Harbour Life Summer 2023

In this issue Saltmarsh restoration Farming in protected landscapes Summer spotter's guide



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Contact us

Chichester Harbour Conservancy Harbour Office, Itchenor, Chichester, PO20 7AW Tel. 01243 512301

www.conservancy.co.uk info@conservancy.co.uk

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700 Sat 0900-1300 (1 Apr-31 Oct) f ChichesterHarbour



chichesterharbourconservancy

We'd love to hear your stories about what you love about Chichester Harbour, and how you use it. Share your thoughts and photos on our social media channels or contact us at the Harbour Office.

Welcome

I'm absolutely delighted to have joined the committed team at Chichester Harbour Conservancy as CEO enabling me to play a part in conserving the internationally important treasure that is Chichester Harbour.

There is much to do. Central is the ecological health and beauty of Harbour; the main reason that so many of us choose to walk, cycle and sail here, which is being assailed on many fronts. These range from development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundary threatening to urbanise the Harbour, to nutrient enrichment from nitrates used in agriculture causing excessive algae growth and sustaining recent gains and further improvements in water quality.

A harsh truth example of the scale of the challenge is that we are currently losing about three football pitches of critical saltmarsh per year and have lost 58% overall since 1947. This in large part prompted Natural England's Condition Review Report that downgraded Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to an Unfavourable Declining condition. One key culprit here is coastal squeeze. This is where rising sea levels are constrained by hard sea defences that lead to

the loss of natural habitats by preventing the landward migration of saltmarsh in response to sea level rise.

The only sustainable path is to allow rollback, the natural inundation of coastal land, where possible. This will require us, as a community, to make some difficult choices, I hope not framed by short-term local desires, but for the benefit of the wider canvass of the long-term health of the Harbour overall.

So, as we enter the busy recreational season, I trust you make the most of our fabulous natural resource and enjoy it to the full. I do implore you though, in a quiet moment, to reflect on how special the Harbour is and the role you can play to ensure we are able to bequeath something that is precious, vibrant and really matters to those that follow us.

Matt Briers CBE

CEO



Food for thought - Central Park in New York is a prime example of how green spaces can be totally engulfed by urbanisation...



News in brief

New faces

This season has bought with it two new faces at the Conservancy helm. As you'll have seen in our Welcome section, Matt Briers has joined us as CEO, with Jo Cox as Harbour Master. Matt had a distinguished 37-year career in the Royal Navy, serving as a warfare officer at sea and aviator in the Fleet Air Arm. As well as a range of staff appointments in Whitehall, he commanded on three occasions with his final post being as Director Carrier Strike as a Rear Admiral. He has a lifelong interest in conservation and the environment.

Jo, pictured below, will be responsible for the safe operation of Chichester Harbour, and management of the Harbour Team. Her strong maritime background saw her serve in the Merchant Navy and the British Antarctic Survey where she combined sea going and scientific research. Jo has also held roles as Government Officer on the sub-Antarctic Island of South Georgia and Captain on the Royal Research Ship Discovery, before time in the Falklands as Harbour Master.



Art in nature

In May, Fine Arts students from the University of Chichester showcased their work in the second annual Maybush Copse Arts Trail in Chichester Harbour. The temporary artwork installation offered a diverse collection of work intertwined with the natural landscape of this reclaimed land.

The project was a collaboration between the University, Maybush Copse Friends, Chichester Harbour Conservancy Education and Chichester Harbour Trust. From tracing the horizon to interactive painting arenas, the Trail was an immersive experience, integrating art into the fabric of the surrounding landscape with each piece conveying a unique perspective on the evolving relationship between art and nature.







Farming in Protected Landscapes

An extension to the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme will now see it run for an extra year until March 2025. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) offers funding to farmers and land managers in AONBs, National Parks and the Broads and has been developed by Defra with the support of AONBs and National Park staff from across England. Find out about how FiPL has been running in Chichester Harbour later in this issue.



Recovering nature

Our sister project - CHaPRoN - was formed to drive recovery of the natural environment in Chichester Harbour.

As a partnership it brings together groups to work collaboratively, and has just published its first Annual Review, sharing some of the key achievements so far, including partnership and funding opportunities secured with the Solent Seascape Project. Read the full report at www.chapron.org.uk

Recently the CHaPRoN team were involved in a visit by HRH Princess Eugenie to the Solent Seascape Project to see the work being done to restore coastal marine life. Princess Eugenie and the team lowered new oyster nurseries against a pontoon in Langstone Harbour to help boost oyster numbers in the Solent and restore the once largest native oyster fishery in Europe.

Some other encouraging local projects have been started by CHaPRoN too, including a saltmarsh restoration scheme at Itchenor which you can read more about in this issue.



 Sarah Chatfield, CHaPRoN Manager (far left), with HRH Princess Eugenie and the Solent Seascape Project Team



Emsworth Slipper Club

Located on the Quay, Emsworth Slipper Club has active dinghy and cruising sections both for racing and social activities. It's also an RYA training establishment keen on developing juniors and youth sailing. The club hosts a very active radio sailing section on the adjacent millpond too. Find out more at www.emsworthslippersc.org.uk

Havant Youth Sail Training Scheme

'Sail HYSTS' is an RYA approved charity offering affordable sailing to youngsters aged 8 to 18. Sailing from April to October the scheme operates at weekends in Chichester Harbour from a base at Langstone Quay. Dinghies include a Hartley 15 and RS Fevas with 2 safety boats operated by experienced volunteers. Each sailing session is run by an RYA Senior Instructor who teaches youngsters the skills, pleasure and fun of sailing. More information at www.hysts.co.uk



Return of the Tern

The Return of the Tern Project, which has rolled out over the last 18 months. captured great interest in and around the Harbour. As the project comes to a close, Jess Vagg, Project Manager, looks back on what's been achieved and how Terns in Chichester Harbour will continue to be supported.

The Return of the Tern project began when the Friends of Chichester Harbour secured £182,000 of funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, the UK Government's £40 million fund to help the nation build back greener from the pandemic.

Work began with a focus on the restoration of the naturally occurring habitat for Terns in Chichester Harbour, Stakes Island, south of Cobnor, was identified as a perfect site for shingle recharge and the bank was raised by one metre above the highest spring tide height, using 500 tonnes of shingle. The shingle remained in place over the winter and was used by winter waders as a high tide roost. Monitoring of the site continued as Terns started arriving this year with the aim that the habitat will return to a successful nesting site in the next few years.

The project also built on the Conservancy's introduction of Tern rafts in the Harbour: the project commissioning five new purpose-built rafts. Their debut in 2022 saw 54 Common Tern chicks fledge, and an initial survey this year has revealed that there are 88 Tern eggs waiting to hatch later this summer.

Of course, the Terns need to be able to feed their chicks, so in partnership with Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA), fish population surveys were conducted last year in June and October. These showed substantial food sources for the Terns with diversity in small fish and other organisms in Harbour waters - all great for a healthy ecosystem!

Educating young people about the threats to Terns, and other species, was also a key focus of the project. Guided by the Conservancy's Education Team, the project has engaged with over 100 young people through lessons focused on nature recovery and Tern species in Chichester Harbour. The Conservancy's Youth Rangers painted Tern decoys for the rafts to encourage

birds to nest on them. We also held sessions with Fishbourne Primary's Year 4 class, with the children becoming Harbour Champions and exploring the different threats to Terns in the Harbour.

The project's success has been captured in a video produced by a local company, Millstream Productions, and shared on the Friends of Chichester Harbour's social media channels, achieving thousands of views! Presentations to community groups and local media have also shared the achievements made by the project.



The National Heritage Lottery Fund. who are delivering the Green Recovery Challenge Fund on behalf of DEFRA have been delighted with the project. Will

> Crawford, Account Manager at The National Heritage Lottery

Fund said "The heritage importance of this project was recognised early on. It has clearly addressed the key strategic aims of the scheme and has gone some way to mitigating the risks to the three species of Tern (little, common, sandwich) and two

species of Gull (black-headed and Mediterranean) that breed in Chichester

Harbour."

Tern eggs ready to

The Return of the Tern project has been an exciting and unique project for the Friends of Chichester Harbour and Chichester Harbour Conservancy. Although the project is now at an end, its legacy continues, and hopefully serves as the first of many nature recovery projects for the Harbour.



The forces of nature, sometimes aggravated by the actions of man, are challenging the landscape and seascape which we seek to protect. The Solent is now constantly under huge pressure from shipping, leisure activities and development along the shoreline, as well as the impact of climate change.

Our activities have developed over the years to provide independent and constructive advice, with observations in the best interests of preserving the natural environment of the Solent. SPS has been involved in the consultation processes that led to the designation of Marine Conservation Zones for the protection of our most important wildlife habitats. SPS has also made representations to the appropriate Local Councils, Natural England and the Government on the creation and routing of local Coastal Paths and many of our comments have been taken into account in the final plans published so far. SPS has a particular interest in protecting our coastline from unsightly development and from time to time submits comments and, when necessary, objections to Planning Authorities when visual intrusion could and should be avoided.

SPS has been working for several years to monitor the impact of pollution in the Solent, long before the topic was given wide focus through mainstream media. Of particular relevance to Chichester is our active work on monitoring the overspill discharges by Southern Water to raise the issue with the water authority and Local Government. SPS has been calling for the scope of Southern Water's Beachbuoy application to be extended to complete full coverage of the Solent area. The other main cause of pollution is created by the nitrate fertiliser run-off from farms into our natural waterways, which have a detrimental

effect on health and also wildlife. By the time nitrates reach the sea, a build-up of green algae occurs and this has created the disturbing phenomenon of 'green tides' across the Channel in Brittany.

SPS is increasingly concerned about the use of recreational craft, such as jet skis and paddleboards which enable easy access to previously undisturbed shores, with consequent disturbance to birds and other wildlife.

The protection of salt marshes and seagrass beds by the creation of Marine Conservation Zones and the reestablishment of our native Solent oysters by Blue Marine Foundation are also areas in which SPS is actively involved. Coastal resilience has become an issue of concern due to rising sea levels as a result of climate change and SPS has joined local stakeholder groups to keep a close watch on the various options presented.

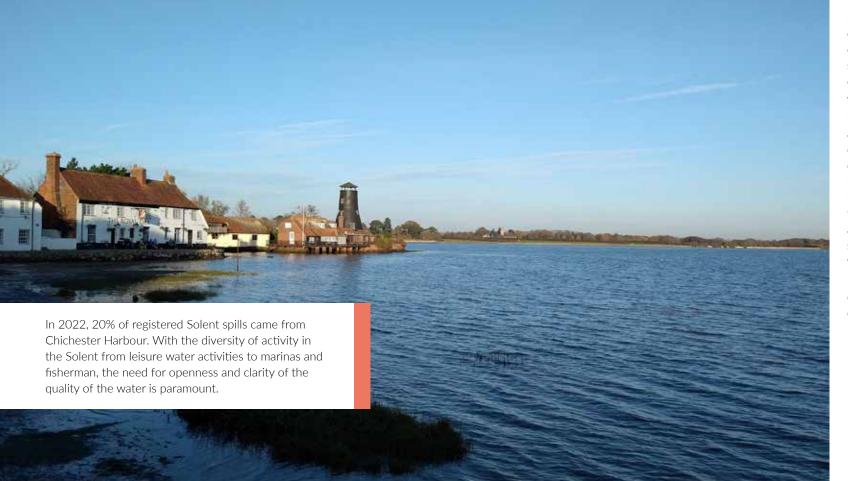
We're keen to support the Conservancy in its work to protect the landscape around the harbour, keep the waters clean and ensure that fauna and flora can flourish undisturbed by human intervention. However, work is only possible with the support of members, through subscriptions and donations and active interaction with local groups. We're seeking new members and enthusiastic volunteers to join our Council.

If you would like further information contact **secretary@solentprotection.org** or scan the code below





solentprotection.org



Extending the impact of Farming in Protected Landscapes

Now in its third year the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) is part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan. It's been designed to help and support farmers and landowners in England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks, in recognition of the important part they play in managing these protected landscapes. Due to its success the programme has now been extended for a year to March 2025.

FiPL offers grants to farmers and landowners for environmental projects which reflect at least one of the following key themes:

- Support and recovery of NATURE;
- Mitigation of the impacts of CLIMATE change;
- Provision of opportunities for PEOPLE to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape:
- Improving the quality and character of PLACE.



Since June 2021, when the scheme began, 23 projects from local farmers and landowners have been awarded a grant. These cover a broad range of projects and together have delivered:

- A total area of 2248 ha farmed with regenerative farming
- 7 projects to improve soil quality
- 2 projects to reduce flood risk
- 712m of new hedgerows planted
- 1298 ha of habitat improved for biodiversity
- 3 projects delivering educational visits
- 5 projects to support public engagement and land management
- Creation of a new farm Cluster Group

Projects in Action

Wildlife boxes and educational video - Northney Farm

This involved the installation of 42 wildlife boxes that were strategically placed around the farm to create new local habitats for native wildlife species including Swifts, House Martins, Kestrels, Tree Sparrows, Swallows and Bats. A series of educational videos were also created to allow school children to experience different farming activities, in a safe environment, regardless of the season and weather. These will be used in conjunction with school visits to the farm as an important educational tool.





GPS fertiliser sprayer - Hale Farm

One grant has contributed towards the purchase of new fertilizer sprayer equipment, helping reduce nitrates and phosphates reaching Harbour waters. GPS technology stops overlapping and controls the rate of fertilizer applied to the field so that plants are given only what's needed to grow reducing excess fertilizer being washed into water courses. The use of this technology is a good example of the catchment sensitive farming practices that FiPL aims to support.

Farm Cluster Group - Manhood Farmers Cluster Group

The scheme supported the creation of a new Farm Cluster Group in the Chichester Harbour FiPL Area. This important project provides support and structure for a group of local farmers to work together to share best practice, knowledge and training opportunities. The Cluster aims to work towards significant environmental projects both on individual farms and landscape wide across the FiPL area.





▲ A Cluster Group training session which involved traditional hedge laying to help enhance hedgerow habitats

Applying for a FiPL Grant

Steven Pick, Farming Officer, and Michelle Rossiter, FiPL Assistant, are available to visit and chat through projects and ideas to maximise any project's environmental potential. Both have a background in farming and are on hand to provide support through the application process.

Projects are assessed by our Local Assessment Panel, consisting of local farmers, landowners, local environmental and statutory representatives - all with a detailed understanding of Chichester Harbour.

New Funding Announced

Following a formal review, Defra have confirmed an increase in budget for Chichester Harbour AONB for FiPL projects over the next two years:

Year 3 (2023/24) - £150,000

ove re keen to encourage applications for new projects that support the scheme and benefit the AONB and ocal environment

To find out more or to discuss a potential project, please visit our website or contact Steven and Michelle at farming@conservancy.co.uk



In February 2023, CHaPRoN and three partner organisations successfully completed a saltmarsh restoration trial at West Itchenor This was the first project to be delivered as part of the Solent Seascape Project. Here Sarah Chatfield, our CHaPRoN Manager, shares an update.

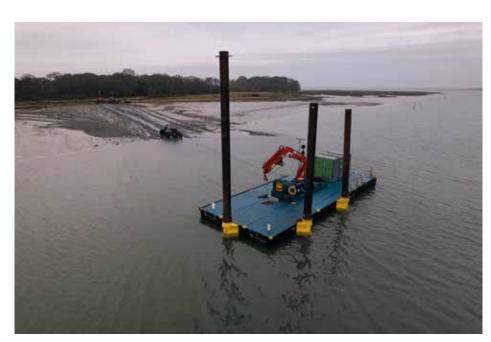


Saltmarsh is something of a powerhouse when it comes to habitats. It's a coastal ecosystem that supports biodiversity, stores carbon to counter climate change, acts as a natural flood and coastal defence and helps improve water quality. Earlier this year we began this saltmarsh restoration trial for three main reasons:

- **1.** To restore and enhance an area of saltmarsh that's been lost in Chichester Harbour
- **2.** To test a new approach using dredged sediment to restore saltmarsh
- **3.** To understand how well nutrients are absorbed by new saltmarsh



The trial piloted a new technique – the saltmarsh restoration dragbox (SRDB) – designed by Land & Water. One of the key challenges in using dredged sediment is ensuring it can be placed in the right location (the upper intertidal area) high enough to support saltmarsh colonisation without being washed away.











Our trial successfully demonstrated the potential of this new approach and its ability to overcome this challenge.

In total, around 1600m³ of dredged sediment was deposited at West Itchenor. The sediment itself came from a routine maintenance dredge at the entrance to Chichester Marina and was deposited by the dredging company at the trial site. Each load was delivered at high tide as far up the intertidal area as water depths would allow. When the tide had retreated far enough, all the sediment was transferred to the top of the shore by the SRDB and moulded into shape.

Once in place the sediment settled relatively quickly, drying out, and seemingly unaffected by tides or weather conditions.

A survey of the trial site shows that the placed sediment is at heights which should be suitable for saltmarsh plant colonisation. The total area measures around 0.25ha.

We'll now carefully monitor the site to understand how things do – checking on the stability of the sediment and its ecological development, together with the wider monitoring requirements of the Solent Seascape Project. We expect that the first pioneer saltmarsh species will begin colonising the site within a year. Watch this space!

For further information visit www.chapron.org.uk







what's / on? Summer fun in Chichester Harbour

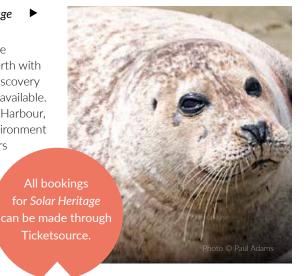
With long, warm days and plenty happening on and off the water there's plenty to enjoy in Chichester Harbour this season.

Race Week ▲ This year's Race Week takes place from 14–18 August. As one of the biggest dinghy regattas on the South Coast, this event enjoys great support with hundreds of hoats.

As one of the biggest dinghy regattas on the South Coast, this event enjoys great support with hundreds of boats and competitors from clubs across the UK. Race Week is organised by Chichester Federation and hosted by Hayling Island Sailing Club, an RYA Centre of Excellence. As a regatta there's first class racing in a relaxed atmosphere with class starts and handicap fleets enjoying the tidal, sheltered waters of Chichester Harbour. Find out more at

Get on the water with Solar Heritage

Solar Heritage, our solar-powered catamaran, is sailing throughout the summer from Itchenor and Emsworth with a series of Seal Safaris, Harbour Discovery Tours and Evening Sunset Cruises available. Enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Harbour, with minimal disruption to the environment and wildlife. Slip through the waters and get close to the wildlife and habitats that make this area so special. Our experts join each sailing and are on hand to answer questions and point out some of the highlights.





Book a place at Ticketsource - just search for Harbour Tots!

Fun for pre-schoolers

Harbour Tots, our pre-school group for under 5s and families, is running through the summer months. This fun outdoor session allows little ones to explore the natural environment and wildlife within the Harbour. Each session includes a short walk and activities – but if the weather is too wet or windy we'll move indoors! Parking is available along the Dell Quay Road.

Under the Sea - Friday 23 June

Learn about the amazing animals that live on the beach and in the sea. Activities will include a shoreline creature hunt and beach walk. We will be making crab 'houses' and a crab hat to take home!

Pirate Party - Tuesday 11 July

Join us for a pirate party! With pirate games and crafts and the chance to 'walk the plank', find some treasure and make a pirate hat. We'll tag on a picnic at Beaky's wildlife area (or indoors if it's wet). Please bring your own food and drinks and we'll provide a small, sweet treat.



fun for families

Make a leaf boat

Collect a tree leaf and use with a piece of fallen bark and bendy stick to create a leaf boat. Making several boats allows you to see which one floats best and you can race them along a stream or in the gentle shallow waters of the Harbour on a calm day.

Try some mindfulness

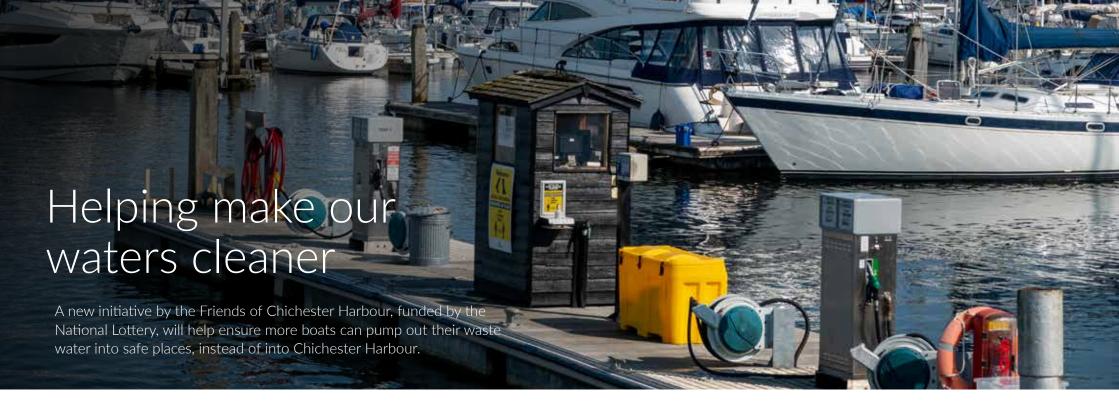
Enjoy being out in the natural world, notice the colours and the light; listen to the birdsong or the lapping of the waves; try a new vista and take in the landscape from a different angle or at a different time of day. Take time to enjoy this special place and let it calm your mind.

Enjoy a high tide splash

Look for when the tide is high at lunchtime. This is when the tides are especially high, called spring tides, which happen roughly every other week, and these often cover the tidal paths. Wear jellies or old trainers and enjoy a splash along the shoreline.

Create a miniature shoreline

Take an empty ice cream tub or similar and when you visit the shoreline, think tiny and create a mini-shoreline. Make a note of the different zones that make up the shore, the water, mud, saltmarsh, shingle and hedgerow. Then slowly add some water and watch the tide come in.



The project is funding seven mobile pump units which can be used in Harbour marinas and taken to individual boats. The pumps' size also means they are narrow enough to manoeuvre easily along marina pontoons.

The need for mobile pumps was proposed following research by Richard Austin, the Conservancy's AONB Manager, which identified that many boat owners required additional facilities and greater awareness of how to dispose of their waste.

Awareness of the water quality in Chichester Harbour has experienced mounting interest, and there are, of course, a variety of ways in which sewage enters our waters. Using pump-outs prevents raw sewage from entering the Harbour and damaging precious eco-systems. Sadly discharges from boats do contribute to the excessive nutrient loads in the Harbour.

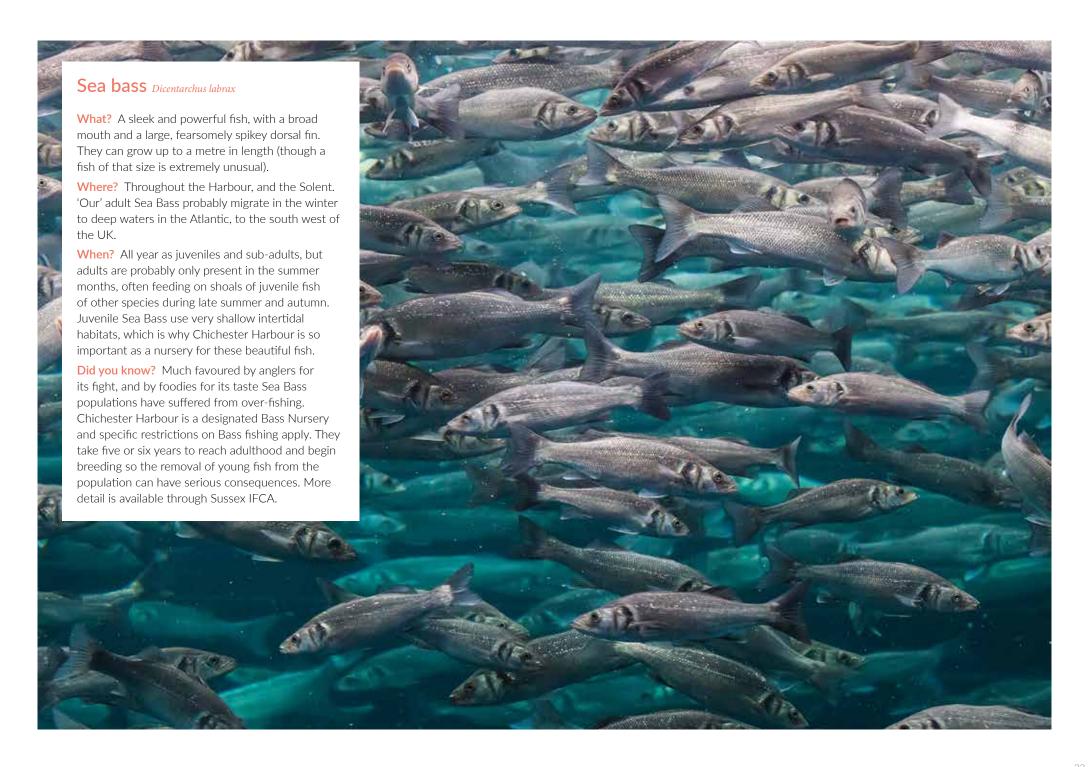
causing degradation to important habitats such as saltmarsh and seagrass beds. Microbial pollution impacts on shellfish too.

These new pumps will help remove the waste from boats quickly and efficiently, allowing it to be pumped into normal waste drains where it can be treated. They also help meet some of the Green Blue initiatives to keep our harbours clean, by encouraging boaters to be more environmentally aware as they enjoy these special spaces.

The Green Blue is the joint environmental awareness programme created by the RYA and the British Marine industry. British Marine is a membership organisation for the UK marine industry to reduce the environmental impact of boating.

Keep Chichester Harbour Clean Emsworth To use a Harbour Northney pump out: Protect our Contact the wildlife and Tell them water quality when you - use one of the pump-outs Chichester Berth Marina * available around Let them Itchenor take over! Chichester Harbour **Sparkes**











Sit back, relax & enjoy the view, on a smooth & silent, solar-powered boat trip in Chichester Harbour aboard

Solar Heritage





- bird watching and seal safaris
- sailings from Itchenor*
- wheelchair lift and onboard toilet
- open air and lots of space
- also available for private hire

For tickets and timetables visit

www.conservancy.co.uk

or call 01243 513275, find us at www.ticketsource.co.uk too.



CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

* Emsworth in July/August