

Solent Seascapes Project – Community Engagement & Behavior Change

Interim Evaluation – 30 April 2025

Summary of the Boat User Survey Data :

from the *Final Interim Evaluation Report (30 April 2025)*, focusing on key findings relevant to behaviour change, anchoring, mooring, and seagrass awareness in the Solent

Survey Overview

- **Total responses:** 599
- **Demographics:**
 - 80% Solent residents
 - 74% male, 56% over 60 years old
 - 58% use sailing yachts; 88% own their boat
- **Boating habits:**
 - 89% sail at least once or twice a month
 - Most common trip types: day trips (45%) and overnight trips (42%)
 - Most popular sailing locations: Cowes, Yarmouth, Lymington, Bembridge

Seagrass Awareness & Knowledge

- 98% had heard of seagrass
 - 51% knew where to find it (mainly via charts, apps, websites)
 - 94% knew anchoring in seagrass causes damage
 - Most wanted more info on **seagrass locations** (75%)
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Anchoring Behaviour

- 67% would only anchor in seagrass in an emergency
 - 35% would never knowingly anchor in seagrass
 - 20% would anchor in seagrass to reach a sheltered bay
 - 10% would anchor if others were doing so
 - **Main influences on anchoring:** location (60%), safety (12%), cost (8%)
 - **Barriers to avoiding seagrass:**
 - Not knowing it's there (65%)
 - Lack of charts showing seagrass (60%)
 - Lack of alternatives (56%)
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Mooring Preferences

- 52% regularly moor in marinas
 - 21% in harbour moorings, 17% in sailing clubs
 - **Main influences:** location (44%), cost (27%)
 - Only 3% said they prefer Advanced Mooring Systems (AMS)
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Trusted Information Sources

- Harbour Authorities (68%) and National Sailing Associations (65%) were most trusted
 - NGOs were trusted by only 10%
 - Preferred communication channels: websites (70%), charts (57%), boating magazines (45%)
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Behavioural Segments Identified

1. **Freedom-to-anchor group** (3%): resistant to change, value autonomy, skeptical of environmental messaging.
 2. **Low awareness group** (6%): unaware of seagrass damage, need education.
 3. **Secluded spot anchors** (19%): value quiet locations, open to alternatives if available.
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Intervention Recommendations

- **Raise Awareness:**
 - Use trusted sources (Harbour Authorities, sailing clubs)
 - Share seagrass maps via charts, apps, and websites
 - Host talks and integrate into RYA training
 - **Provide Alternatives:**
 - Expand AMS availability in sensitive areas
 - Ensure AMS are free or low-cost
 - **Tailor Messaging:**
 - Use peer influence and storytelling
 - Avoid NGO-led messaging for skeptical groups
 - **Monitor Change:**
 - Repeat survey in final year
 - Continue observational studies (e.g., Osborne Bay)
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Proposed Indicators for Final Evaluation

Indicator	Baseline	Target
Know how to find seagrass	51%	75%
Know anchoring causes damage	94%	>94%
Consider environmental impact when anchoring	5%	20%
Would never anchor in seagrass	35%	50%
Reduction in anchoring in Osborne Bay	43% (2023)	<43%