

## Solent Mudflat Disturbance (SMD)

### Developing a Strategy

#### Project Description

Produce a Solent Strategy of Management to help minimise the damaging effects of mudflat disturbance, particularly from bait digging and shell fish hand gathering.

To include the following components:

- Understanding mudflat areas in the Solent disturbed by these activities
- Identify ecologically sensitive sites and hotspot areas
- Agreeing a strategy, similar to the Poole Harbour Strategy, which will prepare a memorandum of agreement, identify priorities and management measures
- Nominate local ambassadors to help prepare Memorandum of Agreement

There is a requirement for a formal project brief to be agreed.

#### Background

In the September 2019 a SEMS action tasked NEG with reviewing the Bait Collectors Code. A paper was presented to NEG in October 2019 and a discussion recorded in the [minutes](#) resulted in a request to set-up a project group to scope the need for a strategy to minimise mudflat disturbance. It was agreed that the Bait Collectors Code would not be updated as too text heavy as a medium; it is still valid for distribution. NEG hoped that this strategy would follow the Poole Harbour model (i.e. establishing a working group to develop a Memorandum of Agreement of the effects of mudflat disturbance from bait digging and shellfish hand gathering in particular). This model would involve joint working between Natural England and Southern IFCA.

In order to take this forward a scoping meeting ([Meeting Minutes 202001](#)) took place, and was to include University of Portsmouth, Southern IFCA, Natural England, HIWWT and Bird Aware.

The Solent Forum have a webpage on the SMD project [Solentems - Solent Mudflat Disturbance Group](#).

The Project Group agreed the need for a strategy and its components listed above.

Progress on the key work areas are as follows:

### Understanding mudflat areas in the Solent disturbed by these activities

A key source of data is the University of Portsmouth's TEMITH data (drone and satellite mapping of the intertidal). This data was presented in late 2020, however although this data is high quality it does not provide a Solent wide picture, nor have an overlay of how sensitive the site is to that disturbance.

The group met again in December 2020 and some basic Solent Forum google mapping was shown of different baitdigging/hand gathering datasets showing areas where mudflat disturbance is known. [Solent Mudflat Disturbance Incidence DRAFT Map - Google Maps](#). A further meeting was held in December 2020 to review the MyMaps data. [Meeting in December 2020](#).

It was agreed that with some small amount of NE funding (£1k) and some matching money from IFCA's, that the University of Portsmouth would continue to build on the TEMITH data to map extent of bait collection and hand gathering using Chichester Harbour as a case study. Sussex IFCA have data on numbers of hand gatherers and amounts collected and UoP have tasked a student with the job of processing and extrapolating the data.

Results from University of Portsmouth (UoP) are expected mid 2021; UoP sent a report July 2021 to Sussex IFCA and are awaiting response and discussion of next steps.

UoP will present the Chichester Harbour Evaluation and next steps to NEG in November 2021. The aim is that the UoP.

- Use TEMITH model to look at CCO imagery of whole Solent to find bait digging evidence, and changes over time (since 2016)
- To produce Solent wide map to show polygons of this activity
- To overlay information of site sensitivity (from NE) to bait digging
- To add useful data from the initial Google MyMaps effort that the Solent Forum have created

### Identify ecologically sensitive sites and hotspot areas

The Solent Forum is helping facilitate mapping which will show mudflat areas sensitive to disturbance, this will help to formulate the Strategy. A start to this was made by creating a Google

More work is required to bring together a small group including NE and Southern IFCA's to evaluating data to understand if any areas coincide with areas where bird populations may be particularly threatened by limited food supply/disturbance. Jessica Taylor responded to my email on this about Chich harbour and other priority sites.

This is bigger than just this project and therefore a separate Solent Forum Hotspots Project is being set up to understand sensitivity to birds from a range of activities such as: mudflat disturbance food supply and physical disturbance, paddle boarding and kayaking, recreational disturbance etc

- Habitat layers from Magic Map or from NE GI
- Key areas for birds (other than the wider SPA boundaries) available sources (e.g, SWBGS maps) alongside local site specific knowledge. Liaise with RSPB.

### Agreeing a strategy, similar to the Poole Harbour Strategy, which will prepare a memorandum of agreement, identify priorities and management measures

None

Nominate local ambassadors to help prepare Memorandum of Agreement

None

## Project Timetable

**Next meeting planned for the Autumn 2021 before or after NEG meeting**

Key project dates

SEMS action to NEG 2019 to review Bait Collectors Code	September 2019
NEG discussed Paper reviewing bait collectors code and agreeing the need for a Solent Mudflat Disturbance Strategy (SMD Strategy)	October 2019
SMD Strategy Scoping meeting held	January 2020
Review TEMITH Data – only outputs for certain areas	October 2020
Solent Forum MyMaps to summarise evidence of disturbance available	...
Natural England fund £1 to extend the work of UoP building on TEMITH data	November 2020
SMD Meeting to review MyMaps data sets in particular	December 2020
UoP to present next steps and Chichester Harbour data on mudflat disturbance	November 2021

## Key Project Contacts

Key project staff

Gordon Watson - UoP

Jessica Taylor - NE

## Project Actions

Actions	When	Status
<b>Overall</b>		
<a href="#">Put in links to this document and tidy up</a>		
Update website with text – before next meeting	Sept	
Go through new AMR and update action for 2021	Sept	
<a href="#">Physically get the £1k and pass to Gordon – check email to Gordon on what we asked them to do for £1k</a>	Sept	
<a href="#">Plan another Mudflat Meeting – after Autumn NEG or before</a>	November	
MyMaps updates which shows areas aware of bait digging Solent – I think it is now up to date, but must share link with group before the		

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meeting. Add HIWWT data when they send it to me – will UoP use this data for their mapping		
<b>Understanding mudflat areas in the Solent disturbed by these activities</b>		
To be informed by TEMITH Data. TEMITH data actually only informed 4 sites, and MYMaps shows		
Solent Forum to put together as much data as possible on disturbance areas. Includes sources from SEMS, TEMITH, Bird Aware, HIWWT, Footprint ecology. This has been done and information can be found in MyMaps. The map shows metadata and the pint points are not location accurate.		
Need to roll out the TEMITH work further. UoP working on this and have extended Shannon White contract. UoP to provide data on Chichester Harbour and Inc. MyMaps - Gordon will present the work now done for Sussex IFCA with plans for future at Nov mtg – July 21 he sent report to Sussex IFCA – waiting for their response and then sit down with Shannon and Deimos to plan how to spend the £1k (TEMITH extension)	November	
<b>Identify ecologically sensitive sites and hotspot areas</b>		
SEMS action for NEG 2021 – Solent Interidal Bird Sensitivity Mapping (separate project)		
The above will involve a meeting with NE, SIFCA and MMO to ID the key ecologically sensitive sites.		
<b>Agreeing strategy</b>		
Invite people from Poole Harbour to demonstrate what they have done		
<b>Working with local amassadors</b>		

Status:

Urgent	Awaiting	Complete
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## Links and Sources of Information

[Review of Baitcollectors Code 2020](#)

[2021 SEMS AMR](#)

[Solent Information Database](#)

SEMS <http://www.ukmarinesac.org.uk/bait-collection.htm>

On Mymaps

SEMS 2020 – Annual monitoring data sent to approx. 30 RAS

Bird Aware 2020 – Bait digging observance data 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020 based on 1795+ hours of accumulated ranger’s site visit time around the Solent

Footprint Ecology data 2019 – Solent Vehicle Counts Data and at 39 of 180 locations the surveyor parked and walked and observed set activities including baitdigging. Baitdigging observed in 13 locations. 19 incidences in total

TEMITH Data 2020 – TEMITH used a number of case study sites in the Solent, Wales and Poole area, to understand the quality of photographic data (aerial and drone) in showing evidence of baitdigging. 4 sites in the Solent selected as they were known baitdigging locations. The evidence provides very clear baitdigging marks and from that polygons of extent could be drawn.

## Sources of Funding

Potential money from remedies

MFF?

## Project Outcomes

Preview of outcomes

Preview of Management Options

Extract from MMO non-licensable activities

Mgt EG in Solent• Sussex IFCA Marine Protected Area Byelaw 2017 & 2015 (revoked): bait digging falls within definition of ‘fishing’. - Schedule 3 - Management measures for Pagham Harbour MCZ limits collection of marine worms (Annelida) to 1kg per calendar day.

## Stakeholder

Project Group

Karen McHugh

Kate Ansell

Natalie Hands – Bird Aware Solent

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Tim Ferrero - HIWWT

Jess Taylor – Natural England

Patrick Cooper - SIFCA

Sarah Birchenough – SIFCA – attend NEG 22<sup>nd</sup> April to present Poole Harbour approach. **Also Nick Rogers?**

Audrey Jones – Sussex IFCA

Gordon Watson – University of Portsmouth

Richard Austin – Chichester Harbour Conservancy - have asked for only one **INVITE Peter Hughes**

Louise MaCallum- LANGSTONE HARBOUR

Other Stakeholder