



## **Studland Bay second eco-mooring installation is a success.**

- **The Studland Bay Marine Partnership (SBMP) are installing an additional 21 eco-moorings at Studland Bay.**
- **The installation will continue to protect local wildlife including the protected spiny seahorse and vitally important seagrass which acts as a nursery for many fish species. It also provides local boaters with a hassle-free mooring.**

The Studland Bay Marine Partnership (SBMP) are proud to announce a further win for marine wildlife and boaters alike at Studland Bay, by installing additional 21 eco-moorings. Seven have been installed so far, with the remainder being completed by the end of June. This follows the 10 that were installed in 2021. In addition, 12 existing moorings have been converted into eco-moorings (belonging to private owners) which will bring the total number installed in the bay to 43.

The installation of eco-moorings provides an environmentally friendly alternative to regular anchors, which can damage the seabed and seagrass meadows, and allow wildlife to thrive beneath the shore. As recently shown on [Springwatch](#), the dropping of anchors has caused significant concern as it damages seagrass, an essential habitat for seahorses and commercial fish, and a vital carbon sequestration source.

This installation unites the boating and conservation worlds once more and is a success for people and nature, allowing boaters to moor sustainably and nature to thrive.

The installation is possible following the successful fundraising that saw the partnership come together and raise £66,000 through a mixture of crowdfunding, corporate partners such as SEA LIFE and the SEA LIFE TRUST and THE PIG-on the beach, private individuals, and donations from organisations such as the National Trust and The Crown Estate and charities including Plastic Free North Devon. The project has benefited hugely from the support of members of the partnership, including boatfolk who have provided support facilitating the installations to date. The partnership will continue its [fundraising efforts](#) and has applied for funding to install a further 57 eco-moorings by 2024. The plan for long-term management is for the SBMP to take ownership and management responsibility for all eco-moorings, funded through daily mooring fees as well as private sponsorship.

In 2019 Studland Bay became a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) meaning it is now a legally protected area and formally recognised for its nationally important habitats and species. It was designated due to a number of habitats including the seagrass meadow that forms on the shallow sand seabed. The spiny seahorse was protected in UK waters in 2008 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act following campaigning by the Seahorse Trust, but received additional protection as a named feature when the area became an MCZ. The legal aim of the

MCZ designation is to ensure the seagrass, seahorses, subtidal sand and intertidal coarse sediment are in 'favourable condition'.

The benefits of eco-moorings are well-documented. Such moorings involve a helical screw anchor being secured in the seabed. An elastic rode is then attached, connecting the anchor system with the mooring buoy. The elastic rode replaces the heavy chain, meaning that none of the equipment scours the seagrass around it. The moorings also provide a hassle-free option for boaters, saving them the trouble of having to drop their own anchors.

Since its formation, the partnership has conducted significant engagement across the local area with residents and boat users to understand their views on awareness and usage of the eco-moorings and the Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ). Of those surveyed, 58% of respondents said they were interested in the conservation of the seagrass habitat. The group is hopeful this new installation will encourage further local desire to use sustainable moorings.

Michael Prideaux, Managing Director of boatfolk said: "We are absolutely delighted to see this next critical phase in the Studland Bay eco-mooring project come to fruition. Providing a sustainable alternative to traditional anchoring at Studland Bay is a mission we have been painstakingly pursuing since our initial conversation with Neil of the Seahorse Trust two years ago. To have 43 environmentally friendly options available for boaters wishing to visit this remarkable location this season is a joy to see. We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from corporate sponsors and the boating community alike, and we look forward to maintaining the momentum towards a greener future for Studland Bay."

Peter Tinsley of Dorset Wildlife Trust said "It is great to be reporting such a positive news story. This shows what can be achieved when a broad range of people and organisations representing different sectors work together to come up with and then implement solutions. The precious wildlife of the bay, including the seahorses and their seagrass habitat, will benefit but crucially, Studland will continue to be enjoyed and appreciated by visitors and locals, on, in and by the water."

Tara Crabb, Hotel Director, THE PIG-on the beach has said: "We hope that by supporting Studland Bay Marine Partnership through funding an eco-mooring, our fundraising efforts and by raising awareness of the important conservation in our area that we are taking positive steps to protecting and enhancing the natural habitat that we and our guest all enjoy daily."

Howard Davidson, boating representative on the partnership: "This is fantastic news for both the environment and boaters. The eco-moorings will enable boaters to continue to use Studland Bay whilst protecting the natural habitats. We are very grateful for the work that has been done by the Studland Bay Marine Partnership. It is an excellent example of everyone pulling together to find a solution that works for all."

Nicholas Greenwood, Head of Marine Conservation at the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), said: "The arrival of a further 21 eco-moorings is a significant step forward in offering suitable alternatives to anchoring in the VNAZ and achieving our shared goal to protect the area's valuable habitats and species. We are pleased to support this initiative and will continue to work with the local community and the Studland Bay Marine Partnership (SBMP) to improve awareness of and adherence to the VNAZ."

Chris Brown, Head of Marine Programmes at SEA LIFE, comments: "Seagrass provides a vital home to a diverse variety of animals including the stunning spiny seahorse, and in taking part in underwater seahorse surveys in Studland, I've witnessed first-hand the unintentional damage anchor chains can make to the seagrass habitats. The work of the Studland Bay

Marine Partnership is crucial in helping to protect important species like them, and the surrounding ecosystems, for the future.

SEA LIFE are therefore proud to sponsor the new eco-moorings that work in harmony with the environment, providing safe anchoring points for the boats whilst helping to protect seahorses and their important seagrass meadows. In working together to make solutions that work for everyone and help protect our oceans and the marine life within them, the Partnership aligns perfectly to our mission at SEA LIFE, along with our partner charity the SEA LIFE TRUST, and we are excited to be part of its future.”

**Contact:**

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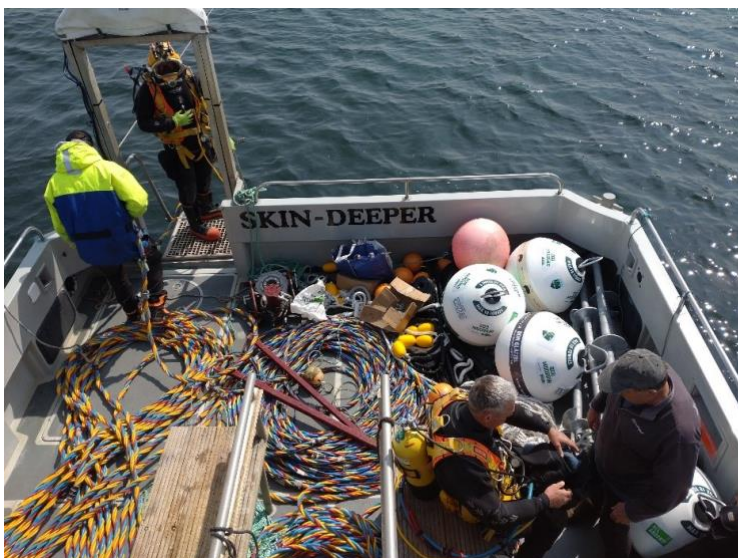
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