

Newsletter: Winter 2020/21

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES was publicly launched by the partnership at the end of January 2020 with an Advanced Mooring Systems workshop at the National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth. Since then, we've been working together on [protecting](#) and [restoring](#) the seabed within five Special Areas of Conservation in the south of England, and [connecting](#) with schools, universities, communities, volunteers, conservation organisations and recreational boaters.

The team

The project team is now complete: [Fiona Crouch](#), Project Manager, [Rebecca Smith](#), Finance Officer (part-time) and [Wendy Johnson](#), Assistant Project Manager – Communications (part-time). In addition, we have appointed an Essex Site Lead (part-time) to work on ReMEDIES from February 2021, as well as already fully funding a full-time Education Officer (Loveday Trinick) and Seagrass Cultivation Officer (Emma Nolan) at Ocean Conservation Trust.

Restoring

Our groundbreaking seagrass lab opened at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth in 2020, where our partners Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) planted the first seeds in July following a series of [seed collection dives](#). Visitors to the Aquarium can see into the lab and learn more about our work from the interpretation panels.

Our seagrass surveys in the project sites also took place in summer, giving us a fuller picture of the current extent and health of existing seagrass meadows. Now we're looking ahead to spring 2021, when OCT will plant 25,000 seed bags and 5,000 seedling bags in the seabed in Plymouth Sound. We're planning to restore a total of eight hectares of seagrass beds in this way as part of the project – a first for England on this scale.

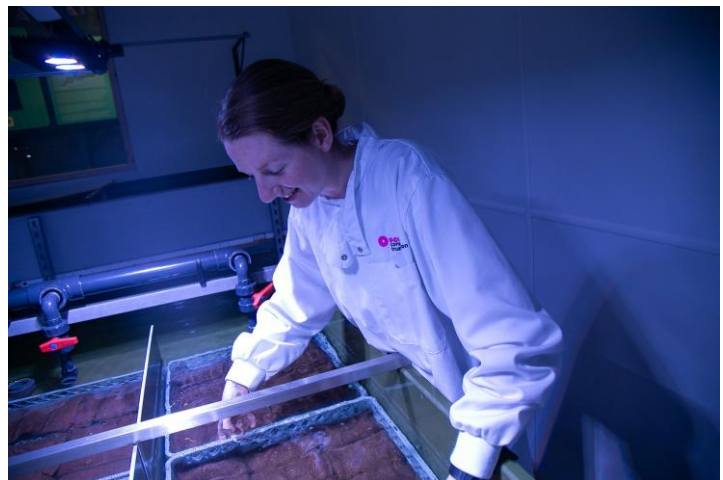


Image: Olly Reed/Ocean Conservation Trust

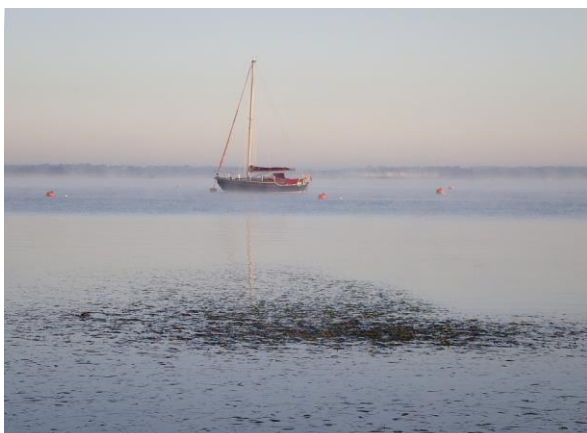


Image: Tim Ferrero/Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Protecting

In winter we began trialling Advanced Mooring Systems (AMS) in the Solent, near Yarmouth Harbour on the Isle of Wight. These moorings are better for the environment and for boats. They will be used in place of existing chain moorings which can damage seagrass meadows. We've been working closely with Yarmouth Harbour Master on this trial, which will provide vital information for introducing AMS more widely. Natural England site leads are engaging locally to agree further locations.



Image: Isles of Scilly by Barefoot Photographer & Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

Connecting

Our planned face-to-face engagement moved online during 2020. The first of OCT's 'Secrets of the Seabed' webinar series was well attended in December ([watch here](#)) and we can look forward to the next in February. Our Education Officer has developed a 90-minute virtual 'super seagrass session' for schools and families and has lined up several schools to work directly with from spring. Meanwhile, our partners Marine Conservation Trust are taking bookings throughout January for 'Ocean Superheroes' – their new online live lessons for children aged 7 to 11. We've also been making valuable connections with Harbour Masters, sailing clubs, universities, conservation organisations and more, and we're excited to be working more closely with the Wildlife Trusts within the project sites this year.

Research and publications

Collingwood Environmental Planning was appointed to explore the practices of recreational boaters in and around Plymouth and the Solent/Isle of Wight. Their findings will help inform how we engage with boaters and will be published on the Natural England evidence catalogue. In February, we'll host a one-hour webinar and half-day workshop to share learning from this research.

Westcountry Rivers Trust has been appointed to conduct site-specific Natural Capital assessments on seagrass and maerl within the five project areas, which we will use to develop a range of communications tools for reaching our audiences.

In autumn, The Green Blue - the joint environmental awareness programme between our project partner the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Marine - led Anchoring and Mooring with Care webinars aimed at recreational boaters, followed by the release of 'The Green Guide to Anchoring and Moorings' in December – a practical guide for boaters to help us improve and protect seagrass beds. [Download your copy here](#).

Find out more...follow @EULIFERemedies on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and look out for our new project website, launching in spring.



LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (LIFE18 NAT/UK/000039) is financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Commission. It is led by Natural England in partnership with Marine Conservation Society, Ocean Conservation Trust, Plymouth City Council/Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum and Royal Yachting Association.

Working in partnership with:

