

Voluntary No Anchor Zone Expansion in Studland Bay

Today (1 June 2022) the interim voluntary no anchor zone will be replaced with a new, extended, voluntary no anchor zone to cover a larger area of seagrass off South Beach. This is part of a [strategy](#) to protect the designated features of the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) to ensure that marine activities can continue in a sustainable way.

The new voluntary no anchor zone will help to protect the seagrass habitat and the species that it supports. An interim voluntary no anchor zone was [announced](#) for the seagrass habitat at South Beach on 17 December 2021. This second phase replaces the interim zone.

MMO has engaged with stakeholders and listened carefully to feedback in developing management measures for the MCZ. Based on stakeholder feedback, the no anchor zone is voluntary, and was first introduced as a smaller, interim zone to allow sea users to understand and adapt to the measure. This has now been replaced with the full zone. Close collaboration between MMO and stakeholders has allowed Studland Bay MCZ users to contribute to and shape the management of anchoring, to ensure that the Bay's important habitats are protected and people are able to continue to visit and enjoy this iconic location.

After careful consideration of recent stakeholder feedback, MMO is continuing with the planned introduction of phase 2 of the voluntary no anchor zone to ensure that seagrass beds throughout the site are protected.

MMO have been actively monitoring the voluntary no anchor zone since December and have recently spoken to users in the Studland Bay area through events and drop-in sessions to raise awareness of the voluntary measures. Over the course of the past few months, members of the MMO South Team have been aboard the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Fisheries Patrol Vessel Endeavour in Studland Bay to speak to boat users on the water.

On 1 and 3 June, our local MMO Poole team will be carrying out on water engagement in Studland Bay to raise awareness of the voluntary no anchor zone, listen to stakeholders, and provide information about the phase 2 extension of the zone.

The voluntary no anchor zone is part of the Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy which was developed to ensure that activities in the area continue in a sustainable way. Currently, anchoring activity within the seagrass beds in Studland Bay MCZ is causing significant pressure and is posing a threat to achieving the conservation objectives of the site. The seagrass beds and long-snouted seahorse that feature in the zone have recently been determined by Natural England to be in unfavourable conditions.

The strategy also provides guidance on moorings, including on advanced mooring systems in the bay, an environmentally friendly alternative to anchoring or using traditional moorings in seagrass. A marine license is required to install moorings in the Bay.

MMO understands that advanced mooring systems are an important alternative to anchoring, in order to support sustainable use of the area and effectiveness of the voluntary no anchor zone. MMO is supporting the work of [Studland Bay Marine Partnership](#) who are working on an eco-mooring project.

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