

Code of Conduct for Wildlife Watching in Langstone Harbour

Langstone Harbour is an amazing place to watch wildlife. By taking a little care visitors can observe the amazing animals that live here without causing them any disturbance or distress. For further information and advice about wildlife in the harbour please contact the Langstone Harbour Board Environment Officer on: 02392 463419. Any unusual wildlife sightings including cetaceans as well as rare bird species may also be reported to the Langstone Harbour Board on this number.

Seals

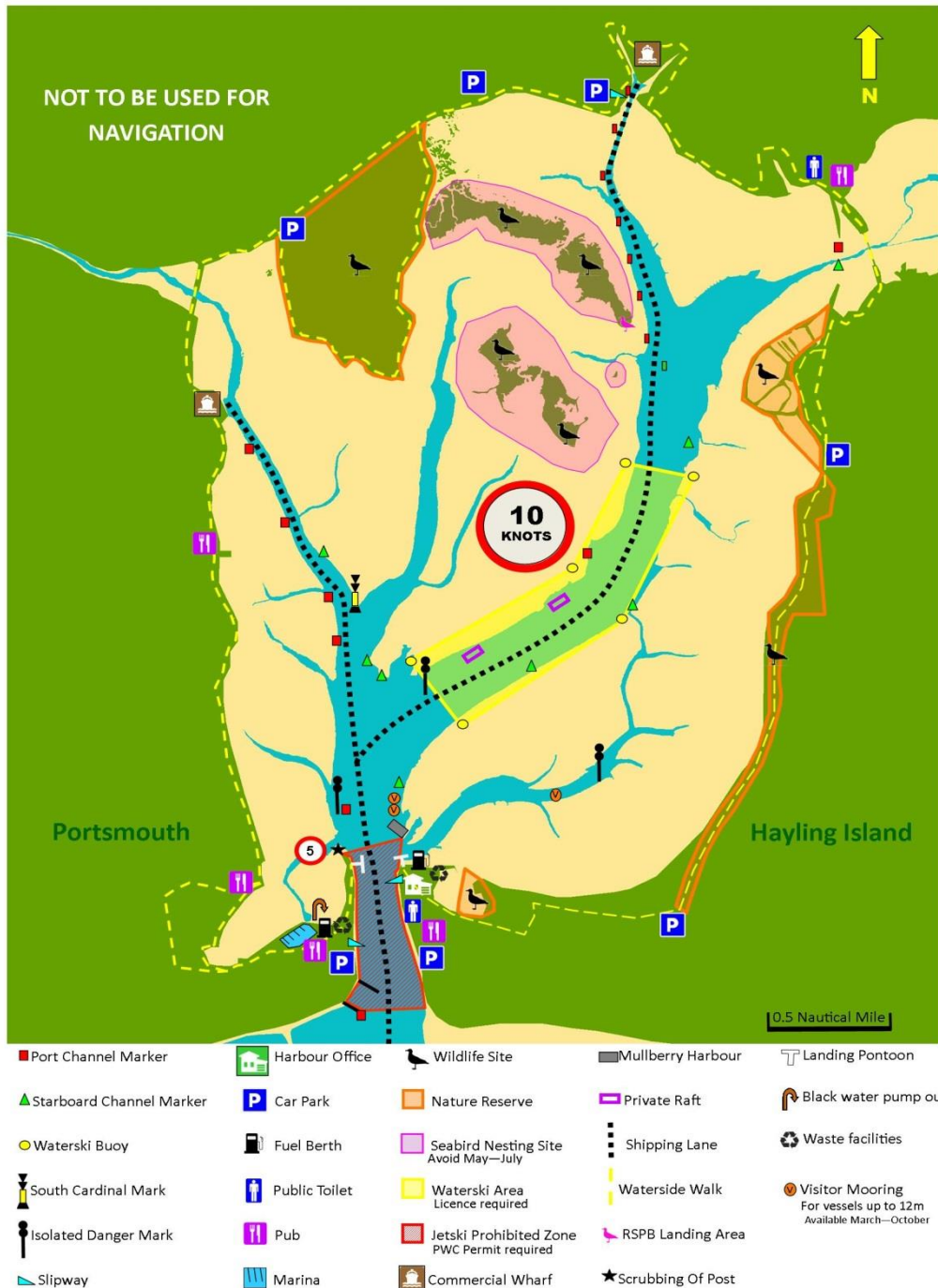
Seals are charismatic and curious marine mammals. They are used to seeing boats in the harbour, but can become distressed if water users get too close or behave inappropriately. The following advice will allow good views of the seals without causing disturbance:

- When possible keep a distance of 100m away from seals, both in the water and when hauled out. At low water in Broom Channel 100m distance may not be viable but please ensure proximity of your vessel does not cause disturbance.
- Limit observation time to 10 minutes
- Keep quiet – no engine revving or shouting
- If you notice signs of disturbance, such as fleeing towards the water or general agitation, move away immediately.
- If you see a seal in the water slow to a speed of less than 5 knots
- Keep the boat parallel (beam on) to seals in the water and at the haul out – never face them bow-on.
- Use binoculars and zoom lenses for really close up observations.
- If you see any injured marine mammal contact British Divers for Marine Life Rescue on: 01825 765546

Birds

Langstone Harbour provides a home to 40,000 wildfowl and waders during the winter months and the largest breeding colony of gulls and terns on the south coast during the summer. It is a very important place for birds. These birds make a magnificent sight, but are vulnerable to disturbance by water users. The following advice will allow good views of the birds without causing disturbance:

- Remain outside the boundary drawn around the harbour islands labelled “Seabird Nesting Site” on the map overleaf throughout the year to avoid disturbance to breeding AND wintering birds.
- Use binoculars and zoom lenses for close up views
- If you see any signs of disturbance, such as birds looking agitated or taking flight then move away immediately.
- Landing is permitted at the RSPB landing area on Long Island as illustrated on the map. During the breeding season (April – July) beware of unexpected nesting occurring in this area. Please do not explore the island on foot beyond the barrier fence.
- For further information on the islands and harbour bird life, as well as to report any anomalies or problems witnessed on the islands please contact RSPB Site Manager Wez Smith: 02392 474440



The information provided in this code of conduct is derived from the Solent Seals Code of Conduct, the Green Blue marine Wildlife Guide and the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code. Full copies of these codes are available from the harbour office.

Commercial skippers undertaking wildlife watching tours in Langstone Harbour should consider becoming accredited by the WiSE scheme for wildlife safe operations:

<http://www.wisescheme.org>

Further information about this scheme is available by contacting the Langstone Harbour Board Environment Officer.