

Section 9 Commercial Activities

Guiding Principle

To sustain the commercial viability of the Port of Fowey and to encourage efforts to ensure that all development proposals balance the economic and environmental needs of the estuary

9.1 Promote sustainable commercial activities

The aim is to ensure that commercial activities continue to thrive and grow in harmony with the valuable nature conservation, heritage, recreation and landscape of the estuary.

Commercial shipping of china clay through the Port of Fowey is well recognised as one of the most established activities in the area which continues to provide employment and trade to the local and wider economy. The income generated from the harbour dues and towage services for the commercial clay boats partly supports the provision of harbour services that benefit the wider recreational user. The Fowey sites are monitored for environmental parameters by the Environment Agency.

The boat building industry has always been an important part of the commercial activity of the harbour. Today the industry is somewhat smaller, although several yards continue to carry out important building and repair work to small commercial craft, fishing vessels and leisure craft. J. C. Toms & Sons in Polruan builds mainly wooden fishing boats of up to 55 feet in length, using traditional skills. The boatyard there has modern undercover facilities, with craning facilities to lift vessels of up to 30 tonnes, and two slipways capable of taking craft up to 80 feet in length.

The Harbour Commissioners yard, on the Polruan side of the river at Brazen Island, is on the site of the former sardine factory and includes extensive engineering and shipwrighting workshops. The slipway, protected by an arm, is capable of hauling out vessels of up to 160 ft (48.5 m) in length, 30 ft (9 m) beam and 450 tonnes weight. Outside work is undertaken to offset operational costs. The yard is serviced by two mobile cranes lifting up to 10 tonnes, and has the capacity for boat maintenance and storage.

Other boat building and repair yards include Fowey Boat Yard at Pottery Corner. Hunkins Yard is on the road from Caffa Mill to Four Turnings at Millpool, specialising in building small wooden craft. Hunkins also provides maintenance and repairs together with boat storage. G. Williams runs a small

yard at Bodinnick. At Golant, three proprietors' properties provide boat maintenance. In addition there are a number of firms specialising in engine repairs and specialised maintenance and services including hydraulic and sail repairs, all along the river from Fowey to Lostwithiel.

Cruise liner visits to the harbour are increasing, bringing more tourists to the estuary. Fowey Harbour Commissioners, in conjunction with other partners, employ the services of a Cruise Co-ordinator to promote the port to prospective cruise line operators. The proximity of the Eden Project from the Fowey Estuary has further interested the cruise line operators. In addition, promoting local amenities, businesses and linking the business and leisure communities is important. The local business sector, through channels such as the Chamber of Commerce, shipping agents and local authorities are all involved in raising the commercial profile of the estuary.

Tourism is a vital part of the local economy, with many visitors arriving by land as well as by sea. Local facilities such as accommodation, restaurants and visitor attractions prove popular and are becoming increasingly used through the winter months as well as the more traditional winter period.

Commercial port and harbour activities and associated maritime industry makes an important economic contribution to the Fowey Estuary area.

9.2 Ensure sufficient contingency arrangements for the Estuary

Contingency arrangements are a vital part of any operations, whether land or water based. Cornwall County Council and Restormel and Caradon District Councils have emergency planning departments with plans to cover eventualities in the FEMP areas. Fowey Harbour Commissioners hold the Port Emergency Plan, covering eventualities within the Harbour and Estuary areas.

Fowey Harbour Marine Emergency Plan Revised November 2000, sets out the action to be taken in an emergency or potential emergency in the Harbour area and in the event of a major incident declared by the emergency services.

Cornwall County Council hold a Coastal Counter Pollution Plan, August 2002, with the aim of assisting in the co-ordination of actions, or provision of co-ordinated action by all participants in dealing with pollution incidents affecting the coastline of Cornwall.

Pollution contingency planning is outlined further in Section 11.4.

Section 10 Fisheries

Guiding Principle

To seek ways of conserving and enhancing recreational and commercial fisheries without undue detriment to the environment or other estuary users

Natural fisheries are important ecological assets and are also of commercial value for angling and netting. Fish and shellfish are good overall indicators of the health of estuaries and rivers.

10.1 Support existing fisheries management arrangements

Fowey Harbour has long been used as a base for the fishing industry and is the registration port for boats from Dodman Point to Seaton. Today the fishing industry in Fowey is of low commercial significance, while the neighbouring harbours of Looe, Polperro and Mevagissey continue to function more strongly as fishing ports.

The estuary is not ideal for supporting a major coastal fishery; the quays are small, road access is poor, there are no storage or vehicle parking areas available and there are limited landing facilities. There are no berths available to boats for deep water access at all states of the tide, nowhere that they can lie to service or take on equipment and no facility exists to provide ice.

Without these facilities the fishing industry in the port will not be sustainable. New EC Directive Regulations on landing requirements for all types of fish, crustaceans and bivalve molluscs restrict landing at sites other than those specifically designated for the purpose. Without these sites being made available, the fishing industry in the port is likely to remain a minor component of the commercial activities of the area.

Cornwall Sea Fisheries (CSFC) and DEFRA regulate fishing activity around the whole Cornish coast, through a combination of byelaws, EU and National legislation governing landing sizes and the types of gear used.

Significant runs of salmon and migratory trout (sea-trout) pass through the Fowey Estuary on their way into the freshwater Fowey system. Within the Fowey Estuary the Environment Agency are the Sea Fisheries Authority. Under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 (SAFFA), the Agency enforces the Salmon and Sea Trout Legislation within the estuary and out to a six nautical mile limit from the coast. The open season for fishing for salmon in freshwater is 1st April – 15th December, although salmon can only be retained after the 16th June (*National Spring Salmon byelaws 1999*). The open

season for migratory trout is 1st April – 30th September. Anglers need an Environment Agency National Rod Licence (*Rod & Line Fisheries Byelaws for the South West Region*) to fish for salmon, trout (including migratory trout), coarse fish and eels in the South West.

The Environment Agency has published its Salmon Action Plan consultation document for the River Fowey (March 2003), which describes the current state of the salmon stock and identifies future actions to protect salmon.

Legislation has allowed the creation of a closed netting season for salmon and trout. There are currently two net licences on the Fowey, which can be used from 16th June – 31st August, although the usual season is between 2nd March – 31st August. The longer period licences were bought by SWW as part of a mitigation process for the construction of Colliford reservoir, but this may change in the future. There are four designated netting stations on the Fowey. The net licensees report their catches as part of the licence requirements.

Other fisheries legislation is in force and detailed advice should be sought from the Environment Agency on 01208 78301 prior to fishing.

The Fowey Estuary also contains a DEFRA designated bass nursery area which allows fishing from a boat to be regulated. The closed season is 1st May – 31st December, up stream of a line drawn 270° true from Penleath Point to the opposite shore. The minimum size limit for bass in Cornish estuaries and on the coast to a six mile limit is 37.5cm. It is an offence to retain any bass under this size from either an estuary (EA byelaw, 6 November 2002) or from the coast out to six miles (Cornwall Sea Fisheries Bass Byelaw 7 April 1997).

Part of the Fowey Estuary is also designated as Shellfish Water under the EC Shellfish Waters Directive. Pacific oysters, mussels, cockles and Manila clams are produced in Pont Pill, where they are also relayed. Pacific oysters are farmed in part of Wiseman's Reach. There is also a purification, depuration and despatch centre near Caffa Mill approved by Fowey Port Health Authority.

10.2 Identify sustainable levels for bait harvesting

The collection of peeler/soft back crabs and the digging of Polychaete worms (such as lugworm and ragworm) have long been established for recreational use. Bait harvesting on a commercial scale has been raised as an issue of concern with regard to its visual impact, the potential hazards these operations cause and the environmental impacts to the intertidal communities. This is an emotive subject and needs to be dealt with in a sensitive manner. Site-specific management needs to be identified using national and regional guidance in co-operation with those who practice bait harvesting.

A Voluntary Code of Conduct for digging bait is in place in the Fowey Estuary, adopted and developed jointly by Fowey Harbour Commissioners, the Cornish Federation of Sea Anglers and the National Federation of Sea Anglers (Cornish Division). Fowey Harbour Byelaw 102 (*Appendix 2*) prohibits bait

digging within six metres of moorings, quays and buoys to preserve the integrity of such structures and to protect the safety of people using them.

Evidence from the South Devon Estuaries indicates that commercial crab tiling is increasing, and measures to limit the numbers of tiles being laid are being investigated. Some studies have recently been carried out to establish the impacts of commercial crab tiling on the estuarine environment (CCW Contract Science Report 51 (2002), and various university student projects), and further research is being undertaken to identify acceptable numbers of tiles and frequency of collection. Surveys are being carried out on Devon estuaries and in Fowey to establish the scale of crab tiling; this work needs to be progressed to develop management plans for crab tiling, such as included in the Tamar Estuaries Bait Collection Voluntary Management Plan (1999).

10.3 Increase understanding between fisheries interests and other estuary users

The Partnership need to provide a mechanism for increasing communication within and between the various fisheries that operate on the estuary and are associated with the estuary and other user groups to reduce the potential for conflict and encourage greater understanding of the issues involved. This can be achieved through the distribution of literature amongst all sectors of the fishing industry and other relevant parties relating to voluntary or statutory measures for fisheries management, including Voluntary Codes of Conduct and byelaws. The various interested parties can also be brought together to encourage liaison through targeted focus group meetings.



Crab tiles on the Fowey Estuary