

Welcome to the Natural Environment Group Meeting

19 November 2025

What is the Natural Environment Group?

1. Group of professional people that have a specific interest in the natural environment of the Solent.
2. The Solent Forum provides the Secretariat and Natural England the Chair.
3. Sits under the work of the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Management Scheme. Members of this scheme have automatic membership, and other interested parties can apply to join.
4. Takes forward Solent wide actions identified by the Solent Marine Sites Management Group.
5. Works to address other Solent wide environmental issues in partnership.
6. Has a small project budget to further the evidence base for issues identified under the SEMS scheme.

Finances

1. The Solent Marine Sites and Natural Environment Group have their own budget code under the Forum's accountable body
2. Members of the Solent Marine Sites Management Scheme (Relevant Authorities under the Habs Regs) are automatically members of NEG
3. Financial contributions pay for Solent Forum staff time to provide the secretariat and management of the SEMS and NEG groups
4. There is a small surplus every year that is allocated to projects that help to address the evidence requirements from the SEMS Management Scheme
5. Budgetary information is shared at the April NEG meeting
6. An advisory letter is sent each November that sets out the expected contribution for the following financial year. Invoices are sent from the Solent Forum's accountable body

Actions Arising from Last Meeting

1. Hants and Wight Wildlife Trust to explore monitoring bird disturbance using observational data.
2. Kate Ansell to contact project bid submitters (2025) with the decision outcome.
3. University of Portsmouth to present final findings from the Starling study at a future meeting once available. – April 2026
4. All to assist Project Portunus with accessing suitable sites for survey work (alisonmayor2003@yahoo.com).
5. Kate Ansell and Jess Taylor to discuss timing of in person meeting and review the project bid application form. Revised bid form attached with Agenda, in person meeting will be late 2026 or early 2027 (one in person, one via Teams)
6. All to please send personnel changes to Kate Ansell to update the mailing list and ensure correct representatives are included.

Matters Arising – Change of Solent Forum Host

- The Solent Forum will be changing host by 1 April 2026.
- The Forum's constitution will not change.
- Invoices for 2026/27 will be sent from a new accountable body – our usual advisory letters sent each Autumn will set out contributions and the amount will not change with the hosting switch.
- Staff email addresses will change, the info@solentforum.org email will remain but the solentforum@hants.gov.uk and sems@hants.gov.uk will go.
- The SEMS website is hosted independently so there will be no change. NEG information is uploaded to this site.
- We will have to reschedule Teams meetings under the new host so please bear with us, the dates will not change

Actions Attributed to NEG from the Solent Marine Sites Management Report, 2025

1. Support further research on how highways run-off could affect the Solent's designated sites.
2. Promote research into the impacts on designated sites of end-of-life abandoned GRP boats.
3. Consider how to obtain greater evidence on coastal footfall across the Solent, esp at sensitive sites.
4. Support the development of the Solent Seascapes project's Seascape Recovery Plan.
5. Define more clearly what constitutes 'disturbance' to the Solent's designated sites.

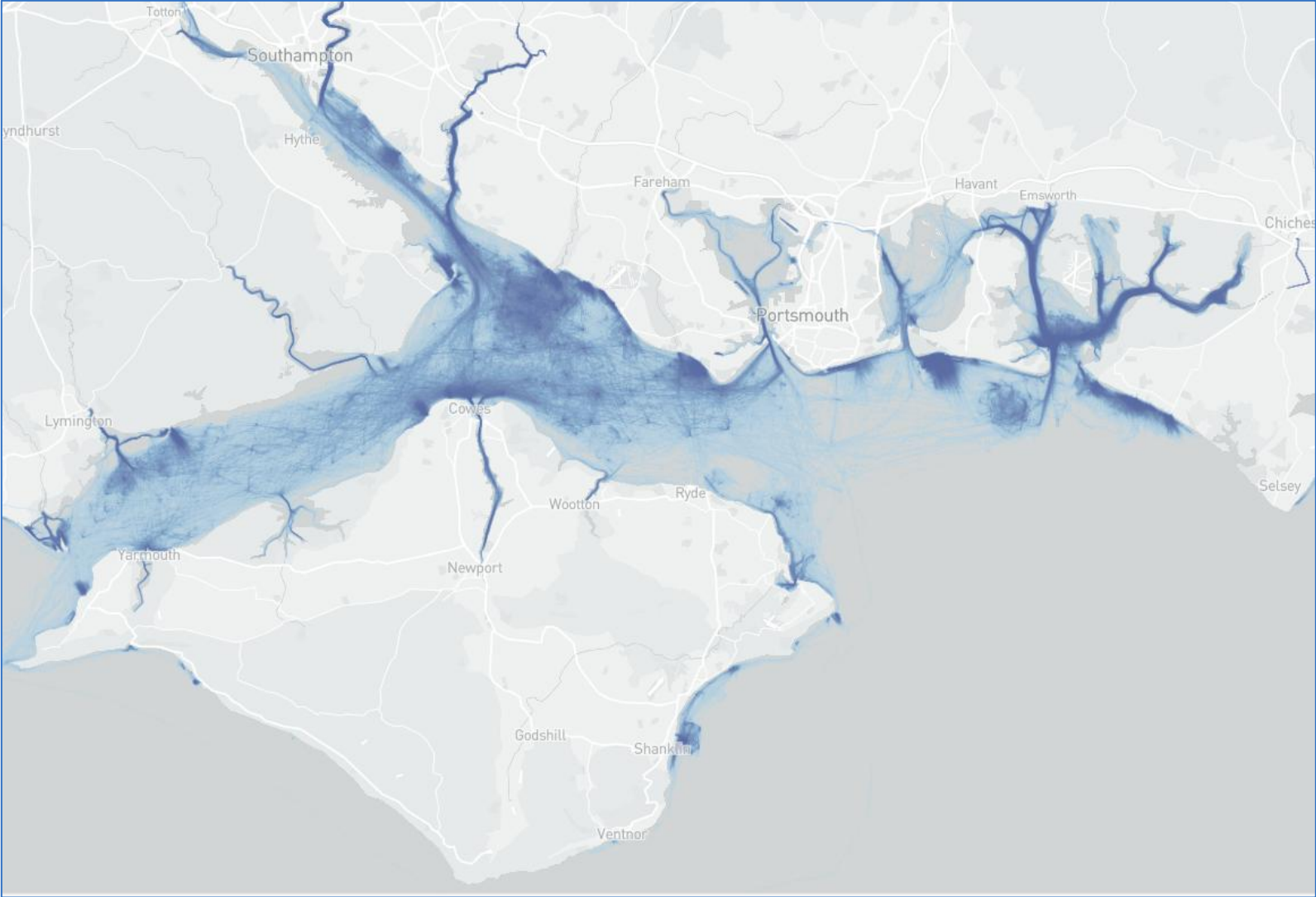
Evidence Gaps from SEMS Management Scheme

Table 4b. Percentage of respondents that reported 'don't know' to activity changes

Activity	Don't Know	Total Responses	% Don't know
Recreation - light aircraft	5	11	45%
Land recreation (incl. walking with dogs)	9	20	45%
Fishing (shore-based activities)	9	21	43%
Grazing and Foraging	3	7	43%
Littering and removal of litter	9	21	43%
General Beach Recreation	7	18	39%
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	7	19	37%
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	6	18	33%
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	4	16	25%
Mooring and Anchoring	3	16	19%
Boat Repair and Maintenance	2	13	15%
Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes	3	20	15%
Wildfowling	1	7	14%
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	2	15	13%
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	2	16	13%
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	1	17	6%

Strava Mapping

Solent: All Watersports



Strava Mapping

Walking



Update on NEG Project Funded in 2025/26

Drug accumulation in fish of the Solent – Uni of Southampton

- In July and September 2025 fish, invertebrates and algae sampled from the Marchwood power plant.
- Standards bought for 14 anti-depressants and anti-psychotics for analysis with NEG funds, based on prescription data and potential impact based on their potency.
- Samples now being analysed for targeted analysis of drugs.
- Brunel University has a method for many more compounds and is willing to run a selection on the samples. This should get data on other drug classes, pesticides and illicit drugs.
- Should be complete in early 2026, so hopefully can present at April 2026 meeting.

Project Bidding Form Changes 2026/27

- NEG has a small pot of money that it grants for research each year. Applications invited in February and confirmed by NEG group in April.
- If you would be happy to sit on a judging panel that ranks the submissions please let us know.
- We were asked to update the bidding form to link it more closely to the impacts being identified under the SEMS Management Scheme.
- Bidding form has now been revised by staff and Chair, it is attached to this meeting invite. If you have any comment, please could you do so by end of November.
- If you know of anyone that would like to receive the call for funding, please email info@solentforum.org so we can add them to our list.

Date of Next Meeting

- 29 April 2026 via Teams
- A placeholder invite will be sent to you after this meeting.
- A revised meeting update will be sent once the Forum has transferred to its new Host.