

[The MMO introduces the Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy](#)

News story

The MMO is introducing the Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy to protect sensitive seagrass and seahorses.



The MMO is introducing the [Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone \(MCZ\) Habitat Protection Strategy](#). This strategy will protect the designated features of the MCZ and ensure that marine activities can continue in a sustainable way.

The strategy includes a voluntary no anchor zone which will be introduced to protect the seagrass habitat and the species that it supports. This will be introduced in two stages over 2021 and 2022:

- 17 December 2021 – An interim voluntary no anchor zone will commence protecting the core seagrass habitat off South Beach.
- 1 June 2022 – The interim voluntary no anchor zone will be extended to cover a larger area of seagrass off South Beach.

Alongside this, the strategy provides guidance about moorings. This will support users of the bay in applying for marine licences to install advanced mooring systems which are an environmentally friendly alternative to anchoring or using traditional moorings in seagrass.

It was decided that the no anchor zone would be voluntary based on feedback from stakeholders. This will give users of the bay the opportunity to take ownership and work collaboratively, with the MMO and each other, to ensure Studland Bay MCZ is protected.

The MMO will be liaising with local groups to raise awareness of the voluntary measure. The MMO will develop plans to monitor and review the voluntary measure, alongside partners. The MMO will inform key stakeholders about how they can participate in reviews.

The MMO would like to thank everyone who has participated in the development of this approach. The feedback received from the public has been extremely valuable.

What has informed the approach?

- May 2019 – Studland Bay MCZ was legally designated on 31 May 2019 by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.
- October 2020 – Following a draft assessment of the impacts of marine non-licensable activities on Studland Bay MCZ, the MMO decided to hold a call for evidence. This was an informal consultation which sought views from stakeholders on the draft assessment and management options.
- February 2021 – The MMO announced that based on the draft assessment and call for evidence, management measures were required for anchoring due to impacts on the site, but further engagement was needed with the public to develop them.
- March 2021 – Dorset Coast Forum [facilitated two engagement events](#) to gather feedback from stakeholders on a set of draft anchoring management options presented by the MMO.

Further information

For more information about the MMO's work in Studland Bay MCZ, please visit the [dedicated page](#) on GOV.UK.

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