

What wildlife?

Chichester Harbour, together with Langstone Harbour is internationally important for its birdlife, attracting over 55,000 individual waterbirds each year, including breeding terns.



An important colony of harbour seals also use the area to rest and to breed, and small numbers of grey seals visit too.

Chichester Harbour is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and both harbours are designated as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation for their important habitats and birdlife.



Important information

The Harbour is enjoyed by several thousands of water users each year, and a large part of that enjoyment stems from the beauty of the natural surroundings and its diversity of wildlife.

For more information about looking after the environment when out paddling, search for the following leaflet online *You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment*, published by the RSPB and British Canoeing. Further information can also be found from Bird Aware Solent who engage with visitors and communities along the coast to help people learn about the different species of bird and understand the impact of bird disturbance. Visit www.solent.birdaware.org to find out more.

Please purchase Harbour Dues before launching. Information on charges and how to pay can be found on our website - www.conservancy.co.uk.

Before going onto the water, we recommended reading *Essential Safety in Chichester Harbour*. This free leaflet is available from the Harbour Offices in Itchenor, Emsworth or Bosham and also on our website.



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Enjoying Paddlesports

and protecting the environment
in Chichester Harbour
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Advice for users of canoes, kayaks and paddle boards



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Why paddlers?

Kayaks, paddleboards, and canoes can be a low impact, healthy and fun way of exploring the Harbour. However, when these craft get too close to birdlife and seals, they can cause disturbance, which can have negative impacts on their survival.



Paddlers often spend a lot of time very close to the shoreline, meaning they often unwittingly disturb birds or seals.



How do birds use the harbours?

At low tide, wading birds, ducks and geese feed on the extensive mudflats and saltmarshes. At high tide, they need somewhere to safely rest, sleep, and digest their food, such as islands and upper parts of the saltmarsh. These areas are known as "roosts" and can involve thousands of birds.

In the spring and summer waders, terns and gulls nest on the ground on islands, spits and shingle beaches. Their nests are often extremely well camouflaged.

How can paddlers help the birds?

By avoiding flocks of birds gathering at high tide, or nesting areas, being aware of the importance of the bird nesting and roosting areas will help in their protection.

When people get too close to roosts, the birds take flight, wasting precious energy. When this happens regularly it reduces their survival chances because they are using energy to avoid people rather than for finding food or surviving in challenging weather conditions.

When people get too close to birds' nesting sites, the birds take flight exposing their eggs or young to the weather or to predators.

How do seals use the harbours?

At low tide they haul out on exposed mudflats for vital resting time, to moult and to give birth. After long foraging trips, the harbours are a place where they recuperate and socialise with other seals.

How can paddlers help the seals?

By staying at least 50m from hauled-out seals, if possible. Never approach a seal with a pup – mothers and young pups need space!

When disturbed they will often enter the water, move away, or even approach closer to a vessel and this is a sign of stress rather than curiosity. This can adversely affect their health through an unnecessary expenditure of energy. Watch out for seal behaviour: if a hauled-out seal has its head up, it is already concerned. If it flushes into the water, you are too close!



 Highly Sensitive Wildlife Areas

Please keep a distance of 50m in order to minimise wildlife disturbance

Map should not be used for navigation purposes

To conserve the wildlife of this harbour while enjoying it at the same time, please follow the advice below:



- ✓ Keep looking ahead and watch out for flocks of birds and hauled-out seals.
- ✓ Keep a minimum distance of 50m between yourself and the sensitive areas highlighted on the map (unless there is a safety issue which would take priority).
- ✓ Do not land/go ashore at Stakes Island, Pilsey Island, Ella Nore Spit and Gutner Point - these are highly sensitive bird roosting and breeding sites.
- ✓ If possible, keep 50m from seals on the mud and from flocks of birds throughout the Harbour. If birds take flight or seals move off the mud in reaction to your presence, you are too close - move away from the area immediately.
- ✓ Avoid dragging boards or kayaks over mud or shallow water as this can damage habitats.
- ✓ Obey harbour Byelaws.
- ✓ Obey any marker buoys indicating sensitive areas.
- ✓ Use recognised launching points and avoid trampling saltmarsh by sticking to public footpaths.