

# Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF): Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee (PPMLC)

Natural England Update – Feb 2024

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## Casework

We continue to be consultees to MMO licence applications and Council Planning applications, providing environmental advice on developments.

## Condition Assessment and Conservation Advice

Condition assessments can be accessed by using the [search tool on Designated Sites View](#). Conservation Advice packages can be accessed via the [Marine Protected Areas: conservation advice packages collection](#) on GOV.UK, alongside previously published advice.

Packages are split among sea regions, you can also navigate directly to the packages by using the [search tool on Designated Sites View](#) or via the [Index Map](#).

- Tamar Estuary Sites MCZ Condition Assessment will be published in March 2024 and the Conservation Advice [Marine site detail \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#) updated in March 2024;
- The [Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC Condition Assessment](#) and subsequent [Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Conservation Advice Package](#) were last updated in September 2021;
- [Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC Condition Assessment](#) was published in November 2022 and the [Conservation Advice](#) updated in May 2023;
- [Skerries Banks and Surrounds MCZ Condition Assessment](#) was published March 2023 and the [Conservation Advice](#) updated October 2023.

## Fisheries

Natural England staff continue to work closely with CIFCA and D&SIFCA as they continue their assessments of fishing in MPAs, focussing on MCZ sites.

### Pacific Oysters

The “Partnership led strategy to monitor and manage the spread of Pacific oyster populations in south Devon and Cornwall” report is available [here](#).

Natural England is generally supportive of such efforts (e.g. by local groups) although any advice on specific Pacific oyster control activities would be informed by the specifics of the proposed location for control. Therefore, this must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## Connecting People with Nature

Natural England funded a children's book about Kelp, which will be officially launched at the Story Festival on the Isle of Wight on February 16th. Copies will be available in Plymouth soon after this.

Natural England is also working with Soapbox children's theatre to pilot a primary school workshop, based around the Allis Shad story book, in 5 schools in Plymouth this month. After evaluation we will seek funding for running it in more Plymouth schools.

Natural England has funded the Connecting Shores project run by SOMATIC (aka Somin Griffin-Dave). This project is an 8-episode audio-documentary series exploring young (18-30) people of colour's experiences of the coast, sea and marine environments. It aims to document and amplify voices which are often overlooked in the natural marine narratives. The series will be released in March 2024 pending the auditorial approval.

## Marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment

The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) is an England-wide programme involving several Defra group organisations. Its purpose is to assess and describe the extent and condition of England's biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural capital assets. A marine element of the programme (mNCEA) covers the marine environment.

### Allis Shad

In collaboration with the EA, the final report on the shad genetic analysis has been completed, which includes the analysis of scales from an mNCEA survey. These were taken from probable shad caught in the Tamar Estuary. The report contains all the data we have been able to generate using the samples provided and samples collected as part of SAMARCH, together with a phylogeny allowing us to see the relative evolutionary/taxonomic positioning of the new samples against a broad range of previously analysed samples from various other studies. Exeter University are currently working towards publishing the report.

## Projects

### LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES Project

Muriel Plaster is the new ReMEDIES site lead for Plymouth. She will be working with PCC and OCT to support the project actions within the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC. The LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES project is now in its last year. An end-of-project conference will be held in October 2024 to share the outcomes.

Further information about the project is available [Home - Save Our Seabed](#)

### Plymouth Marinas

In September 2023, new seagrass information boards funded by the LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES Project, were installed at six marinas across Plymouth, including Queen Anne's Battery Marina, Mayflower Marina, King Point Marina, Sutton Harbour Marina, Yacht Haven Quay Marina, and Yacht Haven Plymouth Marina.

The boards, produced by the RYA's environment programme, [The Green Blue](#), highlights where sensitive habitat areas are located on the seabed, helping recreational water users to identify areas to avoid anchoring in. They also give practical tips to help boat users safely secure their boats whilst helping to minimise damage to seabed habitats below.

### Cawsand Bay

The installation of 16 advanced mooring systems (AMS) within Cawsand Bay is now completed and we are now in the monitoring and evaluation phase. Plymouth Uni are commissioned to carry out the last AMS dive survey in summer 2024 to see how effective the replacement mooring systems are.

### Jennycliff Bay

The OCT's dive Team have trialled all 3 restoration methods (Hessian seed bags, Seagrass Pillows and the Seed injection method) at Jennycliff Bay throughout the project length. More seagrass pillow deployment as well as seagrass seed injection will be carried out in spring/summer of 2024. The OCT will continue to carry out dives to monitor the growth of previous planting trials. The outcomes of the restoration trial, as well as a Best Practice Guide, will be shared at the end-of-project conference.

## Other

### Student Projects

Our Marine Team is currently supervising one MSc student projects from Plymouth Uni:

- Monitoring the effect of water quality on subtidal seagrass beds in the Plymouth Sound

Any in year proposals for student projects will be added to a list of project ideas, reviewed, and actioned once a year. Please contact Muriel Plaster for more information.

### Staffing

**Senior Adviser/s:** Kate Sugar, Angela Gall, and Alan Kavanagh

**Lead Advisers:** Gareth Townsend, Jules Webber, Esther Hughes, Muriel Plaster, Meg Hayward Smith

**Advisers:** Liz Bailey, Eleanor Goodall and Jasmine Rix

Jade Ryding, Jay Boyle, Sophie Hare, and Beth Mathias-Davies have left the Marine Area Team.

The Area Team has designated site leads for some areas:

<b>NE Lead/ Representative</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>IFCA</b>
Muriel Plaster	Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC	-
-	South Devon Estuaries AONB	
-	Torbay MCZ & Exe Estuary SPA	D&SIFCA
Esther Hughes	Fal and Helford SAC	CIFCA
-	Lundy SAC and MCZ	-
Jules Webber	Isles of Scilly Complex SAC	Isles of Scilly IFCA

**Muriel Plaster** (she/her)

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