



Watersports with Wildlife

Reducing Disturbance to Coastal Birds

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Bird Aware Solent

Who are we?

Local partnership project of 19 different organisations including councils and conservation bodies

Team of rangers raise awareness and deliver community engagement and education through outreach projects

Our aim is a coastline where people and birds can share the shores together. Where people's activities and recreation does not lead to higher levels of disturbance to wintering birds



The Solent is special

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

125,000 birds arriving each winter migrating down from the Arctic

Important habitats such as saltmarsh, seagrass, intertidal mudflats and shingle beaches



Special Protection Areas in the Bird Aware Solent region



Birds under pressure - a busy coastline

As our population grows and the coast gets busier with people and recreation, safe spaces for wildlife can decrease and disturbance can happen more frequently



Why does disturbance happen?

- Birds are well camouflaged or in difficult places to spot
- Often disturbance is accidental
- There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue



Photos courtesy of T D Codlin

Why is disturbance a problem for birds?

- They lose valuable feeding or resting time watching for threats
- They waste precious energy moving away from perceived threats
- Regularity of occurrences

“Birds can fly so what’s the problem?”

If birds are unable to feed and rest, they may not survive the winter or make their migratory journey back to their summer breeding grounds.



Anyone who uses the coast can potentially cause bird disturbance but that also means that anyone can help to reduce it.

This past patrol season we have seen disturbance caused by:

Walkers	Litter pickers
Runners/joggers	Drone flyers
Dog walkers	Wild swimmers
Horse riders	Bird watchers
Kite & wind surfers	Photographers
Kayakers & paddleboarders	
Motor boat users	





Watersports with Wildlife

Our watersports with wildlife map and guides 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.

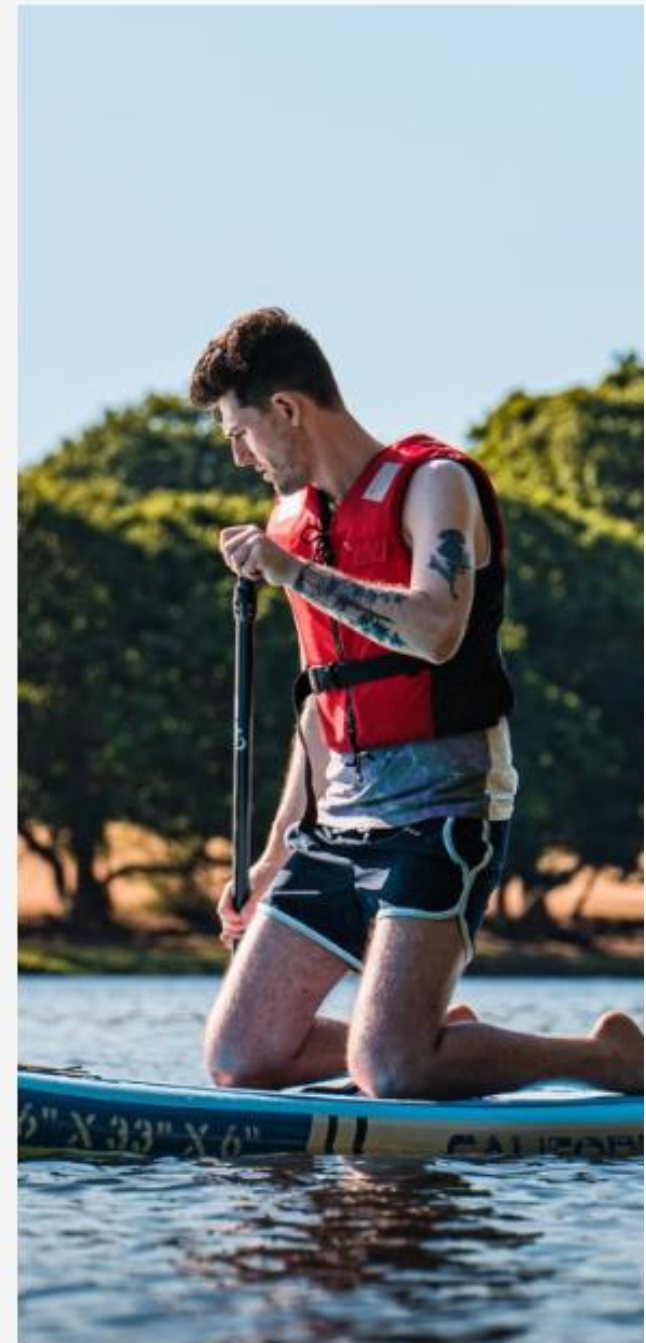


Did you know?

Kite and windsurfing equipment can unintentionally cause disturbance. Anything that flaps is especially scary for birds as it resembles predators.

Tip: Carry or float equipment in and out. Dragging equipment will damage habitat and your craft.

Tip: Keep a low profile: kayakers and canoers help by keeping a low paddle angle. Paddleboarders reduce wildlife disturbance by kneeling rather than standing.





Watersports safety

Safety will be your number one concern while in and around the water. Follow the RNLI's safety advice to stay safe on the water.

Find out more



Wildlife aware paddle sports

Paddle sports offer an opportunity to spot and appreciate wildlife from a unique perspective. Many paddlers are taking steps to avoid wildlife disturbance by following the Bird Aware Coastal Code:

Find out more

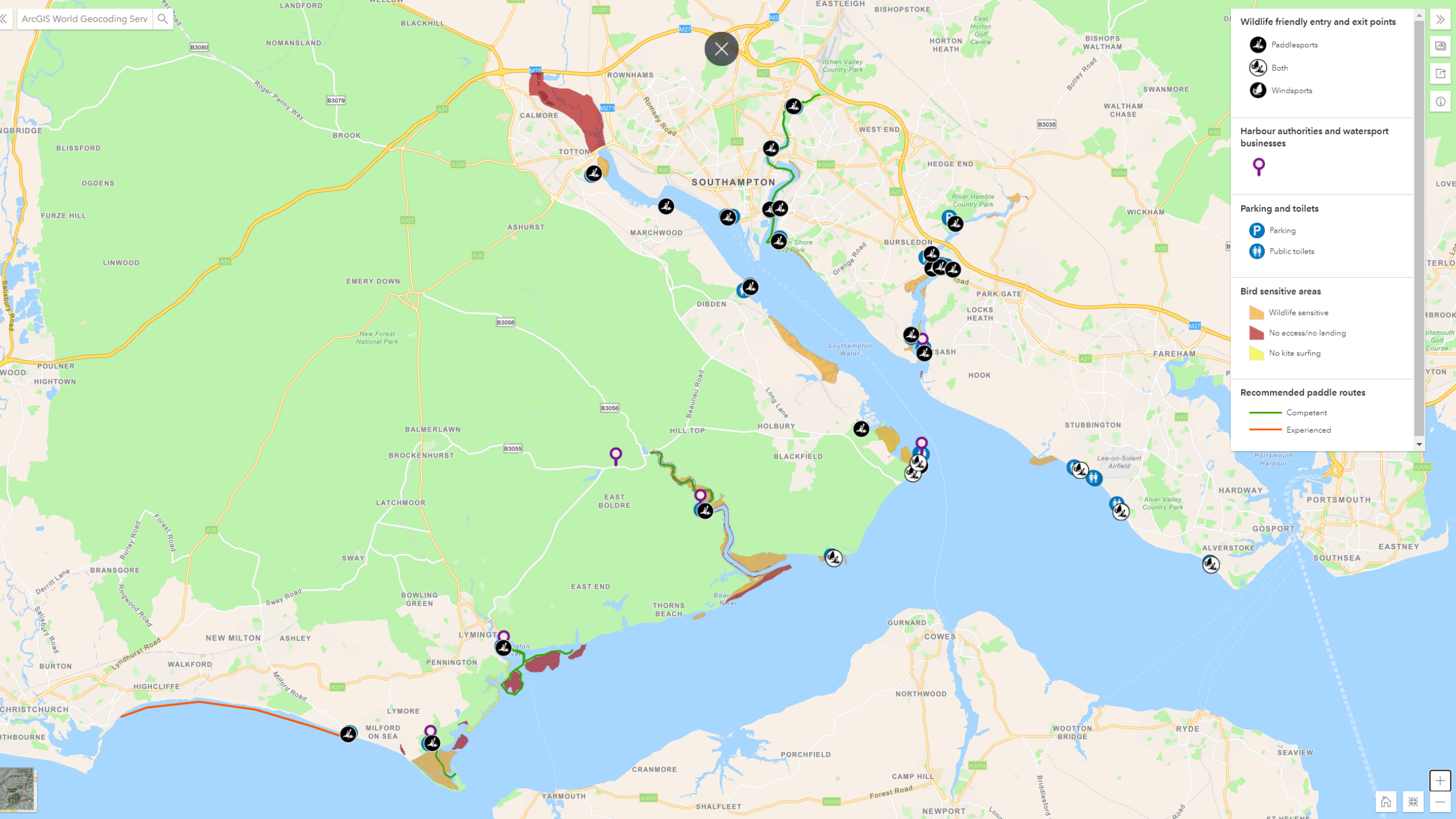


Wildlife aware windsports

Taking steps to avoid wildlife disturbance by looking out for nature, planning your route and choosing a wildlife friendly entry and exit point.

Find out more






Guidance for Wind sports



BIRD AWARE
SOLENT


WILDLIFE AWARE WATERSPORTS

A guide for kite and windsurfers



Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube

www.birdaware.org



Did you know?

Using suitable entry and exit points can reduce erosion, avoid damage to sensitive plants and animals, and lessen wildlife disturbance.



Did you know?

Wildlife disturbance isn't just an issue in the summer. Coastal birds like waders, ducks and geese will be able to feed and rest safely if they're not disturbed in the winter months. This will help them thrive.



Did you know?

The Solent coastline is of worldwide importance for birds.

Entry and exit: watch out, birds about!

Watersports users are taking steps to avoid wildlife disturbance.

Kite and windsurfers stay wildlife friendly by minimising noise and sudden changes in direction.



Little egret

If birds become aware of you and change their behaviour, give them space by moving away at a steady pace.

You'll know they've become aware of you if they start:

- putting up their heads,
- bobbing or turning head in your direction
- calling out
- stretching or flapping wings,
- walking, swimming or flying away.

Rig up and keep kit at top of beach.

Mud, marsh and the water's edge are feeding areas for birds; shingle beaches are resting and nesting areas

Carry or float equipment in and out.

Dragging equipment will damage habitat and your craft.



Oystercatcher

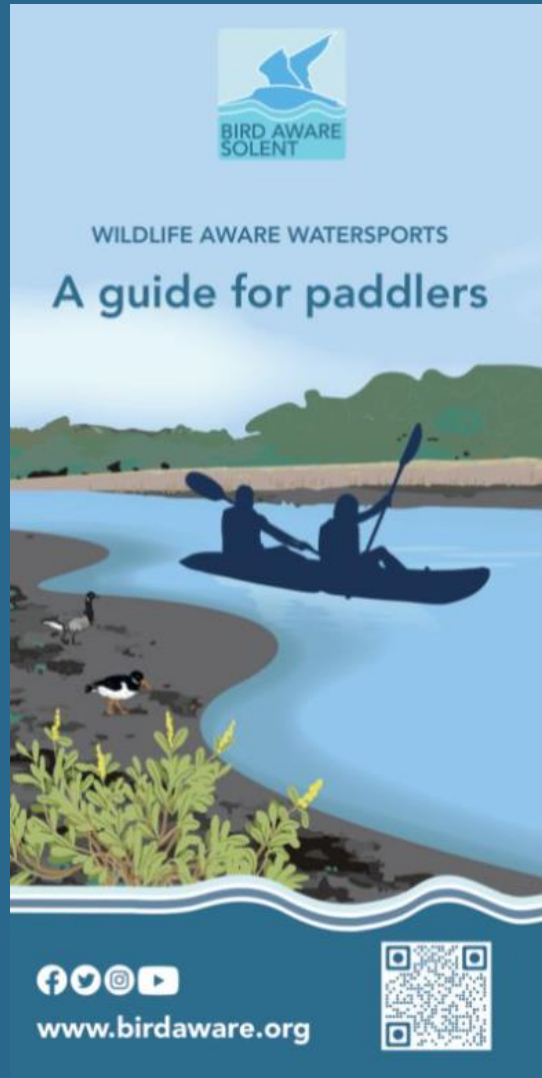
Red Shank

Brent goose

Glasswort

Sea purslane

Guide for Paddle sports



Where to paddle

Entry and exit

- Plan your route and choose a wildlife friendly entry and exit point. Use our online map to find the most wildlife friendly routes
- Keep kit at top of beach when not in use. Mud, marsh and the water's edge are feeding areas for birds; shingle beaches are resting and nesting areas.
- Carry or float equipment in and out. Dragging equipment will damage habitat and your craft.



Watch out, birds about!

Paddlers stay wildlife-friendly by minimising noise and sudden changes in direction.

Tip
If birds have flown from an area, move away as they may return.



Little egret

Tip for kayakers and canoers:
Keep a low paddle angle near wildlife



- putting up their heads,
- bobbing or turning head in your direction
- calling out
- stretching or flapping wings,
- walking, swimming or flying away.

Tip for paddleboarders:
Keep a low profile: get onto your knees near wildlife



Oystercatcher
Red Shank
Brent goose
Glasswort
Sea purslane

Our watersports with wildlife map and guides help paddle and wind sports enthusiasts coexist with nature.



Connecting with wildlife on the water

Paddle sports offer an opportunity to spot and appreciate wildlife from a unique perspective.

What you get up to on the water matters.

Many paddlers are taking steps to avoid wildlife disturbance and share our shores with nature by following the Bird Aware Coastal Code:



Move further away if birds become alert



Follow requests on signs





Paddle routes

Discover paddle routes which have been recommended as wildlife friendly.

Find out more



Recommended routes

These are paddle routes which have been recommended as wildlife friendly.



Let us know if you try them: we'd love to hear how you get on.

Thanks for looking out for birds when you're out on the water, giving them the space they need to feed, rest and breed without being disturbed.

We also recommend you follow the [RNLI's safety advice](#) when out on the water.

Buckler's Hard to Beaulieu

A paddle back in time for when you want to make a day of it

[Find out more](#)

Hurst to Mundeford Route

A longer open water route for experienced paddlers and in fair weather conditions

[Find out more](#)

Keyhaven to Hurst Route

A sheltered picturesque route suitable for all paddle craft

[Find out more](#)

Lymington Route

Two options for a scenic wildlife watching route

[Find out more](#)

River Itchen Northern Route

Enjoy a leisurely paddle among the green canopy that surrounds this part of the river.

[Find out more](#)

River Itchen Southern Route

A paddle on a chalk stream with unique views of Southampton

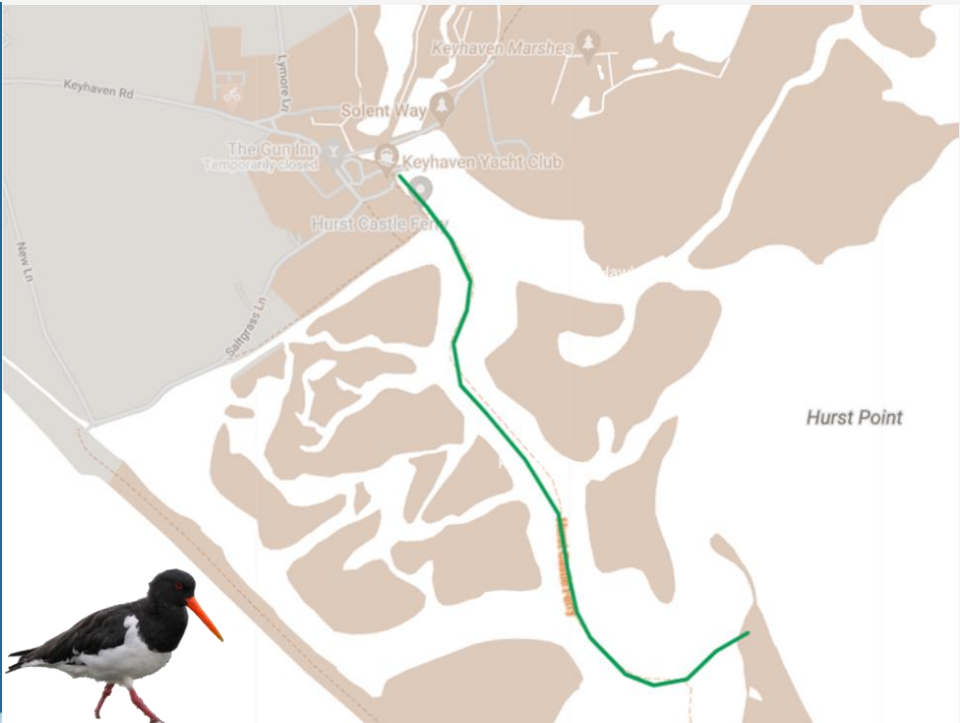
[Find out more](#)

Keyhaven to Hurst Route

A sheltered paddle to Hurst Castle

Parking: Keyhaven Amenity Car Park, SO41 0TP

Facilities: Parking, toilets and marina shop in car park



▲ **Conditions:** A sheltered area, not accessible at lower tides, shared with other craft.

🕒 **Time:** 1 to 2 hours for a return trip

📏 **Distance:** Approximately 2 km or 1.5 miles in one direction

A sheltered picturesque route suitable for all paddle craft. Launch at Keyhaven Public Slipway (fee). Why not take a picnic to enjoy on the beach by Hurst Castle or spend a pleasant few hours visiting this Tudor castle (open April to October)?



Thinking about wildlife at Thorness Bay

- Look out for birds when you first arrive
- Choose an entry pattern that allows them to keep feeding or resting undisturbed
- Rig up at top of beach
- Keep equipment in one area of the beach or coastline rather than spread out
- Secure anything that is flapping as flapping object mimic predators and are especially scary
- Try to always use the same bit of beach as wildlife is more sensitive to disturbance in areas that are not as frequently used

Birds may learn to use areas that you are not using as long as groups are consistent in their behaviour.



Any questions?

