve populations in the Solent, prohibiting the use of a dredge by means of a vessel within the Solent unless authorised by a permit. The byelaw [permit conditions](#) set out various mechanisms for managing the fishery including closed seasons, curfews and gear restrictions. A full list of fisheries byelaws can be found in the [Southern IFCA byelaw booklet](#).

Sussex IFCA have [byelaws](#) for nearshore trawling, scallops and oysters. A byelaw for Chichester Harbour prohibits the use of towed fishing gears, digging, collection and hand gathering of marine

fisheries resources in specified areas of the Harbour to protect Seagrass (*Zostera* spp) and prevent damage or deterioration to the Solent Marine Site. It has [byelaws](#) controlling nets in its district.

The Sea Angling Diary Project aims to provide accurate estimates of recreational catches to improve the management of stocks, helping to achieve conservation goals and improve the availability of fish to sea anglers. The project is funded by Defra and supported by the national sea angling associations. See: <https://www.seaangling.org/>. The latest [participation report](#) covers data from 2018 to 2019.

Southern IFCA has [byelaws and codes of practice](#) that apply to commercial, recreational and charter fishers, who fish in the Southern IFCA district using rods and lines. This includes rod and lining, longlining, recreational angling and charter recreational angling. Sussex IFCA has a [recreational anglers code of conduct](#), and one for [hand gathering/bait digging](#).

[Catchwise](#) is a ground-truthing survey of recreational sea angling taking place across England and Wales. Substance, the Angling Trust and Cefas have partnered to deliver it. The project has been co-developed with the recreational sea angling community and aims to improve recognition of sea angling's value to coastal communities and inform relevant sea fisheries management decisions accurately.

For further information and resources please see: [Solentems - Fishing \(incl. shellfisheries\)](#).

5.3.3 Action

Action (ongoing): All to continue to report to the IFCA's or MMO any illegal fishing activity seen.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG Members.

5.4 Fishing (shore-based activities)

Activity includes crab tiling, bait digging, shellfish collection (including seed mussel) e.g. by hand (with or without digging apparatus), rake or using 'tiles'. Also includes rod and line angling, the setting of pots and nets from the shore and the use of vehicles or vessels to access the shoreline.

5.4.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Fishing (shore-based activities)	1	1	13	4	19
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	5		14		19

5.4.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that bait digging and hand gathering take place on an hoc basis, mostly during the summer, but it tends to be individuals or small groups collecting. This activity is predominantly focused on Pacific Oyster collection which is not deemed an issue as it is an invasive species to the Solent. Concerns include the trampling affects from this activity, bird disturbance, removal of species from the food chain, litter discards and the environmental health issues from illegal commercial shellfish gathering.

Natural England raised concerns that activity levels have continued to increase across the Solent and there are increased reports of hand gathering of pacific oysters and bivalves. There have also been reports of push netting in the subtidal seagrass at Gurnard Bay. This activity may damage seagrass and species living within it such as stalked jellyfish and seahorses, these reports are referred to Southern IFCA.

Respondents noted that this activity is difficult to patrol and police as is monitoring the minimum landing sizes and catch species being collected. The impacts can be difficult to quantify but discarded fishing litter was raised as an issue plus direct disturbance to species from anglers and bait diggers.

The public have a right to dig bait as an ancillary part of the public right of fishery; this does not imply a right of access across private land or the collection of bait for commercial purposes. Ragworm, lugworm, crab, shellfish and other marine organisms are dug or foraged, mainly within the intertidal zone between high and low water.

Hand gatherers collect a variety of species, often dependent on where they are and what is available. In terms of differentiating between commercial and recreational collection this remains difficult, as they may well be both occurring at various points. The IFCA's note that there has been no increase in bait digging or angling (sea or shoreline activity) throughout the Solent EMS.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from shore-based fishing activities that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance and the removal of target and non-target species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in

displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, shore-based fishing activities may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed and penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed.

A great deal of evidence exists on the impacts of bait digging, for example, the literature reports that during the process of bait collection, by hand, mechanical digging or boulder turning, animals and plants other than those being sought in the intertidal mudflat habitat will be damaged and their population levels reduced.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

An increase in shore gathering activities, including the hand gathering of pacific oysters, has been noted across SEMS. SIFCA have an intention to review shore gathering activities within MPAs (SACs, SPAs and MCZs) this year (Phase 1) and Natural England will support this process. Following completion of Phase 1, SIFCA have an intention to review shore gathering activities both within (e.g. SSSIs) and outside of designated sites across the entire SIFCA district. On this basis Natural England advise that we should not seek to evaluate the impacts of shore gathering activities until this review has happened.

Management Measures

Crown Estate's position is, that for the foreshore under their jurisdiction, they do not have any powers to manage bait collection that is exercised as a public right; leases that they grant to local authorities and other regulatory bodies for local management of Crown Estate foreshore are always subject to the public right of fishing, which includes bait collection. Any management would, therefore, need to be by way of the relevant authority exercising its statutory powers rather than by the landowner or one in whom the landowner may vest its rights. Regarding commercial collection, if they were approached, they would consult with the relevant authorities before considering granting any permissions.

Fishery Officers have the legal powers to inspect anyone involved in angling from the shore or a marine installation and any persons involved in harvesting marine organisms such as bait digging.

Sussex IFCA has a [Bait and Hand Gathering Voluntary Code of Conduct](#). It has now sent it's Hand Gathering Byelaw to Defra for approval.

Southern IFCA currently provides management on shore-based fishing activities through a suite of byelaws that can be viewed on its website ([Shore Gathering : Southern IFCA](#)) these include minimum size requirements, approved shore-gathering practices, and a prohibition on gathering sea fisheries resources in seagrass beds. In addition, Southern IFCA provide guidance and codes of practice for hand gathering of shellfish and bait digging within its district ([Shore Gathering : Southern IFCA](#)). The Southern IFCA Shore Gathering Review continues into 2024, reviewing management for shore based activities in relation to MCZs, SACs and SPAs to determine if any new or updated management measures are required.

Relevant authorities also cautioned the need to take a Solent wide approach to prevent this activity being displaced to other locations if management measures are introduced. See http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Shore_based_fisheries/ for more resources on this topic. SEMS has produced a [Code of Conduct for Bait Collection](#).

If people have concerns about netting (esp. illegal) they should call the Environment Agency incident 24/7 hotline on 0800 807060. They take a leading role on migratory species such as Salmonids and Eels.

5.4.3 Action

Action (ongoing): Continue to report and liaise with the local IFCA, and if necessary, the [marine police](#), where it is considered that bait collection or foreshore hand gathering is commercial or having a detrimental impact. Use the [Guidance for Solent Relevant Authorities for monitoring shore-based fishing](#) to help record this activity.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG

5.5 General Beach Recreation

Activity includes other coastal land recreation and leisure activities such as educational or scientific studies, horse riding on the beach, fireworks displays, swimming, rock pooling, surfing, and non-motorised land craft (e.g. sand yachting, kite bugging).

5.5.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
General Beach Recreation	3	1	8	4	16
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	6		10		16

5.5.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that there is a baseline level of beach activity all year round but this peaks in the summer months and in times of good weather. The sites people visit is determined by their accessibility and the provision of facilities like car parks and toilets. Activities like horse riding, fireworks and motorised landcraft that are covered in this section have not been raised as activities of concern in the Solent.

Potential impacts noted by respondents include wildlife disturbance, damage from trampling and increased plastic pollution/littering. Ground nesting birds are particularly vulnerable to disturbance in the summer months.

Unlike other marine recreational activities, general beach recreation is not covered by a national governing body or representative organisation. Good practice messaging regarding minimising impacts on the marine and coastal environment, including wildlife, comes from relevant authorities (e.g. Local Authorities) and environmental NGOs. Examples include interpretation boards, signage (e.g. to prevent trampling on vegetated shingle or directions to less sensitive sites), leaflets promoting codes of conduct and wardens (often volunteers) encouraging adherence to codes of conduct.

Natural England's ongoing '[Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\)](#)' studies show how many people are visiting the natural environment and how they interact with it. The publication on visits to the coast gives detailed information on peoples' needs and experiences.

Potential Impacts

Natural England have published an evidence guidance note on general beach life at: (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5458695407796224>). This identifies the main pressures from this activity; abrasion/disturbance of the substrate surface, e.g. through general footfall (trampling) or digging holes and noise and visual disturbance, of hauled out seals and birds, from the presence and movement of people on the shore.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Recreational pressures, including trampling, are one of the reasons for the unfavourable status of features, including seagrass beds, within Solent Maritime SAC and therefore Natural England considers this activity is currently having an impact on some features within SEMS. Natural England is leading a LIFE funded project, partly looking at trampling pressures. See Mooring and Anchoring (section 5.9) for further details.

The condition assessment for Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area has also now been completed with disturbance being one of the drivers for the unfavourable status of the site. Whilst no formal condition assessment has yet been completed for any of the other Special Protection Areas within SEMS, a reduce target has been set for all features for the attribute 'disturbance' caused by human activity with a target to reduce the frequency, duration and/or intensity of disturbance affecting roosting, foraging, feeding, moulting and/or loafing birds so that they are not significantly disturbed.

Management Measures

Natural England relaunched the Countryside Code in 2021 which also covers the coast. This gives nationally consistent best practice messaging. It can be accessed at: [The Countryside Code - GOV.UK](#). Defra also launched a new [Marine and Wildlife Coastal Code](#) in 2023 and a series of animations using [Shaun the Sheep](#) to help convey messaging.

Many organisations use the hashtag [#ProtectRespectEnjoy](#) to promote best practice across social media platforms.

At sensitive locations, relevant authorities and partners have been fencing off areas to protect nesting birds, using increased staff presence to manage visitors at peak times and controlling access via car parking restrictions. Information boards with QR codes are also being used to educate the public. The educational work of Bird Aware Solent is covered in section 5.7 on walking but equally applies to general beach recreation.

The Natural England evidence guidance note on general beach life provides lots of examples of issues and management measures (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5458695407796224>). There are also guidance notes on surfing, coasteering, diving and snorkelling, and wildlife watching. These also include details of potential impacts and management measures, they can be accessed at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5615944092614656>.

Please see http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/ for further resources, codes of conduct and information.

5.5.3 Actions

1. Action (ongoing): SEMS MG members to consider including information on impacts on designated sites when updating local codes of conduct or signage and look to work with partners to protect sensitive sites like bird nesting areas.
Partners/Lead: SEMS MG members.

5.6 Grazing and Foraging

Activity includes grazing on saltmarsh or intertidal areas.

5.6.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Grazing and Foraging	1	0	3	3	7
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	2		5		7

5.6.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that foraging of wild food includes plants, seaweeds, shellfish and crustaceans. Gathering can put pressure on the existing stock. Without data on what has been harvested, devising a future management plan becomes challenging.

Potential Impacts

[Grazing marshes](#) are particularly important for the number of breeding waders they support and internationally important populations of wintering wildfowl. They are at risk if they become too dry or are subject to intensive grazing or early cutting. Some areas of grazing marsh are also at risk of change following restoration of naturalised floodplains and as sea-defences are realigned.

Foraging for wild food can lead to disturbance of intertidal habitats via trampling, people can also disturb feeding birds and reduce their food sources, it can also negatively impact on invertebrate populations.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Natural England do not consider these activities to be currently impacting on SEMS. However, it has seen an increase in requests for advice in terms of seaweed foraging and so this activity does appear to be increasing and so should be monitored.

Management Measures

A review of seaweed harvesting forms part of the Southern IFCA Shore Gathering Review which is currently underway. This is an activity which has the ability to be managed by multiple authorities which will be considered as part of the review.

The [Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy](#) is a conservation partnership project, which aims to conserve the internationally important brent goose and wading bird populations within and around

the Special Protection Areas and Ramsar wetlands of the Solent coast. It [maps](#) key where birds graze and roost.

Natural England have produced a [seaweed harvesting code of conduct](#). Natural Resources Wales have published a [Seaweed harvesting guidance note](#).

The Crown Estate licenses sustainable, commercial harvesting of seaweed from areas of foreshore and seabed within its ownership. Seaweed collection for personal use, in small quantities does not require a licence. The Crown Estate does not licence harvesting of natural seaweeds in designated conservation areas. See: [Seaweed harvesting | The Crown Estate](#).

For more information and resources please see:

http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Grazing/.

5.6.3 Actions

Action (ongoing): SEMS MG members to report any concerns regarding the foraging for wild plants or shellfish in designated sites to the local IFCA.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

5.7 Land Recreation (including dog walking)

Activity includes walking on upper shore or intertidal zone (including with dogs).

5.7.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	1	1	11	5	18
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	12		5		17

5.7.2 Evaluation and Discussion

This activity is consistently reported in the annual survey as the one most likely to impact on the Solent's Marine Sites, twelve respondents reported concerns about impacts this year.

Gosport BC considers there continues to be potential for recreational disturbance on the coast, with activity along Gosport Borough's entire coastline at high levels. The Borough's urbanised nature and proximity of many residents to the coast, increases pressure on the coastline. Lee-on-the-Solent attracts people from the wider sub-region. Impacts are most likely to be more acute on the western and southern coastline of the Borough given the proximity of footpaths to the sea. The prevalence of dog walking is all year round.

Hampshire CC note that at Lepe the regular numbers of dog walkers and the significant number of visitors during the warmer periods has an impact on both the area and wildlife.

Natural England reported that some localised increases have been seen at places such as the North Solent NNR and Isle of Wight. At most other locations the frequency appears to have stayed at the

same elevated levels as observed in previous years. Increased human activity is disrupting natural behaviours of wildlife, causing stress or displacement, particularly for sensitive species that rely on these habitats for breeding, foraging, or resting. Seasonal increase is seen during warmer months, particularly on the Isle of Wight where the population increases significantly. There is ongoing disturbance to sanderling trying to roost at Ryde.

Respondents reported on several known hotspot areas. Chichester Harbour Conservancy raised West Wittering, Fishbourne Creek and East Head as places where disturbance is likely to happen. Eastleigh BC noted Hamble Common and Manor Farm Country Park. There are acute problems at Ryde raised by the Isle of Wight Council and Natural England.

Beaulieu River Management reported that it is in the bird nesting season, where they see the most impact and damage. They are witnessing more dogs off leads even though they have signage, regular email communications and educational leaflets.

The urbanised nature of much of the Solent's coastline means that there is a large resident population wishing to access the coast in addition to visitors. The push for 'blue health' and the physical and mental health benefits of walking mean that the coast experiences ever increased demand. Demand peaks during summer weekends and bank holidays and at times of good weather. The opening of stretches of the [King Charles III coast path](#) will lead to greater accessibility. This high level of use by people inevitably impacts on the species and habitats of the Solent's designated sites.

Restricting access and car parking can control demand, but at busy times people can park inappropriately, leave main paths and create their own 'desire paths' and seek out quieter areas which can lead to them accessing sensitive sites.

Impacts noted were disturbance to wildlife, especially to overwintering birds and summer ground nesting birds, trampling leading to degradation of habitat (saltmarsh, mudflats, reed beds, shingle beaches, etc), littering and erosion.

In 2024, Natural England published the [condition assessment for Portsmouth Harbour SPA](#). This shows that the site is in unfavourable condition for its designated birds. Visual disturbance and recreation are two of the adverse conditions that have led to this unfavourable status.

The [Solent Seascape Project](#) is preparing a State of Nature data portal and one of the data layers will be bird sensitive areas. This will help to focus the managing authorities on where action needs to be prioritised.

Respondents are concerned about dogs disturbing feeding and roosting waders and wildfowl, particularly free roaming dogs at tide roosts and breeding sites. Respondents also noted that dog fouling causes amenity and water quality issues. There is a general feeling that dog walkers still lack education about the impacts they cause, particularly new owners, and this has been exacerbated by the growth in dog ownership.

Fifteen of the local authorities in the Solent are [Bird Aware](#) partners, and they use both this Partnership, and other workstreams, to help mitigate the impact of this activity in their area of jurisdiction (see management section below) under the [Coast and Country Canines brand](#). Bird Aware research shows that around forty percent of bird disturbance occurs from interactions with dogs.

Since 2011, on an annual basis, the [PAW Report](#) has collected nationally representative data to determine the proportion of people in the UK who own a pet. The 2023 data shows that 29 percent of the UK adult ownership own a dog and there are 11 million dogs in the UK. In 2011 the number was 8.3 million dogs.

Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from dog walking that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance, litter, and the removal of species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality.

The research underpinning the Bird Aware Solent strategy, reports that human disturbance of the birds can have several impacts. Birds may be more alert, resulting in a reduction in the amount of food eaten, or they may move away from the disturbance. A bird which moves away forgoes valuable feeding time whilst in the air and uses energy in flying, a double impact on the bird's energy reserves. If the disturbance is substantial, then food-rich areas may be little used by the birds or avoided altogether, leading to other areas hosting a higher density of birds and intensifying the competition for the available food.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

A formal condition assessment has now been completed for Portsmouth Harbour SPA with disturbance being identified as one of the drivers for the unfavourable status of the site.

In addition a reduce target has also been set for all features of SEMS SPAs for the attribute disturbance caused by human activity. The target is to reduce the frequency, duration and/or intensity of disturbance affecting roosting, foraging, feeding, moulting and/or loafing birds.

Management Measures

Natural England assess the impacts from opening access to the coast as part of their work to deliver stretches of King Charles III Coast Path. These assessments provide guidance on both the potential impacts from people visiting the coast to participate in coastal walking and the management measures that can be implemented to mitigate impacts. The Solent stretches of the coast path and the respective assessment documents are linked to the SEMS website at: http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/.

Bird Aware Solent have worked with Natural England to ensure its messages are incorporated within 56 of their signs that support the route of the King Charles III Coast Path. Bespoke signage has been installed at Sinah Common, West Witterings, East Head, River Hamble and Lepe Country Park. Bird Aware Rangers have also worked with Hampshire County Council site managers and rangers to create a new sign for inclusion on welcome boards. The messaging reads 'Birds rest and feed here - help them thrive by staying on the footpaths and keeping dogs alongside you'. A smaller sign has also been designed to place on internal gates throughout the Lymington Keyhaven nature reserve. Please see section 3.4 for more information on the Bird Aware Solent partnership.

Gosport BC continues to invest in the Alver Valley Country Park which acts as a SANG to deflect pressure from the coast; the Borough Council has purchased additional formerly private land within the Alver Valley to improve the Country Park as a destination. Work is ongoing with funds from Bird Aware to create a dog walking park on this land to increase the attractiveness of the Country Park for dog walkers.

The Isle of Wight Council noted concerns have been raised regarding the impact of recreation on the displacement and disturbance of Sanderlings that roost on Ryde Sands (SSSI). This matter is currently being investigated by Natural England and they are working with them to find a resolution, along with other relevant parties.

Managers at the North Solent NNR increase their presence on the reserve to monitor for disturbances caused by the influx of summer visitors. This involves regular patrols by staff or volunteers to observe visitor behaviour, enforce regulations, and assess any impacts on the sanctuary's ecosystem.

Milford on Sea community group (WINGS) have highlighted various disturbance events including on-foot recreation and are promoting a sanctuary area on Hurst Spit with a partnership (NE/RSPB/NFDC/NFNPA).

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 includes provisions to restrict access for the purpose of conserving wildlife, including ground-nesting and cliff-nesting birds.

[LIFE on the Edge](#) is a four-year EU funded partnership project (2020-2024) between the RSPB and the National Trust is focusing on the creation and improvement of habitat at nine key coastal sites. Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA are one of the coastal sites and work includes the restoration of nesting islands and partnership work fencing sensitive bird nesting sites.

A revised [Countryside Code](#) was published in 2021 to give generic national good practice to people visiting the countryside and coast. Defra also launched a [Marine and Wildlife Coastal Code](#) in 2023.

Dog Specific Measures

[Bird Aware Solent's Coast and Country Canines](#) initiative encourages dog owners to walk in a safer, more enjoyable and wildlife aware way. It includes a series of dog walks away from bird sensitive areas and a [dog friendly zone map](#). Work is also taking place to encourage dog walkers to visit other areas and less sensitive parts of the coast. The Bird Aware Solent team spent £1 million of Local Growth Deal funding on creating or enhancing alternative local greenspaces for people who would otherwise have visited the coast.

Public areas in England and Wales can use [Public Spaces Protection Orders \(PSPOs\)](#) to help address nuisance issues. Local Authorities can and do use such orders to exclude dogs from beaches in the summer. Fareham BC have one such [order](#) in place that applies to the coast; an additional restriction on dogs within a designated seasonal exclusion zone at Hill Head, between 1 October and 31 March, has also been implemented to protect overwintering birds.

The New Forest National Park Authority engages with the [New Forest Dog Owners Group](#) and operate a project officer, on behalf of NFDC, that seeks to work with dog owners to provide advice on best practice dog ownership and walking that respects wildlife sensitivities on terrestrial habitats.

At Lepe, Hampshire County Council have implemented areas of no dog access as well as guidance around site for responsible behaviour in the park. They have a [Countryside Canines campaign](#) that highlights that access rights that normally apply to open country and registered common land require dogs to be kept on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July, to help protect ground nesting birds.

Please see: http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/ for guidance and best practice relating to this activity.

5.7.3 Actions

1. Action (ongoing): RAs to communicate with their own rangers, coastal staff, and comms teams on how they can support Bird Aware Solent and other partnership projects in the delivery of their work on recreational disturbance issues.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

2. Action (ongoing): Local authorities to consider the use of Public Space Protection Orders and SANGS as measures to mitigate dogs disturbing birds, particularly disturbance to overwintering birds.

Partners/lead: Local authorities.

3. Action (ongoing): SEMS MG to help publicise the [Countryside Code](#) and [Marine and Wildlife Coastal Code](#) through existing communications.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

5.8 Littering and Removal of Litter

This activity includes discharges from land, water or air, from all types of vessels, of particulate or solid wastes e.g. plastics, microplastics and other flotsam and jetsam (accidental vessel discharges are a separate category). The toxicity and damage caused by littering materials should be considered as should the cleanup of toxic debris. Please includes information on any strandline clearance and beach cleanup.

5.8.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Littering and removal of litter	1	0	14	7	22
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	13		9		22

5.8.2 Evaluation and Discussion

The presence of litter and its impact on designated sites is an elevated and ongoing issue reported by the SEMS Relevant Authorities. Most respondents believe that this issue is having detrimental impacts. Although the mode value is still no change, many are still concerned about high levels of litter at the coast. Sources include watercourses, waterside businesses (incl. WWTW), spread by wind, poor waste management and direct littering by individuals. With the recent attention on microplastics, there is optimism that public awareness will lead to a reduction in litter pollution.

Respondents noted that large pieces of litter that causes a navigation issue will be removed by the relevant port or harbour authority.

In the Solent there are lots of public interest and community groups conducting litter picks and raising awareness such as the Final Straw Foundation, Plastic Aware and Southsea Beachwatch.

Potential Impacts

Marine litter is any manufactured or processed solid material from anthropogenic activities that are discarded, disposed of or abandoned once entering the marine and coastal environment including: plastics, metals, timber, rope, fishing gear etc. and their degraded components, e.g. microplastic particles. Ecological effects can be physical (smothering), biological (ingestion, including uptake of microplastics; entangling; physical damage; accumulation of chemicals) and/or chemical (leaching, contamination).

In 2020, ABPmer was commissioned by Defra's Marine Biodiversity Impact Evidence Group to assess the [current evidence of potential impacts of plastic on marine protected species and habitats in England and Wales](#). It concluded that marine plastic pollution at current levels is unlikely to pose a high risk to protected features in England and Wales at concentrations of plastic that can be considered currently environmentally relevant levels, although it is expected that these levels could rise.

SEMS survey respondents have highlighted the potential impacts from the abandonment and decomposition of old boats. There is already published evidence on the environmental impacts of this activity, but what is less certain is how these impacts affect designated sites. [Research by Brighton University](#) found 7,000 microscopic bits of boat fibreglass in just a single oyster at Chichester Harbour. The [RYA](#) have begun to look at the issue of abandoned boats and possible solutions, this includes a [reporting tool](#). SEMS monitors this issue and links any relevant reports and research to the [litter activity page](#) on the [Clean Solent Shores and Seas information hub](#).

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES commissioned a study to map the debris in the intertidal areas of the Solent Maritime SAC. This study found a high quantity of anthropogenic debris and mapped the removability of each item based on the distance from shore and size of the object. This work will be useful to inform any efforts to remove debris in the intertidal.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Natural England hasn't yet assimilated impacts from inert waste and litter on features, subfeatures and supporting features into its conservation advice, due to the variety of waste occurring and a lack of data on implications. However, it agrees that litter and waste present in SEMS will, in all likelihood, be impacting species and habitats to a currently unknown degree and therefore further study is required.

Management Measures

There are numerous litter campaigns, initiatives and clean-ups taking place around the Solent, both national and local. The Solent Forum collates information on these as part of its [Solent Plastics Pollution hub](#) and [Clean Solent Shores and Seas \(CSSS\)](#) work to help people coordinate and access information.

The Solent Forum runs a [Facebook page](#) to help collate and share information about litter and plastics across the Solent's community groups.

The [Great British Beach Clean](#), provides data and information on the amount and type of litter found at the coast. Encouragingly the data show there is a net downward trend of the amounts of litter recorded from this beach clean.

Harbours and marinas have comprehensive waste facilities, which include recycling options, and encourage their users to make use of these facilities. The Green Blue have numerous resources on best practice for boating, see: [Waste & Recycling – The Green Blue](#). Its [environmental facilities map](#) also records disposal locations for items such as flares and hazardous waste.

ABP operates its Port Waste Management Plan for commercial vessels providing waste facilities. It has also led on a significant project to remove wrecks from the River Itchen, with over 100 vessels removed.

Local authorities are responsible for waste disposal at the coast and will increase resources during the summer months or at times of events to manage bin availability and minimise littering.

The Preventing Plastic Pollution Partnership for the Itchen (PPPI) focuses on the reduction and prevention of plastic pollution in the Itchen catchment. It is seeking to support better decision-making through increased understanding of the value of the Itchen's natural capital and ecosystem services and the impact of plastic pollution on these. The Solent Forum sits on the steering group for this project.

Water companies collaborate on a national level on the [WINEP Chemical Investigations Programme](#); this has carried out research on microplastics in the wastewater system. Key findings so far are that the vast majority of microplastics are removed in sludge. This however leads to a need to understand what happens to microplastics in sludge when, for example, it is spread on land. Investigations will continue in AMP8 2025-2030 (including research to look at potential sludge treatment processes to remove microplastics). Southern Water's [Bluewave Innovation team](#) are working with University of Portsmouth to baseline their understanding of microplastics in their wastewater systems.

SEMS will monitor this activity and link any relevant reports and research to the [litter activity page](#) on the SEMS website and the Solent Forum's [Clean Solent Shores and Seas information hub](#).

5.8.3 Actions

Action (2021-2026): The Solent Forum will continue to maintain the [Solent Plastics Pollution Hub](#) as a legacy output of the Agency's Preventing Plastic Pollution Intereg funded project. This hub will link closely with the Forum's work on [Clean Solent Shores and Seas](#).

Partners/lead: Solent Forum.

5.9 Mooring and Anchoring

Activity includes the operational use of berths, moorings and anchorages including the presence of these structures and the vessels using them. Includes consideration of impacts from vessels when berthing/berthed, mooring/moored, anchoring/anchored. Also includes impacts from anchors and impacts of boat when at anchor or mooring. There is a particular risk of damage from anchoring in seagrass beds.

5.9.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Mooring and anchoring	0	3	14	0	17
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	6		11		17

5.9.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Natural England gave a detailed response noting that activity levels of anchoring and mooring remain high across the entire Solent. Both activities impact on the seabed through abrasion and scour pressures. Sensitive seabed habitats such as seagrass are particularly vulnerable.

Different harbour authority areas have different permissions with regards to mooring and anchoring, some do not permit anchoring, others have designated anchoring spots to discourage the use of

anchoring in sensitive areas and there is a mix of swing, pile, fixed buoy and permanent moorings in use across the Solent. Most harbour authorities provide resident and visitor moorings.

The Isle of Wight Council reported that owners of private pontoons have been choosing to replacing anchor chains with fixed piles (and have applying for planning permission) in recognition that anchor chains are detrimental to the environment.

Responders noted that while moorings are licensed within the harbours, it is difficult to monitor if people are anchoring in the correct zones. There are also historic moorings within harbour areas which pre-date designations which can create an unnecessary pressure on the seabed habitats in the form of scouring from sinkers. Where there are insufficient moorings due to peak demand, people resort to anchoring.

Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from mooring and/or anchoring that may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features. These include abrasion/disturbance of the seabed, penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed and the introduction or spread of invasive non-native species. A number of designated features within the SEMS are considered to be sensitive to these pressures.

In 2017, Defra published '[Recreational and commercial anchoring and mooring impacts in marine protected areas in Wales and England \(ME6003\)](#)'.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Anchoring and mooring pressures are one of the reasons for the unfavourable status of features including seagrass beds, within Solent Maritime SAC; therefore, Natural England consider this activity is having an impact on some features within SEMS.

Management Measures

[Advanced Mooring Systems \(AMS\)](#), or eco moorings, are mooring systems designed to have less impact on the seabed than conventional swing moorings. They aim to minimise interaction with the seabed to prevent abrasion which damages sensitive habitats. Current locations of AMS' around the Solent include Osborne Bay, Cowes and Yarmouth.

The Green Blue have an '[Anchoring with Care](#)' campaign that advises boat users how to minimise their impacts on sensitive habitats.

Through LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES, [recreational activity surveys](#) monitor anchoring and mooring at Yarmouth West, Bouldnor, Osborne Bay, Kings Quay and West Hayling Island between July-September annually from 2021 to inform potential management. Interpretation Panels have been installed as part of the project to inform people of the presence and location of seagrass beds and their importance. These are located at Norton Spit, Hayling Island ferry terminal, Lepe Country Park and Cowes. The activity surveys have highlighted Osborne Bay as an area with elevated levels of anchoring in seagrass. This has led to the installation of a Voluntary No Anchor Zone to reduce this pressure which was supported by KHM Portsmouth as the statutory harbour authority. The efficacy of this will be evaluated through the continuation of recreational activity surveys this summer. The ReMEDIES project also commissioned a report that mapped areas impacted by anchoring and mooring pressure in the intertidal areas of the Solent Maritime SAC. Reports have also indicated recreational mooring within seagrass beds at Gurnard Bay during late summer.

Further information and resources are available at: [Solentems - Mooring and Anchoring](#).

5.9.3 Action

Action (ongoing): Use and share the available information and best practice on [Advanced Mooring Systems](#), the Green Blue's [anchoring with care campaign](#) and support the work of the [LIFE ReMEDIES project](#) (due to complete in October 2024) and the Solent Seascape Project.

Partners/lead: SEMS Management Group.

5.10 Operation of Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Schemes (FCERM)

Activity includes maintenance and operation of all port/harbour infrastructure including quay walls, jetties, slipways, navigation markers, coastal defence structures etc. Includes consideration of vessels/machinery/vehicles associated with activity. Also include the day-to-day operational use of these structures, lights, buoys, posts, towers, transit marks, supply of fuel/bunkering operations onshore /offshore, etc.

5.10.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Operation of FCERM	3	0	9	3	15
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	10		5		15

5.10.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents noted that hard coastal defences such as the sea wall along Eastern Road in Portsmouth will have a detrimental effect on the integrity of the SEMS, by preventing natural migration of intertidal habitat, specifically saltmarsh. Textured formliner along the sea wall aims to mitigate this, by encouraging colonisation by intertidal species.

The issue of coastal squeeze is widespread across the Solent and is a planning consideration for the replacement of private sea defences such as those found in Chichester Harbour. Natural England would like to see more nature based solutions to mitigate coastal squeeze.

Lymington Harbour Commissioners note that this activity can have a positive impact. The beneficial use of dredged sediment at Boiler Marsh is increasing the availability of intertidal habitat due to it being higher in the tidal frame. It is also providing protection to the salt marsh behind against erosion caused by waves and tides.

The Isle of Wight Council reported that coastal erosion rates/landslips and breach of flood defences are at an all-time high on the Isle of Wight due to the impact of unprecedented levels of rainfall. Strategic plans relating to these are constantly being reviewed.

Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance and barriers to species movement.

Designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement. Similarly, flood and erosion risk management schemes may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion, penetration and physical change or loss of habitat.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Based on current understanding of the extent/magnitude of this activity, and the existing regulatory framework, Natural England suggests that this activity is not having an adverse effect on SEMS as a whole. However, loss of intertidal habitat from rising sea levels and coastal squeeze was flagged as a condition threat in the condition assessment for Solent Maritime SAC and in certain areas, including Chichester Harbour, is having an impact. Natural England are in the process of reviewing whether or not this should be changed to show a current impact on coastal sites and therefore this position may change. Natural England will provide an update once this decision has been made.

Management Measures

In accordance with the [Habitats Regulations](#), all competent authorities must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new plans or projects that may be capable of affecting the designated interest features of European Sites before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such a plan or project. The impacts from the operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes will therefore be assessed at their time of construction or modification.

Each [Shoreline Management Plan](#) policy has a high-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), followed by an HRA for each specific defence works.

The [Regional Habitat Compensation Programme \(RHCP\)](#), led by [Coastal Partners](#), is a strategic programme run by the Environment Agency. It is the government's agreed mechanism for delivering strategic habitat compensation for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) to ensure compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The compensatory requirement passed on to the RHCP from Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) is the amount of habitat required to address the adverse impacts on European sites from the SMP policies due to coastal squeeze and saline inundation impacts.

5.10.3 Actions

No specific activity action required.

5.11 Operation of Ports and Harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)

Activity includes maintenance and operation of all port/harbour infrastructure including quay walls, jetties, slipways, navigation markers, coastal defence structures etc. Includes consideration of vessels/machinery/vehicles associated with activity. Also include the day-to-day operational use of these structures, lights, buoys, posts, towers, transit marks, supply of fuel/bunkering operations onshore /offshore, etc.

5.11.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Operation of Ports and Harbours	1	0	15	1	17
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	2		15		17

5.11.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Harbour authorities have a statutory duty to maintain navigational aids, pontoons, and public slipways in their harbour. As such, maintenance is ongoing throughout the year as needed. They do take account of times of the year to try and avoid disturbance to wildlife at key times. Respondents noted that more extreme weather conditions make the maintenance of infrastructure more important/expensive and can lead to assets having to change to cope with these conditions.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from the maintenance and operation of ports and harbours that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise and visual disturbance. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, the maintenance and operation of ports and harbours may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed, penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed, smothering and siltation.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Whilst Natural England do not consider this activity to currently be impacting on SEMS, it does have the potential to increase the presence and spread of Invasive Non-Native Species which has been listed as an adverse condition reason for Solent Maritime SAC. Natural England advises that ports and harbours should promote best practice and support the biosecurity planning work being coordinated by the Solent Forum.

Management Measures

The [UK Marine SAC project](#) produced guidance on this topic including good management practice.

The spread of marine invasive species has become more of a concern for their environmental, economic and social impact. Waterside infrastructure can be a pathway for such species and Natural England the Solent Forum have worked together to develop [biosecurity plans for the Solent](#).

Harbours are also beginning to look at ways to ecologically enhance their coastal infrastructure. This work will continue and grow over the coming years and the Solent Forum has a [Building Biodiversity in the Solent hub \(BBS hub\)](#) to promote and share best practice. The re-concreting of the River Hamble's sea wall involved inclusion of textured concrete plus pools and ledges to encourage biodiversity. There was replacement of pointed pile caps with flat top caps to allow birds to roost.

The Solent Forum sit on the national Marine Eco-Engineering Working Group to monitor and share new innovations.

Further information on this topic is available on the [SEMS website](#).

5.11.3 Action

Action (2023/ongoing): Utilise the resources and implement relevant actions in the [Solent Biosecurity action plans](#) to address the impacts from marine invasive species when maintaining infrastructure. Partners/lead: SEMS Management Group and Solent Forum.

5.12 Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, paramotors, drones)

Activity includes all types of craft used for recreation in the air e.g. small planes and helicopters, microlights, paramotors, hang gliding, parascending (on beach), parasailing (by boat), drones and model aircraft.

5.12.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Aerial recreation	0	0	7	4	11
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	2		9		11

5.12.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Authorities report that they have no powers to control the air space. However if drone flights are requested, they will only consent for the operator to fly the drone subject to appropriate qualifications, risk assessment (including environmental risk) and compliance with CAA regulations. Flights are not allowed over private commercial land without express permission. Some issue drone pilots with advice on avoiding disturbance to bird species and liaise with Natural England on a case-by-case basis if they have concerns.

Natural England report that there is a perceived gradual increase in use of drones to undertake surveys, monitor projects and for comms purposes. It is difficult to ascertain the in-combination effects of drone use as frequency increases. There appear to be some evidence that adoption of best practice measures should minimise disturbance impacts to SPA birds.

The Isle of Wight Council reported that there are current proposals to introduce a commercial drone service between the mainland and Isle of Wight (intelliports). Discussions regarding potential ecological impacts are current, with a recommendation that Natural England are consulted regarding any pathways that may impact wildlife within SPAs and SSSIs. More research is required as to the

impacts of commercial drones on Solent sites, as it is highly likely that drone use is going to increase over the coming years. Further information on this issue is available at: [Drones: how to fly them safely and legally - GOV.UK](#).

Potential Impacts

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: drones \(EIN035\)](#)' reports that the pressure arising from participants (operating drones) walking across the shore has been considered to be negligible, compared to the larger numbers of people undertaking general beach leisure activities. The disturbance response of birds to drones is dependent on a range of factors, particularly flying altitude, the type (model) of drone and level of habituation to existing disturbance pressure. Existing research has not distinguished between disturbance from noise and visual cues. Repetitive disturbance events can result in possible long-term effects such as loss of weight, condition and a reduction in reproductive success, leading to population impacts.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Based on current levels of reported activity, it is unlikely that drone use is having an adverse effect upon SEMS. However, study is required to determine whether or not this is accurate, and this activity should continue to be monitored as usage has increased as drones become more affordable.

Management Measures

In 2018, Natural England produced a document for SEMS that explains the regulations surrounding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and when local authorities might like to contact it for advice. Please contact the Solent Forum office to access a copy.

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: drones \(EIN035\)](#)' contains guidance on management options; including site management access, education and communication techniques and legal enforcement.

Bird Aware Solent rangers do record if drones disturb birds when out on duty but sightings are rare.

Hampshire County Council asks that unmanned aircraft are not operated from its land holdings.

People wishing to film have to make a formal request, see:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/filmhampshire/code-of-practice>.

The Crown Estate grants permission for UAV flights over Crown Estate foreshore (defined as the land between mean high water and mean low water). It seeks to encourage responsible use of the foreshore and estuaries that it owns. It has published guidelines at: [Metal detecting and drone flying | The Crown Estate](#).

The [Civil Aviation Authority](#) provides detailed information about drone use, regulations and best practice. It recommends that drone users seek advice from Natural England if flying over a SSSI.

[Altitude Angel](#) are the biggest provider of drone mapping and integration in Europe and they have now included all SSSI layers on their [map](#). These are classified as a 'ground hazard'.

Please see the [SEMS website](#) for further guidance and resources.

5.12.3 Actions

No specific action required.

5.13 Recreation (non-motorised watercraft)

Activity includes windsurfing, kite surfing, kayaks, canoes, row boats, punts, paddle boards, dinghies and sailing boats. Includes all related participation such as launching and recovery (shore access and trailers) and any land-based practice. Please include information on events and competitions.

5.13.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Recreation (non-motorised craft)	1	1	10	6	18
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	8		10		18

5.13.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Although most Relevant authorities reported no change, levels of this activity are still thought to be significant and impacting on birds. Wind and kite surfing were observed flushing roosting and feeding birds in the Solent, Hurst Spit has been identified as a hotspot area. Paddlesport craft are readily available to buy, and users can be inexperienced in how to safely participate on the water.

Concerns were raised about disturbance pressures due to paddle and wind sport craft being able to access shallow water particularly at sensitive sites and trampling from launch and recovery. The season is also getting longer with better clothing and equipment and participants are seen from spring to autumn with a summer peak.

In Langstone windsurfing has been observed having a detrimental impact on SPA/Ramsar bird species, large flocks have been observed flushing from roosting locations when windsurfers are nearby.

The harbour authorities note they have no jurisdiction to control activity outside of their statutory harbour authority area, managing marine recreational activity in these locations is the responsibility of the MMO.

At Newtown Harbour people paddle board off the back of overnight moored motorboats potentially resulting in a new early morning disturbance impact on birds in this location. It is unknown if this is happening elsewhere in the Solent. Another new observation is kite surfing activities within/in close proximity to Sanderling nesting areas that may be contributing to disturbance and a decline in numbers at Ryde Sands.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: Non-motorised watercraft including paddlesports \(EIN028\)](#)' reports that the main impacts of this activity are through abrasion from trampling during launch/recovery of non-motorised watercraft, visual disturbance of birds, marine mammals and fish related to the presence of both people and watercraft. Also above water noise disturbance of hauled out seals and birds related to people noise during launch or activity.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

An increase in this activity, particularly paddlesports, has been noted across SEMS. Further study is therefore required to determine whether the use of non-motorised watercraft is having an adverse effect upon SEMS.

A formal condition assessment has now been completed for Portsmouth Harbour SPA with disturbance being identified as one of the drivers for the unfavourable status of the site,

In addition a reduce target has also been set for all features of SEMS SPAs for the attribute disturbance caused by human activity. The target is to reduce the frequency, duration and/or intensity of disturbance affecting roosting, foraging, feeding, moulting and/or loafing birds.

There are numerous anecdotal reports about the level of disturbance from kite surfing at the base of Hurst Spit. This activity is already or has the potential to exclude SPA birds from their roosting areas in fall/winter and from their breeding sites in spring/summer.

Management Measures

Natural England's EIN028 report above gives examples of management options, the three broad options are on-site access management, education and communication with the public and site users, and legal enforcement. The user groups for the activities in this category also provide advice to their members on how to minimise their environmental impact, for example, The Green Blue has the '[Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters](#)'.

Relevant authority management measures include charging a harbour due or permit, implementing car parking charges, slipway booking systems, erecting information signs at sensitive areas and conducting more water and roaming warden patrols. Harbour authorities put environmental educational material in harbour guides/websites.

Guidance on best practice for paddlesports users is available from the [British Canoe Union](#). There is also comprehensive information for paddlesports users on the [Go Paddling website](#). British Canoeing has been formally recognised as a national governing body for Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) after receiving confirmation from Sport England.

Through LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES, recreational activity surveys monitor non-motorised watercraft at Yarmouth West, Bouldnor, Osborne Bay, Kings Quay and West Hayling Island between July-September annually from 2021 to inform potential management. Interpretation panels have been installed as part of the project to inform people of the presence and location of seagrass beds and their importance. These are located at Norton Spit, Hayling Island ferry terminal, Lepe Country Park and Cowes.

Bird Aware Solent have produced a [watersports with wildlife](#) map and guides to help paddle and wind sports enthusiasts coexist with nature. The [interactive map](#) is designed to help people reduce any disturbance to protected birds and habitats and it maps wildlife sensitive sites. Educative signage has been installed at public launch/access points throughout some of the Solent's harbours.

The Solent Forum has developed [biosecurity action plans](#) to help prevent the spread of marine invasive species in the Solent, paddle and wind sports can be a vector for their spread.

A list of resources and information on this topic is available on the [SEMS website](#).

5.13.3 Actions

1. Action (ongoing): Support Bird Aware Solent's [watersports with wildlife campaign](#) and use the [Solent Biosecurity plan](#) information to help prevent marine invasives spread.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG members.

5.14 Recreation (powerboating or sailing with an engine)

Activity includes any motorised boat activity, such as Personal Watercraft (PWC), hovercraft, powerboating and water-skiing. Includes launching and recovery of craft e.g. slipway or beach/shore launching and participation i.e. when activity is underway or making way. Please consider other novel uses of power boats such as flyboarding. The impacts of different craft will vary and should be considered on a case-by-case basis e.g. sailing boats with low power engines moving at slow speeds are less likely to have an impact.

5.14.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Recreation (motorised craft)	0	3	10	4	17
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	7		10		17

5.14.2 Evaluation and Discussion

The Solent is a popular area for all watersports and baseline activity levels of powerboating and sailing remain high. Natural England noted that the use of small personal watercraft or powerboats allow access close to sensitive habitats that may be otherwise unreachable. The wake of these vessels when closer to shore can be detrimental to habitats such as seagrass.

Respondents noted that impacts will be higher at busy access points such as slipways and marina entrances. Langstone and Lymington reported a drop in numbers of this activity which they attribute to poorer summer weather in 2023 and people having less disposable income.

The main concern reported for this activity category is disturbance caused by the use of Personal Watercraft (PWCs). Their noise and manoeuvrability mean that they can disturb both wildlife and the amenity value of sites.

The national [Watersports Participation Survey, 2022](#), showed that 13.2 million UK adults tried a boating activity in 2022. The popularity of Stand Up Paddleboarding continues to grow with numbers up by 536,000.

Electric outboard motors are becoming increasingly popular as a clean, quiet, and efficient alternative to traditional petrol outboard engines. They are particularly suitable for dinghies, tenders, and small boats. Their use will be expanded by the installation of electric charging stations such as those installed at Cowes Harbour and some of the Solent marinas. Their locations can be viewed on the [Green Blue's environmental facilities map](#). Such craft will help to mitigate noise disturbance from

boat use. Electric PWCs are also now coming onto the market and should drop in price as they become more mainstream.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's publication '[Motorised watercraft \(powerboating and sailing with an engine\) \(EIN027\)](#)' reports that the main impacts are through abrasion/disturbance of the surface and sub-surface sediment, underwater noise disturbance of marine mammals and birds, related to engine operation during the activity, above water noise and visual disturbance, of hauled out seals and visual disturbance of marine mammals and birds.

Through [LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES](#), recreational activity surveys monitor motorised watercraft at Yarmouth West, Bouldnor, Osborne Bay, Kings Quay and West Hayling Island between July-September annually from 2021 to inform potential management. These have indicated Osborne Bay and Yarmouth West to have the highest level of sailing. Interpretation panels have been installed as part of the ReMEDIES project to inform people of the presence and location of seagrass beds and their importance. These are located at Norton Spit, Hayling Island ferry terminal, Lepe Country Park and Cowes.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

An increase in this activity has been noted across SEMS, however, further study is required to determine whether the use of motorised watercraft is having an adverse effect upon SEMS. Therefore, this activity should be monitored as usage has increased and is anticipated to continue to do so.

A formal condition assessment has now been completed for Portsmouth Harbour SPA with recreational disturbance being identified as one of the drivers for the unfavourable status of the site. However, this was not specifically linked to motorised watercraft.

Management Measures

Harbour General Directions, including speed restrictions, effectively manage this activity. For activities like waterskiing and jetskiing, these commonly require permits and participants are encouraged to stay away from sensitive sites. A maritime partnership has produced a '[Wash and Slow](#)' leaflet that shows Solent speed limits.

Over the last few years, there has been a marked increase in the number of propulsion failure incidents within the Solent area. Most of these incidents result from a general need for more maintenance. A partnership of ABP Southampton, Cowes Harbour Commission, KHM Portsmouth, Portsmouth International Port and Langstone Harbour is raising awareness of the importance of proper engine maintenance.

Bird Aware educative signage has been installed at public launch points throughout the River Hamble.

After a significant surge in reports of anti-social behaviour on the water, Hampshire Police Marine Support Unit launched [Operation Wavebreaker](#) to address the issues and to start to look for some long-term solutions. They are working closely with local harbour masters, maritime rescue agencies and community groups to quantify the issue and look at effective ways of modifying the current behaviours, to ensure everyone can use the water in a safe and enjoyable environment. The Police ask that issues or concerns about anti-social behaviour in the marine environment, be reported to the local Harbour Authority or to them via 101 or through the Hampshire Constabulary website.

The user groups for the activities in this category provide advice to their members on how to minimise their environmental impact, for example, The Green Blue has advice on [boating around wildlife](#). It also provides guidance on how to run [sustainable events](#). The RSPB have published a guidance notes on [jetskis and birds](#).

In 2023, [new legislation](#) came into force which puts the responsibility on users, operators and owners of powered watercraft to make sure they protect not just themselves but other water users from harm. Although primarily designed for safety of navigation, the new legislation's curb on irresponsible behaviour will also benefit wildlife.

5.14.3 Actions

No specific activity action required.

5.15 Slipway and Jetty Cleaning and Maintenance

Activity includes the ongoing maintenance, such as washing down, clearing of mud or sediment, algal growth or similar of a slipway or jetty.

5.15.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	0	0	14	1	15
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	1		14		15

5.15.2 Evaluation and Discussion

The harbours note that they normally use water to undertake their cleaning; algal mats need to be removed to maintain access to slipways. They do try to keep this activity to a minimum. One respondent was concerned that this activity was impacting on designated sites due to the noise created from pressure washing. The River Hamble Harbour Authority have replaced some of their hammerhead decking with a high friction polymer grid decking system which negates the need to use any cleaner.

Potential Impacts

Maintenance wastes can enter harbours from the cleaning of jetties and slipways. Debris and wastes produced could contain a mixture of contaminants including oils, oil emulsifiers, paints, solvents, detergents, bleach and antifouling paint scrapings. The dilution of wastes in the harbour waters means that in most cases any possible adverse effects will be only localised and temporary.

The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) is the authority responsible for the approval of chemicals if they are biocidal products containing active substances with the intention of destroying the algae.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Whilst Natural England do not consider this activity to currently be impacting on SEMS it does have the potential to increase the presence and spread of Invasive Non-Native Species which has been listed as an adverse condition reason for Solent Maritime SAC. Natural England have commissioned Solent Forum to prepare biosecurity action plans for the Solent to help address this issue.

Management Measures

Solent harbours reported that they try to avoid using harmful chemicals and use plain seawater or environmentally sound cleaning materials when undertaking cleaning operations. The Green Blue recommended not using chemicals to remove weed and algae from slipways but use a stiff brush or a high-pressure hose instead.

The RYA provide guidance on [cleaning of slipways](#) and [guidance](#) is published by the MMO. The Green Blue provide guidance on best practice in cleaning of both [boats and infrastructure](#).

5.15.3 Actions

No specific action required.

5.16 Wildfowling

Activity includes the use of firearms to shoot wild fowl. This category does not consider the use of dogs during these activities, please use 'Land recreation - dog walking' for any dog related activity.

5.16.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Wildfowling	0	0	8	0	8
Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?					
	Yes		No		Total Responses
	1		7		8

5.16.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Wildfowling operations occur at Keyhaven and Lymington saltmarshes during the winter season. [Chichester Wildfowling](#) continues to operate and feedback on their bags (numbers of birds shot) annually.

Wildfowling is a largely solitary activity which involves the hunting of specific species of ducks, geese and waders with a smooth bore shotgun. It is undertaken primarily on estuaries and coastal marshes. In England, the season runs from 1st September until 31st January above the high-water mark and extends until February 20th below the high-water mark. The majority of wildfowling is organised through a club structure, but it can also be undertaken independently, usually by landowners.

Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from wildfowling that may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features. These include above water noise, removal of

target species and visual disturbance. A number of designated features within the SEMS are considered to be sensitive to these pressures.

Impacts on SEMS (Natural England)

Natural England do not consider wildfowling to be currently impacting on SEMS, however, in the long-term Natural England will seek to review all consents in place to ensure that these are fit for purpose.

Management Measures

The relevant authorities that responded that wildfowling took place in their survey return all stated that licences and consents were in place to manage this activity. Landowners/occupiers, such as wildfowling clubs, need to apply to Natural England for consent to undertake wildfowling, this provision does not exist for third parties undertaking activities on these sites.

For all wildfowling activity which takes place under a [Crown Estate lease](#), annual returns are made, detailing the numbers of visits undertaken and number of birds shot. The [Joint Group for Wildfowling on Tidal Land](#) was set up to advise The Crown Estate on issues relating to wildfowling on designated inter-tidal land.

Information from the British Association for Shooting and Conservation is available at: <https://basc.org.uk/wildfowling/>.

[Operation Seabird](#), is a multi-agency operation to allow the reporting of wildlife disturbance (including wildfowling) to try and afford some protection to coastal wildlife, whether birds, seals, dolphins etc. It involves explaining how disturbance effects the wildlife and with the final option of enforcement if necessary.

For more information please see the [SEMS website](#).

5.16.3 Actions

No specific activity action required.

6 Generic Actions

1. SEMS MG members should use this Report and the [activity pages](#) on the SEMS website as a reference resource to help shape relevant plans and policies or management measures for activities in designated sites. This information can also be used to help inform Habitats Regulations Assessments on the potential impact of activities from new development. SEMS MG members are also encouraged to share these resources more widely and encourage the adoption of best practice by private landowners.
2. SEMS MG members to feed information on activities to the SEMS office throughout the year (sems@hants.gov.uk) to enable the promotion and sharing of good practice throughout the Solent.
3. Trend data for activity change is showing that activities in the Solent are elevated but stable, we need to ascertain whether this is the case or people do not have sufficient data to make a judgement on change (increase/decrease). Next year the SEMS Survey will include a 'no data available' option for respondents when asked about activity changes.
4. NEG to continue to support the Blue Marine Foundation's Solent Seascape Project in identifying how anthropogenic activity pressure can be managed, especially in sensitive sites like bird nesting and roosting areas.
5. All to use the [Solent Forum's Biosecurity plans](#) to help prevent the spread of marine invasives species around the Solent.

7 Summary of Actions

Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up

No specific activity action required.

Boat Repair and Maintenance

Action (ongoing): All to continue to promote and share best practice in addressing the potential environmental impacts of boat repair/maintenance, including [preventing marine invasive spread](#).
Partners/lead: Harbour authorities and all others who have this activity in their area of responsibility.

Fishing (including shellfisheries)

Action (ongoing): All to continue to report to the IFCA or MMO any illegal fishing activity seen.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

Fishing (shore-based activities)

Action (ongoing): Continue to report and liaise with the local IFCA, and if necessary, the [marine police](#), where it is considered that bait collection or foreshore hand gathering is commercial or having a detrimental impact. Use the [Guidance for Solent Relevant Authorities for monitoring shore-based fishing](#) to help record this activity.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

General Beach Recreation

Action (ongoing): SEMS MG members to consider including information on impacts on designated sites when updating local codes of conduct or signage and look to work with partners to protect sensitive sites like bird nesting areas.
Partners/Lead: SEMS MG members.

Grazing and Foraging

Action (ongoing): SEMS MG members to report any concerns regarding the foraging for wild plants or shellfish in designated sites to the local IFCA.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG

Land Recreation - Walking (including dog walking)

1. Action (ongoing): RAs to communicate with their own rangers, coastal staff, and comms teams on how they can support Bird Aware Solent and other partnership projects in the delivery of their work on recreational disturbance issues.
Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

2. Action (ongoing): Local authorities to consider the use of Public Space Protection Orders and SANGS as measures to mitigate dogs disturbing birds, particularly disturbance to overwintering birds.

Partners/lead: Local authorities.

3. Action (ongoing): SEMS MG to help publicise the [Countryside Code](#) and [Marine and Wildlife Coastal Code](#) through existing communications.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

Littering and Removal of Litter

Action (2021-2026): The Solent Forum will continue to maintain the [Solent Plastics Pollution Hub](#) as a legacy output of the Agency's Preventing Plastic Pollution Interegg funded project. This hub will link closely with the Forum's work on [Clean Solent Shores and Seas](#).

Partners/lead: Solent Forum.

Mooring and Anchoring

Action (ongoing): Use and share the available information and best practice on [Advanced Mooring Systems](#), the Green Blue's [anchoring with care campaign](#) and support the work of the [LIFE ReMEDIES project](#) (due to complete in October 2024) and the Solent Seascape Project.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

Operation of Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Schemes

No specific activity action required.

Operation of Ports and Harbours

Action (2023/ongoing): Utilise the resources and implement relevant actions in the [Solent Biosecurity plans](#) to address the impacts from marine invasive species when maintaining infrastructure.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG and Solent Forum.

Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, drones)

No specific activity action required.

Recreation - Non-motorised Watercraft

Action (ongoing): Support Bird Aware Solent's [watersports with wildlife campaign](#) and use the [Solent Biosecurity plan](#) information to help prevent marine invasives spread.

Partners/lead: SEMS MG.

Recreation - Powerboating or Sailing with an Engine

No specific activity action required.

Slipway and Jetty Cleaning and Maintenance

No specific activity action required.

Wildfowling

No specific activity action required.

Generic cross cutting actions - Please see [section 6.0](#).

8 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

In 2020, the SEMS Annual Survey was adapted to include questions on the three MCZs that are designated in the Solent:

- [The Needles](#)
- [Yarmouth to Cowes](#)
- [Bembridge](#)

Relevant Authorities were asked whether they had an MCZ within their jurisdiction and whether they had any concerns about activities taking place within these sites.

Sussex IFCA noted that they continue to monitor fishing activities throughout the Sussex IFCA district, including all MCZs.

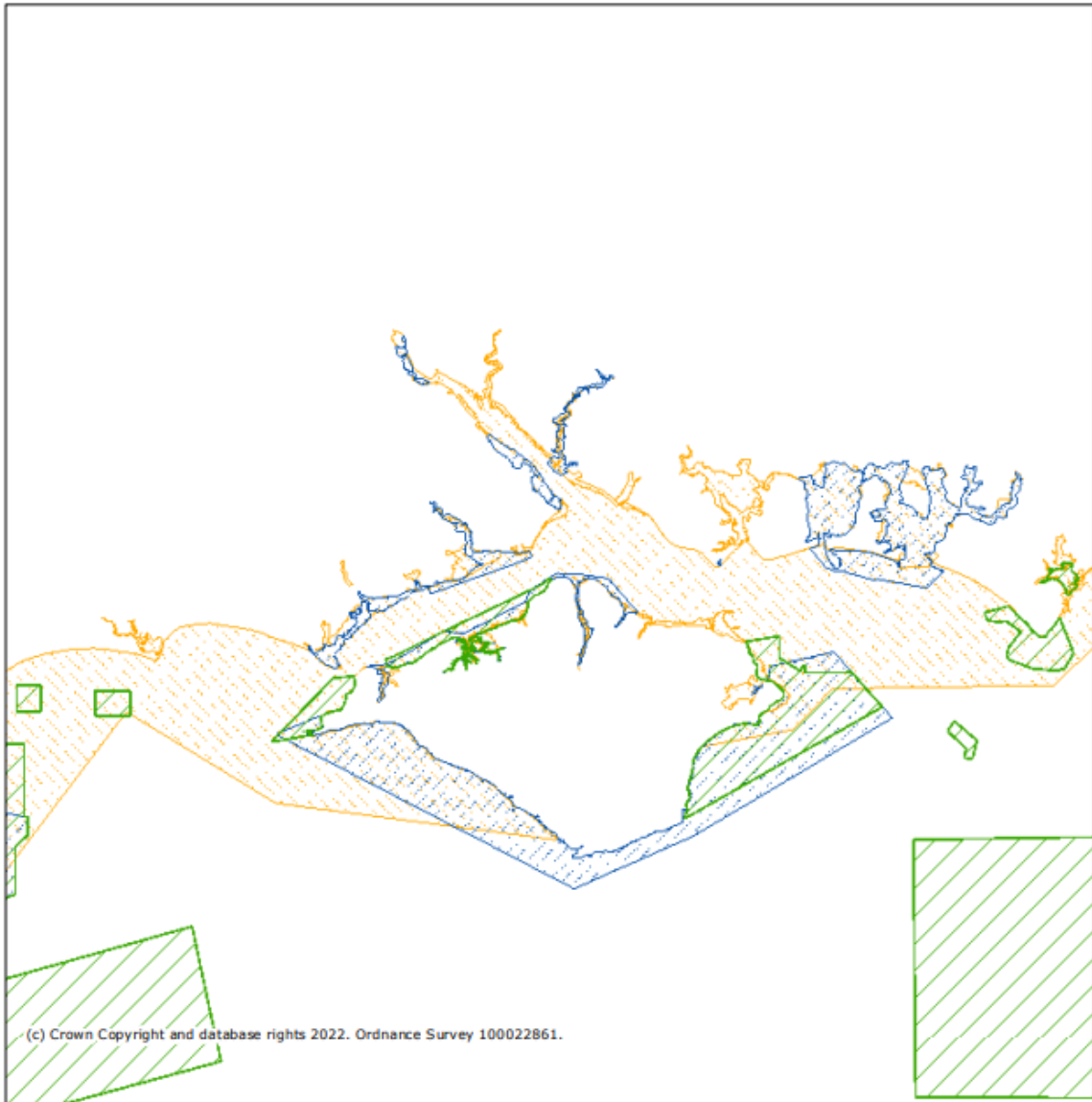
For the Yarmouth to Cowes and Bembridge MCZs the Southern IFCA have undertaken MCZ assessments of fishing activities. The assessments found that Bottom Towed Gears pose a risk to some features in the sites. A review of bottom towed fishing gear for District wide MPAs was commenced in 2020 and is currently ongoing.

Natural England noted that the Needles MCZ, Yarmouth to Cowes MCZ and Bembridge MCZ all sit within their jurisdiction and at all of these sites, walking, dog walking, beach recreation, non-motorised watercraft and motorised watercraft all occur. Yarmouth is monitored as part of the ReMEDIES recreational activity surveys.

Following designation, Natural England started a baseline monitoring programme across all Marine Protected Areas. The inshore benthic marine survey of The Needles MCZ can be accessed at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5147687566704640>.

9 Map of Solent Marine Protected Areas

MAGiC Solent Marine Protected Areas



(c) Crown Copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey 100022861.

Legend

Marine Conservation Zones (England)

Designated

Special Areas of Conservation (Marine Components GB)

Candidate

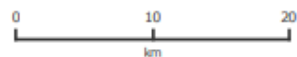
Designated

Possible

Special Protection Areas (Marine Components GB)

Classified

Potential



Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 362900

ymin = 47150

xmax = 533100

ymax = 149500

Map produced by MAGiC on 21 July, 2022.

Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission.

Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.