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**Solent Marine Sites**  
**Annual Management Report, 2022**

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**Solent Forum**  
*September 2022*



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## 1 Executive Summary

In 2022, seventeen non-licensable coastal and marine activities that take place in the Solent were surveyed for the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Annual Management Scheme. Of the thirty-one Relevant Authorities in the Solent invited to complete the survey, thirty responded. Respondents were asked how participation in these activities had changed since the previous year, and whether they believed they were having an impact on SEMS. The Survey results can be accessed at: [SEMS ASR 2022.pdf](#).

This Annual Management Report evaluates and discusses the survey responses, reviews existing management measures, and identifies actions. Natural England evaluate whether they believe each activity is impacting the condition of SEMS sites.

Supplementary information and additional resources on each of the activities can be found on the SEMS website at: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/).

The past years' data shows that participation of activities in the Solent has generally not changed except for a further increase in paddlesport use. However, in 2020 there were significant increases reported in coastal walking (including dog walking) and general beach recreation; these levels have not dropped as people increasingly value the physical and mental health benefits of visiting the coast and using the marine space. There are concerns that high levels of baseline activity are having negative impacts, particularly at sensitive sites, and there is a case to look at reducing or managing activity levels in the future in some locations. Those organisations holding powers and responsibilities where specific activities are a concern, will find this report useful as evidence for guiding their policy and effort in addressing and controlling activity.

Activities highlighted this year by multiple respondents potentially impacting on SEMS sites include coastal walking with and without dogs, paddlesport participation and the use of motorised shallow draft craft like personal watercraft. The impact of litter arising from activities is an ongoing concern. The issue of bird disturbance from dog walking is long standing in the Solent and it is being addressed by the [Bird Aware Solent partnership](#), who commenced a five year review of their work in 2022.

This Report also recognises the ongoing good work that is being undertaken by the Solent's Relevant Authorities, and the trade associations and user groups for recreational activities, to protect and conserve the Solent's designated sites. SEMS will continue to promote this work and share best practice across the Solent, working in partnership with all relevant coastal stakeholders.

## 2 Introduction

This Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Annual Management Report provides an overview of the SEMS Management Scheme, in which the [SEMS Management Group](#) act to comply with the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) for non-licensable activities. It shows the content, structure and process of undertaking the Management Scheme. It summarises, evaluates and sets actions for each of the seventeen activities surveyed in the SEMS annual survey.

Actions to address the issues raised are debated at the annual SEMS Management Group meeting, which takes place each September. The Solent Forum's [Natural Environment Group \(NEG\)](#) takes forward and delivers strategic actions, more localised or specific actions are undertaken by the appropriate individual Relevant Authority (RA).

### 2.1 European Marine Sites

European Marine Sites (EMSs) are Marine Protected Areas below mean high water designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protected Areas (SPAs). The management of EMSs was established under Regulation 38 of the Habitats Regulations. This gives Relevant Authorities (RAs) the responsibility for monitoring activities across designated sites, and for addressing any damaging impacts.

[Marine Conservation Zones](#) are designated via separate legislation and are not formally included in the SEMS Management Scheme. However, since their designation in the Solent we have included questions on these sites in the Annual Survey; we ask respondents if they are undertaking any monitoring and if they have any concerns about activities having an impact. Please see section 7 for more details.

### 2.2 Solent Marine Sites

The Solent is a complex site encompassing a major estuarine system. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive areas of intertidal mudflats, saltmarshes, eelgrass and natural shoreline transitions, such as drift line vegetation. The rich intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, shingle beaches and adjacent coastal habitats, including grazing marsh, support nationally and internationally important numbers of migratory and over-wintering waders and waterfowl, as well as important breeding gull and tern populations.

The Solent Marine Site (SEMS) Management Scheme applies to the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA. It also includes the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA for foraging terns that covers much of the marine area.

Section 8 shows a map of the Solent Marine Sites.

### 2.3 SEMS Management Scheme

In the Solent, a Management Scheme (MS) was first established in 2002 by the RAs opting to work together; members of the scheme and the [terms of reference](#) can be accessed at:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Meetings/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Meetings/). The Solent Forum provides the secretariat for the SEMS MS.

The overall MS components include an Annual Survey, an Annual Management Report, an annual meeting of RAs, consultation with strategic stakeholders and agreed actions. These outputs are supported by the SEMS website, this provides more detailed resources and guidance. Figure 1 shows the annual timetable.

**Figure 1. Solent Marine Sites Management Scheme Framework**



### 2.3.1 Relevant Authority Duties and Responsibilities

The RAs individually report on SEMS activities within their area of duty and responsibility. They provide information on activity participation change and potential impacts by completing an [online survey](#) every spring. This survey data forms the basis of this Annual Management Report. Additionally, RAs need to have regard to the Habitats Regulations and aspire to good practice through their normal work and roles. Please see guidance at: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Actions\\_Guidance/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Actions_Guidance/).

### 2.3.2 MMO Role

The MMO is responsible for the assessment and managing marine non-licensable activities (where necessary) within marine protected areas (MPA) for the purposes of furthering the conservation objectives of the site. This applies regardless of whether the MPA is within harbour authority jurisdiction. Where the MPA is within harbour authority jurisdiction, MMO would liaise with the relevant harbour authority with regards to management. MMO recognise that existing measures may be in place by harbour authorities and would want to avoid regulatory duplication.

### 2.3.3 Natural Environment Group

The [Natural Environment Group \(NEG\)](#) is open to all SEMS RAs who wish to be involved and other invited organisations with an interest in the natural environment. NEG assists the SEMS MG in the delivery of strategic actions. The Solent Forum provides the secretariat for NEG.

### 2.3.4 Strategic Stakeholder Group

The Strategic Stakeholder Group (SSG) exists to ensure that legitimate stakeholders are briefed and can comment on the content of the SEMS Annual Management Report. They are also asked to provide feedback to the management group on key strategic issues.

### 2.3.5 Bird Aware Solent

[Bird Aware Solent](#) is an initiative to raise awareness of the birds that spend the winter on the Solent, so that people can enjoy the coast and its wildlife without disturbing the birds. It is the public facing brand name of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership. Fifteen of the Solent's local authorities are members of this Partnership and use it to help fulfil their duties to mitigate bird disturbance from recreational activity. Partners also include Natural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Chichester Harbour Conservancy. It implements measures to mitigate the impact of additional recreational activity resulting from planned housing development on the Solent's three Special Protection Areas. It succeeds the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project which commissioned the initial research into impacts.

Bird Aware data showed that over winter 2021/22 they observed lower levels of visitors than in the previous year, but visitor numbers remain significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. For ease of comparison, they saw an average of 52 people per site visit, which is lower than the number of people seen per site visit during the pandemic (67), but still significantly higher than the number of people seen per site visit pre-pandemic (37).

### 2.3.6 Weather

Activity participation is weather dependent, particularly for more informal recreation like general beach recreation. Relevant authorities regularly report the close link between the weather and

activity levels in their Annual Survey returns. It obviously follows that with better weather more people will access the coast and there will be more pressure on habitats and species. The predicted long term trend of hotter temperatures could see both an increase in visitors and additional events at the coast like beach festivals. It is recommended to continue to pre-plan and test additional measures that may need to be taken if good weather leads to an influx of coastal visitors at sensitive sites.

### 2.3.7 Activity Infrastructure Plans and Projects

There is a distinction between how impacts are assessed from the development of facilities required for non-licensable activities, and the impacts arising from participation. Development of facilities in SEMS is subject to planning permission and/or marine licensing and is therefore subject to a [Habitats Regulation Assessment \(HRA\)](#). The HRA will assess both the construction and usage impacts. The increased use or expansion of existing facilities could also have the potential to increase impacts on SEMS sites, for example the extension of a coastal path. SEMS does not cover the development aspects of non-licensable activities, but we do ask about plans and projects that may change activity levels as part of the Annual Survey.

## 2.4 Natural England's Conservation Advice

Natural England's (NE) conservation advice (CA) packages provide statutory advice which informs the SEMS MS. Most designated MPAs within SEMS have a formal conservation advice package, these are available on Natural England's Designated Sites System at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>.

The CA package includes Advice on Operations (AoO) which identifies pressures associated with the most commonly occurring marine activities, and an assessment of the feature/sub-feature or supporting habitat sensitivity to these pressures. This advice also helps users understand which features could be impacted by a plan or project and help screen it as part of the initial phases of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

For an activity, the risk of harm will be determined by its extent, magnitude and duration, together with the sensitivity of the feature/sub-feature or supporting habitat. Where available, site condition data is used to inform this assessment. The aim of this process is to help the initial screening (i.e. tLSE) to identify whether the risks posed by an activity are likely to have a significant effect on the designated sites. The CAs are used as the basis to evaluate the potential impact of each activity within this SEMS Annual Management Report. Detailed advice can be provided by Natural England upon request.

Natural England produced formal conservation advice package for the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA in September 2021. With the completion of this site, they have now produced formal conservation advice for all marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within SEMS.

Natural England have started the process of producing conservation advice for the Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) with draft advice for Bembridge MCZ produced in March 2022. Following the invitation to comment period, formal advice for this site will be produced in March 2023.

### 2.4.1 Site Condition Assessments

Understanding SEMS site condition is important in supporting management decisions. Annual monitoring of activities by the SEMS MG aims to identify threats to site condition or, anecdotal signs of any deterioration, so that timely management action can be taken to avoid damage or further evidence can be collected.

The condition of EMSs are assessed by feature and reported on by NE every six years. The most recent site condition can be found on Natural England's Magic Map website at: (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>).

Condition assessments for SEMS interest features indicate if they are in favourable condition; identifying threats which have the potential to impact their condition and therefore require further monitoring or management. In this report, site condition is referenced where further action is needed.

Condition assessments have been completed for the Solent Maritime SAC, which shows all marine features and sub features, apart from coastal lagoons to be in unfavourable condition. This unfavourable status is largely due to a few key factors:

- Elevated nutrient levels
- Elevated aqueous contaminants
- Low infaunal quality index (IQI)
- Anthropogenic pressures including trampling and anchoring

Condition assessments have also been completed for the South Wight Maritime SAC, which is in favourable condition, and for the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC which is in broadly favourable condition. Links to these condition assessments are available at: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/Condition\\_assessments/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/Condition_assessments/).

New methodologies have been produced for SPA and MCZ condition assessments, and it is anticipated that the first SPA condition assessments will be produced in 2022/23 for SPAs and 2023/24 for MCZs. Once the SPA and MCZ condition assessments have been completed, they will also be available on NE's designated Sites System.

Recently, Natural England have begun to include terrestrial drivers into its advice on adverse condition/condition threat that reflect how land based activity can impact on coastal designated sites. In the Solent Maritime SAC, drivers now include forestry, freshwater inputs and agriculture.

### 2.4.2 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)

Natural England's MENE survey provides trend data for how people experience the natural environment in England. The main focus of the survey is capturing how time is spent. It also seeks to capture other ways of people engaging with the natural environment, and pro-environmental behaviours. See: [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment).

### 2.4.3 Other Plans

Other plans also impact on the management and condition of SEMS, for example Catchment Management Plans and the South Marine Plans. The former embed collaborative working at a river catchment scale to deliver cross-cutting improvements to water environments. The [Habitat](#)

[Regulations Assessment](#) for the South Marine Plan details a wide range of pathways and impacts of activities.

## 2.5 SEMS Annual Survey Respondents

Out of the 31 RAs who were invited to complete the 2022 SEMS survey 30 responded. Table 1 shows the list of respondents. Table 2 identifies the types of RAs which responded. One respondent notified a change to their coastal and marine management responsibilities since the last survey in 2021. The Isle of Wight Council is now considering nutrient neutrality in individual planning applications.

Table 1. Relevant Authorities who completed the 2022 survey	
Associated British Ports (ABP)	Natural England (NE)
Beaulieu River Management (BRM)	New Forest District Council (NFDC)
Chichester District Council (CDC)	New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)
Chichester Harbour Conservancy (ChHC)	Portsmouth City Council (PCC)
Cowes Harbour Commissioners (CoHC)	Portsmouth International Port (PIP)
Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC)	Queen's Harbour Master (Portsmouth) (QHM)
Environment Agency (EA)	River Hamble Harbour Authority (RHHA)
Fareham Borough Council (FBC)	Southern IFCA (SoIFCA)
Gosport Borough Council (GBC)	Southern Water (SW)
Hampshire County Council	Sussex IFCA (SxIFCA)
Havant Borough Council (HBC)	Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC)
Isle of Wight Council (IoWC)	West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
Langstone Harbour Board (LHB)	Wightlink Ferries (WL)
Lymington Harbour Commissioners (LHC)	Winchester City Council (WCC)
Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners (YHC)
<b>Organisations who did not respond:</b> Southampton City Council (SCC)	

Table 2. The types of Relevant Authority who responded to the 2022 Survey

Authority Type	Number
Government Authority	4
Harbour Authority	9
IFCA	2
Local Authority	11
Other	2 (water company, National Park Authority)
Private Company	1

### 3 Activity Summary

Section 3 summarises the annual survey findings of the seventeen activities in the SEMS Annual Survey Report, 2022. Detailed observations and actions for each individual activity are set out in section 4.

#### 3.1 Jurisdiction of Activities in the Solent

Table 3 illustrates how many relevant authorities (RA) recorded that a particular activity takes place within their jurisdiction.

<b>Table 3. Activities that fall within the jurisdiction of SEMS Management Group members</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Percentage of RAs with jurisdiction for activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	57%	17
Boat Repair and Maintenance	50%	15
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	47%	14
Fishing (shore-based activities)	70%	21
General Beach Recreation	50%	15
Grazing and Foraging	17%	5
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	57%	17
Land recreation - Walking (other than dog walking)	60%	18
Littering and removal of litter	80%	24
Mooring and Anchoring	57%	17
Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes	60%	18
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	50%	15
Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, drones)	30%	9
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	63%	19
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	50%	15
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	50%	15
Wildfowling	23%	7

### 3.2 Summary of Changes Recorded in Activity Levels

Respondents were asked whether, since the last survey in spring 2022, each activity had increased, decreased, had no change since the previous year or they had no data. Table 4 summarises the data. The mode value of the responses has been highlighted in green.

Table 4. Summary of reported changes in activity levels from spring 2021 to spring 2022					
Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions	1	0	15	1	17
Boat Repair and Maintenance	2	0	10	3	15
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	1	1	9	4	15
Fishing (shore-based activities)	2	0	13	6	21
General Beach Recreation	0	2	7	6	15
Grazing and Foraging	1	0	1	3	5
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	1	0	9	7	17
Land recreation - Walking (other than dog walking)	1	1	9	7	18
Littering and removal of litter	1	1	15	7	24
Mooring and Anchoring	5	0	10	2	17
Operation of FCERM schemes	3	0	8	7	18
Operation of ports and harbours	0	1	14	0	15
Recreation - light aircraft	2	1	3	3	9
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	9	1	4	6	20
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	4	1	6	5	16
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	0	0	14	1	15
Wildfowling	0	1	6	0	7

### 3.3 Activity Impacts on Designated Sites

Respondents were asked whether they thought that the activities surveyed were having an impact on the features of the Solent Marine Sites. Table 5 summarises the data. The mode value of the responses has been highlighted in green.

Table 5. Activities impacting on designated sites				
Activity	Yes	No	Total Responses	Org Names (where Yes) See table 1 for abbreviations.
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up	3	14	17	LHB, ChHC, PIP
Boat Repair and Maintenance	1	14	15	ChHC
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	6	9	15	GBC, EA, EBC, MMO, ChHC, PIP
Fishing (shore-based activities)	7	12	19	LHB, EBC, SxIFCA, MMO, CDC, ChHC, FBC
General Beach Recreation	4	10	14	NE, ChHC, FBC, HCC
Grazing and Foraging	1	2	3	ChHC
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	14	3	17	NE, GBC, LHB, EBC, PCC, IOWC, MMO, CDC, ChHC, NFNPA, BRM, FBC, WSCC, HCC
Land recreation - Walking (other than dog walking)	13	5	18	NE, GBC, LHB, EBC, WCC, PCC IOWC CDC ChHC, NFNPA, BRM, FBC, HCC
Littering and removal of litter	14	10	24	LHC, GBC, LHB, ABP, SW, EA, EBC, WCC, PCC, IOWC, ChHC, NFNPA, BRM, FBC
Mooring and Anchoring	5	12	17	NE, LHB, MMO, ChHC, F BC
Operation of FCERM schemes	6	12	18	LHC, ABP, EA, EBC, MMO, ChHC
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	1	14	15	ChHC
Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, drones)	1	8	9	ChHC
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	9	10	19	NE, LHB, EBC, WCC, ChHC, NFNPA, BRM, FBC, HCC
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	8	8	16	GBC, LHB, EBC, WCC, MMO, ChHC, PIP, FBC
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	0	15	15	
Wildfowling	3	4	7	LHB, WCC, ChHC

### 3.4 Annual Trend Data

Table 6 shows the mode response for activity change for a time series; currently we have data for four years.

Table 6. Trend data for activity change				
Activity	2022	2021	2020	2019
Accidental vessel discharges/emissions	NC	NC	NC	NC
Boat repair and maintenance	NC	NC	NC	NC
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	NC	NC	NC	D/NC
Fishing (shore-based activities)	NC	DK	NC	NC
Grazing and foraging	DK	I	NC	N/a
General beach recreation	NC	I	NC	NC
Land recreation - Dog walking	NC	I	NC	NC
Land recreation - Walking (other than dog walking)	NC	I	NC	NC
Littering and removal of litter	NC	NC	NC	NC
Mooring and anchoring	NC	NC	NC	NC
Operation of FCERM	NC	NC	NC	NC
Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)	NC	NC	NC	NC
Recreation - light aircraft	NC	NC	I	NC
Recreation - non-motorised watercraft	I	I	NC	I/NC
Recreation - powerboating or sailing with an engine	NC	I/DK	NC	NC
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	NC	NC	NC	NC
Wildfowling	NC	NC	NC	NC
<b>Key: I = increase, D = decrease, NC = No change, DK = Don't Know</b> Source: SEMS Annual Surveys: 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019				

## 4 Individual Activity Responses

Section 4 reviews and evaluates each of the seventeen different activities covered in the report. There are three subdivisions under each activity:

1. Summary of the survey response from 2022.
2. Discussion and evaluation. This includes sections written by Natural England on any potential impacts of the activity and whether it is currently impacting on sites. The final section details existing management measures.
3. Actions.

In the action section, actions are dated as to when they were first proposed, or are ongoing, the lead and partners and the progress made. NEG takes on strategic issues that affect the Solent widely and delivers these actions via its biannual meetings.

### 4.1 Accidental Vessel Discharges/Emissions including Oil Spill and Clean-up

*Activity includes accidental discharges and/or emissions from all types of vessels, including exhaust fumes, waste water, sewerage, oils, lubricants, and chemicals, including oil spill and clean-up.*

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
<b>Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up</b>	1	0	15	1	17
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	3		14		17

#### 4.1.1 Survey Response

The predominant response from the survey respondents was that the occurrence of this activity has not changed since last year and that it is unlikely to be having an impact on the SEMS sites. This activity was not reported as causing concern in previous surveys.

Respondents noted that it is not possible to prevent all accidental discharges, such as small leaks, but that measures are in place to investigate and address them if they do happen. Respondents also added that there are good plans and procedures in place to deal with and record oil spills. There is a move towards using electric and alternative fuels for marine vessels, such as LPG, this will help to minimise oil and diesel discharges.

## 4.1.2 Evaluation and Discussion

### Potential Impacts

Materials such as oil are of concern in the marine environment due to their buoyancy and easy transport from one location to another on currents, and the damage it can cause to fish and seabird populations. PAH contamination can also lead to the lowering, temporarily or more permanently, of oxygen levels in the water.

Although there is insufficient evidence on the impacts of features within SEMS, it is known that wading birds can be directly impacted by contamination with hydrocarbon, and the accumulation of hydrocarbons caused by feeding on contaminated fauna can cause changes in migratory and breeding behaviour. Most effects are probably linked to chronic exposure to relatively low levels of pollutants.

### Impacts on SEMS

Natural England do not consider this activity to be having an impact on the SEMS sites when considered alone. However, elevated contaminant levels are one of the reasons identified as causing Solent Maritime SAC to be in unfavourable condition. Therefore, Natural England support continued review as highlighted in the management measures section of this report.

### Management Measures

The SEMS MG members, who have jurisdiction under this activity, already have policies and procedures in place to address accidental discharges. Regular emergency spill exercises help to keep equipment and skills up to date. Information on procedures is available on the relevant authorities' websites and other publications such as harbour guides.

For more resources and information please see: [Solentems - Accidental vessel discharges/emissions incl. oil spill and clean-up](#).

### 4.1.3 Action

- No current action required by SEMS MG.

## 4.2 Boat Repair and Maintenance

*Activity includes vessel maintenance and repair on land or afloat, including hull cleaning. Please also consider the vessels, machinery and vehicles associated with this activity.*

### 4.2.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Boat Repair and Maintenance	2	0	10	3	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	1		14		15

Respondents noted that this activity is not closely monitored, so it is difficult to evaluate change. Two respondents stated an increase as more people have begun to use their boats again and this has required extra maintenance. ChHC noted that boat maintenance is widespread in Chichester harbour, and they have found microplastics and glass fibre particles throughout the harbour.

LHB have concerns regarding Eastney Lake and the maintenance of vessels in a dilapidated state. Occasional maintenance work can include breaking apart fiberglass, releasing glass microfibers into both the marine environment and the atmosphere.

Washdown and filtration systems have been installed in many harbours and the Harbour Authorities do provide guidance to their customers on best practice surrounding this topic.

## 4.2.2 Evaluation and Discussion

### Potential Impacts

Natural England's draft Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from boat repair/maintenance that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance, contaminants and the introduction or spread of invasive non-native species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are considered to be sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, the construction of boat repair/maintenance facilities may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as physical change or loss of habitat, smothering and siltation.

Boat repair/maintenance has the potential to introduce invasive non-native species (INNS) into the marine environment and it needs careful management. Recreational craft have been identified as one of several vectors by which INNS can be introduced to new areas. There is currently no legislation that requires businesses to take steps to deal with INNS, although the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 requires the prevention of spreading of INNS from a site where they are known to be present. People need to be aware that the spread of invasive non-native species can occur from any watercraft movement; this may be exacerbated as climate change allows species to extend beyond their current range

### Impacts on SEMS

Whilst Natural England do not consider this activity to currently be impacting on SEMS it does have the potential to increase the presence and spread of Invasive Non-Native Species which has been listed as a condition threat for Solent Maritime SAC. Natural England advises that harbours and marinas should promote best practice.

The release of TBT into the marine environment from antifouling has historically been of concern in the Solent. Changes in antifouling practice means that this has now become a legacy issue, however, levels of TBT are still reported above Threshold Levels, particularly in the upper parts of Southampton Water, suggesting that historical TBT is still present in sediments and slowly leaching into the wider environment. Environment Agency monitoring indicates that there is a declining trend of TBT with contamination limited to hotspots.

In addition, elevated contaminants levels are one of the reasons for unfavourable status of SEMS, this includes copper and other derivatives which have replaced TBT. The Environment Agency report that copper has never caused failures of WFD water bodies within SEMS, and it is not currently undertaking any investigations into copper sources. However, previous work showed that copper

concentrations were elevated in the Hamble estuary compared to elsewhere in the SEMS, probably linked to the high density of boats in the Hamble. More recent evidence indicates that copper in the Hamble has declined, suggesting that measures to reduce contamination are working and should be continued.

For more information please see the Open data, Water Quality archive at:

<http://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/landing> and the Open data, Biosys archive at: <https://data.gov.uk/data/search?q=biosys>

### Management Measures

The GreenBlue initiative produces detailed guidance and undertakes education programmes on how to minimise the environmental impacts from boat maintenance and repair. It includes guides on:

- Antifouling
- Cleaning on board
- Sewage
- Oil and fuel

See: [Water Pollution Prevention – The Green Blue](#).

The Port of Southampton only allows ECOSubsea to operate at port berths - [Home - ECOSubsea](#).

The Check, Clean, Dry campaign is a national campaign run by the GB non-native species secretariat, designed to help stop the spread of invasive plants and animals in our waters. It has lots of resources and guidance for best practice and the impacts from INNS. See:

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>.

For more resources and information please see:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Boat\\_repair/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Boat_repair/).

### 4.2.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** Continue to promote and share best practice in addressing the potential environmental impacts of boat repair/maintenance, including preventing INNS. For resources see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Boat\\_repair/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Boat_repair/).

**Lead/Partners:** Harbour authorities and all others who have this activity in their area of responsibility.

2. **Action (complete):** Natural England to send an update on their monitoring work on INNS to the SEMS office for distribution once all survey work is completed. Harbour authorities can request specific data for their area from the local Natural England office.

**Lead/Partners:** Natural England

**Action progress:** The Final Report was published April 2022 - [Mapping Invasive Alien Species in intertidal habitats within Natura 2000 sites in the Solent - JP042 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#).

### 4.3 Fishing (including shellfisheries)

Activity includes anchored nets or lines, electrofishing, traps, pelagic fishing (or fishing activities that do not interact with sea bed), hydraulic dredges, dredges, demersal trawl, demersal seines, diving, and sea angling.

#### 4.3.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Fishing (including shellfisheries)	1	1	9	4	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	6		9		15

Sussex IFCA report that as a result of the oyster beds remaining closed to dredging in the past year, there has been no activity taking place. The Environmental Health department continue to sample specific beds throughout the year, outside of this there is no activity.

No changes in sea angling activity have been reported to Sussex IFCA. They continue to monitor fishing activity on routine patrols in the harbour.

Southern IFCA reported that overall fishing activity remains consistent throughout the Solent with the exception of the Scallop dredge fishery which usually occurs outside the SEMS. Activity in the Solent Clam fishery has decreased due to unsuitable classifications, so fishers have moved from this to the Scallop fishery.

The Environment Agency (EA) have on-going concerns in relation to migratory salmonids and netting (though this links strongly to the freshwater designations, the activity occurs within these areas). The only fishery which the EA regulate in this area is the Beaulieu Seine net, this is now regulated under byelaw rather than net limitation order. The other relevant activity is the fyke net fishery for European Eel which operates within designated sites. All other aspects of fishing are regulated by Southern IFCA. There has been an increase in intertidal seagrass in Portsmouth Harbour, probably linked to the byelaw stopping shellfish dredging.

Eastleigh BC have concerns about inshore netting within the Hamble Estuary, the estuary mouth and Southampton water which are all likely to be having negative impacts on SEMS sites and also the interest features of SACs (i.e. salmonids in the Itchen).

Chichester Harbour Conservancy have seen large numbers of anglers use the harbour annually from shore or boat, they note that some netting persists.

Gosport BC noted that on the whole this activity is not considered to have an impact, however there is uncertainty how smaller trawling operations just off the coast affect SEMS sites.

## 4.3.2 Evaluation and Discussion

### Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from shellfish dredging that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations within SPAs. These include above water noise and visual disturbance. A number of designated bird species within SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, shellfish dredging may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed and penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed.

There are concerns over the impacts of discards on marine ecosystems, including changes in population abundance and demographics of affected species, altered species assemblages and food web structures. However, discards also provide important food resources for some scavenging species, including seabirds. Pelagic/mid water trawls, drift nets, pelagic seines and long lines can result in the entanglement and bycatch of a range of fauna.

### Impacts on SEMS

Natural England is content that the impacts of fishing (including shellfisheries) in SEMS have been correctly assessed by Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA, and the current management measures continue to prevent adverse effects on site features/supporting habitats. Natural England will continue to work with local IFCAs as new fisheries develop.

### Management Measures

[The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw](#) came into force on the 1 November 2021. It introduces a single coherent management tool for the purposes of managing the sustainable harvesting of bivalve populations in the Solent, prohibiting the use of a dredge by means of a vessel within the Solent unless authorised by a permit. The byelaw [permit conditions](#) set out various mechanisms for managing the fishery including closed seasons, curfews and gear restrictions. A full list of fisheries byelaws can be found in the [Southern IFCA byelaw booklet](#).

Sussex IFCA have [byelaws](#) for nearshore trawling, scallops and oysters. A byelaw for Chichester Harbour prohibits the use of towed fishing gears, digging, collection and hand gathering of marine fisheries resources in specified areas of the Harbour to protect Seagrass (*Zostera* spp) and prevent damage or deterioration to the Solent European Marine Site.

To avoid the bycatch of diving seabirds from nets, Southern IFCA have published a [code of practice](#). There is also a [byelaw](#) on regulating the use of stake or stop nets in Langstone Harbour. Sussex IFCA has [byelaws](#) controlling nets in its district.

The Sea Angling Diary Project aims to provide accurate estimates of recreational catches to improve the management of stocks, helping to achieve conservation goals and improve the availability of fish to sea anglers. The project is funded by Defra and supported by the national sea angling associations. See: <https://www.seaangling.org/>. The latest [participation report](#) covers data from 2018 to 2019.

Southern IFCA has [byelaws and codes of practice](#) that apply to commercial, recreational and charter fishers, who fish in the Southern IFCA district using rods and lines. This includes rod and lining, longlining, recreational angling and charter recreational angling.

For further information and resources please see: [Solentems - Fishing \(incl. shellfisheries\)](#).

### 4.3.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** Continue to report to the IFCA's any illegal fishing activity around closed beds from illegal netting or fish trapping. Be aware of and help to publicise new IFCA byelaws and codes of conduct.

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG Members

**Action Progress:** Ongoing

2. **Action (ongoing):** Publicise and encourage recreational anglers to take part in the Sea Angling Diary project. See: <https://www.seaangling.org/>.

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG Members

**Action Progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.4 Fishing (shore-based activities)

*Activity includes crab tiling, bait digging, shellfish collection (including seed mussel) e.g. by hand (with or without digging apparatus), rake or using 'tiles'. Also includes rod and line angling, the setting of pots and nets from the shore and the use of vehicles or vessels to access the shoreline.*

### 4.4.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Fishing (shore-based activities)	2	0	13	6	21
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	7		12		19

Respondents noted that this activity is difficult to patrol and police to ensure best practice, and to monitor the minimum landing sizes and catch species being collected. The impacts can be difficult to quantify but discarded fishing litter was raised as an issue plus direct disturbance to species from anglers and bait diggers. There are concerns about illegal commercial shellfish gathering and associated environmental health issues.

Sussex IFCA reported that the activity is largely focused around Nutbourne and Prinstead Channels which feed into Thorney channel, Emsworth channel, Thorney Island, and Pilsey Island, which is accessed either by sea or by land, Chichester Marina and Chidham. Other known hand gathering locations are Dell quay, Northney marina, Copperas Point, Westlands, Birdham pool, and Longmere point. It is a year round activity, over spring tides especially but has been reported to them on a daily basis over the summer months. Diggers and collectors access the intertidal areas by both land and boat.

### 4.4.2 Evaluation and Discussion

The public have a right to dig bait as an ancillary part of the public right of fishery; this does not imply a right of access across private land or the collection of bait for commercial purposes. Ragworm,

lugworm, crab, shellfish and other marine organisms are dug or foraged, mainly within the intertidal zone between high and low water.

Hand gatherers collect a variety of species, often dependent on where they are and what is available. In terms of differentiating between commercial and recreational collection this remains difficult, as they may well be both occurring at various points. The IFCAs note that there has been no increase in bait digging or angling (sea or shoreline activity) throughout the Solent EMS.

Southern IFCA officers work regularly throughout the district educating gatherers regarding relevant legislation particularly in relation to the Southern IFCA 'Minimum Conservation Reference Size' Byelaw, the 'Prohibition of gathering (sea fisheries resources) in seagrass beds' byelaw and the 'Fishing for Cockles' byelaw. These can be found at: <https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/shore-gathering>. Officers also work closely with partner agencies, particularly local authorities in relation to food hygiene concerns as well as working with the GLAA (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority) where concerns are aligned with their remit. As part of its review of spatial management, Southern IFCA has begun reviewing the 'Prohibition of gathering (sea fisheries resources) in seagrass beds' byelaw to ensure it is providing adequate protection to the most sensitive features of the sites based upon the most up to date evidence.

### **Potential Impacts**

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from shore-based fishing activities that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance and the removal of target and non-target species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, shore-based fishing activities may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed and penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed.

A great deal of evidence exists on the impacts of bait digging, for example, the literature reports that during the process of bait collection, by hand, mechanical digging or boulder turning, animals and plants other than those being sought in the intertidal mudflat habitat will be damaged and their population levels reduced.

### **Impacts on SEMS**

Natural England state that due to the extent and complexity of bait digging in the Solent a pilot is suggested, initially in one area of SEMS, using the Poole Harbour model (i.e. establishing a working group to develop a bait digging Memorandum of Agreement). Natural England remains committed to exploring the idea of piloting the Poole Harbour model with Southern IFCA and other stakeholders in part through the Solent Mudflat Disturbance Group.

In addition, Natural England will continue to work with local IFCAs as new fisheries develop.

### **Management Measures**

Crown Estate's position is, that for the foreshore under their jurisdiction, they do not have any powers to manage bait collection that is exercised as a public right; leases that they grant to local authorities and other regulatory bodies for local management of Crown Estate foreshore are always subject to the public right of fishing, which includes bait collection. Any management would, therefore, need to be by way of the relevant authority exercising its statutory powers rather than by the landowner or one in whom the landowner may vest its rights. Regarding commercial collection,

they have not been approached to date for their consent. If they were approached, they would consult with the relevant authorities before considering granting any permissions.

Sussex IFCA has completed its formal consultation stage of its [Hand Gathering Byelaw](#), and it is currently in the stage of analysing these answers. The aim for this byelaw is to introduce management measures relating to shore-based fishing activities within the Chichester Harbour area.

Chichester DC have seen an increase in illegal shellfish collection over the past twelve months and are working with the police on enforcement action.

SoIFCA has byelaws in place to protect the most sensitive features of the European Marine Site from shore gathering in both the SPAs and SACs, details of these byelaws can be found at: [Shore Gathering : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](#). They also have a [guidance leaflet](#) on the hand gathering of shellfish.

Relevant authorities also cautioned the need to take a Solent wide approach to prevent this activity being displaced to other locations if management measures are introduced. See [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Shore\\_based\\_fisheries/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Shore_based_fisheries/) for more resources on this topic. SEMS has also produced a [Code of Conduct for Bait Collection](#) that can be used as a guide.

#### 4.4.3 Actions

- 1. Action (ongoing):** Continue to report and liaise with the local IFCA, and if necessary the marine police, where it is considered that bait collection or foreshore hand gathering is commercial or having a detrimental impact. Use the [Guidance for Solent Relevant Authorities for monitoring shore-based fishing](#) to record this activity.

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG

**Action progress:** Ongoing

## 4.5 General Beach Recreation

*Activity includes other coastal land recreation and leisure activities such as educational or scientific studies, horse riding on the beach, fireworks displays, swimming, rock pooling, surfing, and non-motorised land craft (e.g. sand yachting, kite buggying).*

### 4.5.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
General Beach Recreation	0	2	7	6	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	4		10		14

Respondents commented that due to the diversity and spread of this activity their evidence is anecdotal rather than empirical.

Natural England noted similar use patterns to last year with locals staying closer to home. A rise was seen in holiday makers choosing the Isle of Wight as a staycation destination through the pandemic and after. They have concerns regarding bird disturbance, trampling, plastic pollution and littering.

There were reports of increased outdoor swimming in line with national trends. Hampshire CC commented on the high levels of beach use generally which brings associated problems like the use of BBQs and litter being left.

#### 4.5.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Unlike other marine recreational activities, general beach recreation is not covered by a national governing body or representative organisation. Good practice messaging regarding minimising impacts on the marine and coastal environment, including wildlife, tends to come from relevant authorities (e.g. Local Authorities) and environmental NGOs. Examples include interpretation boards, signage (e.g. to prevent trampling on vegetated shingle or directions to less sensitive sites), leaflets promoting codes of conduct and wardens (often volunteers) encouraging adherence to codes of conduct.

Increases in population from new housing development around the Solent, has the potential to increase participation in this activity. Bird Aware Solent was set up to address this issue.

Natural England's ongoing '[Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\)](#)' studies show how many people are visiting the natural environment and how they interact with it. The publication on visits to the coast gives detailed information on peoples' needs and experiences.

#### Potential Impacts

Natural England have published an evidence guidance note on general beach life at: (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5458695407796224>). This identifies two main pressures from this activity; abrasion/disturbance of the substrate surface, e.g. through general footfall (trampling) or digging holes and noise and visual disturbance, of hauled out seals and birds, from the presence and movement of people on the shore.

#### Impacts on SEMS

Recreational pressures, including trampling, are one of the reasons for the unfavourable status of seagrass beds within Solent Maritime SAC and therefore Natural England considers this activity is currently having an impact on some features within SEMS. Natural England is leading a LIFE funded project, partly looking at trampling pressures. See Mooring and Anchoring (section 4.10) for further details.

#### Management Measures

Natural England relaunched the Countryside Code in 2021 which also covers the coast. This gives nationally consistent best practice messaging. It can be accessed at: [The Countryside Code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

Many organisations have begun to use the hashtag [#ProtectRespectEnjoy](#) to promote best practice across social media platforms.

The Natural England evidence guidance note on general beach life provides lots of examples of issues and management measures

(<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5458695407796224>). There are also guidance notes on surfing, coasteering, diving and snorkelling, and wildlife watching. These also include details of potential impacts and management measures, they can be accessed at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5615944092614656>.

Please see [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Land\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/) for further resources, codes of conduct and information.

### 4.5.3 Actions

- 1. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to be aware of the Natural England recreational evidence note on general beach life and use this guidance to identify issues and management measures ([Marine recreation evidence briefing: general beach life - EIN034 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)).

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

- 2. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to consider including information on potential impacts on designated sites when updating local codes of conduct or signage. Resources to assist this are available at:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/General\\_Beach\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/General_Beach_Recreation/).

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

## 4.6 Grazing and Foraging

*Activity includes grazing on saltmarsh or intertidal areas.*

### 4.6.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Grazing and Foraging	1	0	1	3	5
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	1		2		3

Natural England has seen an increase in requests for advice in terms of seaweed foraging, however no impacts on SEMS features or sub-features had been observed.

### 4.6.2 Evaluation and Discussion

#### Potential Impacts

Grazing marshes are particularly important for the number of breeding waders they support and internationally important populations of wintering wildfowl. They are at risk if they become too dry or are subject to intensive grazing or early cutting. Some areas of grazing marsh are also at risk of change following restoration of naturalised floodplains and as sea-defences are realigned.

Foraging for wild food can lead to disturbance of intertidal habitats via trampling, people can also disturb feeding birds and reduce their food sources, it can also negatively impact on invertebrate populations.

## Impacts on SEMS

Natural England do not consider these activities to be currently impacting on SEMS. However, it has seen an increase in requests for advice in terms of seaweed foraging and so this activity does appear to be increasing.

## Management Measures

Coastal floodplain and grazing marsh information is available from Natural England at:

[Coastal Grazing Marsh.pdf \(solentems.org.uk\)](#).

Information on the management of coastal saltmarsh is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/management-of-coastal-saltmarsh-ct3>.

Natural England have produced a seaweed harvesting code of conduct. See: [Algae-harvesting-NE-Seaweed-Harvesting-Advice-2014.pdf \(solentems.org.uk\)](#).

The Crown Estate licenses sustainable, commercial harvesting of seaweed from areas of foreshore and seabed within its ownership. Seaweed collection for personal use, in small quantities does not require a licence. The Crown Estate does not licence harvesting of natural seaweeds in designated conservation areas. See: [Seaweed harvesting | The Crown Estate](#).

For more information and resources please see:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Grazing/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Grazing/).

### 4.6.3 Actions

**1. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to report any concerns regarding the foraging for wild plants or shellfish in designated sites to the SEMS office direct or via the annual survey.

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

## 4.7 Land Recreation - Dog Walking

*Activity includes recreational participation with dogs, including the use of dogs in wildfowling.*

### 4.7.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Land Recreation - Dog Walking	1	0	9	7	17
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	14		3		17

This activity is consistently reported in the annual survey as the one most likely to impact on the Solent's Marine Sites, fourteen respondents flagged concerns this year.

Respondents noted a growth in dog ownership over recent years and that the coast is a popular destination for dog walkers. They added that it is a year round activity but peaks in the summer. Off lead dogs are a particular problem for bird disturbance, especially at times of ground nesting. They

also noted that the opening of the new national coastal path may exacerbate problems if it leads to people accessing areas that they could not before. Dog fouling and the inappropriate disposal of dog fouling bags are ongoing problems in some areas.

#### 4.7.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Respondents are concerned about dogs disturbing feeding and roosting waders and wildfowl, particularly free roaming dogs at tide roosts and breeding sites. Respondents also noted that dog fouling causes amenity and water quality issues. There is a general feeling that dog walkers still lack education about the impacts they cause, particularly new owners.

Fifteen of the local authorities in the Solent are [Bird Aware](#) partners, and they use this Partnership to help mitigate the impact of this activity in their area of jurisdiction (see management section below). Bird Aware research shows that around forty percent of bird disturbance occurs as a result of interactions with dogs.

##### Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from dog walking that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance, litter and the removal of species. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality.

The research underpinning the Bird Aware Solent strategy, reports that human disturbance of the birds can have several impacts. Birds may be more alert, resulting in a reduction in the amount of food eaten, or they may move away from the disturbance. A bird which moves away forgoes valuable feeding time whilst in the air and uses energy in flying, a double impact on the bird's energy reserves. If the disturbance is substantial, then food-rich areas may be little used by the birds or avoided altogether, leading to other areas hosting a higher density of birds and intensifying the competition for the available food.

##### Impacts on SEMS

While it is important to continue monitoring land recreation impacts via dog walking (and walking), Bird Aware has the potential to mitigate current and future impacts (through its rangers, awareness raising etc). On this basis Natural England advise that we should not seek to evaluate the impacts of dog walking (and walking) until the five year review of the SRMP has been published, this is commencing late 2022.

##### Management Measures

[Bird Aware Solent](#) is a tool being used successfully across the Solent to reduce potential recreational impacts from increased local housing development. The main measure is a team of rangers to help coastal visitors and communities understand the importance of the different bird species and the impact of disturbance from dog walking amongst other activities. It has published a [guide](#) on how to enjoy the beach with your dog responsibly.

Work is also taking place to encourage dog walkers to visit other areas and less sensitive parts of the coast. The Bird Aware Solent team spent £1 million of Local Growth Deal funding on creating or enhancing alternative local greenspaces for people who would otherwise have visited the coast. Gosport Borough Council used improvements at the [Alver Valley Country Park](#) to act as a Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) to deflect pressure from dog walking away from the coast. HCC has produced a '[Taking the Lead](#)' leaflet on dog walking and its management.

Some public areas in England and Wales are covered by [Public Spaces Protection Orders \(PSPOs\)](#). Local Authorities can and do use such orders to direct people to put dogs on leads and issue fixed penalty notices to those that are causing a nuisance. Fareham BC have one such [order](#) in place that applies to the coast.

The New Forest National Park Authority engages with the [New Forest Dog Owners Group](#) and operate a project officer, on behalf of NFDC, that seeks to work with dog owners to provide advice on best practice dog ownership and walking that respects wildlife sensitivities on terrestrial habitats.

### 4.7.3 Actions

- 1. Action (ongoing to 2023):** In 2023, when the 5 year review of the effectiveness of the [Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy](#) is complete, an assessment should be made as to how successful it has been in reducing the impact of recreation from new housing development on the birds in the Solent.  
**Lead and partners:** NEG  
**Action Progress:** NEG will track the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy review and continue to liaise and support.
- 2. Action (ongoing):** RAs to identify and communicate with their own rangers and coastal staff details of how they can support Bird Aware Solent in the delivery of their educational messages and liaise regarding disturbance issues.  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG  
**Action Progress:** Please feed details into the SEMS Annual survey if this action.
- 3. Action (ongoing):** Local authorities to continue to consider the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders and SANGS as measures to mitigate dogs disturbing birds.  
**Lead and partners:** Local authorities  
**Action Progress:** Please feed details into the SEMS Annual survey.

## 4.8 Land recreation - Walking (not with dogs)

*Activity includes walking on upper shore or intertidal zone (other than dog walking).*

### 4.8.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Land Recreation (other than dog Walking)	1	1	9	7	18
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	13		5		18

Respondents noted that the urbanised nature of much of the Solent's coastline means that there is a large resident population wishing to access the coast in addition to visitors. The push for 'blue health' and the physical and mental health benefits of walking mean that the coast is experience increased demand. Demand peaks in the summer and at times of good weather.

Levels of access and car parking do control demand but at busy times people can leave main paths and create their own 'desire paths'.

Impacts noted were disturbance to wildlife including overwintering birds and nesting birds, trampling and degradation of habitat (saltmarsh, mudflats, reed beds, shingle beaches, etc), littering and erosion.

#### **4.8.2 Evaluation and Discussion**

Government policy encourages outdoor recreation for its physical and mental health benefits. This raises challenges for those who manage and protect designated sites. It is likely that coastal visits will remain high into the future as people recognise the benefits for their wellbeing of the natural environment.

Natural England have been developing the [England Coast Path](#), a new National Trail around all of England's coast. It gives people the right of access around all our open coast both along the path, and usually, over the associated 'coastal margin'. In this margin, people usually have new rights to enjoy areas like beaches. Some areas will not have such rights because they're excepted land, or not suitable for public access, such as a saltmarsh or mudflat. It will incorporate all the existing coastal paths around the Solent. Two Solent stretches of the English coast path opened in 2022. The routes from Calshot to Gosport and Gosport to Portsmouth are Hampshire's first complete sections.

##### **Potential Impacts**

Coastal walking can, if not carefully managed, add to environmental pressures such as disturbance to wildlife and birds or new desire paths leading to the removal and fragmentation of habitat. Natural England's coast path Habitats Regulations (HRA) and nature conservation assessments for each stretch give a comprehensive overview of the potential impacts from this activity on designated sites. The HRA is required for European sites, nature conservation assessments cover all other aspects (SSSIs, MCZs etc).

##### **Impact on SEMS**

While it is important to continue monitoring land recreation impacts via walking (and dog walking), Bird Aware has the potential to mitigate future impacts (through its rangers, awareness raising etc). On this basis Natural England advise that we should not seek to evaluate the impacts of walking (and dog walking) until the SRMP five year review has been completed in 2023.

##### **Management Measures**

Natural England assess the impacts from opening access to the coast as part of their work to deliver stretches of England's Coast Path. These assessments provide useful and detailed guidance on both the potential impacts from people visiting the coast to participate in coastal walking and the management measures that can be implemented to mitigate impacts. The Solent stretches of the coast path and the respective assessment documents are linked to the SEMS website at:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Land\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/).

The England Coast Path (ECP) Team at Natural England are looking to work with Bird Aware Solent and other local partners to develop new ECP interpretation panels across the Solent. They hope this will lead to joined up messaging regarding the sensitivities and behaviours that we want to see, clear branding and logos. The ECP team are hoping to initiate the design stage very soon.

Bird Aware Solent continues to mitigate the impacts from all coastal walking, please refer to the land recreation – dog walking (section in 4.7) for details. They are also working with Natural England on appropriate signage for the Solent stretches of the Coast Path.

The revised [Countryside Code](#) was published in 2021 to give generic national good practice to people visiting the countryside and coast.

Please see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Land\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/) for guidance and best practice relating to this activity.

### 4.8.3 Actions

Please also refer to actions on dog walking in 4.7.

- Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG to read and be aware of the issues and measures raised in the assessments relating to the stretches of coastal path in their jurisdiction. To view please see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Land\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/). Once the path stretches are open please feed any information on impacts into the SEMS Annual Survey.

**Partners/lead:** SEMS MG

**Action progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.9 Littering and Removal of Litter

*This activity includes discharges from land, water or air, from all types of vessels, of particulate or solid wastes e.g. plastics, microplastics and other flotsam and jetsam (accidental vessel discharges are a separate category). The toxicity and damage caused by littering materials should be considered as should the cleanup of toxic debris. Please includes information on any strandline clearance and beach cleanup.*

### 4.9.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Littering and removal of litter	1	1	15	7	24
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	14		10		24

The presence of litter and its impact on designated sites is an elevated and ongoing issue reported by the SEMS Relevant Authorities. Over half of the respondents believe that this issue is having detrimental impacts. Although the mode value is still no change, many are still concerned about high levels of litter at the coast.

Respondents noted that litter is an outcome of high and sustained levels of activity at the coast. PPE is a new type of litter that has been recorded in litter picks. Local Streetscene teams work regularly to keep beaches clean, and bins emptied. Langstone Harbour have an issue with old, abandoned craft and its associate detritus. Once litter occurs in a location there is a tendency for people to become more careless in the way that they dispose of it, and this exacerbates the problem.

There is much published evidence on the impacts of litter such as ingestion and entanglement, but Natural England note that there is currently no clear evidence or studies to show whether it is impacting on SEMS features or sub-features.

Harbour authorities collect and dispose of litter that is a navigational hazard and try to clear local hotspots and sites of amenity value.

Southern Water are involved in research (national and local) into the emerging impacts/risks of microplastics from treatment works, but there is currently no driver and therefore no funding to action at this time.

The Environment Agency have undertaken investigation and compliance work for nurdle pollution at [Chessel Bay](#). This has led to investment by companies for pollution prevention management measures, and good practice has been adopted in most cases. Some ongoing improvement work is still required. The Itchen Nurdle Clean-up project is ongoing and will continue to use innovative technology and monitor the effectiveness.

Respondents also noted that there are active groups litter picking in the Solent and the sites where they work are much cleaner.

#### **4.9.2 Evaluation and Discussion**

##### **Potential Impacts**

Marine litter is any manufactured or processed solid material from anthropogenic activities that are discarded, disposed of or abandoned once entering the marine and coastal environment including: plastics, metals, timber, rope, fishing gear etc. and their degraded components, e.g. microplastic particles. Ecological effects can be physical (smothering), biological (ingestion, including uptake of microplastics; entangling; physical damage; accumulation of chemicals) and/or chemical (leaching, contamination).

Secondary effects of poor waste disposal can include the blocking of sewers and drains leading to raw sewage and blackwater overflows.

SEMS survey respondents have highlighted the potential impacts from the abandonment and decomposition of old boats. There is already published evidence on the environmental impacts of this activity, but what is less certain is how these impacts affect designated sites. Research by Brighton University found 7,000 microscopic bits of boat fibreglass in just a single oyster at Chichester Harbour. SEMS will monitor this activity and link any relevant reports and research to the [litter activity page](#) on the SEMS website.

##### **Impacts on SEMS**

Natural England hasn't yet assimilated impacts from inert waste and litter on features, subfeatures and supporting features into its conservation advice, due to the variety of waste occurring and a lack of data on implications. However, it agrees that litter and waste present in SEMS will, in all likelihood, be impacting species and habitats to a currently unknown degree and therefore further study is required.

ABPmer was commissioned by Defra's Marine Biodiversity Impact Evidence Group (IEG), to assess the [current evidence of potential impacts of plastic on marine protected species and habitats in England and Wales](#). It concluded that marine plastic pollution at current levels is unlikely to pose a high risk to protected features in England and Wales at concentrations of plastic that can be

considered currently environmentally relevant levels, although it is expected that these levels could rise.

### Management Measures

There are numerous litter campaigns, initiatives and clean-ups taking place around the Solent, both national and local. The Solent Forum is collating information on these as part of its [Clean Solent Shores and Seas \(CSSS\)](#) work to help people to coordinate work and access information. Information is also available on the SEMS website at [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Littering/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Littering/).

The Solent Forum is working with the Environment Agency led Preventing Plastics Pollution Project to engage local community litter groups. A website of resources has been launched called the [Solent Plastics Pollution Hub](#) and a [Facebook page](#) set up to help collate and share information about litter and plastics across the Solent's community groups.

The [Great British Beach Clean](#), provides data and information on the amount and type of litter found at the coast. Its 2021 survey found that the average litter recorded per 100 metres is dropping year on year across the UK. An average of 385 items were found in 2021, compared to averages of 425 in 2020, and 558 in 2019.

Most harbours and marinas now have comprehensive waste facilities, which include recycling options, and encourage their users to make use of these facilities. The Green Blue have numerous resources on best practice for boating, see: [Waste & Recycling – The Green Blue](#).

Seabins are beginning to be rolled out across the Solent which help to both remove litter and educate people about it in the water, see: <https://seabinproject.com/>.

#### 4.9.3 Actions

1. **Action (Ongoing):** NEG to continue to develop the [Cleans Solent Shores and Seas \(CSSS\)](#) resource hub, with a focus for 2022/23 on collating, supporting and sharing information on the impacts of microplastics and GRP fibres on designated sites. SEMS MG members to use the hub to find information to support or coordinate any appropriate research, policy making, communications, events etc.  
**Lead/partners:** NEG (development) and SEMS MG (to use)  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.
2. **Action (2021-2023):** The Solent Forum, working in partnership with the Environment Agency, to deliver a Solent Plastics Pollution Hub as a legacy output of the Agency's Preventing Plastic Pollution Interegg funded project. This hub will link closely with the Forum's work on CSSS. See: [Solent Forum - Solent Plastics Pollution Hub](#).  
**Lead/partners:** Solent Forum  
**Action progress:** Initiated July 2021.

## 4.10 Mooring and Anchoring

Activity includes the operational use of berths, moorings and anchorages including the presence of these structures and the vessels using them. Includes consideration of impacts from vessels when berthing/berthed, mooring/moored, anchoring/anchored. Also includes impacts from anchors and impacts of boat when at anchor or mooring. There is a particular risk of damage from anchoring in seagrass beds.

### 4.10.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
<b>Mooring and anchoring</b>	5	0	10	2	17
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMs Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	5		12		17

Natural England reported that the Hants and Wight Wildlife Trust produced a recreational activity survey report as part of the LIFE ReMEDIES project, we will share this once published. This showed an increase in seagrass bed damage and highlighted pressure areas for anchoring and mooring. The LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES project is seeking to address this problem through behaviour change and installation of advanced mooring systems, and potentially introducing Voluntary No Anchor Zones within the high use sites identified in the report; they will engage with users to identify reasons for use and considering alternative suitable mooring areas.

Responders noted that while moorings are licensed within the harbours, it is difficult to monitor if people are anchoring in the correct zones. There are also historic moorings within harbour areas which pre-date designations which can create an unnecessary pressure on the seabed habitats in the form of scouring from sinkers. Where there are insufficient moorings due to peak demand, people do resort to anchoring.

It was noted that through Habitat Regulations Assessment, any proposals within the footprint of a designation needs an Appropriate Assessment and use of evidence to support it. This means that there can be further certainty that new proposals for structures, replacement or extensions to existing ones will not be having a significant impact on the marine sites. Some schemes are required to include interpretation panels raising awareness to users of the qualities of the marine environment.

### 4.10.2 Evaluation and Discussion

#### Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from mooring and/or anchoring that may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features. These include abrasion/disturbance of the seabed, penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed and the introduction or spread of invasive non-native species. A number of designated features within the SEMs are considered to be sensitive to these pressures.

In 2017, Defra published '[Recreational and commercial anchoring and mooring impacts in marine protected areas in Wales and England \(ME6003\)](#)'.

## Impacts on SEMS

Anchoring and mooring pressures are one of the reasons for the unfavourable status of seagrass beds within Solent Maritime SAC; therefore, Natural England consider this activity is having an impact on some features within SEMS.

## Management Measures

Advanced Mooring Systems, or eco moorings, are mooring systems designed to have less impact on the seabed than conventional swing moorings. They aim to minimise interaction with the seabed to prevent abrasion and therefore the potential to damage sensitive habitats. The term Advanced Mooring System has been adopted to emphasise the improved measurability of mooring load potential offered by these systems. The RYA's website contains further information on these systems, see: [advanced-mooring-systems \(rya.org.uk\)](http://advanced-mooring-systems(rya.org.uk)).

[LIFE ReMEDIES](#) is working to protect existing seagrass habitat by reducing pressures from recreational activities such as boating. Through its partners the Royal Yachting Association and their environmental programme with British Marine, The Green Blue, the project team are working with recreational boaters to highlight the importance of sensitive seabed habitats and advise how their boating methods, particularly anchoring and mooring, can play a role in protecting them. See: [Recreational boating - Save Our Seabed](#).

Two types of environmentally friendly moorings known as Advanced Mooring Systems were installed near Yarmouth Harbour and are being monitored for their effectiveness, with further AMS planned to be installed this year. The Solent Forum has begun to collate this information under its habitat restoration pages - [Solent Forum - Solent Seagrass Restoration](#).

The Green Blue have an 'Anchoring with Care' campaign that advises boat users how to minimise their impacts on sensitive habitats, see: <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/you-your-boat/info-advice/wildlife-habitats/anchoring-with-care/>.

### 4.10.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information, best practice and research on Advanced Mooring Systems and any potential effects from mooring and anchoring.  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group  
**Action Progress:** Material has been/will be uploaded to [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/mooring/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/mooring/).
2. **Action (ongoing):** All to support, promote and share information from the four year LIFE ReMEDIES project. See: [Recreational boating - Save Our Seabed](#).  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group and NEG  
**Action Progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.11 Operation of Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Schemes (FCERM)

Activity includes maintenance and operation of all port/harbour infrastructure including quay walls, jetties, slipways, navigation markers, coastal defence structures etc. Includes consideration of vessels/machinery/vehicles associated with activity. Also include the day-to-day operational use of these structures, lights, buoys, posts, towers, transit marks, supply of fuel/bunkering operations onshore /offshore, etc.

### 4.11.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Operation of FCERM	3	0	8	7	18
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	5		12		17

The Environment Agency report that the [Regional Habitat Compensation Programme](#) is reviewing further sites to compensate for coastal squeeze. The De-commissioning of Assets Programme may identify sites to change management. Adaptation to future challenges e.g. Sea Level Rise and climate change, carbon off-setting, and net gain are the key focus of all FCERM schemes going forward.

Work has commenced on the Southsea seafront defences in addition to the North Portsea Island scheme. The Coastal defence works have been approved with mitigation schemes. As part of the Portsea Island Flood Management Scheme (Phase 4a - Kendall's Wharf to northern Eastern Road), two slipways were improved and are reopened for use. The first sections of glass flood wall were also installed on the new sea wall.

Lymington Harbour Commissioners reported that the beneficial reuse of dredged sediment at Boiler Marsh is increasing the availability of intertidal habitat due to it being higher in the tidal frame. It is also providing protection to the saltmarsh behind against erosion caused by wind, waves, and tides.

ABP note that the Port's quay wall serve as a considerable part of Southampton's flood defences. In addition, the Port needs to take account of flood risk issues to protect critical infrastructure and cargoes. They have recently reviewed the topic and associated risks.

### 4.11.2 Evaluation and Discussion

#### Potential Impact

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise, visual disturbance and barriers to species movement. Designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement. Similarly, flood and erosion risk management schemes may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion, penetration and physical change or loss of habitat.

## Impacts on SEMS

Based on current understanding of the extent/magnitude of this activity, and the existing regulatory framework, Natural England suggests that this activity is not having an adverse effect on SEMS. However, loss of intertidal habitat from rising sea levels and coastal squeeze was flagged as a condition threat in the condition assessment for Solent Maritime SAC. Natural England are in the process of reviewing whether or not this should be changed to show a current impact on coastal sites and therefore this position may change. Natural England will provide an update once this decision has been made.

## Management Measures

The Environment Agency publish details of the current Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Schemes (FCERM) for the Solent and the South Downs, see:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies#solent-and-south-downs-\(map-area-14\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies#solent-and-south-downs-(map-area-14)).

In accordance with the [Habitats Regulations](#), all competent authorities must undertake a formal assessment of the implications of any new plans or projects that may be capable of affecting the designated interest features of European Sites before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise such a plan or project. The impacts from the operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes will therefore be assessed at their time of construction or modification.

Each Shoreline Management Plan policy has a high-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), followed by an HRA for each specific defence works. Access SMP information at:

<https://southerncoastalgroup.org.uk/smps/>.

The [Regional Habitat Compensation Programme \(RHCP\)](#) is a strategic programme run by the Environment Agency. It is the Government's agreed mechanism for delivering strategic habitat compensation for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) to ensure compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The compensatory requirement passed on to the RHCP from Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) is the amount of habitat required to address the adverse impacts on European sites from the SMP policies due to coastal squeeze and saline inundation impacts.

### 4.11.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information on best practice on this activity including new methodologies and innovation. See: [Solentems - Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes, barrages and sluices](#).  
**Lead/partners:** SEMS Management Group  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.12 Operation of Ports and Harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)

Activity includes maintenance and operation of all port/harbour infrastructure including quay walls, jetties, slipways, navigation markers, coastal defence structures etc. Includes consideration of vessels/machinery/vehicles associated with activity. Also include the day-to-day operational use of these structures, lights, buoys, posts, towers, transit marks, supply of fuel/bunkering operations onshore /offshore, etc.

### 4.12.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Operation of Ports and Harbours	0	1	14	0	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	1		14		15

Wightlink noted that the 200 year old Portsmouth Harbour Pier Terminal is having its supporting steel framework replaced. No pile driving or underwater work will be undertaken.

Harbour authorities have a statutory duty to maintain navigational aids, pontoons, and public slipways in their harbour. As such, maintenance is ongoing throughout the year.

### 4.12.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Port and Harbour Authorities in the Solent are very aware of their environmental responsibilities and much has been achieved over recent years to help designated sites in the Solent. For example, many of the harbours now provide pump out facilities to prevent boating black water discharges. The Environment Agency and Natural England have hosted boating and water quality workshops that were very well attended with a receptive, supportive audience. See: [Solent Forum - Solent Water Quality and Boating](#).

Harbours are also beginning to look at ways to ecologically enhance their coastal infrastructure. This work will continue and grow over the coming years and the Solent Forum has a Building Biodiversity in the Solent hub (BBS hub) to promote and share best practice. See: [http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member\\_Services/Building\\_Bioersity\\_hub/](http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member_Services/Building_Bioersity_hub/).

#### Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies a range of pressures arising from the maintenance and operation of ports and harbours that may impact breeding and non-breeding bird populations of SPAs. These include above water noise and visual disturbance. A number of designated bird species within the SEMS are sensitive to these pressures, which can result in displacement and/or mortality. Similarly, the maintenance and operation of ports and harbours may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features via pressures such as abrasion/disturbance of the seabed, penetration/disturbance of the substratum below the seabed, smothering and siltation.

## Impacts on SEMS

Natural England do not consider these activities to currently be having an adverse impact on SEMS.

## Management Measures

The [UK Marine SAC project](#) produced guidance on this topic including good management practice.

### 4.12.3 Actions

- Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information on best practice on this activity including work on the ecological enhancement of port and harbour infrastructure.

**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group and Solent Forum

([http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member\\_Services/Building\\_Biodiversity\\_hub/](http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member_Services/Building_Biodiversity_hub/)).

**Action Progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.13 Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, paramotors, drones)

*Activity includes all types of craft used for recreation in the air e.g. small planes and helicopters, microlights, paramotors, hang gliding, parasailing (on beach), parasailing (by boat), drones and model aircraft.*

### 4.13.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Aerial recreation	2	1	3	3	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	1		8		9

Natural England reported that there is a perceived gradual increase in use of drones to undertake surveys, monitor projects and for comms purposes. It is difficult to ascertain the in-combination effects of drone use as frequency increases. There appear to be some evidence that adoption of best practice measures should minimise disturbance impacts to SPA birds. However, quantifying and tracking the spatial distribution of drone use is difficult at present.

Relevant Authorities noted they have no powers to control drones in the airspace but if requests are made they will only consent for the operator to fly the drone from subject to appropriate qualifications, risk assessment (including environmental risk) and compliance with CAA regulations. There is ad hoc evidence of an increase in aerial craft and some concerns about bird disturbance if people fly too close. Relevant authorities do liaise with Natural England on a case by case basis if they have concerns.

### 4.13.2 Evaluation and Discussion

#### Potential Impacts

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: drones \(EIN035\)](#)' reports that the pressure arising from participants (operating drones) walking across the shore has been considered to be negligible, compared to the larger numbers of people undertaking general beach leisure activities.

The disturbance response of birds to drones is dependent on a range of factors, particularly flying altitude, the type (model) of drone and level of habituation to existing disturbance pressure. Existing research has not distinguished between disturbance from noise and visual cues. Repetitive disturbance events can result in possible long-term effects such as loss of weight, condition and a reduction in reproductive success, leading to population impacts.

An ongoing action is for Bird Aware to pass on information that its Rangers gather on winter drone sightings. In 2019/20 the data shows low numbers of drone sightings and no sightings of drones causing disturbance. In 2020/21 the data was affected by Covid restrictions as fewer surveys were undertaken; however, it showed a similar picture of low sightings. Site visits were resumed in 2021/22 and those conducting them again reported low levels of sightings. NEG evaluated whether summer drone use was an issue impacting on designated sites in the Solent and concluded that this isn't currently the case.

### Impacts on SEMS

Based on current levels of reported activity, it is unlikely that drone use is having an adverse effect upon SEMS. However, study is required to determine whether or not this is accurate, and this activity should continue to be monitored as usage has increased as drones become more affordable.

### Management Measures

In 2018, Natural England produced a document for SEMS that explains the regulations surrounding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and when local authorities might like to contact it for advice. Please contact the Solent Forum office to access a copy.

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: drones \(EIN035\)](#)' contains guidance on management options; including site management access, education and communication techniques and legal enforcement.

Government agencies and local authorities have the power to ban the flying of drones and other light aircraft activities via byelaws. Hampshire County Council asks that unmanned aircraft are not operated from its land holdings. People wishing to film have to make a formal request, see: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/filmhampshire/code-of-practice>.

The Crown Estate grants permission for UAV flights over Crown Estate foreshore (defined as the land between mean high water and mean low water). It seeks to encourage responsible use of the foreshore and estuaries that it owns. It has published guidelines at: [Metal detecting and drone flying | The Crown Estate](#).

The Civil Aviation Authority provides detailed information about drone use, regulations and best practice see: <https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>. It also supports [Dronesafe.uk](#), a web resource designed to help ensure that drone users in the UK can easily access the information they need about how to fly their drones safely and legally, without endangering others. The CAA recommends that drone users seek advice from Natural England if flying over a SSSI.

Please see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Recreational\\_light\\_aircraft/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Recreational_light_aircraft/) for further guidance and resources.

### 4.13.3 Actions

- 1. Action (ongoing):** NEG to request data annually from Bird Aware Solent on winter drone use and disturbance. Updates will be added to the SEMS website section on [aerial recreation](#).

The Bird Aware data is also summarised in the evaluation and discussion section above (4.13.2).

**Partners/lead: NEG**

#### 4.14 Recreation (non-motorised watercraft)

*Activity includes windsurfing, kite surfing, kayaks, canoes, row boats, punts, paddle boards, dinghies and sailing boats. Includes all related participation such as launching and recovery (shore access and trailers) and any land based practice. Please include information on events and competitions.*

##### 4.14.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
<b>Recreation (non-motorised craft)</b>	9	1	4	6	20
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	9		10		19

Relevant authorities reported an increase in paddlesports, with a wide range of participants, most using these craft in an informal way. Craft are readily available to buy, and users can be inexperienced in how to safely participate on the water. Concerns were raised about disturbance pressures due to craft being able to access shallow water particularly at sensitive sites like Newtown Harbour and Black Point at Hayling Island. The season is also getting longer with better clothing and equipment and participants are seen from spring to autumn with a summer peak.

##### 4.14.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Non-motorised watercraft is a generic term which includes both small sailing boats (without a motor) and paddlesports. Small sailing boats include dinghies, day boats or other small keelboats which are usually taken out of water at end of use. Paddlesports is a term for a range of watersports which involve the use of a paddle for propulsion. This includes sea kayaking, surf kayaking, sit-on-top kayaking, Canadian canoeing and stand up paddle boarding (SUP).

Most activity occurs in relatively sheltered areas. Vessels are launched from slipways or sheltered beaches using a trailer or trollies. Activity is centred around sailing clubs, activity centres, harbours and marinas. Paddlesports are generally undertaken close inshore (typically within 1-2 km of the coast). Watercraft that are used for paddling activities have a shallow draught. This allows access to shallow areas of the coast (which are often inaccessible to larger vessels or humans on foot).

[The Watersports Participation Survey](#) is an annual publication from user groups the most recent edition covers participation from October 2020 to September 2021. Key findings from this national study include:

- 11.7m individuals stated they participated in any boating activity one or two times in the UK in 2021. This has jumped by almost double over the 2020 figure and this is likely due to the covid effect.
- Participation levels from 2020 to 2021 have increased for many of the boating activities but it

would seem that the trend is more infrequent, experiential participants are taking part.

- The more frequent participants (3+ times) for on water activities have increased slightly but not to the same level as the infrequent participants. This highlights the experience culture of people trying new activities, as there are plenty on offer, but getting people to take it up more frequently is a challenge.
- Coastal activities, which generally require little or no specialist training or equipment, are done the most frequently. The trend in 2021 is that more infrequent participants have taken part.

### Potential Impacts

Natural England's '[Marine recreation evidence briefing: Non-motorised watercraft including paddlesports \(EIN028\)](#)' reports that the main impacts of this activity are through abrasion from trampling during launch/recovery of non-motorised watercraft, visual disturbance of birds, marine mammals and fish related to the presence of both people and watercraft. Also above water noise disturbance of hauled out seals and birds related to people noise during launch or activity.

### Impacts on SEMS

An increase in this activity, particularly paddlesports, has been noted across SEMS. Further study is therefore required to determine whether the use of non-motorised watercraft is having an adverse effect upon SEMS. Therefore, this activity and the impacts from both disturbance and trampling should be monitored as usage has increased and is anticipated to continue to do so.

### Management Measures

In 2016, guidelines for paddlesports were produced by the Solent Forum's Natural Environment Group's working group on recreation. See:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Recreation\\_Non\\_Motorised/Paddlesports\\_Guidelines\\_Avoid\\_Bird\\_Disturbance.pdf](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Recreation_Non_Motorised/Paddlesports_Guidelines_Avoid_Bird_Disturbance.pdf).

The EIN028 report noted above gives examples of management options, the three broad options are on-site access management, education and communication with the public and site users, and legal enforcement. The user groups for the activities in this category also provide advice to their members on how to minimise their environmental impact, for example, The Green Blue has the 'Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters'. A list of these resources and guidance is available at:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Recreation\\_Non\\_Motorised/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Recreation_Non_Motorised/).

Relevant authority management measures includes charging a harbour due, implementing car parking charges, slipway booking systems, erecting information signs at sensitive areas and conducting more water and roaming warden patrols. Harbour authorities put environmental educational material in harbour guides. QHM has information on its website: [Using the port for recreation | Royal Navy \(mod.uk\)](#).

Guidance on best practice for paddlesports users is available from the British Canoe Union at: <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/access-and-environment/environment-good-practice>. There is also comprehensive information for paddlesports users on the Go Paddling website, see: [Go Paddling | Go Canoeing, Go Kayaking, SUP | PaddlePoints | Tips](#).

From summer 2022, Bird Aware Solent will be looking to work with recreational watercraft users to address any impacts from their activities on the Solent's birds.

### 4.14.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members are reminded to use the paddlesports guidelines (published 2016) and the other resources available on the [SEMS website](#), to help manage impacts.  
**Lead/partners:** SEMS MG  
**Action progress:** Ongoing
2. **Action (2020/ongoing):** NEG to research the evidence base for potential impacts on designated sites from the increased use of paddlesports.  
**Lead and partners:** NEG.  
**Action progress:** An [Impacts and Management of Paddlesports in the Solent \(IMP Solent\)](#) project was established in November 2020. Chichester Harbour is providing the pilot site. Please visit [Solentems - Paddlesports in the Solent \(IMP Solent\)](#) for details.

## 4.15 Recreation (powerboating or sailing with an engine)

*Activity includes any motorised boat activity, such as Personal Watercraft (PWC), hovercraft, powerboating and water-skiing. Includes launching and recovery of craft e.g. slipway or beach/shore launching and participation i.e. when activity is underway or making way. Please consider other novel uses of power boats such as flyboarding. The impacts of different craft will vary and should be considered on a case by case basis e.g. sailing boats with low power engines moving at slow speeds are less likely to have an impact.*

### 4.15.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Recreation (motorised craft)	4	1	6	5	16
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	8		8		16

Respondents noted people were making more use of their boats due to the staycation effect and that boat ownership has increased in some locations. People are concerned that the use of motorised craft in close inshore areas such as jetskis have the ability to cause large disturbance effects to seals and birds. Wash and erosion impacts were also raised as issues of concern.

### 4.15.2 Evaluation and Discussion

The main concern reported for this activity category is disturbance caused by the use of jetskis. These can disturb both wildlife and the amenity value of sites.

The latest [Watersports Participation Survey 2021](#) showed that the largest increase in participation for motorised craft is for the use of personal watercraft.

The use of electric outboard motors to replace petrol motors is starting to become more common, although this is still in its infancy. These are quieter and produce no emissions. Bio diesel is another fuel source option.

## Potential Impacts

Natural England's publication '[Motorised watercraft \(powerboating and sailing with an engine\) \(EIN027\)](#)' reports that the main impacts are through abrasion/disturbance of the surface and sub-surface sediment, underwater noise disturbance of marine mammals and birds, related to engine operation during the activity, above water noise and visual disturbance, of hauled out seals and visual disturbance of marine mammals and birds.

## Impacts on SEMS

An increase in this activity has been noted across SEMS, however, further study is required to determine whether the use of motorised watercraft is having an adverse effect upon SEMS. Therefore, this activity should be monitored as usage has increased and is anticipated to continue to do so.

## Management Measures

Solent Relevant Authorities noted in their Survey returns that Harbour General Directions, including speed restrictions, effectively manage this activity. For activities like waterskiing and jetskiing, these commonly require permits and participants are encouraged to stay away from sensitive sites. The Royal Navy have produce a 'Wash and Slow' leaflet that shows Solent speed limits, see: [Wash and Slow leaflet update 2021 web \(mod.uk\)](#).

After a significant surge in reports of anti-social behaviour on the water, Hampshire Police Marine Support Unit launched [Operation Wavebreaker](#) to address the issues and to start to look for some long-term solutions. They are working closely with local harbour masters, maritime rescue agencies and community groups to quantify the issue and look at effective ways of modifying the current behaviours to ensure everyone can use the water in a safe and enjoyable environment. The Police ask that issues or concerns about anti-social behaviour in the marine environment, be reported to the local Harbour Authority or to them via 101 or through the Hampshire Constabulary website.

The user groups for the activities in this category provide advice to their members on how to minimise their environmental impact, for example, The Green Blue has advice on boating around wildlife, see: <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/you-your-boat/info-advice/wildlife-habitats/boating-around-wildlife/>. It also provides guidance on how to run sustainable events, see: <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/clubs-centres-associations/running-a-sustainable-event/>.

The RSPB have published a guidance notes on jetskis and birds, see: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/marine/jet-skis-and-birds---the-rspb-position.pdf>.

The EA and NE have been focussing on black water discharge from recreational vessels. Actions are underway for partners (e.g. harbour authorities, Southern Water, marina groups, RYA, EA) to seek improvements to pump out facilities and ways to encourage behavioural change of recreational sailors. See: [Solent Forum - Solent Water Quality and Boating](#).

### 4.15.3 Actions

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share environmental studies, reports and good practice. Information is collated on the [SEMS website activity page on motorised craft](#).  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG members.  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.

## 4.16 Slipway and Jetty Cleaning and Maintenance

Activity includes the ongoing maintenance, such as washing down, clearing of mud or sediment, algal growth or similar of a slipway or jetty.

### 4.16.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance	0	0	14	1	15
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	0		15		15

The harbours noted that they normally use water to undertake their cleaning; algal mats need to be removed to maintain access to slipways. They do try to keep this activity to a minimum. None of the respondents were concerned that this activity was impacting on designated sites.

### 4.16.2 Evaluation and Discussion

#### Potential Impacts

Maintenance wastes can enter harbours from the cleaning of jetties and slipways. Debris and wastes produced could contain a mixture of contaminants including oils, oil emulsifiers, paints, solvents, detergents, bleach and antifouling paint scrapings. The dilution of wastes in the harbour waters means that in most cases any possible adverse effects will be only localised and temporary.

The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) is the authority responsible for the approval of chemicals if they are biocidal products containing active substances with the intention of destroying the algae.

#### Impacts on SEMS

Whilst Natural England do not consider this activity to currently be impacting on SEMS it does have the potential to increase the presence and spread of invasive non-native species which has been listed as a condition threat for Solent Maritime SAC. In addition, poor water quality is considered one of the reasons for the current unfavourable status of Solent Maritime SAC. Therefore, Natural England advises that harbours/marinas should promote best practice.

#### Management Measures

Solent harbours reported that they try to avoid using harmful chemicals and use plain seawater or environmentally sound cleaning materials when undertaking cleaning operations. The Green Blue recommended not using chemicals to remove weed and algae from slipways but use a stiff brush or a high pressure hose instead.

The RYA provide guidance on cleaning of slipways at: <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/environmental-advice/Pages/cleaning-slipways.aspx>.

Guidance from the MMO is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cleaning-of-slipways-and-harbour-infrastructure>.

The Green Blue provide guidance on best practice in cleaning of both boats and infrastructure, see: <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/clubs-centres-associations/facilities-operations/pollution-control/cleaning-maintenance/>.

The River Hamble Harbour Authority have replaced some of their hammerhead decking with a high friction polymer grid decking system which negates the need to use any cleaner.

#### 4.16.3 Actions

- Action (ongoing):** Continue to follow best practice guidance when undertaking slipway and jetty cleaning. See: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Slipways/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Slipways/).  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG members.  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.

### 4.17 Wildfowling

*Activity includes the use of firearms to shoot wild fowl. This category does not consider the use of dogs during these activities, please use 'Land recreation - dog walking' for any dog related activity.*

#### 4.17.1 Survey Response

Activity	Increased	Decreased	No change	Don't know	Total Responses
Wildfowling	0	1	6	0	7
<b>Do you think the activity is impacting on SEMS Sites?</b>					
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total Responses</b>
	3		4		7

Langstone Harbour Board raised concerns regarding noise disturbance in sensitive habitats and the removal of target species. All wildfowling in Langstone Harbour require license approval from Natural England.

#### 4.17.2 Evaluation and Discussion

Wildfowling is a largely solitary activity which involves the hunting of specific species of ducks, geese and waders with a smooth bore shotgun. It is undertaken primarily on estuaries and coastal marshes. In England, the season runs from 1st September until 31st January above the high-water mark and extends until February 20th below the high-water mark. The majority of wildfowling is organised through a club structure, but it can also be undertaken independently, usually by landowners.

#### Potential Impacts

Natural England's Advice on Operations identifies pressures arising from wildfowling that may impact SPA supporting habitats and designated SAC features. These include above water noise, removal of target species and visual disturbance. A number of designated features within the SEMS are considered to be sensitive to these pressures.

## Impacts on SEMS

Natural England do not consider wildfowling to be currently impacting on SEMS, however, in the long-term Natural England will seek to review all consents in place to ensure that these are fit for purpose.

## Management Measures

The relevant authorities that responded that wildfowling took place in their survey return all stated that licences and consents were in place to manage this activity. Landowners/occupiers, such as wildfowling clubs, need to apply to Natural England for consent to undertake wildfowling, this provision does not exist for third parties undertaking activities on these sites.

The summary of responses to Natural England's consultation on the review of its guidance for assessing wildfowling consents on protected sites, can be viewed at:

[https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/wildfowling-guidance-review/results/summaryofresponsestonaturalengland\\_final\\_namesupdated.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/wildfowling-guidance-review/results/summaryofresponsestonaturalengland_final_namesupdated.pdf) (March 2018).

For all wildfowling activity which takes place under a Crown Estate lease, annual returns are made, detailing the numbers of visits undertaken and number of birds shot. The Crown Estate provides guidance at: <https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/en-gb/what-we-do/on-the-seabed/coastal/wildfowling/>. The Joint Group for Wildfowling on Tidal Land was set up to advise The Crown Estate on issues relating to wildfowling on designated inter-tidal land, see: [https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/1206/wildfowling\\_wildfowl-joint-tidal-group-procedure.pdf](https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/1206/wildfowling_wildfowl-joint-tidal-group-procedure.pdf).

Information from the British Association for Shooting and Conservation is available at:

<https://basc.org.uk/wildfowling/>.

### 4.17.3 Actions

- No action required by SEMS Management Group. For more information see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Wildfowling/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Wildfowling/).

## 5 Generic Actions

1. SEMS MG members should use this Report and the [activity pages](#) on the SEMS website as a reference resource to help shape relevant plans and policies or management measures for activities in designated sites. This information can also be used to help inform Habitats Regulations Assessments on the potential impact of activities from new development.
2. SEMS MG members to feed information on non-licensable activities to the SEMS office throughout the year (sems@hants.gov.uk) to enable the promotion and sharing of good practice throughout the Solent.
3. SEMS MG members to use the [duty and responsibility table](#) to guide what activity sections they need to complete in the SEMS Annual Survey. To also be aware that Relevant Authorities have a responsibility to manage activities under their jurisdiction in the exercising of general duties.
4. Trend data for activity change is showing that activities in the Solent are not changing except for paddlesports which are on the rise. For those activities where Relevant Authorities, particularly Natural England, are concerned about impacts on designated sites, we need to evaluate if and how we can reduce or better manage those activities; focusing on sites that are especially sensitive. It is proposed to look at this in more detail in the 2023 when we have five years of SEMS activity trend data. In 2023 we will also have data from the Bird Aware Solent five year review.
5. The Natural Environment Group will be leading on a [Solent Bird Sensitivity and Activity Mapping](#) project (commencing 2022). Its aim is to map the most sensitive areas in the Solent to bird disturbance from a range of non-licensable activities, to inform strategic management options. It will devise the criteria for bird sensitive areas and the evidence needed for activity layers to build an evidence based digital management tool.

## 6 Summary of Actions

### Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up

No current action required by SEMS MG.

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### Boat Repair and Maintenance

1. **Action (ongoing):** Continue to promote and share best practice in addressing the potential environmental impacts of boat repair/maintenance, including preventing INNS. For resources see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Boat\\_repair/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Boat_repair/).  
**Lead/Partners:** Harbour authorities and all others who have this activity in their area of responsibility.
  2. **Action (complete):** Natural England to send an update on their monitoring work on INNS to the SEMS office for distribution once all survey work is completed. Harbour authorities can request specific data for their area from the local Natural England office.  
**Lead/Partners:** Natural England  
**Action progress:** The Final Report was published April 2022. [Mapping Invasive Alien Species in intertidal habitats within Natura 2000 sites in the Solent - JP042 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Mapping-Invasive-Alien-Species-in-intertidal-habitats-within-Natura-2000-sites-in-the-Solent-JP042).
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### Fishing (including shellfisheries)

1. **Action (ongoing):** Continue to report to the IFCA any illegal fishing activity around closed beds from illegal netting or fish trapping. Be aware of and help to publicise new IFCA byelaws and codes of conduct.  
**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG Members  
**Action Progress:** Ongoing
  2. **Action (ongoing):** Publicise and encourage recreational anglers to take part in the Sea Angling Diary project. See: <https://www.seaangling.org/>.  
**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG Members  
**Action Progress:** Ongoing.
- 

### Fishing (shore-based activities)

1. **Action (ongoing):** Continue to report and liaise with the local IFCA, and if necessary the marine police, where it is considered that bait collection or foreshore hand gathering is commercial or having a detrimental impact. Use the [Guidance for Solent Relevant Authorities for monitoring shore-based fishing](#) to record this activity.  
**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG  
**Action progress:** Ongoing
- 

### General Beach Recreation

1. **Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to be aware of the Natural England recreational evidence note on general beach life and use this guidance to identify issues and management measures ([Marine recreation evidence briefing: general beach life - EIN034 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)).

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

- 2. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to consider including information on potential impacts on designated sites when updating local codes of conduct or signage. Resources to assist this are available at:

[http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/General\\_Beach\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/General_Beach_Recreation/).

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

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### Grazing and Foraging

- 1. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members to report any concerns regarding the foraging for wild plants or shellfish in designated sites to the SEMS office direct or via the annual survey.

**Lead/Partners:** SEMS MG members

**Action progress:** Ongoing

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### Land Recreation - Dog Walking

- 1. Action (ongoing to 2023):** In 2023, when the 5 year review of the effectiveness of the [Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy](#) is complete, an assessment should be made as to how successful it has been in reducing the impact of recreation from new housing development on the birds in the Solent.

**Lead and partners:** NEG

**Action Progress:** NEG will track the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy review and continue to liaise and support.

- 2. Action (ongoing):** RAs to identify and communicate with their own rangers and coastal staff details of how they can support Bird Aware Solent in the delivery of their educational messages and liaise regarding disturbance issues.

**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG

**Action Progress:** Please feed details into the SEMS Annual survey.

- 3. Action (ongoing):** Local authorities to continue to consider the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders and SANGS as measures to mitigate dogs disturbing birds.

**Lead and partners:** Local authorities

**Action Progress:** Please feed details into the SEMS Annual survey.

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### Land Recreation - Walking (other than dog walking)

- 1. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG to read and be aware of the issues and measures raised in the assessments relating to the stretches of coastal path in their jurisdiction. To view please see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Land\\_Recreation/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Land_Recreation/). Once the path stretches are open please feed any information on impacts into the SEMS Annual Survey.

**Partners/lead:** SEMS MG

**Action progress:** Ongoing.

### Littering and Removal of Litter

1. **Action (Ongoing):** NEG to continue to develop the [Cleans Solent Shores and Seas \(CSSS\)](#) resource hub, with a focus for 2022/23 on collating, supporting and sharing information on the impacts of microplastics and GRP fibres on designated sites. SEMS MG members to use the hub to find information to support or coordinate any appropriate research, policy making, communications, events etc.  
**Lead/partners:** NEG (development) and SEMS MG (to use)  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.
  2. **Action (2021-2023):** The Solent Forum, working in partnership with the Environment Agency, to deliver a Solent Plastics Pollution Hub as a legacy output of the Agency's Preventing Plastic Pollution Interegg funded project. This hub will link closely with the Forum's work on CSSS. See: [Solent Forum - Solent Plastics Pollution Hub](#).  
**Lead/partners:** Solent Forum  
**Action progress:** Initiated July 2021.
- 

### Mooring and Anchoring

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information, best practice and research on Advanced Mooring Systems and any potential effects from mooring and anchoring.  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group  
**Action Progress:** Material has been/will be uploaded to [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/mooring/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/mooring/).
  2. **Action (ongoing):** All to support, promote and share information from the four year LIFE ReMEDIES project. See: [Recreational boating - Save Our Seabed](#).  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group and NEG  
**Action Progress:** Ongoing.
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### Operation of Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Schemes

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information on best practice on this activity including new methodologies and innovation. See: [Solentems - Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes, barrages and sluices](#).  
**Lead/partners:** SEMS Management Group  
**Action progress:** Ongoing.
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### Operation of Ports and Harbours

1. **Action (ongoing):** Promote and share information on best practice on this activity including work on the ecological enhancement of port and harbour infrastructure.  
**Lead and partners:** SEMS Management Group and Solent Forum ([http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member\\_Services/Building\\_Bioversity\\_hub/](http://www.solentforum.org/services/Member_Services/Building_Bioversity_hub/)).  
**Action Progress:** Ongoing.
-

### Aerial Recreation (light aircraft, drones)

**1. Action (ongoing):** NEG to request data annually from Bird Aware Solent on winter drone use and disturbance. Updates will be added to the SEMS website section on [aerial recreation](#). The Bird Aware data is also summarised in the evaluation and discussion section above (4.13.2).

**Partners/lead:** NEG

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### Recreation - Non-motorised Watercraft

**1. Action (ongoing):** SEMS MG members are reminded to use the paddlesports guidelines (published 2016) and the other resources available on the [SEMS website](#), to help manage impacts.

**Lead/partners:** SEMS MG

**Action progress:** Ongoing

**2. Action (2020/ongoing):** NEG to research the evidence base for potential impacts on designated sites from the increased use of paddlesports.

**Lead and partners:** NEG.

**Action progress:** An Impacts and Management of Paddlesports in the Solent (IMP Solent) project was established in November 2020. Chichester Harbour is providing the pilot site. Please visit [Solentems - Paddlesports in the Solent \(IMP Solent\)](#) for details.

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### Recreation - Powerboating or Sailing with an Engine

**1. Action (ongoing):** Promote and share environmental studies, reports and good practice. Information is collated on the [SEMS website activity page on motorised craft](#).

**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG members.

**Action progress:** Ongoing.

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### Slipway and Jetty Cleaning and Maintenance

**1. Action (ongoing):** Continue to follow best practice guidance when undertaking slipway and jetty cleaning. See: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Slipways/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Slipways/).

**Lead and partners:** SEMS MG members.

**Action progress:** Ongoing.

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### Wildfowling

- No action required by SEMS Management Group. For more information see: [http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS\\_Activities/Wildfowling/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/SEMS_Activities/Wildfowling/).
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**Generic cross cutting actions** - Please see [section 5.0](#).

## 7 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

In 2020, the SEMS Annual Survey was adapted to include questions on the three MCZs that are designated in the Solent:

- [The Needles](#)
- [Yarmouth to Cowes](#)
- [Bembridge](#)

Relevant Authorities were asked whether they had an MCZ within their jurisdiction and whether they had any concerns about activities taking place within these sites. In 2022, observations were made as follows.

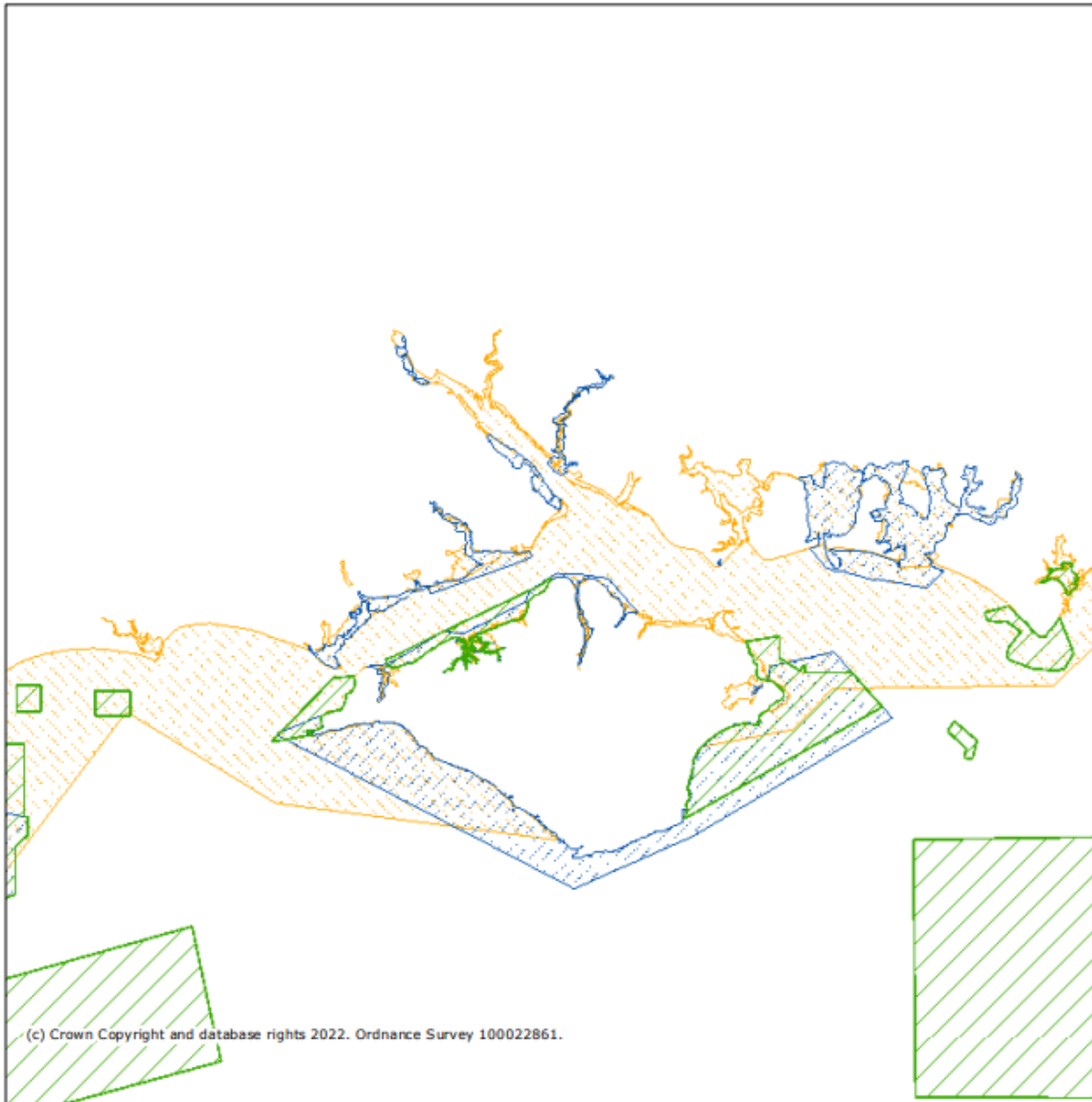
Southern IFCA have undertaken MCZ assessments of fishing activities for Yarmouth to Cowes and Bembridge MCZs. The assessments found that Bottom Towed Gears pose a risk to some features in the sites. Following these findings they will be developing additional management and updating old management for bottom towed fishing gear throughout the MCZs and SEMS.

The MMO's marine non-licensable activity (NLA) management approach is being developed. [Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone](#) is the first site to be assessed by the MMO for NLA impacts. To support development of the approach, the MMO have an evidence project underway which is collating data on a number of MPAs. This will be published on the MMO website when complete. There is not currently a confirmed timeline of NLA site assessments going forward. SEMS will be contacted if the MMO commence assessment on any sites in the Solent. See: [Managing marine non-licensable activities in marine protected areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Following designation, Natural England started a baseline monitoring programme across all Marine Protected Areas. The inshore benthic marine survey of The Needles MCZ can be accessed at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5147687566704640>.

## 8 Map of Solent Marine Protected Areas

### MAGiC Solent Marine Protected Areas



<b>Legend</b>		
<b>Marine Conservation Zones (England)</b>		Potential
Designated		
<b>Special Areas of Conservation (Marine Components GB)</b>		
Candidate		
Designated		
Possible		
<b>Special Protection Areas (Marine Components GB)</b>		
Classified		

0 10 20  
km

Projection = OSGB36  
 xmin = 362900  
 ymin = 47150  
 xmax = 533100  
 ymax = 149500

Map produced by MAGiC on 21 July, 2022.  
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