

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

POOLE HARBOUR SHELLFISH HAND GATHERING

We would like to hear your views on a proposed Poole Harbour Shellfish Hand Gathering byelaw. In your response we would particularly like to know:

- **How the proposed byelaw will affect you?**
- **Whether you feel that the proposed byelaw offers suitable protection for Poole Harbour's environmentally designated features?**
- **How often and where you hand gather shellfish in Poole Harbour?**
- **Whether you feel that the management of shellfish hand gathering in Poole Harbour could be improved?**

As a result of the anticipated expiry of the Poole Fishery Order on 30th June 2015, Southern IFCA is proposing to introduce a new byelaw to manage the hand gathering of shellfish within Poole Harbour. The new byelaw, which is designed to introduce improved spatial and temporal protection for sensitive overwintering and nesting bird populations, will compliment proposed shellfish management measures in Poole Harbour whilst ensuring that important environmental features are protected.

Much of Poole Harbour is environmentally designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because it supports wildlife and/or habitats that are of European or National importance. This site contains some of England's most vulnerable marine wildlife and habitats including for example seagrass beds, over-wintering and nesting bird populations. When important social and economic activities such as fishing, recreation and other industries take place within environmentally designated sites it is important that we ensure that these activities occur in a manner that is consistent with the protection of the site.

Under the proposed byelaw the activity of hand gathering shellfish between the period of 1st November to 31st March will be prohibited within areas of Keyworth, Arne, Middlebere Lake, Wych Lake, Ower Bay, Newton Bay, Brands Bay, Blue Lagoon, Holes Bay and Lytchett Bay. This byelaw will replace the existing 'Prohibition on Using or Carrying a Shellfish Dredge, Scoop or Handrake in Certain Areas of Poole Harbour' byelaw, therefore increasing shellfish hand gathering access between April and October each year in previously closed areas. These closures are consistent with those introduced for the shellfish dredge fishery and bait digging, as outlined by the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan.

This public consultation will run for 10 days until 17.00 on Monday 1st December 2014. Your feedback is of great value to Southern IFCA and will be used in the development of this byelaw. Please leave feedback via the contact us form on the website or in writing to the office address below.