



Project Information Note- 1

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES



Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES is a four year project that will improve the condition of four marine habitats of European importance. The project will focus on five key Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the UK, from Essex in the east to the Isles of Scilly in the west.



Key Issues

- Oceans need to be in a good condition as they provide more than 50% of our oxygen and are crucial for our survival.
- Large areas of the seabed within the SACs are currently in an unfavourable condition.
- There has been a significant long term reduction in seagrass extent and quality.
- Maerl beds are slow growing, very fragile and do not recover from damage.
- Both seagrass and maerl are easily damaged by disturbance such as scouring or abrasion.
- Few people know about the seabed's sensitive features, their location and importance.
- Recreational pressures are increasing.

What will this project achieve?

- Demonstrate habitat restoration and management techniques including seagrass restoration.
- Protect and improve the condition of key intertidal and subtidal habitats.
- Raise awareness and actively inspire better care of the habitats by key users.
- Monitor, record and evaluate the project to maximise public benefits, conservation impact and repeatability across Europe.



Damage to seagrass bed

Why key habitats and species need our help?

Sediment seabeds

The project focuses on four types of intertidal and subtidal sandbanks and mudflats of European importance. These habitats are home to a number of protected species such as seahorses, stalked jellyfish and rare seaweeds.

Seagrass and maerl are key features of these habitats, are most at risk from damage and are the main features in unfavourable condition at the five sites.

Seagrass (Zostera species)

- Is a flowering marine plant that is scarce in the UK.
- Seagrass beds are one of the most rapidly declining habitats on earth (11th International Seagrass Biology Workshop 2014).
- Provides important nursery grounds for fish including commercially important species.
- Seagrass helps stabilise sediment and reduces coastal erosion.
- Healthy seagrass beds store significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, helping mitigate climate change impacts. Beds of seagrass are like the rainforest of the marine world!

Maerl (including Phymatolithon calcareum/ Lithothamnion corallioides)

- Maerl is a calcified red seaweed that over hundreds of years forms deep carpets of unattached pink nodules. It is slow growing (<1mm/year) and very fragile.
- Maerl beds have a very limited distribution in England.
- Creates a very diverse habitat and supports an abundance of species.



Funding

LIFE: LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (LIFE18 NAT/UK/000039) has received funding from the LIFE Programme which is the European Union's funding instrument for the environment. Funding is awarded to best practice, innovative and demonstration projects that contribute to the objectives of Natura 2000.

Natura 2000: The project includes 5 Special Areas of Conservation that are part of 'Natura 2000' - a network of the very best areas for wildlife across Europe. All SACs have special protection under European & UK laws.

Key Project Dates:

Start: 15 July 2019

Completion: 31 October 2023

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Working in partnership with:

