



Fisheries Management Plan for the Chesil and the Fleet Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

November 2019

Title: Chesil and the Fleet Marine Protected Areas Fisheries Management Plan

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About this document: This document has been developed as part of the 'Community Planning in Marine Protected Areas' Project, carried out in partnership with the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, the Dorset Wildlife Trust and funded by the East Devon and Dorset Fisheries Local Action Group. The plan reflects input from community and stakeholder representatives in a series of workshop events held during December 2018.

The purpose of this Fisheries Management Plan is to create a clear and accessible document to provide information on the Chesil and the Fleet Marine Protected Area (MPA), its evolution in community led and regulatory management overtime, an insight into the thriving MPA which is recognised as a site of international importance and a summary of ongoing fisheries management within the MPA, detailing the role of partners and opportunities for the community to complement the governance of the site.

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Forward

The coastal waters off the Dorset coast are some of the most diverse and productive areas in the world. The multifarious marine habitats support a variety of spectacular marine wildlife. This incredible marine environment has, for centuries, supported the county's important fishing communities. The long fishing tradition in Dorset has shaped the culture and traditions of our coastal ports and towns and today fishing remains an integral part of our coastal communities. Coastal fishing is not just an important economic activity, it remains a way of life contributing to what makes Dorset special.

In recognition of the national and international importance of this marine environment much of the coastal sea area is designated, in a variety of forms, as a Marine Protected Areas. Whilst there are a number of differing types of Marine Protected Areas their overall objective is similar; namely to conserve and enhance the habitats and species within.

Fishing activities and practices which are compatible with the protection of the marine environment are sustainable, the sustainable management of our marine resources enable coastal fisheries to continue to be productive. In the production of this plan we have worked to create a clear and accessible blueprint to provide information on the Marine Protected Area and how it is managed.

At its heart the plan is a framework which aims to engender support and raise awareness of the marine protected areas, and provide detail as to how the regulatory system combines with community led actions to deliver sustainable fisheries alongside the protection of the marine area.

The plan provides a summary of ongoing and proposed fisheries management within the protected area, detailing the role of partners and enabling opportunities for the community to contribute and complement the management of the site, ensuring not only the integrity of conservation objectives of the area, but also to enable sustainable fishing activity to flourish. Through the production of this plan we aim to engender community engagement and develop opportunities for ownership of actions to support sustainable management of our seas. The plan aligns with the objectives set out in 'Dorset's 25 Year Environment Plan'.

The plan reflects input from community and stakeholder representatives in a series of workshop events held during December 2018. This engagement reflects the commitment of those involved to deliver effective management of the marine areas. The plan was developed as part of the 'Community Planning in MPAs' Project, carried out in partnership with the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, the Dorset Wildlife Trust and funded by the East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group.

Effective management of the marine protected area relies of the many partners who are involved in the management and monitoring of the area. It is through these networks and by working together we can collectively deliver social and economic development alongside the protection of our spectacular coastal waters.



Chief Executive Officer

Robert Clark

Executive summary

Over the past decade great progress has been made in the protection of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) network, sites which are designated in order to protect habitats and wildlife at sea. Alongside their designation management of activities within these sites which could cause damage or disturbance to the species and habitats within them has been key in their development. However, often this process has led to stories of conflict rather than benefits.

This Fisheries Management Plan aim is to create a clear and accessible document to provide information on the Chesil and the Fleet Marine Protected Area, its evolution in community led and regulatory management overtime and an insight into the thriving MPA which is recognised as a site of international importance, demonstrating a vibrant and valuable site underpinned by community engagement and local management initiatives.

MPAs in the UK are co-managed by a number of competent authorities and landowners. Therefore, these authorities and stakeholders must work together to meet the conservation objectives of each site. This management plan has been written by the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority which are responsible for the management of fishing activities within the site. Therefore, this Fisheries Management Plan provides a summary of ongoing and proposed fisheries management within the MPA, detailing the role of partners and opportunities for the community to complement the governance of the site, ensuring not only the integrity of conservation objectives attributed to the site, but also the sustained promotion of thriving communities across Chesil and the Fleet as a direct result of joined up management initiatives and active community engagement and ownership within the MPA.

This document has been developed as part of the 'Community Planning in MPAs' Project, carried out in partnership with the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, the Dorset Wildlife Trust and funded by the East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group. The plan reflects input from community and stakeholder representatives in a series of workshop events held during December 2018.

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1 Introduction

Over the past decade, Dorset's marine habitats have been widely recognised as some of the most diverse, high quality in the UK, with a number of large areas being designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). These sites have not only been important in recent years. Many have a long history of being harvested and protected by local fishers as well as being enjoyed by recreational users creating economic, cultural and environmental value. The fishing industry itself have created tourist hotspots, giving towns the 'fishing town' brand, and protecting inshore sites from larger fishing industries. Despite this, the recent designations have most often focused on stories of conflict within the sites rather than those of benefits and added value.

This Fisheries Management Plan has been created as a part of the partnership project: 'Community Planning for MPAs'. The projects aspiration was to engage Dorset's local communities in the exceptional recent development of the Marine Protected Area network and the management of fisheries practices within them. The management of which simultaneously enables small-scale sustainable fisheries to continue to thrive alongside the environmental and cultural benefits of MPAs. The purpose of this fisheries management plan is to raise awareness of the site, and how good fisheries management within MPAs can enable and add to the economic, cultural and environmental benefits of those sites.

The focus of this fisheries management plan is Chesil Beach and the Fleet. This site has a well-documented history of fishing, fisheries management and cultural benefits of the area now a marine protected area. The site protects an area of around 23.83 km² of the long Chesil Bank beach and the Fleet Lagoon in Dorset. The habitats are known as a biodiversity 'hotspot' and support rare species such as the little tern and starlet sea anemone.

The site is co-managed by a number of competent authorities and landowners. Southern IFCA are the lead regulators for inshore fisheries in the Chesil and the Fleet area and have produced this Fisheries Management Plan to consolidate and coordinate collaboration to achieve the shared objectives of the site. The FMP will be delivered through a partnership between Southern IFCA, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

The plan describes the many ongoing and planned future management actions for ensuring our responsibilities for fisheries with the sites are met. The plan includes ongoing compliance monitoring and enforcement action within the site as well as district wide reviews of minimum sizes and potting management.

The MPA Fisheries Management Plan will be reviewed and updated every six years, in line with Natural England's (the responsible authority for the sites monitoring) schedule of site monitoring. Should the Chesil and the Fleet designation, the site features or the fisheries use change significantly, a review of this MPA Fisheries Management Plan will be carried out outside of the six-yearly cycle.

2 Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas in the marine environment, which are designated in order to protect habitats and wildlife at sea. In the UK, there are a number of protected areas, which fall under the umbrella term of an MPA, most notably European Marine Sites (EMS) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs).

2.1 European Marine Sites

European Marine Sites are designated to protect wildlife and habitats, which are important at a European level. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transpose Council Directives 92/43/EEC¹ ('Habitats Directive') and 79/409/EEC² ('Birds Directive') on the conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and species into national law. The Directives provide for the designation and protection of European Marine Sites (EMS), referring to those marine areas including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These sites are afforded protection in order to conserve habitats or species which have been identified as rare, special or threatened within Europe and are as such subject to protection from damage and disturbance.

European Marine Sites are designated based upon a scientific basis; as such no consideration is given to social or economic factors.

2.1.1 Conservation Objectives

Each EMS has a set of Conservation Objectives, which directly apply to all listed habitats or species for which the site is protected. The Conservation Objectives are set to ensure that the features of the site are maintained or restored as appropriate and that the general structure and function of the whole site i.e. its integrity to be protected.

A number of characteristics are used to decide whether or not the condition of a habitat or species is considered 'favourable'. For habitats, these characteristics can include the area covered by the habitat, its ecological structure and function and the typical species associated with the habitat type.

2.1.2 Monitoring and Management of European Marine Sites

The Habitats Directives requires that activities which take place within EMS '*...do not damage, disturb or have a negative effect on the protected species or habitats...*' as such where necessary appropriate management must be put in place to ensure that the conservation objectives of the site are achieved.

The management of EMS is the responsibility of Competent Authorities, as defined under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. For the inshore waters (out to 6 nautical miles) this management responsibility falls upon the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) to ensure that fishing activities do not damage or have a detrimental effect on an EMS.

The UK government's Statutory Nature Conservation Body, Natural England (NE), carry out condition monitoring of each EMS every six years. If required, following this condition monitoring, IFCAs will undertake assessments of each EMS in order to ascertain whether fisheries activities were likely to cause damage and prevent the conservation objectives of the EMS being achieved, and where appropriate, the IFCA will develop and introduce suitable management measures to ensure the integrity of the site specific conservation objectives are upheld.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147>

2.2 Marine Conservation Zones

In England, nationally important habitats and species are protected through Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The UK Government designated the MCZ network through a phased approach, designating the first 27 sites in 2013, a further 23 sites were introduced in 2016 and finally in May 2019 an additional 41 sites were added, completing the UK Blue Belt through the contribution of an ecologically coherent network in the North East Atlantic in terms of the representation of species and habitats in the marine environment.

2.2.1 Monitoring and Management of Marine Conservation Zones

Under Section 154 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009³, IFCAs have a duty to further the conservation objectives of MCZs, as such IFCAs are responsible for managing fisheries activities in MCZs for the purpose of marine conservation.

2.2.2 Tranche three Marine Conservation Zones May 2019

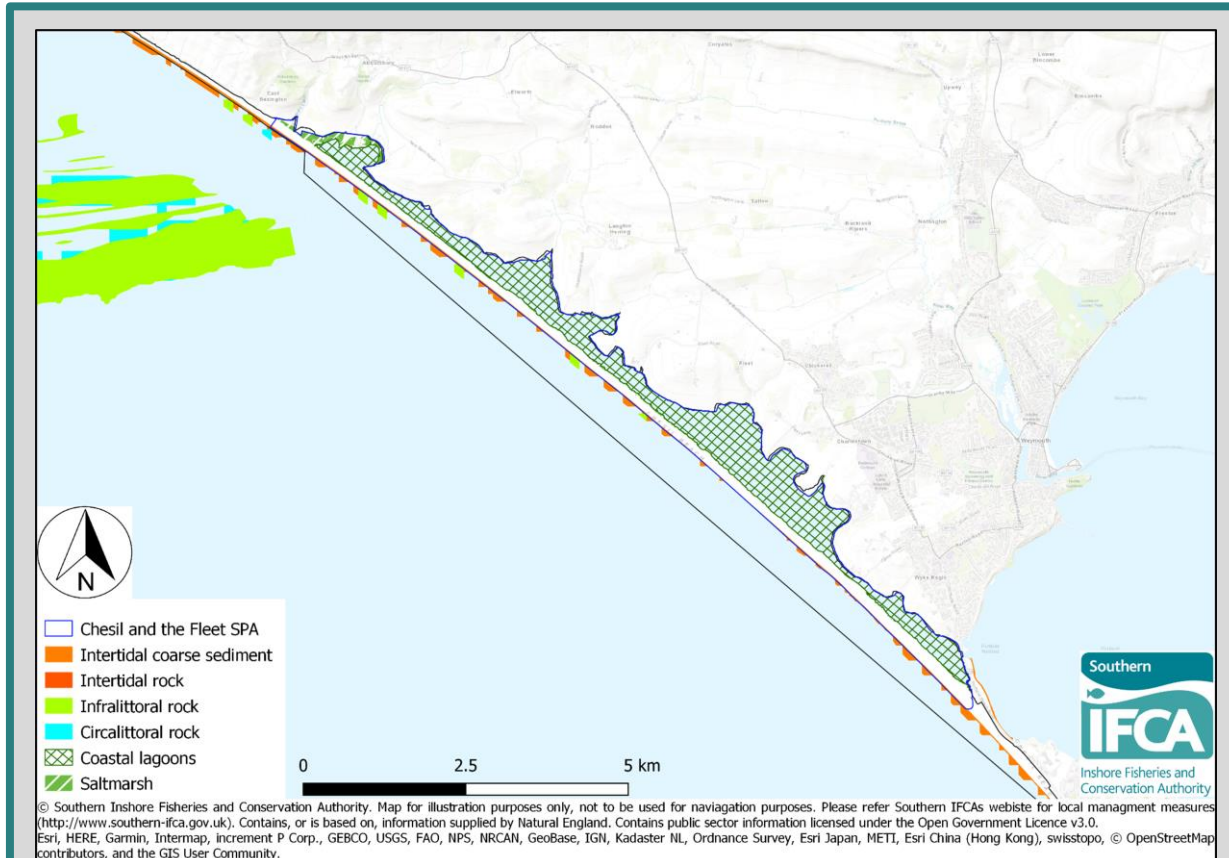
On the 31st of May 2019 the UK Government announced the designation of a third round of MCZs totalling 41 new sites across English water as well as many additional features for existing sites. The Chesil and the Fleet MPAs overlap with the Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges MCZ which was designated for an additional number of features at this stage.

The Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges pre 2019 features were covered in a separate management plan. The May 2019 additional features are beyond the scope of the 'Community Planning in MPAs' project and therefore have not been incorporated into that management plan. However, by 2023, under Southern IFCAs statutory duty, the authority will assess the impact of fishing activities within the site in relation to these new features. If these assessments find that fishing activities are preventing the site from achieving its conservation objectives management may be brought in. Management could take the form of voluntary measures or Southern IFCA byelaws. Alongside this process, Southern IFCA will update this management plan to reflect any changes in management made.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

2.3 Chesil and the Fleet SAC and SPA

Chesil and the Fleet MPAs are located off the south coast of England in Dorset. The SAC and SPA (also known as a European Marine Site) cover a combined area of approximately 23.83 km². A long straight shingle beach, known as Chesil Beach, or Chesil Bank to the locals, encloses a lagoon, known as the Fleet¹. The Fleet is extraordinarily rich in wildlife, including a diverse array of aquatic plants and animals, which in turn support an important number of overwintering and breeding birds.



The SPA is designated for the bird species wigeon and little tern.

Wigeon (Mareca Penelope), non-breeding

Internationally important populations of wigeon overwinter around the Fleet (October to March). In 1985 the site supported 1% (>4,500 individuals) of the north-west European population and approximately 4% of the UK population. Numbers have since declined. Wigeon supporting habitats:

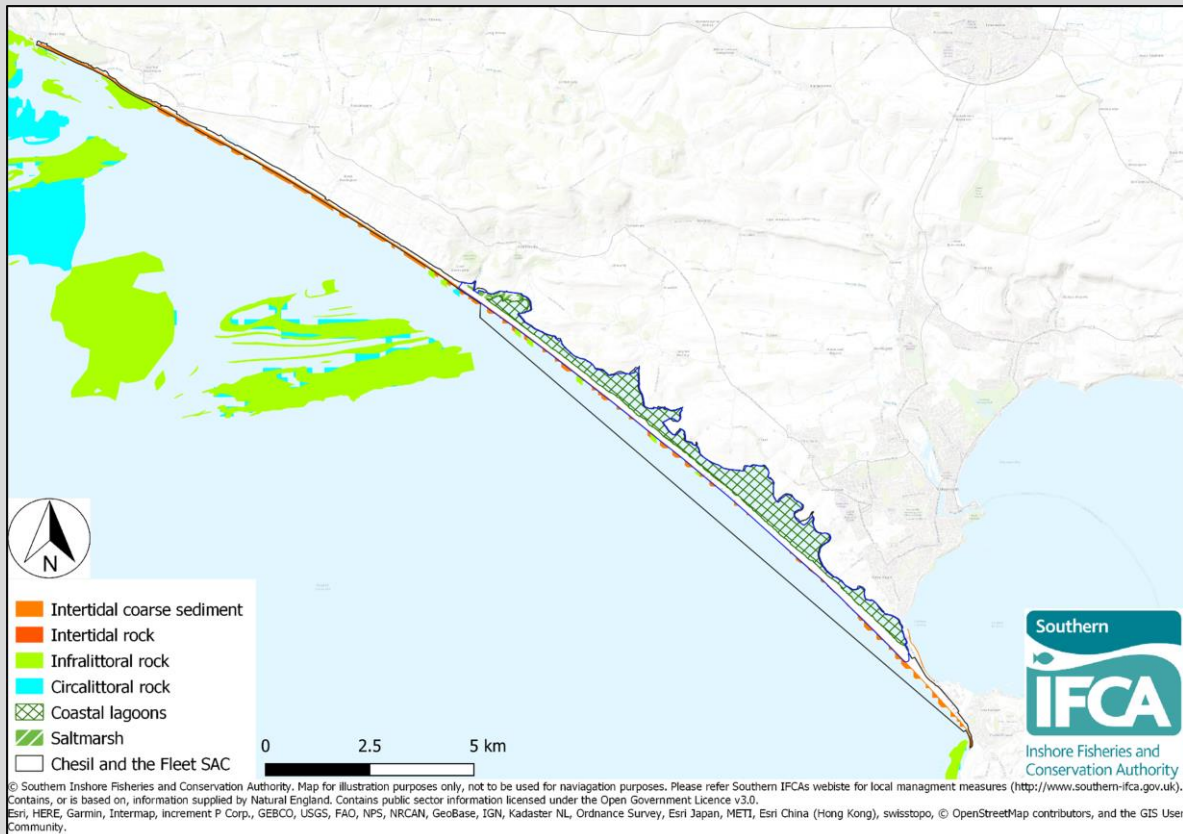
- Intertidal sediment communities
- Seagrass beds
- Atlantic salt meadows
- Coastal Lagoons
- Water column

Little Tern (Sterna albifrons), breeding

The shingle on Chesil Beach provides nesting habitat for internationally important numbers of little tern. In 2017 the site supported 38 breeding pairs, (approximately 1.8% of the British breeding population). Little terns feed on small fish in the shallow waters of the Fleet. Little tern supporting habitats:

- Coastal Lagoons
- Intertidal sediments

For more information on the features of the site please visit [Natural England's Conservation advice](#).



The SAC is designated for a number of coastal habitat types: coastal lagoons, perennial vegetation of stony banks, annual vegetation of drift lines, Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*), Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Lagoons are areas of shallow water, wholly or partially separated from the sea by some kind of barrier which may include sandbanks, shingle or less frequently rocks. The Fleet is the largest lagoon in England and supports the greatest diversity of habitats and species of any lagoon in the UK. This includes a number of nationally rare species such as the lagoon shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*) and starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*).

Perennial vegetation of stony banks is a type of coastal shingle vegetation which lives above the reach of usual wave action. In the SAC it extends the 29km long Chesil beach. This vegetation supports the rare sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) and sea pea (*Lathyrus japonicas*).

Annual vegetation of drift lines can be found on the shingle at or above the mean high-water mark. It is short-lived and is able to withstand total removal of the surface by storms. Within the site, drift line habitat exists on the inner shore of the Chesil Beach and on the shoreline of Portland Harbour. The communities are dominated by sea beet (*Beta vulgaris*) subsp. *maritima* and orache (*Atriplex*) spp., sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*) and sea rocket (*Cakile maritima*). They support a species of snail which is known in only 5 locations in the UK.

Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs and **Atlantic salt meadows** refers to a type of vegetation which is tolerant to salt water. The major concentration of this scrub type in the SAC represents the western-most limit of this habitat type in the UK. Scrub communities are dominated by sea-blight (*Suaeda vera*) and sea-purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*). Atlantic salt meadows develop in areas of soft intertidal mud and sand protected from strong wave action.

For more information on the features of the site please visit [Natural England's Conservation Advice](#).

3 A thriving Chesil and the Fleet MPA

Following community input and regional management intervention, the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs are...



Is highlighted as an area of high conservation value by the multiple designations it holds, both national and international. These include SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), SPA, SAC and Ramsar (Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands), as well as lying in the centre of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The area is locally valued as nature reserve which brings in thousands of tourists every year.



The lagoon supports a rich diversity of marine life and is an important nursery area for over 25 fish species. The lagoon supports many nationally rare and protected species including the lagoon sandworm (*Armandia cirrhosa*), lagoon shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*), the starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*) and the sea slug (*Tenellia adspersa*). In the main lagoonal basin in the mid-Fleet, there are the most extensive mixed seagrass meadows in Britain. There are also extensive stands of *Phragmites* reedbed grading to wet meadows behind. The Fleet is a designated Bass nursery area. A bass nursery area is an area in which fishing for bass, or fishing for species of sea fish using sand eels (*Ammodytidae*) as bait in a vessel is prohibited during in all or part of the year



The sites underwater area's also form a key location for the national Seasearch project, whereby volunteer sports divers survey our near-shore habitats around the coast. This type information is extremely useful and is used to monitor the condition of these habitats. On the Beach the Fine Foundation Chesil Beach Centre runs regular public marine education events such as 'shark school', Seashore Safari's and wildlife watching trips.



The Fleet Study Group is a small, independently run, organisation of volunteers with research interests in the site, whilst Southern IFCA and the Environment Agency undertake annual spring and autumn fish population monitoring at various sites within the lagoon.



The unique physical nature of Chesil and the Fleet, as one of three major shingle structures in the UK and England's Largest lagoon, combined with the extraordinarily rich wildlife associated with the Fleet lagoon and surrounding areas, attract up to **150,000 visitors** a year for a multitude of reasons, predominantly for recreational and educational purposes. Bird watching, walking and sea angling, along the site are among them, as well as the opportunity for educational field trips organised by school and study groups.

The area supports a range of commercial and recreational fishing activities. Chesil Beach is a nationally important site for recreational sea angling and fishing by rod and line takes place, predominantly



Supports strong and diverse recreational fishing

Supports strong and diverse harvesting of fish

on the seaward side of Chesil Beach throughout the year, targeting a range of fish species. Recreational sea anglers occasionally dig for bait in the eastern mudflats of the Fleet, close to Ferrybridge.

A small number of commercial fishing vessels, based in the Fleet, operate on an occasional basis in the Fleet, mostly using nets to target Grey mullet species and pots to catch green shore crab (*Carcinus maenas*), for use as bait in other fisheries. The Fleet also supports a fishery for the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), which is managed by the Environment Agency.

The Fleet Oyster Farm is a small-scale aquaculture operation based at the eastern end of the Fleet, covering an area of approximately 2 hectares. The farm grows Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) mostly for consumption in local restaurants. The aquaculture rights for the site are leased by the landowner, Ilchester Estates.

The area of the Chesil and the Fleet is one of multiple overlapping MPA designations. This can complicate how the site is managed, particularly if an activity benefits one site but damages another. Natural England are the lead authority of the site as it is underpinned by a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – a national designation to protect habitats, species and geomorphology. Information on the condition of protected habitats and species is provided by Natural England.

The Fleet reserve is managed by a warden and assistant warden, employed by the Ilchester Estate. A reserve management meeting is held on a biennial basis, attended by relevant stakeholders, authorities and organisations.

Permissions to carry out activities on the site are complicated as they must be granted by both the Government's Statutory Nature Conservation Body, Natural England, and the land owner. Much of Chesil Beach and the Fleet is privately owned. This can create challenges for controlling access to the site as well as further increasing the complications of managing the site.

The management of sea fisheries resources within the site is primarily carried out by Southern IFCA, however the Environment Agency have responsibilities for the management of migratory fish species, principally European eels, within the site. In reality, in order to achieve effective fishery management collaborative working relationships are required between Southern IFCA, the Environment Agency, Natural England and landowners, principally through the Chesil and Fleet Management Scheme.

3.1 On-going management within the SAC and SPA

Southern IFCA aim to achieve compliance with fishing regulations within the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs, as well as across their districts. This is achieved through a combination of education via engagement, monitoring and enforcement.

The IFCAs vision is to '*...lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry...'*. The management actions, identified in the Fisheries Management Plan for the Studland to Portland SAC seek to achieve the objectives underpinning the IFCA vision.

Southern IFCA is responsible for the management of fishing activities in the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs as it entirely sits within their district.

The IFCA's continually strive to improve public awareness and understanding of fishing regulations through active engagement across all sectors. It is through this engagement that the community and fishers are aware of existing fisheries regulations, and further have an understanding of how and why regulations are developed.

Compliance with regulations are conducted in accordance with Southern IFCA's Compliance and Enforcement Framework⁴. Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) carry out regular compliance patrols with a focus on the priorities set under our Compliance Risk Register⁵. Throughout the district, patrols are carried out at day, night and on weekends year-round, in patrol vessels on the water and on foot in ports and harbours. During patrols, officers inspect the catches, landings and fishing gears of fishing vessels, recreational vessels, charter vessels and recreational anglers.

An important part of these patrols is engagement with the industry. During inspections IFCOs educate the community on the current regulations and update them when changes are made. These patrols are also important for the industry to feedback to IFCOs with their views on the status of the fisheries within the district and any suggestions they may have for their management.

When inspections reveal that non-compliance with regulations has occurred, the IFCA ensures there is an effective deterrent to prevent future non-compliance via the issuing of warnings, financial penalties or prosecution of offenders.

3.2 National and International Management

Fisheries resources in the United Kingdom (UK) are managed through several layers of International (European), National and Local regulations. These regulations follow a hierarchy: Local regulations must not undermine National or International regulations, and National regulations must not undermine International regulations. The international and national regulations are gathered together by the Marine Management Organisation into a single collection of all UK and EU laws called The Blue Book⁶. Fishers are expected to have read and understood the regulations which apply to their vessel, fishing methods, species targeted and areas in which they fish. However, support is available to them through their local MMO Marine Enforcement Officer or team.

The national and international management of fisheries can be grouped into several themes. Control Regulations, The Landing Obligation and Technical Conservation. These can be described as follows:

- Control Regulations set out what procedures, policies and licences a fishing vessel or merchant must follow and have in place in order to catch, sell and buy fish. This includes the requirement that they pay to be licenced appropriately and that logbooks of activities are completed to meet certain criteria. Merchants or fishers wishing to buy vessel's fish must be RBS registered (Regulation of Buyers and Sellers). Under both the fishing licences and RBS register the fisher or merchant will have to conform to a number of rules for both health and safety and protection of fisheries resources benefits.
- Technical Conservation regulations aim to ensure that the fishing for certain species in the entire fishery, and in specific areas of that fishery remains sustainable. They may govern the total fishing effort in a fishery, the gear types used, the allowable catch

⁴ Southern IFCA's Compliance and Enforcement Framework: <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/25364/sitedata/files/EnforcementFramework.pdf>

⁵ Southern IFCA's Compliance Risk Register: <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/25364/sitedata/files/Compliance-Risk-Reg-18.pdf>

⁶ The Fishing Regulations Blue Book: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-regulations-the-blue-book>

composition for a particular gear type (to account for unavoidable bycatch), species minimum and maximum conservation reference sizes, prohibited species and additional area specific requirements. See table 1. for further explanation of these individual measures.

- The Landing Obligation stipulates which species, size of species and bycatch quantities can be discarded and landed. The aim of the obligation is to prevent the wasteful discards of unavoidable species or fish sizes that do not meet the requirements of the technical conservation measures. There are however, many exceptions to this obligation.

Management Technique	Explanation
Licence/ entitlement	A vessel may only catch the species for which it has a licence or/and an entitlement which is often based on having a historic track record of fishing for this species.
Quotas and Catch Allowances	A vessel will be allowed to catch and land a given amount of any one species specific to the area they fish.
Prohibited species or reproductive stages	Endangered species such as sharks and some rays are prohibited as well as certain species at vulnerable times of their reproductive stage.
Gear type and design specifications	Vessels may only be allowed to use a certain type of fishing gear to target a particular species and that gear must be set up or made to set of specifications.
Minimum and maximum conservation reference sizes	Fishers cannot take fish which are under the minimum size or over the maximum size. These sizes are set so that they enable a proportion of the stock to breed at least once or to remain within the stock as highly mature breeding stock.
Closed seasons	During all or part of the year vessels may not be allowed to catch and retain particular species in certain areas.

Table 1. A summary of the Technical Conservation measures which may be applied through fisheries regulations in order to ensure fisheries remain sustainable.

3.3 Local Management

Throughout England, ten IFCAs manage their individual districts out to 6 nautical miles from the shore. Within these districts they may establish byelaws (which at a minimum meet the requirements of International/ National regulations) to further control the inshore fisheries resources. Byelaws can be made to include any number of the measures set out in Table 1 as well as other appropriate measures such as the permitting of a fishery.

In order to create a byelaw IFCA's must follow a detailed process of evidence gathering, public consultations and reviews by the MMO, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and approval from the Secretary of State. The byelaws specific to the Southern IFCA and Devon and Severn IFCA districts MPA and relevant fisheries are described in the next sections.

3.3.1 Intertidal hand-gathering

Low levels of intertidal bait collection and shellfish hand gathering for personal use take place at the eastern end of the Fleet lagoon, on the mudflats close to Ferrybridge. At the levels experienced at the time of writing, this activity was not considered to present a risk to the site. As a precaution, in order to minimise the disturbance to ground nesting birds Chesil Beach is closed by Ilchester Estates between the 1st May and 31st August as a thoroughfare between the Tank Teeth at Abbotsbury and the Portland Boundary Stone.

From the Narrows to Abbotsbury, in order to protect seagrass beds from damage or disturbance, and in line with the priorities of the Management Scheme for the site, the digging for, or hand-gathering of sea fisheries resources is prohibited under the Southern IFCA 'Prohibition of Gathering (Sea Fisheries Resources) in Seagrass Beds' byelaw⁷.

Hand gathering periwinkles is prohibited in the district and therefore this site from 15th May to 15th September.

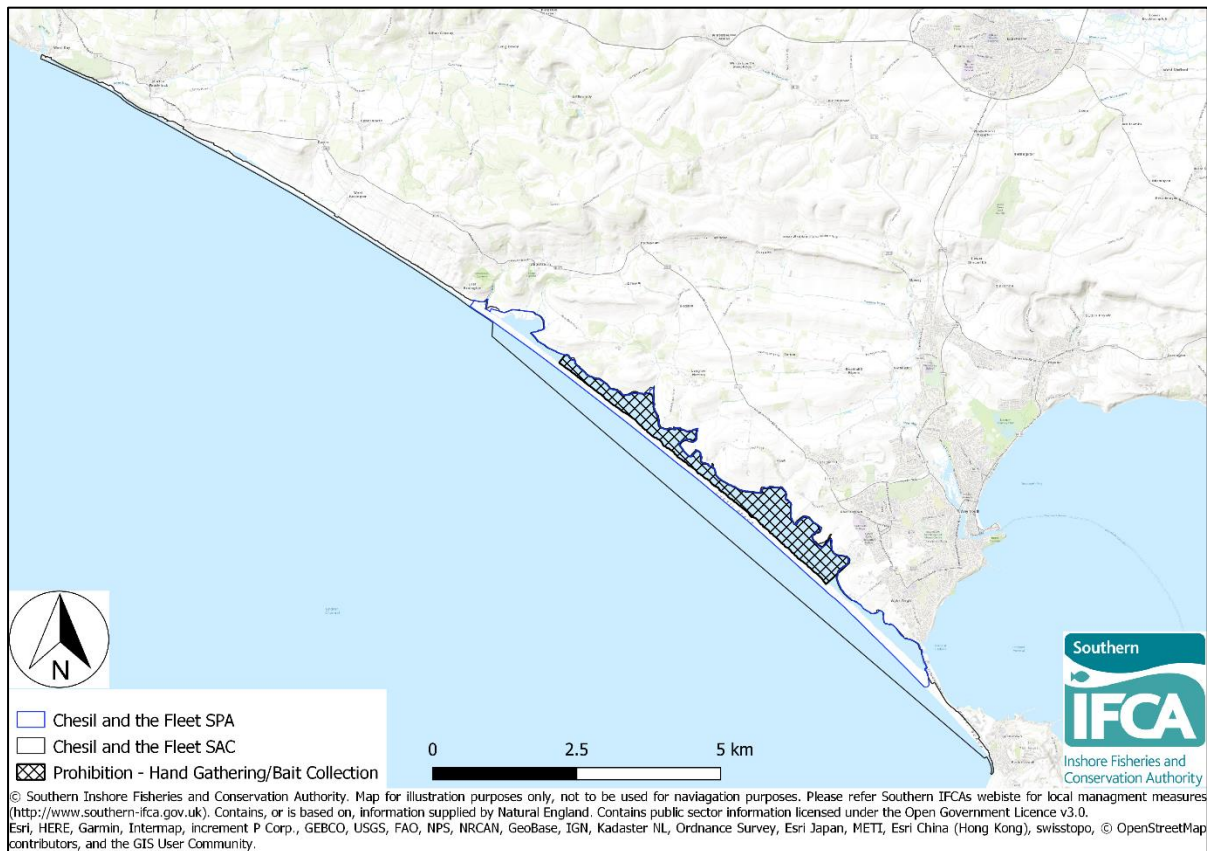


Figure 1: A map showing areas in the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs which are closed to hand gathering and bait digging.

3.3.2 Pot and Net fishing

Occasional pot fishing for shore crabs (*Carcinus maenas*) has taken place in the Fleet, carried out from a single fishing vessel in the area east of the Narrows. Shore crabs are principally targeted for use as bait in other fisheries. Due to the site, including the seabed, being designated as a SSSI, in the past this vessel has gained consent from Natural England to undertake the activity in this area, with a restriction on the time of year and the number of pots that can be used.

A small number of fishing vessels (no more than 5), based at various points along the Fleet, occasionally fish with nets in the Fleet Lagoon. The primary means of fishing is by use of non-fixed gill nets, known locally as 'pound' nets. The nets are set in a circular motion around a shoal of fish and then attempts are made to scare the fish into the nets by 'pounding' the water or the deck of the vessel with an oar or similar object. After approximately 10 minutes the net is recovered and cleared. This process may be repeated several times over the course of a fishing trip. The primary target for net users is grey mullet species, with mixed catches of

⁷ Southern IFCA Prohibition of Gathering - [http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#Prohibitionofgathering\(seafisheriesresources\)inSeagrassBeds](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#Prohibitionofgathering(seafisheriesresources)inSeagrassBeds)

golden grey mullet, thick-lipped grey mullet and thin-lipped grey mullet. Occasional bycatch of other species such as herring or mackerel may occur, however any bass caught must be returned immediately as the site is a nationally designated year-round bass nursery area. The majority of netting activity occurs seasonally over the summer months in the eastern Fleet, east of the Narrows, however occasional fixed net use is known to occur in the central Fleet area, focussed around Langton Herring, again targeting similar species.

The Fleet is a nationally recognised site of nursery importance for bass and it's sheltered rich waters are also known to provide important habitat for juvenile and feeding fish species.

Net fishers must comply with a series of minimum conservation reference sizes for fish species, outlined in European legislation and Southern IFCA byelaws. These include a larger local minimum size for grey mullet species. Alongside their review of net fishing management, Southern IFCA plans to review the suitability of the minimum size for grey mullet species, with the potential for greater alignment with the species' size of sexual maturity.

3.3.3 Fyke net fishing

The Fleet is a popular location for eel fishing through the use of fyke nets. The Environment Agency are responsible for the management of eel fishing activities throughout England.

3.3.4 Sea angling

Sea angling is carried out in the Fleet and from Chesil Beach on a mostly recreational basis. The site is of national importance for recreational sea anglers, attracting hundreds of participants on a daily basis to fish for a range of marine species, including mackerel, cod, pollack, bass, rays and plaice. Fishing activity is focussed around the 18-mile-long shingle bank's several access points, from Chesil Cove, Portland in the east, the Chesil Beach Centre car park, Abbotsbury and West Bexington, towards the western end. More determined participants may also row across The Fleet at points such as Langton Hive, or walk distances along the beach to access preferred fishing locations. The site is highly valued by anglers due to the diversity and accessibility of fish species available, whilst it is important that fishing activities are carried out in a sustainable manner, it is also important to recognise the social and economic value of the activity to the local community, as well as those who may travel further to enjoy the past-time.

Although not directly affecting sea angling activities, the Southern IFCA 'Fishing under mechanical power – closed area' legacy byelaw seasonally prohibits the use of fishing trawls within 1nm of Chesil Beach (from a point close to Langton Herring to Golden Cap). This historic byelaw reduces conflict between trawlers and recreational sea anglers and supports the access by Chesil Beach's anglers to fish populations.

Commercial sea angling occasionally takes place from vessels operating close to the Fleet's entrance at Ferrybridge. Ferrybridge itself has also become a popular angling location, and is particularly popular in late summer for horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) fishing.

The Fleet is a Nationally designated year-round Bass Nursery Area, bringing restrictions on the use of bait by anglers fishing from a vessel. All sea anglers must also comply with a series of minimum species sizes set out under Southern IFCA byelaws and international legislation.

Angling in the Fleet west of the Narrows is not permitted by Ilchester Estates.

3.3.5 Dredge and trawl fishing

Towed gear fishing is not currently known to occur in The Fleet. In order to further protect the Fleet's seagrass beds, Southern IFCA has introduced management⁸ to prohibit the use of bottom towed fishing gear in the western Fleet, west of the Narrows.

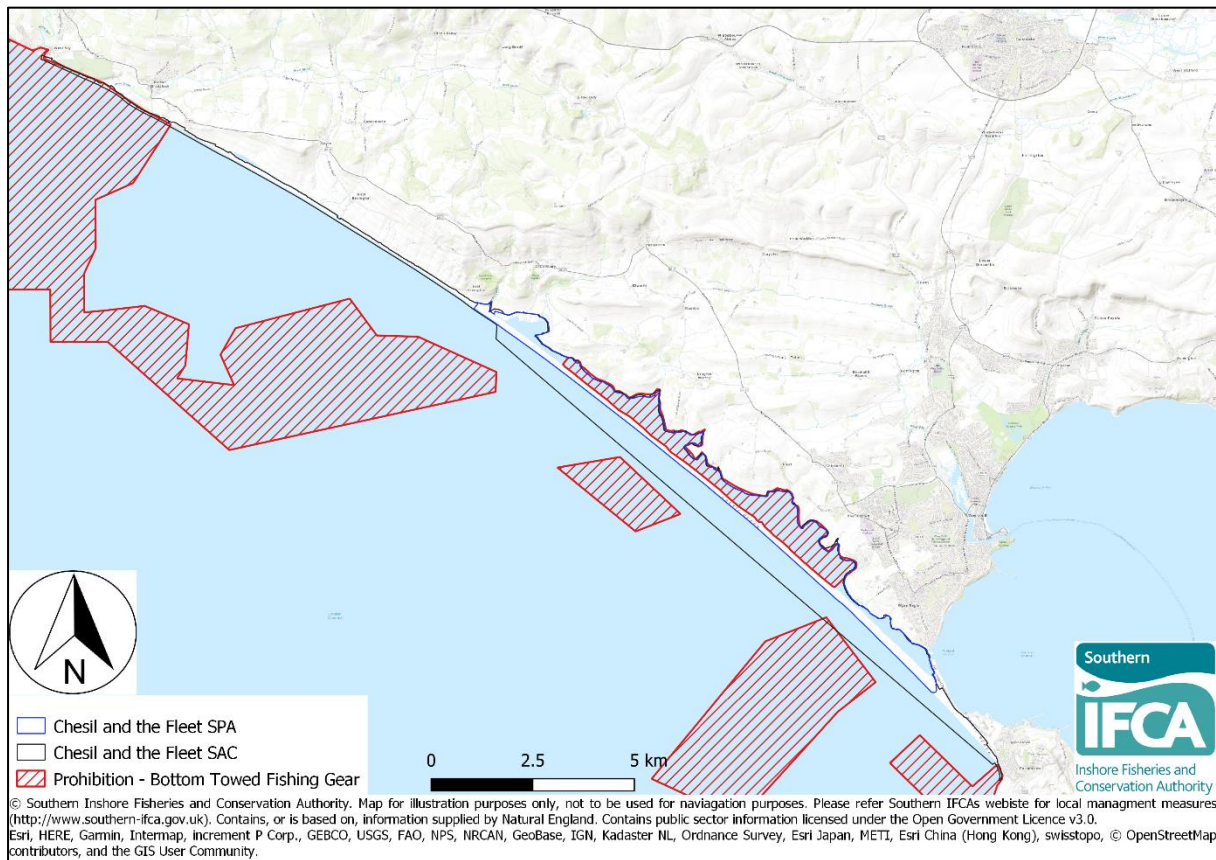


Figure 2: A map showing the areas closed to methods of bottom towed fishing gear in the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs.

3.3.6 Pacific Oyster Farming

Located in the Fleet is the Fleet Oyster Farm - a small-scale aquaculture operation based at the eastern end, covering an area of approximately 2 hectares. The farm grows Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) mostly for consumption in local restaurants.

3.4 Community and regulatory fisheries management

The Chesil and the Fleet Fisheries Management Plan (Section 4) summarises on-going and proposed fisheries management within the SAC, stretching from the west coast of Portland to West Bay, designated to protect excellent examples of subtidal reefs.

It seeks to describe the role of partners in the successful management of the SAC, ensuring the integrity of conservation objectives as well as the continued promotion of thriving communities across Chesil and the Fleet as a direct result of joined up management and active community engagement and ownership within an MPA.

The plan also seeks to provide details of how the local community can continue to champion the continued environmental, social and economic development of the area.

⁸ Southern IFCA Bottom Towed Fishing Gear byelaw 2016 - <http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws#BotTowedFishGear>

3.5 Local Management Measures in the Chesil and the Fleet MPAs

Fishing Activity	Management Area	Regulation	Management measures summary
Hand gathering	The Fleet	Prohibition of Gathering (Sea Fisheries Resources) in Seagrass Beds' byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No person shall dig for, fish for or take any sea fisheries resource in or from the prohibited areas. This does not apply to net, rod and line or hook and line – or fishing using a vessel. ○ No person shall have with them in the prohibited areas any rake, spade, fork or any similar tool.
Pot and Net Fishing	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Protection of Berried (egg bearing) Lobsters Byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lobsters which are carrying eggs must be returned immediately to the sea.
	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Minimum Fish Sizes Byelaw Skates and Rays – Minimum Size Byelaw Grey Mullet – Minimum Size Byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any fisher must not remove from the sea a fish which does not meet the minimum conservation reference size specified (more than 14 species)
	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Voluntary code of conduct: Wrasse Fishery Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Live wrasse outside of the following ranges should be returned to the sea immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ballan wrasse 18 to 28 cm ▪ Corkwing wrasse 14 to 22cm ▪ Rock Cook and Goldsinny wrasse 12 to 18cm ▪ All live Cuckoo wrasse should be returned immediately. ○ All forms of commercial fishing for wrasse should not take place in the specified zones ○ Potting for live wrasse should not take place in the area between Portland Bill and Chesil Cove. ○ Fishing for wrasse should not take place in water deeper than 10m ○ Each fishing vessels should not use more than 80 baited wrasse pots ○ Commercial fishing for live wrasse should not take place between 1st April and 30 June each year ○ All fishers and buyers of wrasse species should submit catch information/ sales notes to Southern IFCA.
	The Fleet	Bass Nursery Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fishing for bass from any vessel is prohibited in all tidal waters of the fleet all year.
Sea Angling	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Minimum Fish Sizes Byelaw Skates and Rays – Minimum Size Byelaw Grey Mullet – Minimum Size Byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any fisher must not remove from the sea a fish which does not meet the minimum conservation reference size specified (more than 14 species)
Dredge and Trawl Fishing	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Bottom Towed Fishing Gear byelaw 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All vessels are prohibited from towing fishing gear which interacts with the seabed, such as dredges and trawls, in the specified areas.
	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Minimum Fish Sizes Byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any fisher must not remove from the sea a fish which does not meet the minimum conservation reference size specified (more than 14 species)

		Skates and Rays – Minimum Size Byelaw Grey Mullet – Minimum Size Byelaw	
	Chesil and the Fleet MPAs	Vessels Used in Fishing 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No person shall use any vessel which exceeds 12 metres in overall length for fishing for or taking sea fish. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A number of exceptions apply to this byelaw

4 Chesil and the Fleet Fisheries Management Plan

The table below summarises the fisheries management actions of the Chesil and the Fleet MPA. These actions align with the site's Management Scheme⁹.

Area of concern within MPAs	Management Measure	Lead partner(s) (supporting partner)	Role of Partners	Community role
Removal of undersize fish and shellfish by commercial and recreational fishers	Council Regulation (EC) No. 850/98, Article 17, Annex XII Minimum Sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern IFCA MMO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance Ongoing - Actively educate and engage with community, attend relevant outreach events (e.g. Dorset Seafood Festival), maintain and build on existing communication networks, promote fisheries management across the MPAs via social media platforms 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p>
	Southern IFCA Minimum Fish Size Byelaws: Minimum Fish Sizes Byelaw Skates and Rays – Minimum Size Byelaw Grey Mullet – Minimum Size Byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern IFCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance Ongoing - Actively educate and engage with community, attend relevant outreach events (e.g. Dorset Seafood Festival), maintain and build on existing communication networks, promote fisheries management across the MPAs via social media platforms By 2020 - Review existing evidence for fish/shellfish species size of sexual maturity – where data is absent, seek to gather new data with a range of partners via stock assessments and surveys where appropriate. By 2022 - Where necessary, review and develop a minimum size byelaw, taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p> <p>Feed into public consultation and engagement process</p>
	Voluntary code of conduct: Wrasse Fishery Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern IFCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p>

⁹ Chesil and the Fleet Single Scheme of Management: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2967759>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing - Actively educate and engage with community, attend relevant outreach events (e.g. Dorset Seafood Festival), maintain and build on existing communication networks, promote fisheries management across the MPAs via social media platforms • Ongoing - Educate and engage with community taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations 	Feed into public consultation and engagement process
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Area of concern within MPAs	Management Measure	Lead partner(s) (supporting partner)	Role of Partners	Community role
Physical damage to seagrass habitats through use of bottom towed fishing gear	Bottom Towed Fishing Gear byelaw 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern IFCA • Natural England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs • Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance • Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance • Monitor the condition and extent of reefs every six years in line with the Statutory requirements • Periodically review the Byelaw every five years and consider any changes necessary. • Ongoing - Educate and engage with community taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance:</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p> <p>Feed into public consultation and engagement process</p> <p>Submit species/habitat condition evidence to Natural England</p>
	Inshore Vessel Monitoring System Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Management Organisation • Southern and Devon and Severn IFCAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing post the commencement of the project - Upon work together to ensure compliance with the iVMS installations and maintenance program. • Ongoing post the commencement of the project - Carry out regular monitoring of iVMS data to retrieve information relating to fishing effort and location • Ongoing post the commencement of the project - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs • Ongoing post the commencement of the project - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance • Ongoing post the commencement of the project - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance:</p> <p>Marine Management Organisation: 0300 123 1032</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing - Actively educate and engage with community, attend relevant outreach events (e.g. Dorset Seafood Festival), maintain and build on existing communication networks, promote fisheries management across the MPAs via social media platforms 	
	<p>Council Directive 92/43/EEC of May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora 'Habitats Directive'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural England • Defra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the SAC site condition and effectiveness of management every six years • Ongoing - Consider the effectiveness of fisheries management measures in the context of any new findings and evidence gathering 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern IFCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where necessary (if site integrity has lessened as a result of fishing practices following outcomes of NE site condition review) undertake a site assessment, and where required introduce effective measures to ensure integrity of SAC following site condition assessment 	<p>Feed into public consultation and engagement process</p>

Area of concern within MPAs	Management Measure	Lead partner(s) (<i>supporting partner</i>)	Role of Partners	Community role
Reduce mortality of discarded fish	Southern IFCA Fish Handling Code of Conduct (<i>pending</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern IFCA • <i>Recreational Sea Angling Group (RSAG)</i> • DWT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2020 – to review existing best practice and fisheries data to develop a code of practice for effective fish handling in order to reduce the mortality of discarded fish • Engage local users through existing networks, including the RSAG, to facilitate development and compliance with the code • Educate and engage with community taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations 	Feed into public consultation and engagement process
Reduce mortality of bass from fishing	Bass Nursery Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern IFCA • Marine Management Organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs • Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance • Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance • Periodically review the Byelaw every five years and consider any changes necessary. • Ongoing - Educate and engage with community taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations • Ongoing Defra review of the effectiveness of Bass Nursery Area legislation 	Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance: Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373

Area of concern within MPAs	Management Measure	Lead partner(s) (supporting partner)	Role of Partners	Community role
Physical damage to seagrass beds through intertidal hand-gathering	Prohibition of Gathering (Sea Fisheries Resources) in Seagrass Beds' byelaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern IFCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Undertake regular compliance patrols in MPAs Ongoing - Maintain effective intelligence handling systems and respond through a risk-based enforcement approach to information relating to non-compliance Ongoing - Investigate any detected instances of non-compliance and ensure that an effective deterrent is in place to prevent further instances of non-compliance Periodically review the Byelaw every five years and consider any changes necessary. Ongoing - Educate and engage with community taking into account evidence submitted via public consultations 	<p>Feed into intelligence model through notification of non-compliance:</p> <p>Southern IFCA Number: 01202 721373</p>
Disturbance to ground nesting birds through intertidal hand-gathering	Closure to Fleet-side access of Chesil Beach between 1st May and 31st August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the single scheme of management landowners will maintain existing access control arrangements and monitor their effectiveness. 	<p>Abide by the beach closure in order to protect nesting bird species.</p> <p>Report any breaches of the closure to the Chesil Centre.</p>

Area of concern within MPAs	Management Measure	Lead partner(s) (supporting partner)	Role of Partners	Community role
Disturbance of juvenile, breeding and feeding fish populations through net fishing	Southern IFCA Inshore Netting Review (pending)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern IFCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually - Monitor fish populations in the Fleet through annual spring and autumn seine net surveys at various locations. Ongoing - Maintain a comprehensive understanding of net fishing activities in the Fleet through regular contact with all users. By 2020 undertake a review of net management in the Fleet and surrounding waters to consider the impact on juvenile, breeding and feeding fish populations in the Fleet. By 2020, introduce any necessary management to reduce the potential for disturbance of juvenile, breeding and feeding fish populations in the Fleet through netting. 	<p>Feed into public consultation and engagement process</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing after byelaw - Effectively communicate any legislative changes to users.• Ongoing after byelaw - Monitor compliance with new regulations through existing compliance and enforcement systems.• Ongoing after byelaw - Monitor the effectiveness of any new regulations through the collation and analysis of relevant data. Where data is absent, seek to gather new data with a range of partners.	
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