Information for boaters in Plymouth Sound

#thinkocean
Information for boaters in Plymouth Sound

Hello! If you’re reading this then you probably own a boat, or you want to own a boat...

Either way, this handy guide is a one stop shop with information about exploring Plymouth Sound in a boat. So whether you’re visiting the shores of Britain’s Ocean City for Sail GP, or you live here, but want to explore the city from a different perspective, hopefully this guide will have all the information you need.

Contents

Plymouth Sound Conservation Designations & Chart
Explore the sounds importantant conservation status

Ocean life beneath the keel
Some of the amazing animals you may find in our waters

Pro Ocean Plymouth Projects
Groundbreaking work happenings here in the Sound

Ocean Friendly Boating Tips
Handy advice to making your time on the sea Ocean friendly

Protecting the seabed and safe anchoring
Mooring in Plymouth Sound

Things to do dry-side
Looking to pop onto shore, explore some unique options

History of Plymouth Sound over the past 400 years
Take a look at some of the highlights of history during the last 400 years
Plymouth Sound is a designated Marine Protected Area – or ‘MPA’ – because it hosts some of Europe’s most threatened marine species and habitats. The MPA is made up of several overlapping designations and component sites, recognising its importance to marine conservation both in the UK and internationally.

National Marine Park - a concept used to better protect coastal waters while bringing shared prosperity, broader public engagement, and regeneration of deprived coastal communities.

Special Area of Conservation (6402 hectares) - This designation was in part due to the Annex 1 seagrass habitats found within the sound, along with the anadromous Allis Shad (Alosa alosa), inhabiting Tamar estuary.

Special Protection Area (1955 hectares)

Marine Conservation Zone (1530 hectares)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (2623 hectares)

Rationale behind these designation include the nationally scarce pink sea-fan Eunicella verrucosa, the carpet coral Hoplantia durotrix and the stalked jellyfish Stauromedusae sp., along with a number of unique habitats.

These designations help us conserve this area for the enjoyment of future generations.
Plymouth Sound is rich in biodiversity, from tiny plankton to Ocean giants such as basking shark and Ocean Sunfish. Some of the most iconic visitors are shown below...

**Marine Mammals**

Cetaceans are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and as such it is an offence to deliberately injure or kill any species. Furthermore, active pursuit, corralling, or disturbance in any way will register as an offence.

Bottlenose Dolphins and Harbour Porpoises are Annex II species contributing to the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC designation, although within this site they are graded D (non-significant presents). The range of the other SoC encompasses Plymouth Sound, however their presence is too scarce to warrant recognition within SAC designation. It can be considered that while their appearance is plausible, it is unlikely.
Ocean life beneath the keel

**Large fish species**

**Basking Shark**  
*Cetorhinus maximus*

**Atlantic Bluefin Tuna**  
*Thunnus thynnus*

**Sunfish**  
*Mola mola*

**Marine Reptiles**

**Leatherback Turtle**  
*Dermochelys coriacea*
Pro Ocean Plymouth Projects

Preventing Plastic Pollution

Working in partnership with 18 organisations from across France and England, Preventing Plastic Pollution seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the marine environment. By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives.

Why is plastic a problem to the Ocean?

From lost fishing nets down to microscopic particles from cosmetics, every piece of plastic ever produced is still on this planet. An astonishing 300 million tonnes of plastic items are produced worldwide every year, it never biodegrades, and it is estimated that as much as 4% of this washes into or is dumped at sea every year. 50% of litter found on beaches globally consists of single-use items or fragments of them. That is rapidly increasing year on year.

Some plastics attract a layer of algae, making them smell like tasty morsels of food and when Ocean animals and seabirds consume plastic items, they can starve.

Once in the Ocean, plastic may get broken down by sunlight and wave action into millimetre-sized microplastic debris, but this can be just as much, or more, of a hazard to Ocean mammals, seabirds, fish and other creatures as they can mistake it for food. Microplastics also act like sponges, absorbing toxic chemicals and pesticides.
Seagrass restoration (ReMEDIES)

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES is a four-year marine conservation partnership project to protect and restore the seabed at five Special Areas of Conservation in Southern England.

It is funded by the EU LIFE programme and led by Natural England in partnership with The Royal Yachting Association, Marine Conservation Society, Ocean Conservation Trust and Plymouth City Council/Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum.

ReMEDIES stands for Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed. We are focusing on how sensitive seabed habitats, such as seagrass, are impacted by recreational activities and what we can all do to protect them. Together, our partnership aims to:

- Promote awareness of seabed habitats and their importance
- Work together to reduce impacts on the seabed from recreational activities
- Restore and protect sensitive habitats for the benefit of nature and people

Healthy seagrass meadows are vital to keeping our seas clean, healthy, attractive places to explore by boat. Seagrass...

...is an important nursery ground for juvenile fish support local commercial fisheries

...provides habitat for protected creatures such as seahorses and stalked jellyfish

...captures and stores significant amounts of carbon

...cleans the surrounding seawater to helps improve bathing water quality

...helps stabilise the seabed and reduce coastal erosion, helping protect coastal infrastructure
Pro Ocean Plymouth Projects

Seagrass restoration (ReMEDIES)

Seabed restoration

Seagrass is now present in only half of the areas of the UK where it was once recorded, with factors including wasting disease, pollution and physical disturbance contributing to its decline. ReMEDIES aims to restore a total of eight hectares of seagrass meadows – four hectares in Plymouth Sound and four hectares in the Solent. This is England’s largest seagrass planting effort and we hope other conservation organisations across Europe can learn from and replicate our work.

In April 2021, the Ocean Conservation Trust began this planting work by deploying 16,000 seagrass seed bags and 2,200 seedling bags across an area of almost one hectare in a carefully selected area in the southern part of Jennycliff Bay, Plymouth Sound. The seeds are expected to germinate within a month of planting, forming a healthy meadow over the next 12 to 18 months.
Plymouth climate emergency action plan

Plymouth is now firmly on track to become carbon neutral by 2030 - a generation ahead of the Government’s 2050 target. A series of policy changes and action plans to tackle the climate emergency have received cross-party support from councillors.

They included adding the 2030 net zero carbon target to the Plymouth Plan which sets out the long-term strategy for the city up to 2034.

Net zero is the point where carbon output is cancelled by the removal of the same amount from the environment, for example by using technology to capture it, or through natural processes such as trees absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through their leaves.

The council approved a Climate Emergency Action 2021 with 89 measures to cut carbon across the city.

Schemes include:

> A feasibility study into a solar farm to power 70 per cent of the city’s households,

> Improving the energy efficiency of more than 300 homes,

> Starting £96million of sustainable transport initiatives with new walking and cycling routes across the city.

> Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021 - setting out 24 actions to reduce the emissions from city council activity which is responsible for 1% of emissions in the city. The measures include more solar panels, 38 more electric vehicles, and a sustainable travel policy for councillors and staff including the use of electric-powered bicycles.
Ocean friendly boating tips

Below are some handy tips that won’t complicate life aboard but will ensure that you are minimising your impact wherever possible:

Never allow litter to go overboard. Do not leave any plastic utensils or bags loose on board. They can easily blow away. If it’s possible, avoid plastic on the boat altogether.

Do not throw cigarette butts into the sea.


Ideally, of course, it best to not produce waste at all. Choose packaging that doesn’t use disposable plastic, use cloth bags and buy in markets locally.

Try to buy bigger containers rather than small plastic (PET) bottles. They will fit comfortably in the locker and each crew member can fill their own bottle with fresh water.

If you have children or love mixed drinks, bring a stainless-steel straw instead of a plastic one.

Do not discard of fishing line or any rope fragments into the Ocean.

Actively engage in beach and ocean cleaning. Whether within a wider group or just on your own. (You can take a look at our beach clean programme via our website).

Ensure oil and fuel do not entre the water. Install a bilge filter and keep a spill kit on-board to clean up any accidental spills.

Use onshore toilets where possible.

Keep your distance for wildlife, The rule of thumb is to stay at least 100m away from marine wildlife in the water and 50m away from marine wildlife on cliffs and rocks, if you can.

Choose anchoring sites carefully and avoid areas of seagrass.

Use low phosphate, and environmentally friendly projects.

Safely dispose of waste from maintenance
Protecting the seabed and safe anchoring

A Voluntary No-Anchor Zone is in place around the newly planted seagrass meadow in Jennycliff Bay, intended to help protect it from anchoring disturbance from recreational boats.

The Queen’s Harbour Master, Plymouth has issued a notice to mariners which includes location details and chart. Marker buoys will be installed around the area to provide sailors with a visual indication of the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone when out on the water.


Voluntary No-Anchor Zones are intended to help boaters make an informed choice about where to anchor. Safety is paramount and the zone is not intended to limit safe anchorage when needed. However, during smooth sailing, boaters are asked to observe the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone and explore alternative safe anchorages nearby.

Please visit our website www.saveourseabed.co.uk where you can find up-to-date information about our partnership and our work.

#thinkocean
Plymouth is a vibrant waterfront city packed full of attractions, activities, shopping, entertainment and sightseeing. Come rain or shine you’ll find something for everyone among the city streets, surrounding countryside and marine environment beyond.

There are well-known landmarks, historical sites and natural assets to explore across Plymouth’s many unique areas and districts.

Wander the Barbican’s quaint cobbled quayside following in the Mayflower Pilgrims’ footsteps, visit the National Marine Aquarium, explore the water with a Snorkel Safari.

Sample Plymouth’s finest export at the Plymouth Gin Distillery or take a boat trip around the Sound from the Mayflower Steps or head over to Drakes island. You can climb the iconic Smeaton’s Tower lighthouse and take in a full view of Plymouth Sound National Marine Park.

Plymouth is also located at the mouth of the River Tamar, set in the UK’s youngest area of outstanding natural beauty. Unspoilt and still relatively unknown, the Tamar Valley retains it’s unique character and beauty. Take the Tamar Valley Train or a boat trip, it’s well worth exploring the surrounding area.
History of Plymouth Sound over the past 400 years

1620 – Mayflower departs for New England – check out the Mayflower steps on the Barbican.

1691 – Construction of Royal Dockyard (Devonport) – which is presently the largest Naval base in Western Europe, run by the Royal Navy.

1759 – Smeaton’s Tower built on the Hoe, reconstructed brick by brick from its original location on the Eddystone Reef.

1812 - Plymouth Breakwater was built - a 1,560-metre stone breakwater protecting Plymouth Sound and the anchorages near Plymouth, Devon, England. It is 13 metres wide at the top and the base is 65 metres. It lies in about 10 metres of water.


1939 – Hodgkins and Huxley begin work on Squid Axons at MBA – later to win Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1963.

1988 – Plymouth Marine Laboratory founded.

1996 – Plymouth Sound and Estuaries European Marine Site designated.


2020 – The Box opens.

2021 – Plymouth Hosts SailGP

#thinkocean
The Ocean Conservation Trust restores and protects the Ocean

For more information about our work head to

www.oceanconservationtrust.org

#thinkocean