

State of the Solent Edition 3:

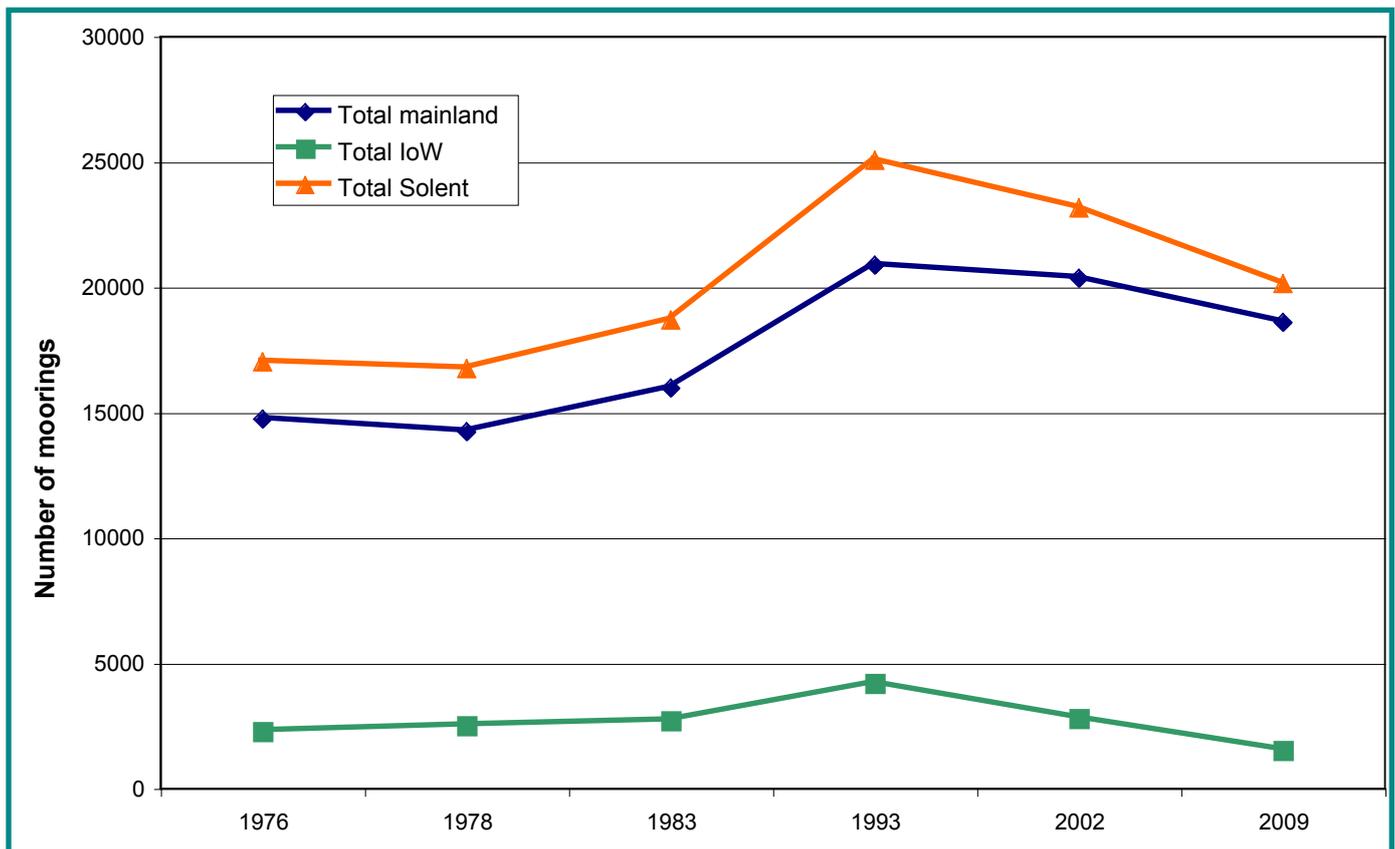
7. Recreation & Tourism Indicators



The long term aim in the Strategic Guidance is 'to support recreation and tourism activities within the Solent, and extend opportunities where possible'. Recreation and tourism are vital to the Solent, and in turn the quality of the Solent is vital for recreation and tourism.

Recreation can be counted as the Solent's most significant activity in terms of the number of people which take part and it is certainly the most diverse. At least twenty different activities take place, each with its own characteristic distribution and pattern of use. Tourism is also significant, particularly for the Isle of Wight. On the Hampshire coast there are fewer long stay visitors, but the number of day and short stay visitors is significant. For tourism and recreation to be sustainable in the Solent there has to be a balance between the pressures on the environment and social and economic benefits.

7.1 Indicator: Number of berths and moorings for recreational boating in the Solent



Source: Solent Marinas and Harbour Authorities

7.1 Reason for indicator selection

Recreational boating is one of the main recreational activities in the Solent, which is internationally and national recognised as one of the best areas for boating. It takes place throughout the Solent with specific concentration of activity associated with local sailing clubs and marinas. Boats vary in size from personal water craft, small dinghies and RIBs to large motor cruisers and yachts. There has been a noticeable trend towards the increased use of powered craft.

Recreational boating is important to the economy of the region. It attracts a wide range of visitors and there are large numbers of marine industries associated with it. It also makes an important contribution to the quality of life of the area leading to participation in active recreation. Recreational boating also brings with it pressures on the environment, for example the potential for habitat loss and water pollution.

This indicator will give a measure of the trends and levels of recreational boating in the Solent, however it will not include users who store their boats ashore or trail their boats to the slipway. However, just measuring the numbers of berths and moorings in the Solent would not give an idea of trends in recreational boating and it may be necessary to collect more specific measures. These include: number of boats by category; average size of vessels; waiting list and occupancy levels; and berth and mooring prices.

This indicator is one of the proposed European indicators for sustainable development in the coastal zone and is also used by the SAIL partnership.

7.1 Where does the data come from?

The data is available from the marinas and harbour authorities, and the figures for the indicator have been taken from a number of studies which have been carried out over the years. It must be noted that different methodologies have been used for these studies and so although the data gives an indication of the change in the numbers of moorings over time, the level of confidence in the data is at times low.

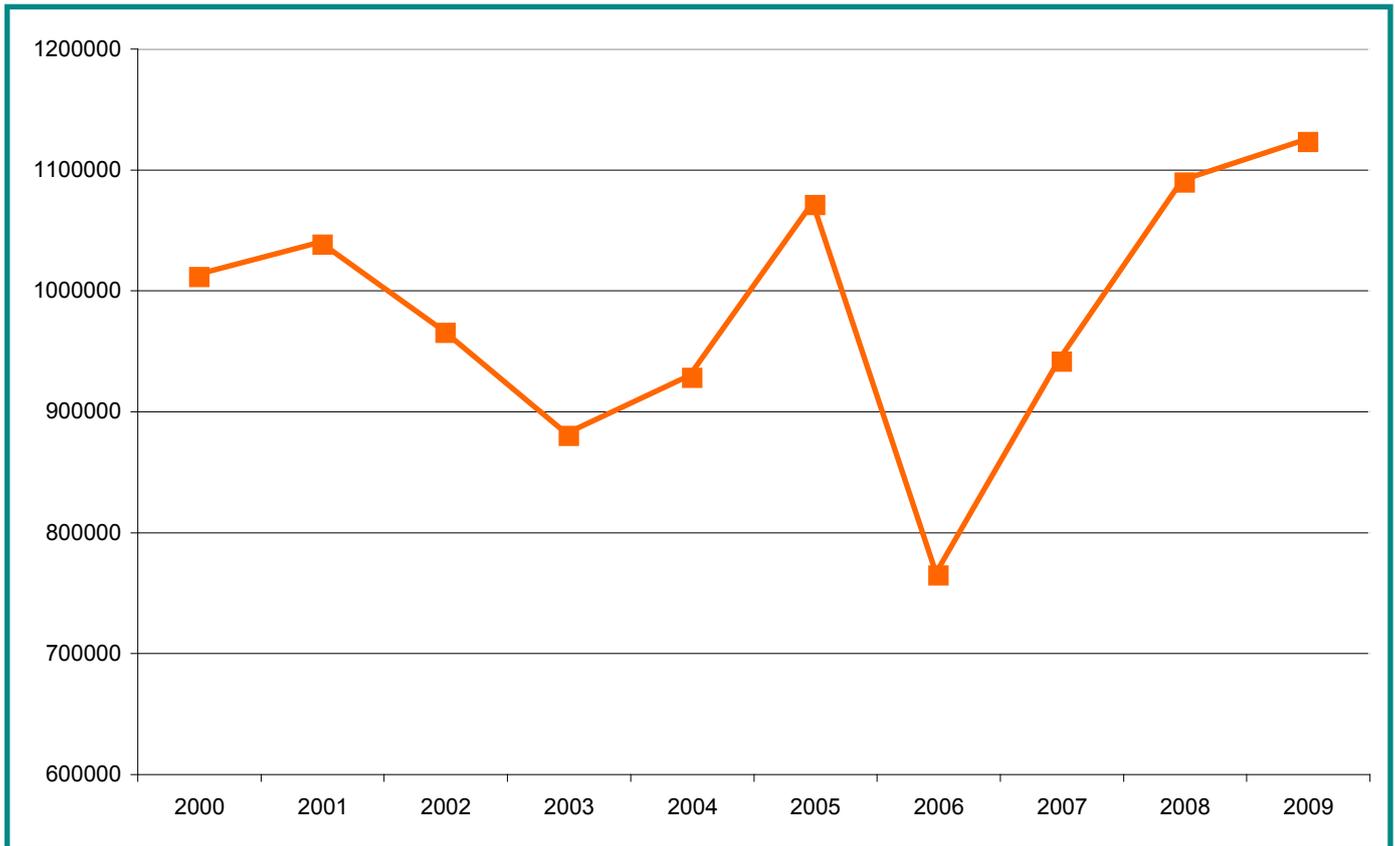
7.1 What the indicator shows

The data shows that the number of moorings for recreational craft in the Solent is declining from a peak in numbers identified in a study carried out in 1993. This trend is not unexpected as there have not been any new marina developments during this time and many of the harbours have been at capacity. Also the trend has been for larger craft which reduces the amount of vessels able to moor as you can fit one larger craft or two smaller ones into the same area. It is likely that the number of moorings in the Solent has remained constant since 1993 but due to the different study methodologies this is not shown.

7.1 What are the implications for coastal planning and management

It would be useful in the future to have a standard methodology by which the number of berths and moorings were recorded, i.e. area available for mooring rather than number of boats. Also the current measure does not include the number of boats which are held in dry stack which is becoming more common. For example, in Southampton Water, there are marinas now holding a significant number of boats in dry stack.

Indicator 7.4: Visitor numbers to key attractions



Source: Visit England

7.4 Reason for indicator selection

The Solent has a number of key attractions which attract both day and longer stay visitors. The shores of the Solent are dotted with remains of its defence heritage and the industries the coast once supported. Such sites are valued not just for their contribution to the coastal landscape, but also as cultural and educational resources. There are also a number of nature reserves, both local and national, which are a popular attraction for visitors and residents alike.

This indicator would show the number of people which visit the key attractions in the Solent. It would give an indication of the value that people put on these attractions and also the economic value of these key attractions to the Solent's economy.

7.4 Where does the data come from?

Data is available from the Visit England Survey which carries out an annual survey of visitor numbers to key attractions. The data is taken from the top 20 attractions (free and paid) in the southeast.

7.4 What the indicator shows

There are annual fluctuations in the numbers but since 2006 there has been an increase in the numbers visiting the three most popular attractions in the Solent. This increasing trend is also seen in the number of visitors to Hampshire's attractions in the work they have done for their Hampshire Tourism Trends Survey 2003-2008.

7.4 What are the implications for coastal planning and management

None identified at this time.

Future work

There is still a lack of data for indicators 7.2 and 7.3 (intensity of recreational activity and land/water based participation in coastal based recreation). Some data is available at the regional level but not for the Solent sub-region and not data which is annually repeatable.

These two indicators would provide a measure of the value people place on the recreational aspects of the Solent coast, and how many people visit an area because of the recreational opportunities in the coastal zone. It will indicate both the level of social and economic activity in the region and also reflects the pressures exerted on coastal resources due to human use. Participation in coastal activities is an important measure of the quality of life for people in the area. This indicator would give a measure of the social aspect of recreation in the Solent area.

Currently there are limitations on this data, some data is collected by a variety of organisations but the data sources are scattered, incomplete and inconsistent in quality and timing (Geodata Institute, 2004). This disparity currently prevents measurement of this indicator and further work is required to develop a methodology. This is also the case for indicator 7.5 (attractions with Environmental Quality Management Plans). Although the information is available for the top three key attractions, who are all very environmentally aware, this does not tell the whole story. At this time there is no central point where this data can be gathered for all the Solent's attractions.

Links

- Ports and Harbours in the Solent: http://www.solentpedia.info/enjoying_our_coast/take_to_the_water/.
- Visit England annual visitor numbers for attractions: <http://www.enjoyengland.com/corporate/corporate-information/research-and-insights/statistics/Annual-Visitor-Attractions-Survey/Visitor-Attractions.aspx>.
- Tourism South East: <http://www.tourismsoutheast.com/>.
- Hampshire County Council Tourism: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tourism-section/tourism-facts.htm>.