

# THE PERFECT PLACE FOR A .... MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE?



## Studland Bay is:

- A very popular beach (the beach itself below the high water mark, the intertidal zone, is in the proposed Conservation Zone and would potentially be subject to conservation controls) – 2.5 miles long, it has nearly a MILLION visitors every year, according to the National Trust.
- Probably the busiest and most popular coastal anchorage for leisure boats in the UK: on a single busy summer weekend upwards of 2000 people visit the Bay by boat
- A beautiful and popular leisure amenity, enjoyed by successive generations, and one of the reasons many people choose to visit the Poole area or to keep a boat there.

Marine Conservation Zone restrictions would threaten all this, plus jobs in the £13.5 Million local marine leisure industry – and to no apparent conservation benefit, as spelled out in over 20 technical articles and papers on this site: see Technical Summaries. The eelgrass beds, the primary conservation focus, are flourishing and expanding in the presence of boats which have been anchoring here for decades, and as for seahorses – seen in the Bay sporadically in very small numbers, just a few a year recently – there is enough eelgrass habitat to support more than a thousand or two! Talk of a threat through loss of their habitat is pure scaremongering hype: see the eelgrass actually increasing at [Aerial Images\\*](#). So, out of the 42 miles of coastline between Poole Harbour mouth and Portland Bill, why on earth make the perverse choice of the two critical miles of Studland Bay to be an MCZ? There are many possible alternative sites – and in fact, on a wider scale, 87% of the Dorset coast, and 65% of the coastline between Chichester Harbour and Lands End is within a Marine Protected Area already!

Note: a 2007 report by Bournemouth University puts annual visitors to the Studland Bay area at 866,000 – see <https://core.ac.uk/download/files/9/74614.pdf> p.97. The National Trust website for Studland Bay claims one million beach visitors a year.

\* <http://boatownersresponse.org.uk/aerial-images/>

A summary of evidence about the health of the eelgrass, by the Boat Owners' Response Group, is at <http://boatownersresponse.org.uk/Evidence-overview-Sept14.pdf> , See also <http://boatownersresponse.org.uk/technical-summaries/> and other articles at <http://boatownersresponse.org.uk/>