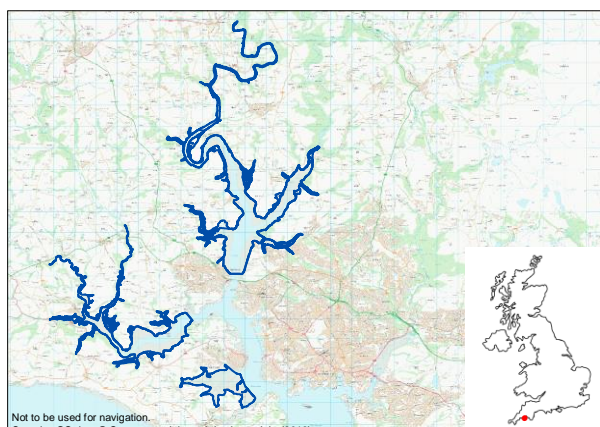
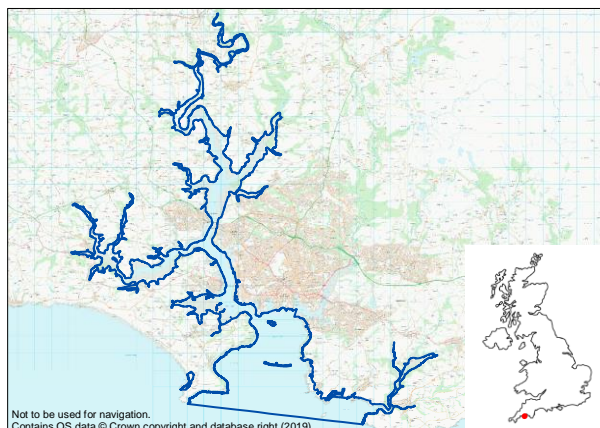


## Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (including Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA)

### Description:

Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located on the south coast of England and straddles the border between Devon and Cornwall. The 64 km<sup>2</sup> site encompassing Plymouth Sound and its associated tributaries comprise a complex site of marine inlets. The high diversity of reef and sedimentary habitats, and salinity conditions, give rise to diverse communities representative of ria systems and some unusual features. These features include abundant southern Mediterranean-Atlantic species rarely found in Britain. It is also the only known spawning site for the allis shad (*Alosa alosa*).

The Tamar Estuaries Complex Special Protection Area (SPA) comprises the estuaries of the rivers Tamar, Lynher and Tavy. The Tamar river and its tributaries provide the main input of fresh water into the estuary complex, and form a ria (drowned river valley) with Plymouth lying on the eastern shore.



### Qualifying Features:

The Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC hosts the following habitats: sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; estuaries; large shallow inlets and bays; reefs; and Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*). The site also hosts mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. The site further supports shore dock (*Rumex rupestris*) and allis shad (*Alosa alosa*).

The Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA supports overwintering and on passage little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) and the overwintering avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*).

## Management:

- There is a voluntary code of conduct in place for disturbance and removal of species within the [Wembury Marine Conservation Area](#). This has been specifically designed to protect the 'reef' features of this part of the SAC.
- Promotion of Eco-moorings within the SAC in order to protect 'eelgrass' and 'sandbanks'
- [Code of Conduct](#) for seaweed harvesting.
- Community [Seagrass Initiative](#).
- [The Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum](#) (TECF) has delivered a single management plan for the site. This consists of 17 partners including the Marine Management Organisation and is chaired by the Queens Harbour Master. The eleven funding partners pay Plymouth County Council to co-ordinate and deliver the TECF service.
- There is a [water-users leaflet](#) which sets out who can/should do what and where.

## Stakeholder Concerns:

The key activities raised by the online stakeholders which are likely to cause an impact on the designated features of this SAC included: motor boating; jetskis; bait collection and beach recreation. Motor boating is the loudest and fastest and therefore has the greatest potential for wildlife disturbance in addition to producing pollution into the water. Anchoring in sensitive seagrass beds, is an issue for all types of boat recreation. Bait collection can have an impact on the bait species and on the species which rely on them for food. It can also disturb protected habitats.

Beach recreation has a huge impact on this SAC during the summer months from trampling, rockpooling, crabbing, increases in littering, and sewage effluent. There is evidence of species decline at Wembury Beach over the years, possibly due to trampling. There is visible damage noted on Church Reef during summer months. Bird numbers on the Great Mewstone have declined in recent years, possibly due to increased disturbance by paddle sport users and/or increased numbers of motorboats passing.

Issues of concern raised by stakeholders at the workshop included:

- All recreational activities are cumulatively impacting the Marine Protected Area, but some have a higher potential to impact.
- Bait collection (including wild food foraging) has potential to have a very high impact.
- There is an increase in paddle sport users who have the potential to impact birds in the SPA.
- Recreational boating has an impact, but mainly at the point of mooring and anchoring.
- SCUBA diving has impacts at hot-spots, which are usually well known.
- Coasteering has the potential for high impacts but given it is a relatively new activity, long term impacts are unknown.
- Some activities are difficult to manage and therefore must be carried out through raising awareness.

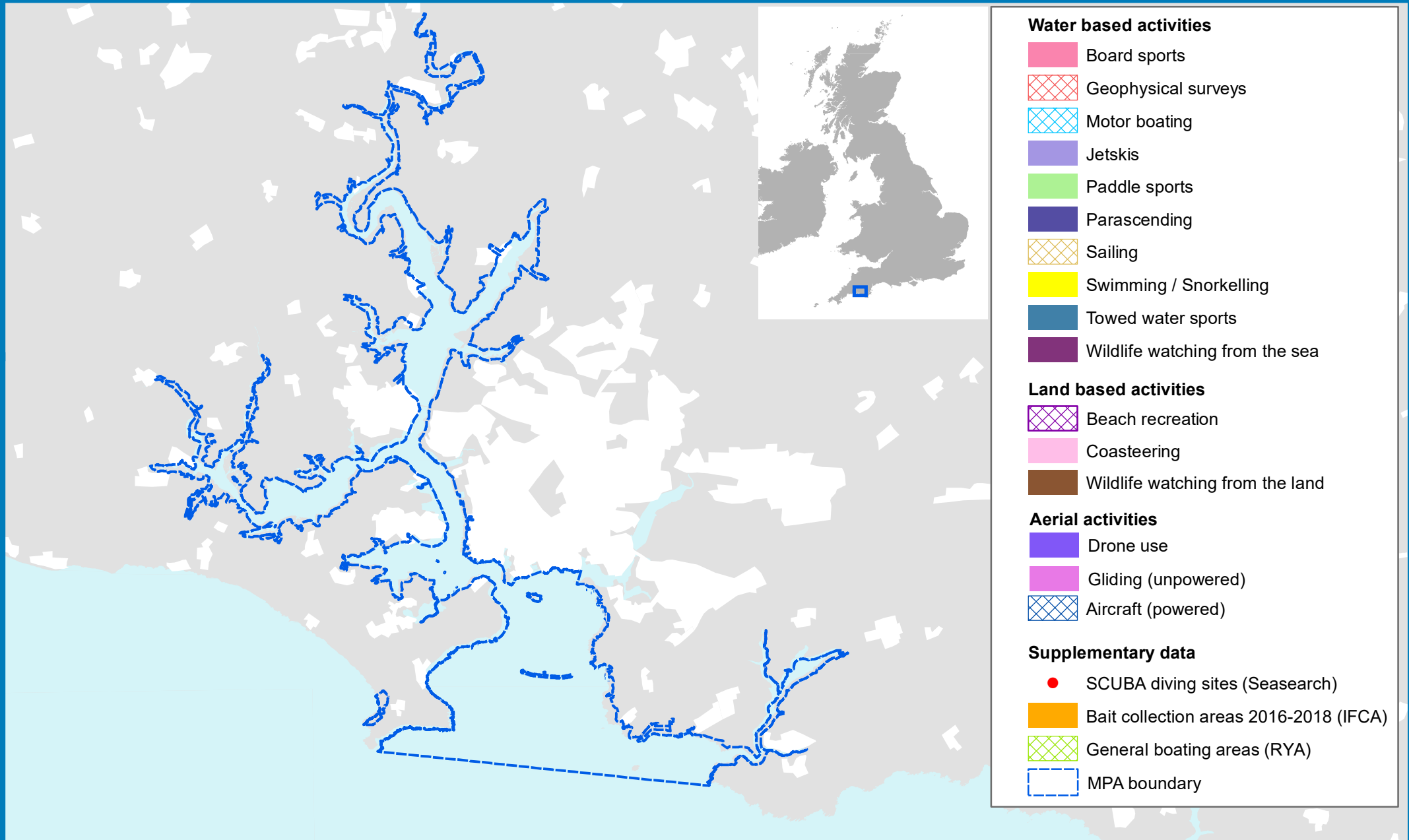
MPA: Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (including Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA)				No. Stakeholders: 2 online & 2 workshop			
Activity	Frequency	Duration	Participation	Intensity	Confidence	MPA Extent	Trend
Board sports	4	2	4	32	H	1	↑
Geophysical surveys	4	2	1	8	H	2	↑
Motor boating	4	3	5	60	H	2	↑
Jetskis	3	2	3	18	M	2	↑
Paddle sports	4	2	4	32	M	2	↑
Parascending	1	2	1	2	M	1	→
Sailing (non-motorised)	4	3	5	60	H	2	↑
SCUBA diving	4	3	6	72	H	1	↑
Swimming / Snorkelling	4	1	3	12	H	1	↑
Towed water sports	3	2	3	18	M	1	↑
Wildlife watching from the sea	4	2	1	8	M	1	↑
Bait collection	4	1	6	24	M	1	↑
Beach recreation	4	2	6	48	H	1	↑
Coasteering	3	1	3	9	H	1	↓
Land boarding	0	0	0	0	H	0	?
Motorsports (quad bikes, motorbikes)	0	0	0	0	H	0	?
Vehicle access (cars on foreshore)	0	0	0	0	M	0	→
Wildlife watching from the land	4	2	5	40	H	2	↑
Drone use	4	1	3	12	M	1	↑
Gliding (unpowered)	1	1	1	1	M	1	→
Aircraft (powered)	1	1	1	1	M	1	?

KEY

FREQUENCY	DURATION	PARTICIPATION	INTENSITY	CONFIDENCE	EXTENT	TREND
4 Regular/daily	4 >8 hours	6 >100	45-96 High	H High	2 Whole MPA (solid)	↑ Increase
3 Regular/weekends	3 4-8 hours	5 51-100	24-40 Med-high	M Medium	1 Part of MPA (shaded)	→ Stay the same
2 Seasonally	2 2-4 hours	4 21-50	9-20 Low-med	L Low	0 Does not occur	↓ Decrease
1 Sporadically	1 <2 hours	3 11-20	1-8 Low	? Data missing	? Data missing	? Data missing
0 Does not occur	0 Does not occur	2 6-10	0 Does not occur			
? Data missing	? Data missing	1 1-5	? Data missing			
		0 Does not occur				
		? Data missing				





# Non-licensable activities which occur in and around the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (including Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA)



## Marine Protected Area Designated Features - Marine SAC and Subfeatures and SPA Supporting Habitats






### SAC Complex features (Polygons)

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Estuaries (H1130)
-  Large shallow inlets and bays (H1160)







### Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (H1140) polygons

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1)
-  Intertida sand and muddy sand (A2.2)
-  Intertidal mud (A2.3)
-  Intertidal mixed sediments (A2.4)
-  Intertidal seagrass beds (A2.61)








### Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time (H1110) polygons

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1)
-  Subtidal sand (A5.2)
-  Subtidal mud (A5.3)
-  Subtidal mixed sediment (A5.4)
-  Maerl beds (A5.51)
-  Subtidal seagrass beds (A5.53)








### Reefs (H1170) points

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Intertidal rock (A1)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria alveolata*) (A2.71)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF\_SH\_5)
-  Infralittoral rock (A3)
-  Circalittoral rock (A4)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria spp.*) (A5.61)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF\_SH\_6)

### Reefs (H1170) polygons

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Intertidal rock (A1)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria alveolata*) (A2.71)
-  Intertidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF\_SH\_5)
-  Infralittoral rock (A3)
-  Circalittoral rock (A4)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: (*Sabellaria spp.*) (A5.61)
-  Subtidal biogenic reefs: mussel beds (SF\_SH\_6)

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Sea Caves (H8330)

#### SAC\_SFCODE

-  Saltmarsh (A2.5)