Solent News

The newsletter of the Solent Forum

Issue 55: Winter 2023/4

Inside this issue

How could marine net gain help with nature recovery in the Solent?
Image © Lymington Harbour Commissioners

Government Responds to Marine Net Gain Consultation

The government's 25 Year Environment Plan and Environmental Improvement Plan are the drivers for biodiversity net gain (BNG) and proposed marine net gain (MNG) in England. In June 2022, Defra published its consultation on the principles of MNG which set out the aims for net gain policy for development in the marine environment. Defra published a summary of responses in March 2023; the high-level principles of MNG were generally supported by consultees. In December 2023, Defra published its response to the consultation comments.

The government intends to make MNG a mandatory requirement for all new in-scope development activities in English waters below the mean low water mark. This will be in addition to statutory protections, such as compensatory measures requirements under the Habitats Regulations and the Marine and Coastal Access Act. Economic activities considered 'development', are those that involve construction or installation of new infrastructure (including significant extensions or improvements to existing infrastructure) or extraction. Fisheries are not included within MNG requirements.

In response to support from the consultation, the government intends to allow for improvements to features of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to qualify as net gain interventions. It recognises that, due to the large percentage of marine habitats that are designated MPAs, their exclusion from MNG would make it more difficult to identify locations to deliver it and could constrain investment in enhancements in coastal and marine environments. This follows the proposed approach for BNG to allow for improvement to features of MPAs in the intertidal zone.

Defra will now develop MNG policy in conjunction with stakeholders and will consult further prior to implementation.

News from the Forum

Chairman's Column

Peter Barham

Last year I said that we were beginning to see a real change in the way that we look at conservation. Instead of just talking about the need to do something, there are an increasing number of initiatives that will put money directly into restoration and recovery projects.

In 2024, we should see a real step forward in this direction in many ways. Two great examples of this are that Biodiversity Net Gain will become a statutory obligation for developments onshore and down to mean low water and secondly the Local Nature Recovery Strategy workshops being held by the responsible authorities. This includes a Solent coast and marine one being supported by Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council. The resulting information from the workshop will be of real value in ensuring that initiatives and funding for restoration is spent well and will have the greatest impact.

There are already many great things happening in the Solent which show that the drive to restore is there, such as oyster reef and seagrass restoration, but the opportunity to do more is growing and Solent Forum will play an essential part in ensuring that effort is put where the best outcomes can be achieved. What is also important to remember is that any new initiatives take place alongside continuing and incredibly important actions which are already making a real difference, such as the Solent Plastics Pollution Hub whose activities are great to see.

Reflecting the changes that we are seeing about the environment, and the role that people who live in the area can play, it is important that Solent Forum carries out its five year review to make sure that we take on board these changes and look to see how the Forum can play a full role in delivery.

In 2024 we will be undertaking a review of the work we do and preparing the work programme for the coming years. Your role in helping us to do that will be vital. We will be in contact with you during the year to hear your views and thoughts, to help us bring all this together to form a clear plan for the Forum's work and how we can help you, the environment and the Solent.

Solent Forum Website Information

We have been undertaking work to rationalise and clarify some of the content of our website. We now have an information hub directory that contains the following subpages:

- Biodiversity and Marine Net Gain
- Blue Carbon
- Building Biodiversity into Infrastructure
- Clean Solent Shores and Seas
- Habitat Restoration
- Natural Capital
- Solent Catchments

We also have a partnership projects and opportunities page that contains information on projects that the Solent Forum is involved with, these include:

- Greater Solent Project Tracker
- River Itchen Project
- Sea the Value
- Solent Research Needs
- Solent Seascapes Project
- Solent Water Quality and Boating
- Three Harbours
- Water Quality and Habitat Restoration

Solent Forum members, if you would like to include your project or would like to suggest a new information hub page then please contact the Forum Office.

News from the Forum

Solent Biosecurity Plans Launched

During 2023, the Solent Forum worked with Natural England and APEM Ltd to develop resources on marine invasive species and biosecurity planning in the Solent. Six workshops were held to obtain stakeholder input, three in person ones in March and three online in June.

The resources have now been finalised and were launched at the October Solent Forum meeting. There are three main sections to the biosecurity pages:

- Marine invasive species
- Biosecurity Pathways
- Biosecurity action plans

We have also produced a media pack to help people to share and publicise these resources more widely throughout the Solent. This includes copy, images and a QR code, it can be downloaded from the project homepage.

Marine Biological Association Identification Guide for Selected Marine Non-Native Species.

LNRS Solent Coast and Marine

The Solent Forum is working with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Responsible Authorities to include the marine environment of the Solent in the forthcoming LNRS'. Coast is already included in the strategies by default as the Responsible Authorities have jurisdiction down to mean low water.

A partnership has been formed which includes the Solent Forum, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England and the Solent Seascape Project to progress the coast and marine aspects. The first step will be a workshop that will be on 16 January 2024 at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton. At this workshop we hope to gain the knowledge and experience of the Solent's coastal and marine communities on nature recovery.

The Solent Forum has also put a webpage together to explain what is happening with the Solent coast and marine aspects of LNRS.

If you would like more information on the marine aspects of LNRS and how you can get involved please email the Solent Forum Office.

Bursary Award & Student Placement

This year we funded one student project under our Professor Mike Clark bursary award.

Henry Obanya from the University of Portsmouth is researching tyre wear particle and the associated chemical-additives present in Langstone harbour. He will evaluate the effects of the physical particles and leachates on the behaviour of amphipods *Gammarus pulex* (in freshwater habitats) and *Echinogammarus Marinus* (in marine habitat and a keystone species found in Langstone harbour). The study aims to relate any observed toxicity to specific additives or additive groups.

His award will fund field work around the catchment areas within Langstone harbour receiving storm water from the M27 motorway. He will collect surface-water, sediment, seaweed and amphipod samples at pre-determined sample points for analysis as part of his PhD project. The analysis of these samples will allow identification of relevant environmental concentrations of these contaminants in the Solent.

Over the summer, Katinka Klein a student from Portsmouth university, joined us as our placement student. She worked really hard and diligently undertaking research on mooring numbers in the Solent, helping to write our Clean Solent Shores and Seas webpages and developing a grant tool. Katinka now has a job with the Environment Agency and we wish her all the best.

We plan to take another placement student in summer 2024 and we will also be running the bursary scheme in 2024.

Harbours

Langstone Harbour Board secures Defra funding for Local Fishers

Image © Langstone Harbour Board

Langstone Harbour Board has been awarded £233,000 in grant funding, under Defra's 'UK Seafood Fund: Infrastructure Scheme'. Total investment will be £311,000 over the next 12-month period. The fund aims to improve the UK seafood sector by providing increased capability for fishers at ports and resilience for smaller scale fishing fleets.

Over the lifespan of the Langstone project, it will fund access to a safe pontoon to land catch, eight new commercial grade moorings, and a regionally significant maintenance facility.

The funding is allocated to three key projects; upgrades to the Eastney pontoon, lift-out facilities for vessels up to 47t and eight commercial moorings suitable for vessels 10m to 24m. It is anticipated that these will help the twenty small sustainable commercial fishing vessels who use Langstone Harbour thrive and save over 200 tonnes of CO^2 per year. The Solent fishing fleet has experienced a decline for several reasons, including the closure of fisheries for the protection of sensitive habitats and suspension of fisheries due to concerns regarding stock.

If you wish to get in contact with the Harbour Board, please email: admin@langstoneharbour.org.uk.

Trafalgar Wharf

Premier Marinas has completed the purchase of the Trafalgar Wharf site in Portsmouth Harbour. It includes an indoor dry stack boat storage facility and the Trafalgar Shipyard. Operationally, things will carry on as normal.

The site has evolved over the years to now encompass Europe's largest indoor dry stack boat storage facility for over 300 small boats, and a significant commercial shipyard providing bespoke refit and maintenance programmes for commercial vessels and private yachts.

Trafalgar Wharf has a long-standing history of marine employment. With a direct and monitored approach from Portsmouth Naval Dockyard, a number of Royal Naval vessels have been hosted and worked on by the onsite team.

KHM General Direction on Wash Effects

KHM have issued a new General Direction about wash effects across the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth. Documented incidents of ship wash on local beaches have highlighted the dangerous effects that unexpected large waves can have on local bathers and beach users. All vessels navigating within the area of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth are asked to pay due regard to the effects of their wash and adjust their speed to minimise adverse effects, especially at times when large numbers of people would be expected to be using beaches.

Water Quality

Government Expands Storm Overflows Reduction Plans to Cover Coasts

In September 2023, Defra confirmed that all coastal and estuary storm overflows are now included in the updated Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan. The additions to the Plan also mean that Marine Protected Areas and shellfish water protected areas will be added to the 'high priority sites' list, alongside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and bathing waters.

Drone footage of CSO in operation in Langstone Harbour

© Chris Pearsal

The Plan targets include requirements for water companies to:

- Improve 100% of storm overflows discharging into or near every designated bathing water; and improve 75% of overflows discharging to high priority sites by 2035.
- Improve all remaining storm overflows, regardless of location, by 2050.

Storm overflows are a feature of combined sewerage systems, designed to prevent sewage backing up into properties and stop mains pipes bursting. There are strict permit conditions for when and how they should be used.

What is Palm Oil that can Wash up on our Shores?

Palm oil is a vegetable product that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees. It's used in food and cosmetics but, once in the sea, it can form solid lumps that can then wash up on shore.

However, the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) often see observations of various waxy solids on the shoreline wrongly being referred to as 'palm oil'. Palm oil can appear very similar to other solidified vegetable oils, and it's usually only through laboratory testing that they can know for sure. That's why its usually referred to officially as a waxy/oily substance.

Vegetable oils are regularly transported around the world by ship. Before a new product is put aboard, crews are sometimes permitted to flush out residue in a vessel's storage tanks at sea to avoid contaminating the next delivery. In the cold waters around the UK, vegetable oils can solidify and later wash ashore, even if they originally entered the sea many miles from land.

You can report sightings of any shoreline pollution to the relevant local authority or by dialling 999 and asking for the Coastguard. Either council workers or a Coastguard Rescue Team will attend to start the process of identifying what it is, any risks, and a clean-up, if necessary. It is the responsibility of the landowner to arrange testing and removal if required.

After changes in legislation in 2021, in European waters the bulk residue of palm oil is no longer allowed to be discharged into the sea.

Fisheries & Aquaculture

Small Fish Surveys

Every year, staff from Chichester Harbour Conservancy work with partners from the Sussex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA) and the Solent Seascape Project to survey the fish within the harbour. An important "nursery" for many young fish species, including sea bass, the sheltered streamlets of the harbour's saltmarsh and mudflats provide a vital habitat for young fish to develop and grow before heading out into the open seas.

The surveys take place every year, at the beginning and end of the summer across four sites. They provide a snapshot of the health and diversity of fish species within the harbour, and form part of the monitoring for the Solent Seascape Project.

Photo courtesy of Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Sand smelts, juvenile sea bass and golden grey mullet were amongst the most common fish surveyed. Other findings included a garfish, a long slender fish with an elongated beak-like jaw (a bit like a swordfish). A young cuttlefish was also surveyed.

The team use a boat to fan out a fifty metre seine fishing net in a wide arc. This is pulled in carefully and the fish are decanted into oxygenated buckets of seawater. The fish are then identified, counted and measured.

Catchwise

Catchwise is a new survey of sea angling taking place across England and Wales in 2023 and 2024. The project has been co-developed with sea anglers, and aims to significantly improve the recognition of the sport's value to coastal communities and inform relevant fisheries management decisions. It will be the biggest single study of sea angling undertaken for over a decade and will involve a major shore and private boat survey of sea anglers as well as an online survey of charter boats.

It is funded through the UK Seafood Scheme: Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) scheme. The project will be delivered by Substance, the Angling Trust and Cefas. It has an Advisory Group representing the recreational sea angling community, individual anglers, charter skippers, scientists, fisheries managers and agencies.

Recreational anglers catch around 100 species each year, many of which are non-quota and non-commercial stocks, and this project will provide new and improved data on data-poor stocks that are important recreationally. These include Gurnards, Black Seabream, John Dory, Pilchards, Lemon Sole, Cod, Whiting, Hake, Saithe, Ling, Blue Ling and Skates and Rays.

Fisheries Management Plans

The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage UK fisheries as an independent coastal state. It requires the UK fisheries policy authorities to publish fisheries management plans (FMPs).

Each FMP specifies the stocks, type of fishing and the geographic area covered, as well as the authority or authorities responsible and indicators to be used for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan. Once published, FMPs will inform a wide range of relevant fisheries management actions.

The six Frontrunner FMPs were made live in July and have been publicly consulted. Defra is currently preparing the next five FMPs for English waters, which will be published by the end of 2024.

The MMO has been holding a set of quayside conversations with fishers in ports on the south coast to get their views on ongoing development of the Channel demersal non-quota species FMPs.

Ports & Marine Industries

Sea Change: Shore Power Port Decarbonisation Project

The Sea Change project will design, build and operate a 'shore power' system across the three busiest berths at Portsmouth International Port. This will allow visiting ferry or cruise ships to turn off their engines when in the port, as they will be able to 'plug-in' and use electricity to run their onboard systems.

A consortium of academics, marine specialists and UK technology SMEs have been brought together alongside Portsmouth International Port and Brittany Ferries to deliver the project. It will also help to develop the necessary skills for green shipping and infrastructure, design, manufacturing and maintenance capability.

Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Port

Brittany Ferries is introducing two new LNG-electric hybrid ferries from 2025, which run on a combination of cleaner liquefied natural gas (LNG) and battery power. With shore power available at the port, they will be able to charge their batteries and run on battery power when manoeuvring through Portsmouth harbour, improving air quality and supporting the industry-wide shift to zero-emission shipping.

Sea Change is part of the Zero Emissions Vessels and Infrastructure competition (ZEVI), which was announced in February 2023, funded by UK Government and delivered in partnership with Innovate UK. As part of ZEVI, the Department for Transport allocated over £80m to 10 flagship projects supported by 52 organisations from across the UK to deliver real world demonstration R&D projects in clean maritime solutions. Projects will take place in multiple locations from the Orkney Isles to the southwest of England.

DP World Builds Pinning Station at Southampton

DP World has introduced a remote pinning station at its Southampton hub. 'Pinning' is the process of manually placing a twistlock into the corner casting of a container to keep it in place during a journey at sea. For the past 50 years, twistlocks were put in and taken out on the quayside, directly underneath container-bearing cranes, a hazardous environment where heavy machinery and people operate in close proximity.

Photo courtesy of DP World

The new station is the first at any straddle carrier port in the world. It is the size of two football pitches and is set 150 yards from the quay to further protect workers. The remote model enables the straddle carriers, which move containers handled by the quay cranes, to take each one from berth to pinning station.

Coastal Communities

Reconnecting Historic Gosport Waterfront

In November, Gosport Borough Council was awarded up to £18,117,915 for the project 'Reconnecting Historic Gosport Waterfront'.

The funding will be used to create better connections and walking routes between Gosport town centre and the historic waterfront and to support the restoration and development of the former naval Rum Store at Royal Clarence Yard. This will create space for skilled marine employment and reconnect the town centre to the waterfront.

The project will see renovation works to the core structure of the Rum Store a derelict Grade II listed building, located in the heart of the historic waterfront. It will provide almost 7,000 sqm of commercial mixed-use space.

The Rum Store. © Gosport Borough Council

Solent LEP Disbanded

In a policy shift, the government announced that it will cease funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), directing financial resources towards local authorities. However, these funds will be subject to spending reviews starting from 2025.

In Hampshire, the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), was among the 38 LEPs nationwide responsible for driving local economic development. These partnerships played a central role in determining economic priorities and undertaking initiatives to spur growth and job creation within their regions.

Starting in April 2024, these responsibilities will be transferred to 'top-tier' authorities such as Hampshire County Council. The government hopes that district councils will enter into in power-sharing devolution agreements with their respective top-tier counterparts.

Solent Partners has evolved from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This initiative incorporates services and initiatives ranging from skills and careers to business support and partnership working opportunities. *Solent 2050* is the long-term strategy that guides the work of Solent Partners, focusing on regional productivity and sustainability.

Chichester DC Foreshore Services

Councillors at Chichester District Council have agreed that the council's Foreshores Service should be delivered differently in future. Rather than focusing mainly on Bracklesham, the service will be spread across all of the council's key beaches and it will involve inspections all year round, along the nine miles of coastline under its jurisdiction.

The new service will see a permanent member of staff working alongside other services, including the Community Wardens; Environmental Enforcement Officers; and the council's Contract Services, to inspect and respond to issues across the coastline that the council has responsibility for, helping to keep beaches safe, clean and tidy.

Inspections carried out by the service aim to identify potential hazards on the foreshore. In the past, this has sometimes involved the use of boat patrols. Following a review of the service, it has been identified that this is no longer required as it can be provided by, or can be accessed through, other local locations or organisations.

The Foreshores Service will not be a designated rescue service. This will continue to be delivered by HM Coastguard and the RNLI Search and Rescue Service.

Recreation

Formula Kite European Championship

In September, the Formula Kite European Championships took place in Portsmouth. Some 112 athletes from 28 nations raced at the Olympic qualification event on the waters of the Solent.

The event team at the RYA worked with Portsmouth City Council, with the support and guidance of UK Sport over two years to deliver it.

Around 400 local schoolchildren experienced the event's bespoke beach club, which sought to use the Championships as a launchpad to inspire and connect the city's young people to the sea, linking in to water-sports opportunities and marine conservation.

Photo © RYA

As well as providing teacher resources for classroom delivery prior to the event, the Beach Club saw children engaging in STEM experiments looking at how a foil and a kite works, environmental experiments with The Green Blue and beach cleans with the Marine Conservation Society.

The participants also experienced SwimSafe sessions to help build their water confidence, as well as opportunities to try wing-surfing and kite flying.

End of Life Boats

The RYA have been looking into the issue of end of life boats and they have made the following observations and comments.

Most small leisure craft built from the 1970s onwards, were constructed from fibre reinforced plastic (FRP). These boats are highly durable, typically lasting thirty to fifty years in active use. Vessels using the material include sailing and power boats, but also those with a shorter life that will be scrapped much sooner, such as dinghies and other small craft. As the boats become too expensive to maintain, end-of-life disposal is becoming a major issue for boaters, the environment and, when abandoned, for marine life.

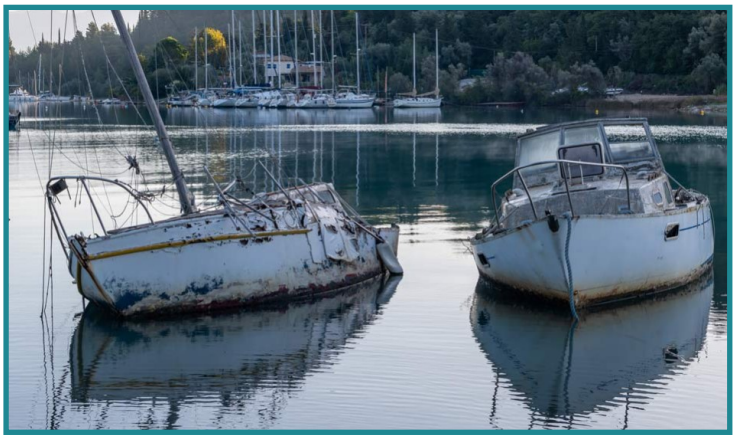


Photo © RYA

Wood and steel hulls in old boats can be managed relatively easily through established recycling routes, as can other metal and wood components. This is not the case for FRP, which doesn't easily decompose, though it does physically break down over time. Research undertaken at the University of Brighton has shown that boats made of FRP, which are left in the water, release microscopic fibres. These particles enter the ecosystem where marine creatures ingest them, and these may then enter the human food chain. There's also the damage caused by fuel, oil and chemicals from anti-fouling paint and upholstery leaking into the water.

With boats continually reaching their end of life, abandoned boats appears to be a growing issue. To confirm this, the RYA is collecting data on abandoned boats from across the country and they need your help. Next time you spot an abandoned boat, report it to the RYA via The Green Blue. All data received will be a valuable indication of the scale of the problem.

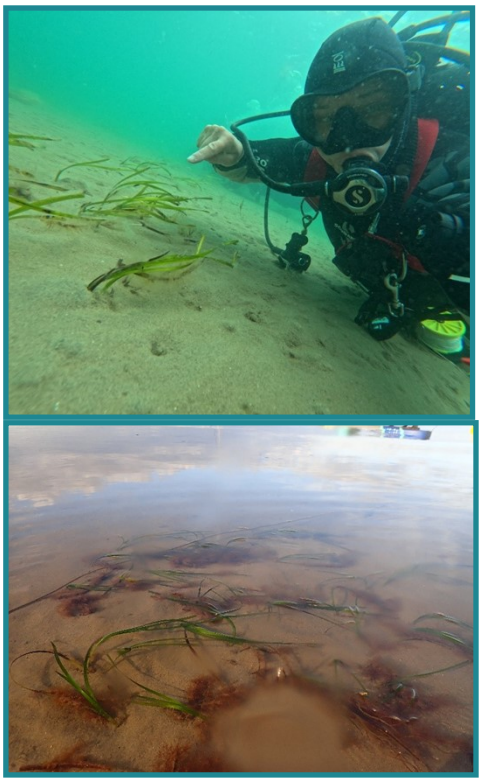
Conservation

Continued Learnings from Solent seagrass Planting Trials

Things have been busy down in the Solent since spring 2023, with Project Seagrass's research into the best methods for seagrass restoration continuing, and data starting to emerge from trials. Immediate replanting of seagrass was the fifth method to be trialled, with local volunteers helping to pack freshly cut spaethes (part of the seagrass plant containing seeds) into hessian bags in July. Seagrass plots on the Isle of Wight at Priory Bay and Thorness, and the mainland were monitored again, with promising results for some methods and locations. Transplants (small plants moved from healthy dense meadows) were doing well at Priory Bay, in both July and September.

Other planting methods called Direct Injecting Seeding (DIS) directly inputted seeds into the sand or mud were also showing promising results with emergence of new seedlings. With a few more months of monitoring to go, the project team can't say anything for certain yet, but trials are looking promising.

On the engagement front, the team went to the Isle of Wight and delivered seagrass educational sessions to over 1,000 students and their teachers, and two businesses. The team was enthused by the positivity and interest of the young people. From spring 2024, Project Seagrass will be ramping up engagement activities, with more opportunities to get involved in seagrass spotter walks and assist with seed picking. Keep an eye on social media or email: volunteers@projectseagrass.org to be kept up to date.



Transplants in Priory Bay © Project Seagrass

Bird Aware Solent Strategy Review

A report that was commissioned by Bird Aware Solent brings together various data and information (covering the period 2016-2022) to summarise the level of housing growth, mitigation implementation, bird numbers and distribution, visitor use and how the Bird Aware Solent Partnership is perceived. The work considers the effectiveness of the Partnership, the lessons learnt from the first five years and it will be used by Bird Aware Solent and its partners to inform how mitigation might need to change or adapt in the future.

The Report found that recreational disturbance is a complex issue and Bird Aware Solent has a challenging role to ensure mitigation across the entire Solent coast. While some of the coastline is clearly managed for nature and visitors are likely to be very aware they are entering a reserve, along most of the coast there is little indication that the area is important and protected for wildlife. A significant shift in mindset is required for people to appreciate the importance for birds and modify their behaviour accordingly.

Bird Aware Solent key messages

Habitat Restoration

Marine and Coastal Habitat Restoration Principles

Ten overarching restoration principles have been developed by the Environment Agency and Natural England as part of the Restoring Meadows, Marsh and Reef Initiative (ReMeMaRe):

1) The primary aim of restoration is to (re)create natural habitats and functions and enhance resilient habitat features.

2) Climate change is the critical backdrop against which all restoration efforts will play out. We should not be investing in creating habitats that are shown not to be viable due to current and future climate pressures.

3) Removal of pressures in existing marine and coastal habitats should be considered before and alongside active restoration.

4) Landscape and seascape scale restoration of habitat mosaics and supporting processes at suitable spatial scales is preferred over creation of single habitats.

5) Habitat suitability and historic habitat extents should be considered in restoration projects, as this will enhance support and confidence in restoration.

6) Restoration projects within designated sites must consider existing designated features and how the restored habitat or mosaic will fit in, guided by evidence and statutory processes.

7) Restoration projects should have robust monitoring, evaluation, public engagement and sharing of lessons learnt.

8) Restoration projects should have robust biosecurity measures in place, to prevent the introduction, spread and establishment of invasive non-native species.

9) Artificial structures may supplement existing biodiversity in highly modified ecosystems but do not create new naturally functioning habitats.

10) Although artificial enhancement for commercial gain may have some benefits for the environment, activities that alter the natural processes are not considered a form of restoration.

Saltmarsh restoration. © Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Harbours & Business

Red Funnel Port Improvements at East Cowes

Red Funnel is proposing to upgrade and redesign its three existing sites within East Cowes at Phoenix Yard, Trinity Yard and Redux Yard.

At Phoenix Yard there is an outline plan to redesign this area to create space for the development of an 80-bedroom hotel.

The north end of Trinity Yard will be the home of the new Red Funnel terminal building. This site also includes proposals for a mixed-use development of residential apartments and businesses, a new short stay car park and a taxi rank.

View of terminal from the ferry. © Red Funnel

Redux Yard will become the main marshalling yard for freight and passenger vehicles with new automated check-in booths. It will have capacity for over 350 vehicles and a new multi-lane vehicle route for disembarking vehicles, allowing for quicker unloading and making turnaround times more efficient.

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2025. See: Our proposals – Red Funnel Port for more details.

HVO Fuel Trialled at Premier Marinas

Premier Marinas has become the first UK marina group to switch to using HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel in boatyard plant machinery and equipment.

HVO is a low carbon drop-in diesel replacement fuel made from 100 per cent renewable waste, residue, and vegetable oils. It can be used across a range of applications and industries.

It has been trialling the fuel in its 25 tonne WISE boat hoist and its 15-tonne boat mover at its Southsea Marina for the last twelve months.

Southsea Marina © Premier Marinas

Gosport Marina's specialist boatyard has also seen successful trials of HVO on its 180-tonne WISE travel hoist, 40-tonne Alto self-propelled boat mover, 40-tonne Terex mobile crane, New Holland tractor and three forklifts.

Each Premier Marina has a full-service boatyard facility and Premier is rolling out HVO usage across its ten South Coast marinas, having invested in new dedicated fuel infrastructure to support this roll out in all plant machinery and equipment.

HVO reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90 percent which allows Premier Marinas to significantly reduce its carbon footprint. It also reduces NOx (Nitrogen Oxides) emissions and particulate matter providing improved air quality for employees and others in and around the site.

The switch to HVO is part of Premier's strategy to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 from both its own business operations as well as that of its supply chain.

More News

The Power of the Tides

MeyGen Tidal Turbine being installed off the Orkney Islands

Tidal power has great potential as an energy source as water is nearly 1,000 times more dense than air, so the energy is far more concentrated. A big advantage over other renewable technologies like wind and solar is that the tides are predictable. Tidal power can deliver a steady, reliable stream of energy and studies suggest it could meet as much as eleven percent of the UK's annual electricity demand.

The focus of tidal power research has moved to the energy contained in tidal streams, the currents of water created by the rise and fall of the tides. They run fastest where constrictions, like straits or inlets, funnel the water, increasing the speed of the flow. The UK is at the forefront of tidal stream research and all sorts of ingenious devices are being tested in the waters off our coasts.

In recognition of the potential of the industry, the government is offering subsidies to the companies developing tidal technology. Eleven tidal stream energy projects have secured funding from the UK government. Under the deal, the government guarantees it will buy the electricity they produce for an artificially high price of £198 per megawatt hour, it pays £52 MWh for onshore wind and £47 MWh for solar. The hope is this government support will allow the tidal power industry to grow.

Southern IFCA Net Fishing Byelaw

Image © Southern IFCA

Southern IFCA's Net Fishing Byelaw as been ratified by the Secretary of State. It introduces various measures to regulate fishing with nets within the Southern IFCA District.

It was developed following the Authority's decision to review and develop regulations for the District's harbours and estuarine waters in order to support the use of these areas as essential fish habitats, to provide protection to migratory salmonids as they transit through these areas, to balance the social and economic benefits of net fishers and to further the conservation objectives of designated sites.

The Byelaw introduced three types of management area:

- Net Prohibition Areas
- Net Restriction Areas
- Net Permit Areas

In addition, it introduces requirements for the marking of nets by all fishers within the District, a definition for a ring net and a method for how a ring net must be used and provisions relating to the use of a net within a bass nursery area.

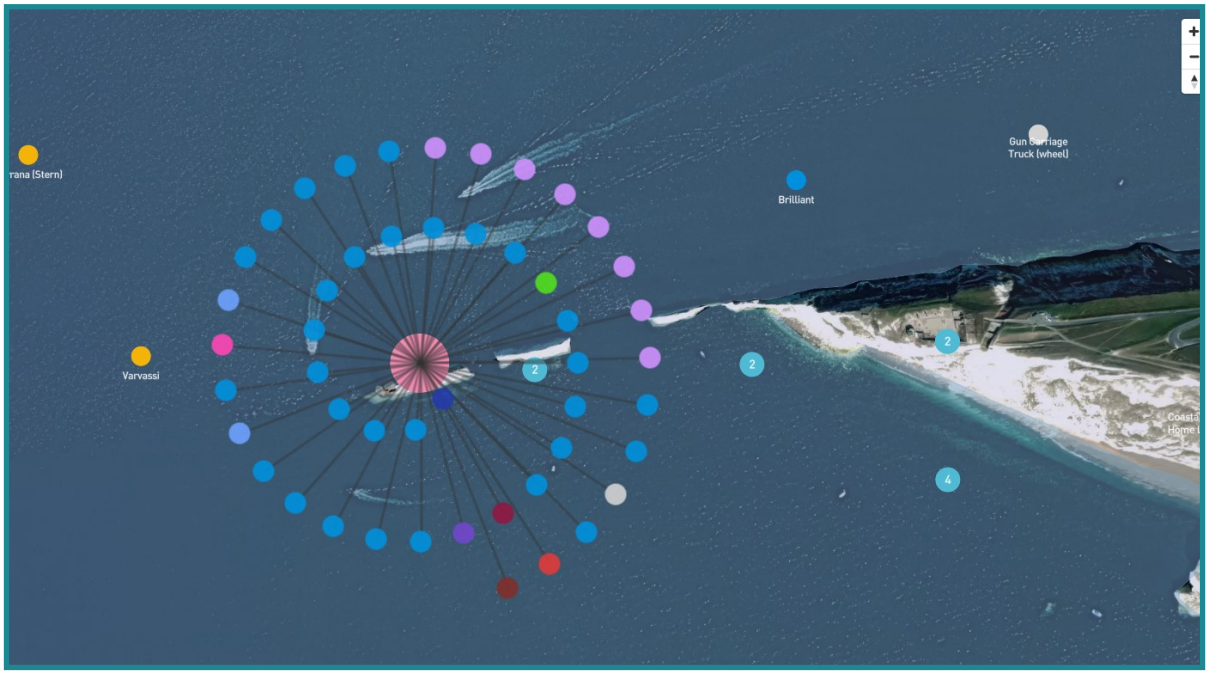
For more information on the Net Fishing Byelaw please visit the Net Fishing page and if you are wanting to find out more about the Net Permits please visit the Net Fishing Permit page.

More News

The Needles Voyager

An interactive map of the Needles has been developed as part of Unpath'd Waters. In the map you can click on icons to find out more about the archaeological sites, wrecks and finds within the five kilometre wide study area delimited by the outer boundary.

Unpath'd Waters is led by Historic England, and is part of the 'Towards a National Collection' programme. This Collection is a major five-year research and development programme that aims to underpin the creation of a unified virtual 'national collection', dissolving barriers between the different collections of the UK's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The programme is funded through a £18.9 million investment by UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Strategic Priorities Fund and delivered by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.



Finds and Wrecks off the Needles, © Isle of Wight. Unpath'd project

Oyster Regeneration comes to the Isle of Wight

UKSA has officially launched the Isle of Wight's first oyster regeneration project, in partnership with Blue Marine Foundation, as its first oysters were placed in baskets beneath its pontoons to breed.

The oysters will provide a range of benefits to the environment and people such as improving water quality, with a single oyster able to filter up to 200 litres of water every day. They also act as a natural defence to coastal erosion.

The project will facilitate the release of millions of larvae into the Solent, while also providing refuge for other marine life including endangered European eels, young seahorse sand sea bass.

News & Snippets

Scientists Assess Value of Mechanical Cleanup Devices

An international group of scientists, including some from the University of Plymouth, has cautioned against reliance on mechanical cleanup devices as a means of addressing plastic pollution. They note that the plastic removal technologies used so far have shown varied efficiency in the amount of waste material they are able to collect, and many have not been tested at all. Some have been shown to harm quantities of marine organisms, including fish, crustaceans and seaweeds, that far exceed the amount of plastic captured, meaning their overall impact on the ocean is potentially more harmful than helpful.

Previous research by the University of Plymouth provided the first independent evaluation of the performance of a Seabin device, which is designed to continuously suck water inwards using a submersible pump which is then filtered. Hundreds have been installed globally, including in the Solent, and are reported to have captured over 2.5 million kilograms of litter from calm sheltered environments such as marinas, ports and yacht clubs. The Plymouth study found that a total of 1,828 items, was retained by a device installed on the city's waterfront during 750 hours of operation between April and June 2021. This was equivalent to 58 items a day, but the device also captured one marine organism for every 3.6 items of litter.

Photos courtesy of University of Plymouth

Snippets

- Fancy doing a beach clean this year? Then find out more from our Solent Plastics Pollution hub. Hundreds of volunteers now do regular clean ups around the Solent.
- Four shingle islands for breeding seabirds have been created at the RSPB Reserve at Farlington Marshes. The ditches and scrape around them will provide varied feeding habitat for passage migrants and are already being used by winter waders.
- Data from OSPAR shows that the estimated annual input of microplastics into OSPAR catchments averaged over 0,3 Mt, the largest land-based sources being tyre wear and the degradation of litter.
- The UK government is to diverge from the EU's standards for monitoring water quality in England. While in the EU, England was covered by the water framework directive (WFD), and a national chemical and ecological survey of rivers was conducted annually. After Brexit, the WFD was transposed into English law. From 2016 the government decided to test water quality under WFD every three years rather than annually. Defra are looking to use the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) process to assess future performance.
- In this year's Solent Great Coastal Birdwatch more than 100 different bird species were spotted area for birds. Little egrets were spotted by more than seventy five percent of those participating in the survey, the highest proportion among any of the species seen. Dark-bellied brent geese outstripped other species in terms of total numbers counted with more than one and half thousand recorded.

Solent News

Solent Seagrass Symposium

The first Solent Seagrass Symposium was held in April, hosted by Cowes Yacht Haven. Many of the people working on seagrass restoration and research across the Solent, local businesses and interested people came together for an evening of talks and discussion around seagrass work.

Talks were given by Dr Ian Boyd (ARC) on the Isle of Wight UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, Dr Tim Ferrero (Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) on restoring the smaller seagrass species Zostera noltii, Amelia Newman (Ocean Conservation Trust) on the Remedies seagrass restoration project, and Dr Richard Unsworth (Project Seagrass) on the larger species Zostera marina restoration research and the Seagrass Spotter app, a citizen science programme to help build knowledge of seagrass extent globally.

Several local organisations also showcased their work to support seagrass, with vibrant displays of photography, art and seagrass lino-printing.

Find out more about the Solent Seagrass Restoration project and volunteering opportunities at: www.hiwwt.org.uk/seagrass-restoration.

The Solent Forum

Since 1992, the Solent Forum has provided a platform to deliver Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Solent sub-region of the southeast. It operates at a strategic coastal management level, providing a network for closer working relationships, information dissemination and discussion of topical coastal issues. The Solent Forum members meet twice a year and will next meet on 13 March 2024 in Cowes, on the Isle of Wight.

Solent News is prepared and edited by the Solent Forum Officers. It is a biannual publication and issue 56 will be produced in summer 2024. To find out more about the publication, how to submit articles or be included on the mailing list, please visit http://www.solentforum.org/publications/solent_news/.

Contact Information

Solent Forum
c/o Hampshire County Council
Universal Services
Three Minster House
Winchester
SO23 8UD
Tel: 03707 795206
Email: solentforum@hants.gov.uk. Twitter @solent_forum

The following organisations steer the work of the Solent Forum.