



Solent European Marine Sites

Annual Management Report 2019: Stakeholder Comments

Bembridge Angling Club

Comment numbering refers to the sections in the 2019 SEMS Annual Management Report.

4.2.1. Accidental Vessel discharges etc.: I assume that the report was compiled prior to HMG publishing its consultation on banning the use of red diesel for propulsion in leisure vessels. One consequence of the change will inevitably be an increased use of cans to fuel up vessels due to non availability of white diesel in some areas. This then poses a possible new & increased threat of accidental diesel spillage. Any move away from traditional fuels is likely to be very slow given the number of existing vessels that have a significant life span expectancy.

Personal observations suggest that there is no monitoring of polluted discharges from large commercial vessels using the many commercial anchorages within the Solent & Sandown Bay. Given the direction of prevailing winds, these are likely to have a significant contribution to such pollution of SEMS areas.

4.3.2. Boat Repair & Maintenance. It is difficult to see the justification for the NE comment that it "may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs". Repair & Maintenance facilities would not gain planning consent in areas where birds breed & would almost certainly exist alongside other existing facilities so would not themselves be the only cause of impact.

The Solent with the ports of Southampton & Portsmouth sees large numbers of transits of very large commercial vessels that are not subject to the same strict restrictions on anti-foul as apply to leisure vessels. These must contribute to the background anti-foul related contamination levels and of course to invasive species trans-shipment. Whilst there is probably little that could be done regarding these, they should at least be acknowledged.

Copper is mentioned in the context of contamination from anti-foul. Given that virtually all domestic water pipes are likely to be of copper, has any investigation been done to establish to what degree discharged domestic waste water contributes to the copper contamination?

The "Check, Clean & Dry" people supply durable notices but there is no evidence that I have seen of any of these in local harbours or marinas. One did briefly appear at Ryde Harbour but disappeared again within a few days.

4.4. Fisheries (including shell fisheries). There is no mention of the long standing issue relating to the whelk fishery having an adverse effect on the overall eco-system within the Solent. This fishery seems to have expanded over recent years and, in consequence, the number of empty shells

available to be used by hermit crabs has drastically declined thus adversely affecting their populations with a knock on negative effect on species that would use them as food such as foraging sea birds and several species of fin fish including smooth hounds. It is believed that legislation prevents whelk processors from returning post processing empty shells into the sea in order to mitigate the loss.

There is mention of discards, apparently in the context of discarding commercially caught fish being a problem. With the EU Common Fisheries Policy ban on discarding juvenile specimens of some species, there is also a negative impact on the eco-system of removing such juveniles prior to them having been able to breed at least once.

4.5. Fishing (shore based activities). Southern IFCA has indeed introduced restrictions on shore based hand gathering within seagrass beds within the Solent but has not erected any information signs informing of the restrictions at any of the sites that I am aware of on the coast of the IW. In consequence, I am not aware of any significant reduction in activity within them. In addition, anchoring within seagrass beds has been long asserted as being damaging to them but the MMO (the competent authority for anchoring) has, I believe, not introduced any restrictions within any seagrass bed within the Solent. See 4.11.

Reference to the SF sponsored bird disturbance report would be appropriate in this section.

Since Southern IFCA covers virtually all of the SEMS area, it should be left to them to deal with bait digging given that they are a competent authority for that activity, have previous experience with Poole harbour & have the necessary contacts with local stakeholders.

4.8. Land recreation (Dog walking). Reference to the SF sponsored bird disturbance report would be appropriate in this section. It seems that not all district councils support restrictions on dog walking on beaches. St Helens parish council consulted & then declined to ban it on their beaches a few years ago despite the area being sensitive for foraging birds.

4.11. Mooring & Anchoring. MMO (the only competent authority for anchoring) has, I believe, not introduced any restrictions within any of the many seagrass beds within the Solent. Any introduction of eco-moorings will not benefit recreational sea anglers who need the ability to anchor for short periods of time in positions of their choosing.