

**MAIN KEY**

Anchorage	East Cardinal Buoy	Channels
Moorings	South Cardinal Buoy	High speed areas
Marina	North Cardinal Buoy	Swimming areas
Sailing Club	West Cardinal Buoy	Coastal path
Slipway	Seagrass Beds	Keep clear, diver below
Starboard Hand Buoy	Main Avocet Beds	Seaward boundary of 10 knot speed limit (vessels under 15m)
Port Hand Buoy	Main roosting sites	Road/rail bridges
Starboard Hand Beacon	SPA/SSSI/MCZ protected areas	Speed limit (knots)
Port Hand Beacon	Intertidal area	Ferry routes
Beacon	Anchoring and Fishing prohibited	Historic/Protected Wrecks

**NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION**

**NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

Use the species guide on the TECF website to help identify any species of concern. Report sightings of non-native species on the iNaturalist App [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

Follow Check/Clean/Dry campaign advice. Before and after use - check your boat, equipment and clothing for plant and animal material, clean with fresh water and dry as much as possible.

For further info and advice on minimising the spread of non-natives visit: [www.plymouth-mpa.uk/home/managing-the-mpa/projects-research](http://www.plymouth-mpa.uk/home/managing-the-mpa/projects-research)

**MARINE ANIMALS**

Dolphins, porpoises, seals, basking sharks and whales can be seen in the Plymouth Sound and attract attention from boat users. However, these creatures are susceptible to disturbance. If you are lucky enough to see them, follow these basic rules:

- Let them decide what happens
- Keep your distance and never go closer than 100m
- Never drive head-on to, or separate, groups of animals

It is illegal to deliberately or recklessly disturb, harass or endanger them. Please report any such incidents to the Police stating boat details (type, colour, name etc.) or car registration of the towing vehicle.

**PERSONAL WATERCRAFT**

PWCs should register with the ports registration scheme [plymouthport.org.uk/leisure/watercraft-registration/](http://plymouthport.org.uk/leisure/watercraft-registration/). Registration is free and covers the whole Dockyard Port of Plymouth.

**Users must act responsibly:**

- Keep out of swimming areas; if passage is required then keep speed below 4 kn and proceed with caution
- Keep within the speed limits and be considerate to other users - your wake can affect others
- Avoid anchorages and moorings

**RECREATIONAL ANGLING AND FISHING PERMITS**

Plymouth's waterways offer some of the best sea angling in the country but fishery byelaws are changing quickly. Keep up to date by visiting the Inshore Fisheries Conservation and Authority websites for Devon & Severn (D&SIFCA) [www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](http://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk) and Cornwall (CIFCA) [www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk)

**LYNHER ESTUARY**

The estuary is fringed by remnants of semi-natural ancient woodland. Its marsh together with its productive mudflats provide feeding and roosting grounds for wintering wildfowl and waders. The estuary is particularly valuable for dunlin, curlew, spotted redshank, grey plover, little egret and avocet. It is also a good place to see the main duck species of the Plymouth waters; widgeon, teal, mallard, pintail and shelduck.

**ST JOHN'S LAKE**

The tidal flats of the lake support the greatest number of estuarine birds in Cornwall, particularly over winter. It is notable for its oystercatcher, dunlin, whimbrel, grey plover and shelduck numbers and, in Spring and Autumn, for its migrating terns.



**PROTECTING OUR SEAGRASS**

There are six seagrass beds in Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries. Growing in sheltered shallow locations, seagrass is considered one of the most productive habitats in the marine environment and plays an important part in commercial fish life cycles, but it is in rapid decline. Seagrass also harbours several rare British species of fish as well as providing habitat for the two native species of seahorses.

Please avoid damaging seagrass beds:

- Avoid anchoring in known seagrass locations. Choose areas outside these beds and please always follow the Green Blue anchoring guidelines.
- Avoid travelling over seagrass in shallow waters.

ReMEDIES is an EU Life funded project that will find new ways to conserve our seagrass with new environmentally friendly moorings, voluntary codes and habitat restoration. For more information visit <https://saveourseabed.co.uk>

**THE RIVER PLYM CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following codes of conduct have been agreed between representatives of the water sports involved, the Plymouth City Council Pier Master and the Queen's Harbour Master.

Small craft may exceed the speed limit for the in the area off Chelson Meadow marked by yellow buoys.

Sailboards should launch from the East Beach at Saltram and proceed up river to keep clear of the water-ski area and return by the same route.

All non high speed craft should, where possible, keep clear of the high speed area. This advice does not give exclusive use to high speed craft. All craft should give a wide berth to the narrow rowing shells and avoid creating a wash in their vicinity. Rowing shells are very fragile, have a low freeboard and are most unmanoeuvrable.

Board sailing is prohibited east of a line drawn between the Navigation Light Tower at Sparrows Quay to the Yacht Haven Marina hoist up to Laira Bridge.

Reports of accidents or near misses should be made to Longroom by telephone or VHF.

**SIX RNLI TIPS FOR SAFE TRIPS:**

- Training:** Knowledge of your activity is essential
  - Wear a lifejacket:** A life statement, not a fashion one – wear it
  - SOS device:** Carry a means of calling for help
  - Tides and weather:** Check the conditions before heading out
  - Engine and fuel check:** Have you sufficient fuel and spares?
  - Inform:** Tell others where you are going.
- Find out more at [www.rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water](http://www.rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water)

**THE GREEN BLUE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Follow these boating top tips to help safeguard our marine environment:

- Never allow rubbish to go overboard.
- Ensure oil and fuel do not enter the water. Install a bilge filter and keep a spill kit on-board to clean up any accidental spills.
- Use onshore toilets where possible.
- Keep your distance from wildlife, get hold of 'The Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters'.
- Choose anchoring sites carefully and avoid areas of Seagrass (shown on map).
- Use low phosphate, environmentally-friendly products.
- Safely dispose of waste from maintenance, e.g. antifoul scrapings into hazardous waste bins.

For more environmental best practice visit [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)

**WEMBURY BAY**

Wembury Bay, a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area, is an area of outstanding marine biological importance. Extensive reefs running out from the shore provide partial shelter from the prevailing tide action allowing a wide variety of plants and animal communities to thrive. The rocky cliffs are home to nesting sea birds and oystercatchers can be spotted around the bay. For more information and to see our code of conduct visit [www.wemburymarinecentre.org/](http://www.wemburymarinecentre.org/)



# LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND NAVIGATION GUIDANCE NOTES

## NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY

The deep water navigation channels are well marked by buoys and lights. They are in constant use by the Royal Navy, ferries, large tankers, bulk carriers, fishing vessels and other traffic.

Recreational and other small craft users are advised to:

Keep well clear of the main channels or when having to cross them, to do so as far as is practicable at right angles.

Not impede the safe passage of the Torpoint Ferries.

North of Plymouth Breakwater Rule 9 of the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea is in force at all times, ie:

All vessels under 20m in length and all sailing vessels must keep out of the way of all shipping following a pre-planned track

All vessels are to keep at least 50m clear of all military vessels (100m submarines) both alongside and at anchor or as directed by QHM.

## AVOID CROSSING THE BOWS OF ONCOMING TRAFFIC

It is dangerous for small craft to hinder the passage of large vessels. Small craft users should observe the Collision Regulations; Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order; Commercial Port Byelaws, Codes of Conduct and Local Notices to Mariners.

## REPORTING DAMAGE OR INCIDENTS

Any incident that reflects on the safe use of the Port of Plymouth is to be reported immediately to the Queen's Harbour Master.

Such incidents are considered to be:

- Any groundings or collisions.
- Damage to vessels navigation marks, property or persons.
- Injuries to persons
- Movement or defects of navigational marks
- Close quarter incidents resulting in emergency action.
- Pollution

## SWIMMING AND DIVING

Swimming areas are marked with yellow buoys at Cawsand, Bovisand, Firestone Bay and the Hoe foreshore. Swimming is prohibited in Cattewater Harbour and swimmers are encouraged to make use of one of the ports swimming areas. Small craft should avoid these areas. If passing through do not exceed 4 knots.

Plymouth is a rich diving area with numerous wrecks to explore. However, diving is prohibited within 150 metres of HM ships and establishments. Within channels and prohibited anchorages diving

is only permitted with the consent of QHM.

All divers should inform Longroom Port Control Station prior to diving in order to be warned of any dangers or hazards. This can be done either on VHF Ch 14 or by telephone: 01752 663225. All divers are required to use Surface Marker Buoys.

For more safety advice visit [mli.org/safety/choose-your-activity](http://mli.org/safety/choose-your-activity)

## WATER SKIING

North of the Breakwater, water skiing may only be carried out where the speed limit may be exceeded:

- Jennycliff Bay in an area south of Mount Batten Pier to the green wreck buoy.
- River Plym on the East Bank, north of Laira Bridge, marked by yellow buoys.
- Tamar, at the confluence with the Tavy
- West mud training area (when not in use by military vessels).

## BOARD SAILING AND STAND-UP PADDLE BOARDING

Board Sailing and stand-up paddle boarding is permitted except in the main commercial part of the Cattewater east of a line from the Navigation Light Tower at Sparrows Quay to the Yacht Haven Marina hoist up to Laira Bridge. The same care must be exercised as by other small craft users.

## FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND

Large, deep draught ships cannot easily avoid small craft in narrow channels.

Rule 9 is in force north of Plymouth Breakwater; it is up to you to stay clear.

## HISTORIC/PROTECTED WRECKS

The sites of historic wrecks are protected from unauthorised interference, this includes diving, fishing and the depositing of anything on the seabed in the vicinity of the wreck. Unauthorised activity on the sites can lead to prosecution. Locations of protected wrecks are available on admiralty charts.

## VHF RADIO CHANNELS

Yachtsmen are reminded that Channel 16 is a DISTRESS, SAFETY and CALLING Channel only. Other than for distress it must only be used to establish contact before going to a recognised channel. Port operation channels must not be used for ship to ship communications.

DISTRESS, SAFETY and CALLING Channel only	16
Ship to ship channels	6, 8, 72 and 77

Port operation channels:	
Tug control	11
Sutton Lock working channel	12
Queen's Harbour Master Naval and Commercial Port Control	14
Plymouth Pilots calling channel	14
Rame Head - National Coastwatch	65
HM Coastguard working channel	67 or 73
Marina working channels	37 and 80

## THE PORT OF PLYMOUTH SAILING ASSOCIATION

The Port of Plymouth Sailing Association acts as an 'umbrella' organisation for the twenty sailing clubs on the local waters. It co-ordinates racing fixtures and provides a forum for discussion of topics of mutual interest particularly in matters involving both civil and military interests. [www.plymouthsailingassociation.org.uk](http://www.plymouthsailingassociation.org.uk)

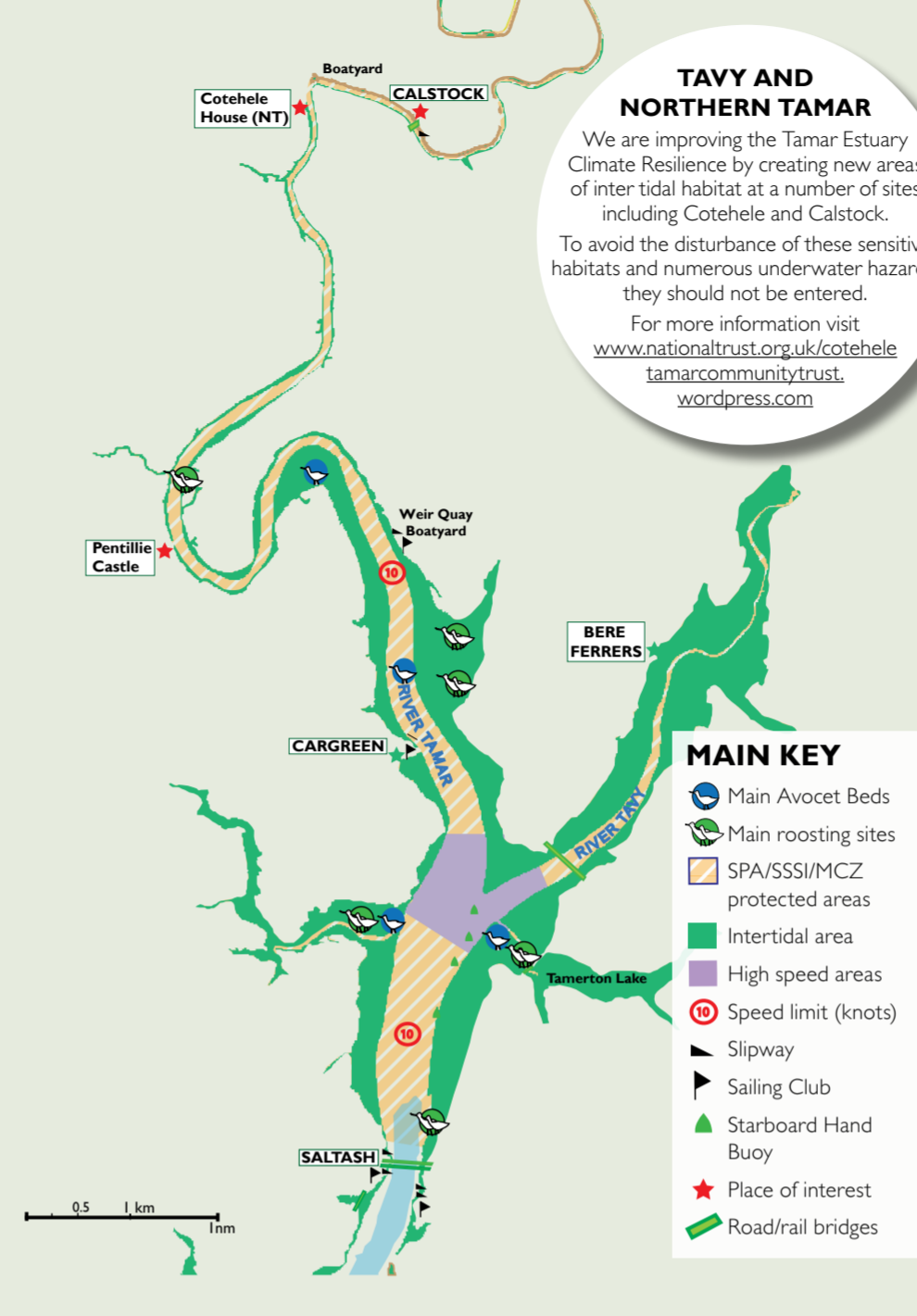
## MOD BOAT WATCH SCHEME

The Ministry of Defence Marine Police run a boat registration scheme in order to establish ownership of all types of vessels used on the waters. This has reduced marine crime and assisted Police in the returning of lost/found/stolen property. [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/qhm/plymouth/safety-and-regulations-plymouth/harbour-patrol](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/qhm/plymouth/safety-and-regulations-plymouth/harbour-patrol)

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Coastguard	999
Cattewater Harbour Master	01752 665934
National Coastwatch Institute (NCI) Rame Head	01752 823706
Coastguard Falmouth	01326 317575
Environment Agency Incident Hotline	0800 807060
HM Customs Hotline	0800 59 50 00
Mayflower Marina	01752 556633
Millbay Docks (ABP Ltd)	01752 662191
Natural England	0300 060 3900
MoD Police Marine Unit	01752 553384
Plymouth City Council	01752 668000
Plymouth City Council Pier Master	07771 663560
Plymouth Tourist Information	01752 306330
Plymouth Yacht Haven Marina	01752 404231
King Point Marina	01752 424297
Police (non emergencies)	101
QHM Port Control Longroom	01752 663225
Queen Anne's Battery Marina	01752 671142
Sutton Harbour Lock Gate	01752 204732

## TAVY AND NORTHERN TAMAR



# PLYMOUTH WATERWAYS

A guide for small craft



February 2022



## ENTERING PLYMOUTH

Protected by its Breakwater, Plymouth Sound provides excellent shelter. It can be entered by either the Western or Eastern Channels which are both well buoyed and lit. Inside the Sound there are no real hazards and no shoals with less than 3.7 metres at MLWS, although care is needed to the west of Drakes Island. Yachts should keep clear of the marked deep water channels which are used by HM ships, cross channel ferries, large tankers, bulk carriers and the city's fishing fleet. The channels should, as far as possible, be crossed at right angles.

No mooring or landing is permitted on the Plymouth Breakwater.

Swimming areas off the Hoe foreshore, Bovisand Bay, Cawsand Bay and Firestone Bay are marked by special yellow buoys. All watercraft should be aware of any small boats flying the blue and white 'A' flag, which is displayed when diving is taking place.

Yachts approaching the marinas at Sutton Harbour, Queen Anne's Battery and Plymouth Yacht Haven should maintain a look out for tankers and bulk carriers entering, turning and leaving the Cattewater.

Anchoring is prohibited in Cattewater Harbour. Visitor moorings are available to book online, or free anchorages are available nearby as marked on current admiralty charts. There is a seasonal (Mar/Apr-Sept) dinghy pontoon available on Commercial Wharf (Barbican), which is free to use. Tenders up to 4m LOA, 4hr max stay

Sutton Harbour Marina is entered through a traffic light controlled 44m x 12m lock which operates free of charge, 24 hours a day. (Call VHF Channel 12). The lock operates in free flow mode for

approximately three hours either side of high water.

Craft heading for the Mayflower Marina, King Point Marina, the Hamoaze and the River Tamar should keep special watch for ferries turning outside the entrance to Millbay Docks and for the naval ships entering and leaving the Devonport Naval Base particularly in the Narrows where there are strong tidal streams. The short cut to the Hamoaze between Drakes Island and Mount Edgecumbe (known as 'The Bridge') has 2.9m at MLWS.

Small craft must avoid impeding the Torpoint Floating Bridge Chain Ferry which crosses between Devonport and Torpoint. The River Lynher entered above Torpoint dries extensively but is navigable on the flood tide up to St Germans Quay (no mooring). The River Tavy is navigable on the flood tide to Calstock, 12 miles above the Tamar road and rail bridges. The River Tavy is only accessible to unpowered craft and is navigable to Bere Ferrers.

Vessels should maintain a listening watch on VHF Ch.14 when operating in the port, and skippers should ensure they are familiar with all current Local Notice to Mariners, available on QHMs website.

## Speed Limits

Inside the Breakwater - 10 Knots\*  
 Cattewater - 4 Knots and no wake  
 The Cattewater - 8 Knots and no wake  
 River-Tamar north of Cargreen - 10 Knots and no wake  
 Sutton Harbour - Dead Slow  
 Swimming areas - 4 Knots

\* Except vessels under 15 metres in length overall may exceed the speed limit in Plymouth Sound outside of 400m from the shore or in the designated high speed areas, as shown on chart.

## PLYMOUTH SOUND AND TAMAR ESTUARIES MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA)

These waters have numerous designations for the rare and valuable species and habitats The key designations are:

Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Protects seabed habitats; rocky reefs, kelp forests, seagrass beds and saltmarshes, and species including Allis shad and Shore dock.

Tamar Estuaries Complex Special Protection Area (SPA) protects the intertidal areas that provide crucial habitats for the migratory wading birds, especially Little Egrets and Avocets.

Tamar Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ): Protects the habitats required by Native Oysters, Blue Mussels and Smelt as well as intertidal reefs and sediment.

Together these designations form the 'Plymouth Sound and Tamar Estuaries MPA'.

## Fragile Seabed

Plymouth Sound and Estuaries is home to globally important habitats and species. These ecosystems provide vital support to commercial fish stocks and rare species. These are vulnerable to boats, fishing gear or recreational water users. Care must be taken to avoid any damage to the seabed.

## Clean Water

The marine environment relies on clean waters, free from pollution and

contamination. Please note: it is illegal pursuant to the Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order 2020 for any polluting substance to be permitted to enter the waters of the Dockyard Port of Plymouth.

## Sensitive Birdlife

The waters are home to many wading and diving birds, which are very sensitive to human disturbance. Please keep your distance on land or water and keep dogs on leads particularly from November to March.

## TAMAR ESTUARIES CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Is a partnership bringing together the local authorities, harbour authorities and statutory bodies to ensure the sustainable management of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries. The membership consists of: Queen's Harbour Master Plymouth | Plymouth City Council | Cattewater Harbour Commissioners | South Hams District Council | West Devon Borough Council | Duchy of Cornwall | Cornwall Council | Devon County Council | Associated British Ports | Sutton Harbour Company | Natural England | Marine Management Organisation | Environment Agency | Devon & Severn IFCA | Cornwall IFCA | South Devon AONB | Tamar Valley AONB

TECF Coordinator: Tel 01752 304339 email: [coastal@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:coastal@plymouth.gov.uk), [@TamarEstuaries](mailto:@TamarEstuaries) [www.plymouth-mpa.uk](http://www.plymouth-mpa.uk)

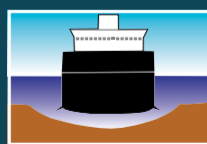
## NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

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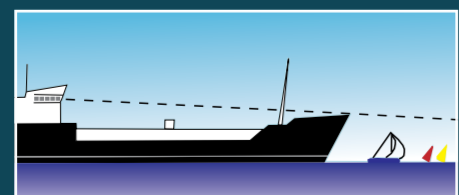


## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Obey Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations for conduct in narrow channels. Do not impede the passage of large vessels.
- Do not underestimate the speed of ships. If your boat is slow, you might not be able to take effective evasive action if you find yourself on collision course with a large ship in visibility of a quarter of a mile or less.
- Be visible. At night make sure your navigation lights can be seen. Remember, from the bridge of a large tanker, the captain or pilot will lose sight of you



ahead when you close within a third of a mile even though YOU can see the ship at all times. Even very small vessels e.g. canoes should carry a torch to make others aware of their presence.



- Be alert. Look around you frequently, especially astern.
- Keeping watch at night. Even on a clear night you will have difficulty seeing a big ship approach.

- Watch the ship's lights. To determine whether you are in the path of a ship, pay attention to the sidelights rather than the masthead lights. If you see both sidelights, you are dead ahead MOVE OUT FAST. You MUST be sure of your position. Learn to recognise the navigation lights of vessels towing, restricted in their ability to manoeuvre or constrained by their draft.

- Know whistle signals. The captain of a ship will frequently use the 'Port' (2 short blasts) or 'Starboard' (1 short blast) whistle signals when altering course. Five or more short blasts on the whistle is the 'danger' signal. Check and see if it is for you and if it is MAKE AWAY FAST! Three short blasts means

'My engines are going astern'.

- Know flag signals and shapes. A large ship displaying a cylinder on her yardarm during the day or three red lights in a vertical line at night indicates that she is of deep draught and therefore has restricted manoeuvrability. A submarine will be accompanied by a tug displaying the signals on her behalf. Give these vessels a wide berth.

- Keep your VHF Radio tuned to Channel 14. This is the Port Control channel. Listen for traffic information from the Port Control (Longroom for the Sound and Flag for the Dockyard).