

Impacts and Management of Paddlesports in the Solent (IMP Solent)

Updated: 08/11/21

Project Description

The objectives of the project is:

Develop the evidence base on the impacts of paddle sports on the Solent's designated habitats and species, in particular birds, as explore suitable management options, using Chichester Harbour as a case study.

Key work areas:

Locations where does paddle sports take place

Incidence of paddle sports

Bird disturbance data

Evaluation of survey data to understand impacts

Set out potential management options

A project brief has been agreed [IMP Solent Project Brief](#)

Background

The Solent Forum are aware of the rising levels of Paddlesports in the Solent and in 2016 produced some guidelines for the use of Paddlesports generally to assist local managers.

[*Paddlesports Guidelines to Avoid Bird Disturbance \(3\) \(solentems.org.uk\)](#)

The Solent Forum Natural Environment Group (NEG) was set two actions in by the Solent Marine Site (SEMS) annual monitoring programme, and this was updated in 2021 for the 2021/22 year.

1. NEG to research the evidence base for potential impacts from increased use of paddle sports
2. NEG to discuss how we can develop the evidence base to focus more closely on the impacts on the Solent's designated habitats and species from activities

The SEMS Annual Monitoring Report documents a notable increase in the activity of Paddlesports in the Solent, and the 2021 report showed that over half of Relevant Authorities believed Paddlesports were impacting on the designated site.

The issue was discussed and minuted at the last two NEG meetings ([Autumn 2020](#) and [Spring 2021](#)).

An inaugural [IMP Solent Project Group](#) meeting held 26th May 2021 to agree the project brief.

The project brief sets out the methodology to develop the evidence base and set out management options. It concentrates on waterbased disturbance from Paddlesports. It does not include the launching of Paddlesports, as this problem and the associated disturbance is covered by other research on shorebased disturbance to birds.

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A further project Group meeting was held in September 2021.

Project Timetable

Next meeting planned with the project group on Spring 2022

Key project dates

SEMS action to NEG 2019 to understand impacts of paddlesports	September 2019
NEG agreed action to work with Peter Hughes to build the Chichester Harbour paddlesports and bird disturbance case study.	October 2019
NEG agreed action: KM to speak to Natural England Reserves Manager at North Solent NNR on their paddlesport experience and update the group on this action at the autumn 2021 meeting.	October 2020
IMP Solent Scoping meeting held and brief agreed	May 2021
IMP Solent Project Meeting held	8/9/21
Methodology for Paddlesports incidence expect by Peter Hughes	October 2021
Bird Aware data expected	October 2021
Solent Forum to provide project reporting on website	October 2021

Key Project Contacts

Working Group

Kate Ansell

Peter Hughes CHC

Adam Wells – North Solent Reserves Manager (NE)

Julie Simms – Bird Aware

Jess Taylor - NE

Project Actions

Actions	Status
Overall Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next meeting expected in Spring 2022 when Chichester Harbour Conservancy has begun surveys. Main subject would be to agree Solent roll out of methodology• Chichester Harbour has made the methodology for the surveys available• KM to document all reporting to date so accessible to all	
Where paddlesports takes place <p>List of current national and local evidence known up until November 2021 is provided in appendix of project brief – includes SEMS.</p>	

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<p>Bird Aware Data – ranger team observe different activities inc. Paddlesports. They are planning to conduct specific activity data gathering surveys . Data can be abstracted to form a picture of where Paddleboards take place and when birds fly away. Awaiting</p> <p>Specific evidence from Rangers –Data from North Solent NNR manager Adam Wells – See appendix in brief. Awaiting</p> <p>Chichester Harbour case study below - Results expected Spring 22</p> <p>The ReMEDIES project is undertaking baseline monitoring of recreational activities in and near seagrass beds as part of behaviour change work. This will occur at 5 sites including KM asked JT for the ReMEDIES data from the five sites Yarmouth, Bouldnor, Osborne Bay, King's Quay Shore and Langstone Harbour. The results of this work will show to what extent Paddlesports an issue at these sites. ReMEDIES surveys will take place annually until 2023 with reports in October each year. KM will look at the first baseline report (to be sent by JT) next month in November 2021</p>	
<p>Incidence of paddlesports</p> <p>Chichester Harbour Conservancy will provide a case study and a methodology to measure the incidence of Paddlesports and consequent bird disturbance.</p> <p>The CHC Case study aims are:</p> <p>To develop a methodology to record paddlesports counts and incidences of bird disturbance over one year or more at different states of tide and times using Chichester Harbour as a pilot. This data will be fed into the forthcoming Natural England SPA condition assessment for the harbour to help evaluate whether this activity is affecting the condition of designated sites.</p> <p>Methodology is agreed and survey work started in October 21. Survey to be conducted over 2 years. Initial results expected Spring 22– there is a need to roll it out to other areas of the Solent</p>	
<p>Bird Disturbance Data</p> <p>Bird Aware have provided historic winter survey data for three years until 2019/20 for records of Paddlesports in Chichester Harbour (they do have data for other Solent sites). Each year there are records of under 10 incidents. Incidence of paddleports on the winter would be expected to be low; some of these incidents also record disturbance. Bird Aware will be changing the way surveys from Autumn 2021 – adding the following questions onto the site monitoring survey that rangers complete upon completion of each site visit.</p> <p>Were kayaks, canoes, stand up paddleboards or jet skies present on the water during your visit? Yes/No If yes what were the approximate number of each. Counts of paddlesports</p>	

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<p>above would also include statement if birds flew away. This data should be used with caution as Bird Aware not looking systematically.</p> <p>KM to obtain most recent winter data in Spring 2022</p> <p>Engage with organisations such as the Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS) in terms of recording? Given that they have numerous members recording information, and many are recording at the same places for WeBS counts too.</p> <p>Obtaining any relevant information Footprint Ecology hold, particular data collected during SDMP in 2009/10 on Paddlesports and its impacts. KM looked at this and only Paddlesports monitored/found was Canoe on Water. Incidence was low but disturbance was high. The popularity of Paddlesports has risen significantly since this work. KM also looked at annual reports of disturbance monitoring by Footprint Ecology since then, all surveyed between October and March. The incidence is low mas would be expected for the winter months</p> <p>Complete</p>	
<p>Evaluation of Survey data to understand impacts</p> <p>How link the evidence to Solent's designated habitats and species - Jess Taylor has highlighted the need for this link to the overall condition assessment / conservation advice for the area.</p> <p>JT has stated that will need at least one year of data. NE are able to look at all data, even if anecdotal. They then apply a confidence level.</p> <p>Link with any NE condition monitoring surveys across all SSSIs inc N Solent NNR which sits in Solent SSSI. – Ask Adam Wells NNR manager (have some anecdotal information in brief from him). North Solent has had condition monitoring survey using CSM guidance over April 2021, the results are not yet available. The NNR manager also conducts some surveys on levels of activities but this is very much on an ad hoc basis. The conclusions from these surveys will be made publicly available on Natural England's Designated Sites System</p> <p>Detail who could collect evidence and training and procedure</p>	
<p>Build Management Options (see preview on project outcomes below)</p> <p>Work with Bird Aware operation seabird</p> <p>ID and target sensitive areas</p> <p>Info on Paddlesports/boards website, british canoe, go paddle. Hampshire paddleboarding facebook page</p> <p>Signage at sensitive sites</p> <p>Need pros and Cons for different management options</p>	

Status: **Urgent**, **Awaiting**, **Complete**

Links

Meeting minutes

Sources of Information

Sources of Funding

Project Outcomes

It is one of the objectives of this project to categorise possible management options. These could include a range of tools that are branded across the Solent. Bird Aware are working on branding and the use of a logo for all sites.

It would be useful to contact various paddle boarding user groups and website to work with them to get the right messages across.

Bird aware will be producing maps for paddlesport users to help them undertake their activities. This work will include a code of conduct.

Tools could include:

- Buoys around sensitive sites
- Signs at sensitive sites

NE Briefing note (see Appendix C) suggested management options as follows.

Potential management options within a Natural England Briefing Note (detailed in Project Briefed) for marine recreational activities (note, not specific to non-motorised watercraft and Paddlesports activity), include:

On-site access management, for example:

- designated areas for particular activities (voluntary agreements or underpinned by byelaws);

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- provision of designated access points eg slipways, in locations likely to be away from nature conservation access (voluntary or permit condition or underpinned by byelaw).

Education and communication with the public and site users, for example:

- signs, interpretation and leaflets;
- voluntary codes of conduct and good practice guidance;
- wardening;
- provision of off-site education/information to local clubs/training centres and/or residents.

Legal enforcement of, for example:

- byelaws which can be created by a range of bodies including regulators, Local Authorities and landowners (collectively referred to as Relevant Authorities); and
- permitting or licence conditions.

Specific examples of management measures which have been applied to non-motorised watercraft and paddlesport activities are described further in a Management Toolkit which can be accessed from Marine evidence > Marine recreational activities [Natural England Access to Evidence - Marine recreational activities](#) and include:

- codes of conduct;
- voluntary zonation – eg, exclusion zones, specified activity zones and defined landing areas;
- signage
- permit systems – eg, managing access to slipways, often supported by byelaws.

Based on expert judgement, it is considered that where management measures, which would be considered current good practice, are applied to non-motorised watercraft activities, adhered to and enforced, the likely risk of significant impact on a site's Conservation Objectives would be Low

in relation to all activity/pressure impact pathways. For further information and recommendations regarding management measures, good practice messaging dissemination and uptake, refer to the accompanying project report which can be accessed from Marine evidence > Marine recreational activities. [Managing marine recreational activities: a review of evidence - NECR242 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

Solent Initiatives

Solent Forum Paddlesports guidelines

Chichester Harbour Conservancy are in the process of placing marker buoys around high tide roosts to dissuade Paddlesports users from accessing the shoreline. Messages will be placed on the buoys such as 'wildlife refuge'.

Signs have been put up on the Hamble at Burridge and Curbridge

NE North Solent reserves manager working with Bird Aware and Lymington and Beaulieu Harbours

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Langstone Harbour have noted high levels and have introduced a small licence fee for Paddlesports usage in the harbour so that they have a database to send guidelines to

Stakeholder

Project Group

Other Stakeholder