

## South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership

### Voluntary Exclusion Zone Consultation

April 2017

#### Full comments

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**Q1. Which one of the following best describes the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire:**

**Q1a Other text**

There were 22 respondents

- Former sailor, windsurfer, power-boater, water-skier and canoeist, member of ESC and EPBSC
- Actively involved in many watersports inc. sailing, rowing, kayaking, powerboating
- A dinghy sailor AND windsurfer
- multiple of the above
- A local resident who enjoys walking and looking at the birds.
- resident, walker, canoer - impossible to answer as just one
- Walker, sailor, kayaker, birdwatcher, local resident,
- Sailor, kitesurfer, windsurfer, paddleboarder, dog walker
- Sailor, kitesurfer, stand up paddle boarder, local dog walker
- As a local resident, at least seven of the cats. listed above represent myself. Asking one to pick o
- a local resident who boats on the river in a number of ways including sailing & small motor craft.
- I have an allotment that I rent from EDDC between the railway track and the estuary path.
- I actually use the Estuary in many of the ways noted above.
- Pleasure boater, from out of the area
- Both Stand Up paddleboarder and Kitesurfer (Equally)
- Follow up to the consultation event on the 20th April
- a regular visitor to the area to visit family
- Local resident and water user for a variety of sports.
- Walker, Dog Walker, SUP, Swim, Kitesurfer,
- What a stupid way to define my interests 11 of the categories are applicable
- Local resident- sailor- walker- volunteer RNLI launching authority
- individual user, one of many, multiple activity user in, on and under the water

**Q1b Name of organisation**

There were 3 respondents

- Regional Waterways Adviser, British Canoeing
- Exeter Canoe Club Sea Kayakers
- Starcross Yacht Club

**Q2 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Exmouth was implemented, would this have any benefits for you or your organisation?**

**Q2a Please explain what the benefits for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these benefits would happen?**

20 respondents commented.

- It's not about benefits for me or my organisation, it's about preserving the roosting and feeding sites for the birds which we are all legally obliged to protect. It is a fundamental requirement of the SSSI, SPA & RAMSAR sites. We are not doing anything like enough to protect all their feeding & roosting areas. What about the West muds?! What about banning dog walking on all of the sand banks on the estuary all year round? What this proposal does is a start, but it needs to be more.
- It would be a positive step to conserving the beauty and biodiversity of this special place. I regularly see evidence of the disturbance caused by human and dog behaviour especially on wading birds.
- It would enhance the richness of wildlife in the area.
- It would minimize disturbance to wintering birds trying to feed on the estuary - this is vital to enable them to replenish (refuel) at the harshish time of the year. Disturbance also disrupts both surveys of birds such as WEBs counts, and the enjoyment that myself and others get from watching the birds. The proposed exclusion zone enables me to continue enjoying the estuary, whilst also enabling other users to have their own space for their enjoyment.
- Reduce disturbance and protect habitat and food for Migrating and local bird life. These areas should be protected anyway under the RASAR agreement and our own legislation which should be enforced under the various laws protecting wildlife .
- as a keen birdwatcher this would improve my enjoyment by allowing the birds less disturbance, particularly a ban on dog walkers.
- The benefit would be for the wildlife on the estuary and not for other users. This is important.
- Birdwatching would be far more enjoyable - not seeing species that have travelled thousands of miles to feed being needlessly disturbed would be fantastic. There are large areas of the river that could be utilised for water sports but often users will plough through thousands of feeding wildfowl, flushing them repeatedly.
- Would continue to enhance opportunities for enjoying the very varied birdlife Usually found here especially in winter
- Reducing disturbance to birds feeding on the mud, enhancing the experience of those interested in birds and watching them, and promoting the conservation of the preferred habitats and feeding grounds of both migrant and resident birds.
- I hope it would limit disturbance which would otherwise adversely affect wintering birds, for which this is a very important feeding area.
- It would ensure that the bird population of the Exe Estuary has a defined feeding area where disturbance is minimized.
- Will give birds a chance to be natural in their habitat without human disturbance. They need all the help they can get.
- This will help to ensure the continuation of undisturbed feeding by migratory waders, providing people respect the conditions of the zone
- Avoidance of disturbance to internationally important bird populations
- Less disturbance to important wintering flocks
- I hope it will lead to less disturbance to birds from human recreation, thereby benefiting the wildlife and those who wish to enjoy seeing birds without disturbing them. Disturbance causes birds to move around, spending energy instead of feeding and it can move them away from the best feeding areas.

- Hopefully this would minimise disturbance to wildlife
- There would be more wildlife to look at!
- The estuary is one of the most important feeding stations for migrant and visiting birds in the south-west. Wildfowl and wading birds gather in this part of the estuary to feed at low tides. The spectacular numbers attracts many visitors to the area to view the birds both from the land and boats on the river. This brings in money to local businesses.

**Q2b Please tell us about any suggestions you have for how we could improve our proposal to increase the benefit to you or your organisation, and explain how this would increase the benefit:**

9 respondents commented.

- See above - ban dog walking/letting dogs run freely all over the sand banks & mud flats throughout the estuary and Dawlish Warren all year round. Ban it outright and stop pampering to these people who don't care about the birds - they are causing illegal disturbance. Also ban wildfowling which is ridiculous on SSSI, SPA & RAMSAR sites. Shooting birds should not happen at all on the Exe Estuary.
- I would exclude people, dogs and powered boats from sensitive areas used by wading birds
- Encouraging voluntary monitoring by all user groups, in order to ensure there are no incursions.
- Reduce disturbance and protect habitat and food for Migrating and local bird life. These areas should be protected anyway under the RASAR agreement and our own legislation which should be enforced under the various laws protecting wildlife .
- Any zonal implementations need to be enforced. The current restrictions are continually being ignored.
- the Exmouth exclusion zone should start at the beginning of September. Wildfowl start arriving in August and numbers are often pretty high by mid September. For example on 24th September 2016 I recorded 112 Dark-bellied Brent Geese, 2 Pale-bellied Brent Geese, c800 Wigeon, 85+ Pintail, 47 Mute Sawn and a large number of Mallard.
- The VEZ should apply through the whole winter - through to March NOT just to December. It is particularly important to reduce disturbance to birds during the coldest part of the winter period, when food supplies are most limited, and the birds are particularly reliant on the Exe Estuary. Later in the winter, the Brent Geese need to have undisturbed access both to the Eel Grass and land grazing, as the Eel grass becomes well-grazed.
- I am happy for the protection of wildlife.
- Effective publicity about the restricted area/timing to achieve compliance by users of the estuary and ideally understanding and support for the restrictions, and effective means of ensuring that any non-compliance is recorded and follow up action taken to minimize the risk of repeat non-compliance.

**Q3 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Exmouth was implemented, would this cause any problems for you or your organisation?**

**Q3a Please explain what the problems for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these problems will happen:**

129 respondents commented.

- Less water to sail in, more congested and therefore more dangerous with all types of craft (power boats and sailing, paddle boarders, kayaks all forced into a smaller area.
- I believe there is a suggestion that we restrict our sailing to high tide only-this would have a massive negative effect as we normally sail on an outgoing tide just before low tide. We are aware of the need to avoid disturbing feeding/resting birds and already take steps to do this.
- Restriction of use of parts of the estuary at a state of the tide when birds would be off the mud or the grasses would be covered by water.
- Exclusion From the Exmouth VEZ will seriously harm local canoeists capability to safely passage up or down the estuary. Only expert canoeists are able to use the main channel which is subject to fierce tidal currents, river traffic, buoyage and moored craft. A club such as Exeter Canoe Club regularly passes close to the shore for safety reasons when leading groups of improving or moderate level paddlers.
- We row Traditional Cornish Pilot Gigs on a regular basis, at least two sessions a week, all year around, with presently 40-50 club members, from the local community. We launch from either Shelly Beach or Belchers Slipway. The challenges we face are the large number of moorings (boats and bouys) and the rushing tides. To weave between boats swinging on their moorings against a rushing tide can be dangerous and sometimes impossible with a novice crew, on these occasions we row across the Duck Pond area and to the north between two yellow pole markers. We need at least 1m of water and so don't disturb river bed and have never noticed that we disturb any paddling or resting birds. If the VEZs were enforced we could be forced into dangerous waters through the moorings into the channel - which in turn could be more crowded from other traffic avoiding the VEZs.
- Our sailing club now has a canoeing section. Expecting canoes to stick to the main channel is dangerous. 1. This means that they are in all the traffic and they are slow, so cannot move out of the way of larger, faster vessels easily. Also, with their low profile they may not be seen. 2. The tide is at its strongest in the main channel and paddlers can become exhausted trying to stem the tide. Also, being in the area where there the tide is strongest makes them vulnerable to be swept down river, into moorings or out to sea. Expecting a sailing club to stage all its events at high tide might seem logical because we already do all ur racing around high tide. However, we also run dinghy cruises and these are often arranged around low tide, so that slow boats can sail with the tide when heading for Exmouth and then with the tide as it comes in again, when they want to return to Powderham. Sailing against a strong tide in a slow dinghy is hard work and exhausting, which is dangerous.
- The proposed and revised exclusion zones would make the duck pond area virtually unusable to all water users. During the consultation held at The Beach House we presented you with a plan that would be possible to adhere to, unfortunately the revised zone is remains to large and needs further amendment if it to be achievable.
- Dinghy sailors and kayakers like myself would not be able to access as much of the estuary as we can at present. This will be denying us the benefit of the space without a good reason. I have been unable to discover any serious evidence based for the proposal such as declining populations linked to other users of the estuary. As someone who regularly sails on the exe I have not noticed the bird life being disturbed by my presence.
- The estuary is already naturally limited for sailing, due to shallow waters and tidal constrains. For this reason, the estuary sailing clubs are not as active as sailing club in

deep waters (like e.g. Torbay). If you further restrict the area that it is permitted to use, or the times when it is allowed to do so, it is probable that the sailing clubs will be pushed towards shutting down.

- It would make sailing and canoeing very difficult for local areas. I cannot see how motor boats can remain whist wind craft which have minimal impact on the environment can be disturbing
- I regularly sail a slow and graceful boat up and down the estuary and this exclusion zone would be impossible to obey if it covers High Water +/- 3hrs
- Restrict freedom to sail because sailors would be excluded
- It would restrict dinghy cruising
- forces boats in to strong tidal streams
- Restriction of an already crowded space, curtailing the activity of sailing and making conflict between the various recreational water users more likely.
- Reduce the amount of water in which to sail. This will cause difficulties during periods of strong tides.
- It's an area that I and my family have used for more than 50 years for recreation at high tide for canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and kite surfing. It is the only SAFE place for people to learn these sports, as further out in the river and on the coast there are strong tides and rough water
- I would hate to see a new generation faced with impositions on the freedoms I enjoyed, and new generations should enjoy.
- The inability to seek safety along the east bank from a fast flowing outgoing spring tide on the turn of the tide and/or strong easterly wind and/or fog when returning to Exe Sailing Club from kayaking up river. Coming down the middle of the river away from the proposed VEZ would cause a kayaker to be caught in the main tidal flow in such circumstances, making it extremely difficult to safely navigate around the southern tip of the proposed VEZ on the east bank against the secondary tidal flow sweeping past the front of Exe Sailing Club with the dire consequence of being swept out past the more dangerous waters off the harbour entrance and out to sea.
- I often paddle from Exmouth to Lypstone and return. The exclusion zone would require me to paddle in fast moving tides and put me in potentially dangerous conflict with other estuary craft. Rendering kayaking on the Southern Exe potentially unviable during times the zone was in force.
- Sailors and other boat users need to be able to move to safe, slower waters if they have to effect a repair or have other problems with their craft. If there are fast moving or large vessels, small boats need to get out of the way. If travelling against the tide unpowered boats need to get into shallower, slow moving water and avoid the channel. I don't think these problems would happen. I know they will happen if the proposals are implemented in their entirety and lives may be at risk as a result.
- The proposed zones are safer for kayaking down the river from Exeter end as it is usually more protected from wind and tide. To use the channel would be unsafe on a dropping tide as it would be more or less impossible to safely cross from the channel to the Exe sailing Club slip. Also the channel is used by powered craft e.g. Stuart line, the Starcross ferry and yachts all of which create wake which is unsettling for canoes and kayaks.
- I use this stretch of water for boating activities, wind surf and kite surfing. We only have a small space
- Yes I wouldn't be able to paddle in the relatively sheltered safer water in these areas.
- I regularly sail through this area on recreational outings. The proposed Exclusion Zone would prevent this and I object strongly. I've been sailing in these waters regularly for nearly 20 years and have at no point been aware of my disturbing any wildlife. I also kayak in the estuary and the proposed exclusion zones would mean

having to go down the sometimes fast moving estuary channel, a hazardous process and definite safety risk.

- It is very difficult to attract talented software engineers to Devon. But it is critical that we do so otherwise when many of the local industries become automated over the next 20 years (marine, agriculture etc.) then we shall simply be consumers of solutions built in alternative locations resulting in high unemployment. Access to water sports on the Exe Estuary is a critical and unique selling point in the ongoing efforts to attract and retain talented engineers to and within the area.
- I run sailing courses for children at the Exe sailing club, whilst the mud flat areas south of Lympstone are not suitable for groups of children the Duck Pond area at the correct tide is very useful and a very safe area allowing group control to be easily maintained. Forcing the children out in to the tidal stream area makes the control harder. We are an RYA approved Training Centre and all instruction is done in accordance with their guidance. Having greater control often means that the children's skill progression is enhanced in that they can sail designated courses more easily practising techniques more regularly rather than having to beat against tides. I also use this area for recreational activities with my family for canoeing and paddleboarding, often transiting up to Lympstone and occasionally over to Cockwood.
- They will cause safety problems because in some conditions of weather / tide / traffic with powered craft, kayaks would need to paddle in the proposed zones. They will restrict use of the estuary severely because many trips could not be planned if the option of paddling in these areas was not available. The safe training area in the "duckpond" would be drastically reduced.
- There would no longer be a safe area to use on the river which is particularly dangerous around the spring tides or where as a kayaker and windsurfer I can launch and recover easily and safely.
- It would prevent my sailing, rowing or motor boating in those very tranquil areas. It would also prevent my collecting data for my project to chart the tidal flow currents of the lower Exe estuary.
- Very occasionally on high spring tides I have sailed in parts of this area. I believe that on these occasions I cause significantly less disturbance to wild birds than the power boats whose use of the area is protected by law. What is of more concern is that this proposal is being pushed forward with little evidence to support the ban on sailing activity in this area. I believe this is another instance of more regulation for the sake of more regulation. Educate not regulate!
- The whole idea of these further restrictions on the Exe are both unnecessary and unfounded. It seems that the organisations promoting these proposals would prefer the Exe to be a no go area for humans. There seems to be no credible evidence of any conflict with wildlife.
- I windsurf on the 'duckpond' and would be unable to do so satisfactorily under this proposal. In particular, mainly because of the prevailing wind direction, I often sail into the proposed exclusion zone
- As far as I can see and according to information I have read, many bird species are flourishing and already enjoy using the estuary as it is. The estuary is not in a remote part of the country. It is situated in between large, vibrant communities for whom the estuary with its history of boat usage, is an important and highly valued amenity. There are train lines in both sides and I cannot believe that the exclusion of the small craft that generally use the estuary will make any significant difference to the bird population. In particular making a business out of having to patrol the areas to uphold the exclusion zone (on a boat!) seems ridiculous and out of proportion to the aims. I would not like to see any proposal that reduces the areas small boats/kayaks etc. can use and I would prefer to be able to continue to sail, paddle and walk around all areas of the estuary as one of the main draws to living in the area.

- Safety of my young family, i will be forced to use the area with stronger currents. The chance of serious harm will increase tremendously if i follow the voluntary exclusion zone. I have yet to see why when water covers this area it cannot be used?
- None powered craft cause no noise. Only on accessing and exiting the water do they generally come close to shore and usually at very low speed. The area is a safe waterproof location better than any other locally.
- Could be a loss of safe angling spots. Could infringe on bait digging
- I use the Estuary for Kayaking, Sailing and Windsurfing. Familiarisation with no-go zones would be enough of a deterrent to deter me from going anywhere near the exclusion areas. It would possibly result in me windsurfing or kayaking elsewhere.
- I frequently walk or cycle in that area, as well as the occasional kayak trip up to Lympstone. I kayak at high water across the mud flats, as it is much easier and safer than going all the way out to the navigable channel. It appears that the proposed exclusion zone includes the cycle way - is that correct??? Built at such an expense and used by so many, we'll now be barred from using it over the winter months? Surely not.
- My children are learning to kitesurf and windsurf, and they sail too. These exclusion zones would restrict and hamper the safe use of these areas, as there are times when wind or tide might force them to move into an exclusion zone, even if not planned. It appears that the exclusion zone is more extensive than previous kitesurfing voluntary exclusion zones have been. Windsurfers and kitesurfers use the area at high tide, whereas the birds use it at low tide. Is there REALLY any well-founded evidence that water use causes problems for the birds?
- I won't be able to access the area as a dinghy sailor.
- Because the channel is so narrow and winding, the main currents in the estuary are concentrated in this area. As such most organised events, particularly ones including juniors or less experienced adults, need to be run in the margins where the currents are slacker. The higher the tide, the more width of the estuary needs to be used.
- The problems with restricting all non-motorised craft but especially sailing craft to the deep non-drying channels outside the VEZ are when trying to get home against the tide. When cheating the tide, shallow water is sought as the foul tide doesn't run as hard here. By forcing ALL craft to use the deepest parts of the river with the strongest tide potentially turns an inconvenience into a safety issue where unlit craft are returning after dark - all because they were forced into the strongest foul tide that prevented them making much or any progress over the ground. As Exe uses, we all know that the spring ebb starts at between 6pm and 9pm on the fortnightly cycle making this scenario a real possibility. This will be exacerbated as the wind frequently dies away in the evening, especially in thermal sea breeze conditions.
- Unable to use area if required...i.e. in trouble on boat. May need to sail into that area for safety.
- The exclusion zone would mean that kayakers/canoes would be required to go farther out into the areas where the tidal flow is stronger and canoeing in a busier waterway. One of the attractions of this activity is the quiet access it gives to observing wildlife.
- I will be unable to canoe safely in a close to shore situation. I will - to the best of my understanding of this - be unable to take long walks across cockle sands when the tide is out. Also - and quite apart from my own situation right now - I have lived in Exmouth for 18 years now and in that time have sailed dinghies within the proposed exclusion zone at all times of the year and learnt to windsurf there. The duck pond area has always been a safe area for water users to practice and learn.
- I like to bring my children to the duckpond as a very safe environment on the sea. This is a great area for children who want to learn about the sea.
- Ending the period of the VEZ in December would make a major reduction in its benefit to wintering birds - which need to use the estuary throughout the winter (not just in

periods most convenient to Kite surfers, etc.) and lead to further degradation of the environmental quality of the Exe Estuary - which is, after all, an SPA.

- Due to wind conditions it is possible that a sailing dinghy might need to approach or enter this area but as it needs about a metre of water, it would be a long way from the tide-line feeding area.
- It has no benefit to any one bird stocks are good. It seems to me like a power hungry pen pusher with time on their hands and money to justify spending is trying to justify their existence.
- It would restrict both my opportunity to dig bait as well as actually going fishing
- I am not sure that high/mid tide travel by a SUP is actually affected-
- Because the benefits to avians will be very marginal, at low tide when used for feeding there is no water anyway so it cannot be used for waterborne activities, the environment on the exe is not in danger of development and the current usages have been going on for many years without detriment to avians
- Lack of use of areas will allow the decline of the estuary, and cause problems for man and wildlife. Each year I put my boat in and out at The Retreat. The autumn exclusion could have effects on the passage to and from The Retreat. There has been an affect because of the lack of dredging the channel. Higher and higher spring tides are needed to allow passage up to the Retreat. Also due to the early times of springs I tend to use a mooring by Turf Lock, so access to the Retreat can be made with sufficient time to be lifted out before the tide runs out.
- Potential for overregulation and misinterpretation of proposals by wardens and other water users.
- The water over these areas is slower moving than in the main channel providing a much safer place to paddle. Obviously these areas can only be accessed when there is enough water over them. When the water is too shallow then even canoes can't pass over them.
- The area is a safe kayaking area at high tide keeping kayaks out of the way of large powered vessels. The area is also used to access the slipway at the Imperial Ground while avoiding the strong tidal flows in the main channel. It is often impossible for unpowered craft to make progress against the tidal flows in the main channel close to Exmouth.
- 1. My freedom of movement with or without my dog, I enjoy kayaking I have done both for many years and see no reason to stop. I am born and bred in this country (England) served my country so I will not be stopping the above.
- The River Exe is a tidal river, which can restrict movement, and it's safer to canoe near the banks, when weather and tides dictate. With strong winds and tides, you may be driven onto the banks against your own will. As members of the Exeter Canoe Club, we show respect to each other, and give assistance when we can. With signs in the relevant places, the general public will show respect, and pass by peacefully. It's the very small minority who cause trouble, and they are the ones who need to be policed.
- The exclusion zone would force all canoeing activity into the main channel irrespective of weather and traffic conditions. The calmer waters of the protected area would be denied with the subsequent increased safety risk.
- Because of the speed of flow in the main channel of the Exe, and the speed and size of other vessels present, it is totally unsafe for kayakers/canoists to paddle in the main channel. Therefore this exclusion zone would effectively ban kayakers/canoists from the Exe estuary. To put it mildly, this seems very drastic. Is there any specific evidence that kayakers/canoists are adversely affecting wildlife in the estuary? The vast majority of kayakers/canoists are very respectful of wildlife.
- I consider any exclusion of peaceful recreation and enjoyment of areas of the river to myself or others for what is essentially the benefit of another group of recreational users to be nothing short of elitism. I strongly object to the principle of migratory birds

being in dire need of solitary use of these areas seeing as they've always had to share them up until now anyhow. The whole thing is deeply flawed and being driven by people who have their own interests at heart.

- This zone would restrict the safe access for kayaks. The Deep water channel can be too fast flowing and choppy for some paddlers. I have seen first-hand that paddling within this area does not appear to affect wildlife as the majority of us are respectful and keep a sensible distance. Many birds remain where they are, doing what they are doing so long as a respectful distance is given, but that distance may be within your VEZ and may be in an area that is safer for kayakers.
- Limit windsurfing and visitors to the town
- I want to enjoy water activities in the estuary and of the
- Voluntary Exclusion Zone was implemented I could not do it anymore.
- Reduced access for Kitesurfing based on the map. If the other proposed changes from the existing VEZ to the map this will cause a major safety risk to both beginner and experienced kitesurfers due to the lack of space and proximity to mooring buoys at the south west end of the duck pond.
- Kayakers, sailors etc. would be forced to use channels of water that are unsafe due to the speed of water moving in the channel and sharing that reduced space with motor craft
- I am a beginner kitesurfer and am still gaining confidence with my kite flying skills. With the proposed exclusion zone that is on your website, I would no longer be able to use the duckpond as it would be too dangerous for me to launch a kite, cross a road and then walk 20m down a slipway with it in the air before reaching water. Exmouth is well known as a watersports area and this will deter new comers to sports and therefore Exmouth and cause dangerous situations for those attempting to learn here.
- The suggestions of Kite/windsurfing: details of zones, a requirement to only use the Duck Pond zone from 1 September to 1 April so that kite/windsurfing does not take place in the rest of the estuary during this period; to maintain distance from Dawlish Warren all year round; a requirement to only use the Duck Pond area 2 hours either side of high tide; clear guidance on where users should set up their equipment; and a requirement to not be out on the water in prolonged cold weather. Are frankly totally unreasonable. The duckpond area is one of the safest places for people to learn to Kitesurf. This is a big draw for Exmouth and brings a lot of business into the town. The exposure of having multiple world champions living and working here should be promoted not excluded. Kitesurfing only at high tide reduces the safety aspect as it creates deeper water where people can get into difficulties. Also some of the best conditions for wind sports are during the winter months when the wind is more reliable. Of all the water users kitesurfers have minimal impact with very small boards in the water. We don't have motors, long rudder or centreboards. Don't dig up the sand and food, stay away from wildlife don't foul the area with dog litter.
- The zone as proposed would prevent us from using any of the river outside the main channel. This is a problem for us because we paddle craft with a maximum top speed of 3 knots and the water flow in the channel reaches about 6 knots. Therefore, we cannot make any headway against the flow, indeed, we will be swept backwards. This presents obvious dangers. We risk being swept out to sea or, worse, under moorings and moored boats. This zone as proposed would prevent all but the most experienced paddlers from using the estuary at the times when the exclusion zone applies which is, exactly the time we currently use the estuary for training most at present.
- As listed above, possible use in a safety situation boating/ sailing. And dog walking.
- At high tide it restricts the area available for sailing, and of course at that time no birds are feeding or roosting in the area. It conflicts with the statutory right of navigation.
- Because it stops people enjoying the river with over and unnecessary interference from quangos. Birds have been coming to the river Exe for thousands of years, and

have adapted to the changing environment without the need of a committee, even the advent of the railway, the change from steam to diesel! Dogs, humans and even foxes have to be very close to the birds before they cause the slightest alarm. By making this exclusion area you are preventing local people using a very safe and accessible area for people to sail and enjoy the water, and walk along the foreshore to enjoy birds and the view.

- This would affect the use of safe areas at various times of the tide and certain wind directions which would make it very difficult to use the estuary as not only would it be a safety issue for all but of great importance for junior rowers and novices Rowing is a non-motor sport and very quiet and of no disturbance to wildlife
- Areas proposed are currently used as safe rest areas from strong tides and currents.
- Health & Safety! Lack of sheltered water from strong winds/currents especially for young and inexperienced rowers.
- Safety of dinghies, canoes, etc. being forced to use the main channel which is being used by larger and commercial vessels with limited manoeuvrability.
- It would restrict my personal freedom to enjoy the Estuary based upon a completely non-evidence based premise and I fear would be the first of a series of similar initiatives which will further erode my personal freedom to enjoy my local countryside and waterways.
- Around High Water only: this large area forms a safe, shallow sailing area, ideal for small unmotorised sailing craft (dinghies) to navigate. I sail through here regularly, when conditions are right. The minimum depth of water required by these craft is a metre. Over the centuries, it is recognised that good seamanship practice is for small sail-driven craft to stay out of deeper main shipping lanes, where large power vessels have to navigate. There is the additional benefit that tidal flows are generally weaker over shallow areas. In short, the availability of this area is a major contribution to safety. The autumn is a good time for sailing since the water is still relatively warm. The loss of this area for dinghy sailing activity would be a serious loss to me.
- Unable to enjoy use of the estuary.
- I would lose beneficial rights to enjoy any area of this beautiful waterway I currently enjoy.
- I and friends are regular kayakers on the Exe estuary and due to the shifting sandbanks have to be careful where we paddle in order that we do not get stranded at certain states of tide which may then involve calling out one of the rescue services to assist. Yes at times we can safely go about our trips well away from the birds but there are occasions when we have to move closer to the East shore in order to make a safe passage. Incidentally on the odd occasion when we have moved close to wading birds they have taken little or no notice as we glide silently by.
- It would be unsafe to have no go areas.
- This is the area that provides an area of safety and protection from the elements within the estuary, when other areas are more dangerous. Such enforcement action being proposed will force other users of these areas to practice their sport in other areas of the estuary, further increasing traffic and reducing safe areas in which rowers can operate. In my opinion, that I row only when there is enough water, any disturbance to the birds or the habitat is non-existent
- The boundary of the VEZ is difficult to identify. Not sure that a few sail boats would have a determined effect on the bird life
- The estuary is so tidal that over 50% of it is inaccessible to sailing boats for 50% of the time. Keeping dinghies out of part of the estuary at high water is tackling an unproven problem (bird disturbance from sailing) by restricting a healthy and environmentally friendly activity unnecessarily.
- Some portions of the VEZ are used by our very low impact activity of Gig Rowing during certain conditions. Our club hopes to provide a junior rowing section this year which may only be possible using part of the proposed VEZ. Whilst I think the power

boats for example should continue, it seems mad to then exclude lower impact activities a stone's throw across the water. I do agree however that the very special wildlife of this unique area should be considered and protected so much as is possible. Our biggest risk is collision with other motor boat users in the main channel. Tides impact our activity heavily limiting our usable areas.

- I currently paddle the estuary to get from the ShiOp Canal to Exmouth and the restrictions will no longer allow me to do this.
- Restriction of access when area covered. Limiting opportunities to fish from boats. Limited opportunity to fish from shore at low water.
- My son, who has Autism, paddles a sea kayak with Exeter canoe club. He regularly uses this part of the Estuary and imposing this ban would severely affect his safe use of the estuary. The narrow pathway proposed that will be allowed would make it far too dangerous for manually powered sea kayaks to pass through safely, along with all other craft that would be squashed into this narrow channel. I see NO evidence to support your reasons for imposing this ban on such craft, there is no pollution, damage to the estuary or wild life from club members or indeed any kayak users.
- I fully support protection of the environment and wildlife. I also expect humans to be treated with due regard. Water users need to be free to choose where to navigate as they take account of the winds and the tides.
- Safety to river users such as myself would be put at risk. Assuming the area would be marked, this would make parts of the river unavailable or at least questionable depending on the date, at a time life could be at risk.
- I may need access in certain wind and weather conditions when sailing and with sufficient water particularly for safety reasons.
- See above in point 2.
- This is an area of favourable tides and conditions that enable us to safely use the water during certain tidal conditions. The availability of the area to others is still important as it gives space for users to "spread out" meaning that all users are not forced into using the same area's which are already congested.
- I cannot see any evidence to support the proposal from the point of view of a kayak user - on the contrary it may put myself and my family members at increased risk through the consistent suggestion that we use the "main channel". This is deeper, and faster flowing, than other parts of the Estuary and may also place us in danger from other users of the Estuary.
- Limit sailing times and area
- This is against the idea of free navigation, it is an unnecessary cost to the council tax payer.
- Not relevant for this feedback which is on the single issue of the Dawlish VEZ
- the area is too large and can be strayed into on certain wind weather conditions
- THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE VAST AMOUNTS OF FUNDING THAT HAVE BEEN HARVESTED VIA THE EXE ESTUARY HABITAT MITIGATION LEVY WILL BE SPENT IN THE WRONG AREAS AND CAUSE RATHER THAN PREVENT CONFLICT.A PROLIFERATION OF BOUYS WILL CAUSE A HAZARD AND ARE UNLIKELY TO BE CORRECTLY POSITIONED AND MAINTAINED AS HAS HAPPENED FOR YEARS IN THE SKI AREA WICH IS INCORRECTLY MARKED ON ANY OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS. THE RIGHT OF NAVIGATION EXISTS AS A RIGHT OF WAY IN ALL TIDAL WATERS INCLUDING RIVERS AND AT COMMON LAW THE PUBLIC HAVE A RIGHT OF PASSAGE. AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS EXPERTS HAVE RAISED THE LINK BETWEEN GLOBAL WARMING AND REDUCED BIRDS IN THE ESTUARY.WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE VEZS COULD BE THE START OF FURTHER RESTRICTIONSWHICH BLAME LOCAL WATER USERS AND DO NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF GLOBAL WARMING.
- It would affect the use of our tender to access areas of the Ex

- The "zones" are too onerous and appear to be formed from guess work and unsubstantiated ideas. The Zones and the constraints are not clearly laid out, have different user restrictions, different time periods, highly unlikely to be enforced (understanding and financial) and not going to be clear on site. Can the Partnership demonstrate the additional funding that will be in place for the enforcement of these areas? While I agree there should be due regard for expert opinion on the effects of different types of users within the Estuary and IF the negative impacts outweigh the positive, then consultation should be undertaken on the specific impacts. The consultation information contains unclear information. The existing kitesurfing exclusion ground: Boats can use it at high tide but SUP cannot - What possible evidence is there to support this! Also - "Kite/windsurfing: details of zones, a requirement to only use the Duck Pond zone from 1 September to 1 April so that kite/windsurfing does not take place in the rest of the estuary during this period;" - This is an undefined term - What does it refer to? Jet Skiing/PWC use: a requirement to keep outside the estuary - Does this mean all year!
- As a dinghy sailor based at Starcross Yacht Club, my main concern is one of safety. The River Exe is used by many different types of craft including Power Driven Vessels (PDV) and some commercial craft. Whilst the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea (1972), require a PDV to give way to a sailing vessel, the constraints of the safe navigable channel and used by relatively deep draft vessels often mean that a small sailing dinghy will be obliged to give way and take action to avoid a collision. This is one reason why it is often preferable to sail a dinghy outside the defined navigable channel. Another issue is one of the tidal flow. The tidal streams in the Exe are quite strong and in light airs it is often not possible for a dinghy to have sufficient speed to overcome an adverse tide, and as the tide flows faster in the main navigable channel, sailing outside of this in shallower water may be the only way to go faster than the tide. I have mentioned the risk of collision with moving craft, particularly power driven vessels (motor boats or yachts under auxiliary power). There is another consideration and that is moored craft and Navigation buoys. Whilst static over the ground, in a tidal flow, these will seem to be moving. There is a real danger of a dinghy being swept onto a static object particularly if there is little wind, and the consequences especially with some of the larger craft moored on the Exe is that the dinghy or a person may be sucked under a 'static' vessel. The same of course applies with larger vessel making way through the water. Equipment can fail on dinghies and often the only safe course of action is to head for the shore so that a repair can be (if possible) undertaken. It may well be if the equipment failure is such that it is expedient in the interest of safety of the craft and the occupants to head straight for the nearest shore. Dinghies are also prone to capsize (even for experienced sailors) and it takes time to right the boat and it may well be that the boat would be carried by the tide and wind into one of the exclusion zones.
- Sailors have to enter these areas in certain circumstances. Tidal conditions and winds determine when that might be. There are safety issues for sailors in creating exclusion zones.
- Potential restriction in sailing area. The Exe estuary is tidal and requires the full area to avoid tides.
- We occasionally sail to the Warren and land on the beach there, it would be a real shame if this could not happen in the future. The tide there is very strong I also windsurf in the duck pond area so any restrictions there would have a significant impact
- The Duck Pond is the only shallow water area protected from the wind and strong current available to people wanting to learn a water sport and for intermediates to use in times of strong winds - any restriction will oblige water users to try using other areas with the consequent risk of getting into difficulty and calling on rescue services. Lack of a safe learning area, will almost certainly reduce the willingness of parents to allow

their children to take up water sports, which will stop the fantastic heritage the area has for producing champions in sailing.

- The VEZ encompasses areas of the estuary used to shelter from strong tides and adverse weather. Not having this option severely limits when we can take out novice rowers and potential future junior rowers.
- I would no longer be able to paddle in some of the places where I have been accustomed to paddle. I currently paddle regularly in the duckpond, sometimes starting in Exmouth and sometimes on journeys from Exeter to Exmouth. We often choose the estuary and the duckpond as destinations when the weather is bad as it is more sheltered. There are often very few birds in the duckpond during the top half of the tide at this time of the year.
- The club uses the estuary regularly for sea kayaking. For example during the summer we are sea kayaking at Exmouth up to twice a week. If the weather is good and sea is calm then we tend to paddle from Orcombe Point. If the weather is less good or the sea is rough or we have beginners with us (about 50% of the time) then we tend to paddle in the Estuary. This would include the Exmouth zone. The Exmouth zone is particularly good for practising rescues as it is sheltered and the prevailing winds from the West cause paddlers in any difficulty to be blown towards a safe landing place.
- Needs guarantees that this would be voluntary and not made permanent in the future. This area is customary used by boating and water users for navigation out of strong tides. No proof has been given that there is a problem with activities in this area, it has been used for decades, to no ill effects.
- In certain weather conditions this is a safer area for teaching paddles
- Interfere with freedom of navigation. The wildlife that we are all proud to host in our area irrespective of our water use has thrived without these regulations and there should not be a presumption that some disturbance to wildlife is unnatural or should be unlawful.
- I am concerned that this may restrict the opportunity for dinghy sailing and paddle sports in the estuary when there is no evidence to suggest that restrictions are necessary.
- The proposal would limit access to the estuary. The proposal in the code of conduct for sailing clubs to only hold events at high tide is particularly restrictive since there is a public right to navigate the estuary.
- Anything that prevents usage of the estuary is a problem. The estuary has been used for hundreds of years without issue. Any restrictive usage plans are a slippery slope for power hungry greens to enforce their views.
- As a dinghy sailor who regularly sails on the Exe estuary, I am very concerned at the proposed VEZ. Small dinghies regularly sail both up river toward Topsham and down river to Exmouth. The down river cruises take place toward low water, in order to make good use of the favourable ebb tide and subsequent flood tide for the return trip. The proposed 200m VEZ means that small boats, which for safety reasons sometimes need to stick to the edge of the channel to avoid bigger craft, would be forced into the middle of the channel which could potentially seriously jeopardise safety. The same principle applies to canoes and kayaks. There may also be occasions when smaller craft need to manoeuvre closer to the shoreline if weather conditions deteriorate such as wind over tide, meaning it is safer to move to calmer water. The club also holds regular dinghy racing events, which mostly take place around high water but may extend to 2 hours + either side of HW.
- Safety Concerns: It is essential for small craft, especially sailing dinghies, kite surfers and kayaks to have unrestricted access, not only to the buoyed channel but to areas outside the main channel to allow for safe navigation, avoiding the strongest tides or currents, and to avoid larger, powered craft using the main channel. In fact small craft have an obligation to allow safe passage for craft which are restricted by their draught to deepest parts of the buoyed channel. Excluding small craft from using areas

outside the main channel would cause serious safety issues. One proposal states that Kayaks would be restricted to using the main buoyed channel although there is no evidence provided in the Exe Disturbance Study of 2011 to suggest that kayaks cause disturbance to roosting or feeding birds. Although small craft do not need deep water to navigate, they need some water in which to sail so cannot closely approach the foreshore, except when launching and recovering. They are unlikely to cause disturbance to birds. The Disturbance Study itself confirms that water craft users cause very little disturbance to birds and where disturbance has been noted, the cause has not been clearly attributable to water craft. Leisure concerns: The local authorities have spent considerable sums of money encouraging people to use the estuary for leisure and exercise. The cycle track alongside the river attracts many visitors and users along the length of the river. This is also used by dog-walkers as are the foreshores and beaches. The Disturbance Study concludes that there is far more disturbance of birds from these sources than from water users but, in the Codes of Conduct Proposals, these exclusion zones would seem to affect and penalise mainly water craft users, almost completely ignoring land based and shore based leisure activities. Funding concerns: The monitoring of these Exclusion zones, buoyage etc. could prove to be very expensive. What provision has been made to fund them and who would be charged?

- If the proposals are put in place, canoeing and kayaking activities in the estuary will be restricted to the main channel. The water in the main channel moves at up to 6 knots and we can only manage 3 knots in most of our craft, the danger this imposes is self-evident. The depth of the water course in the main channel is deep, the flow rates at points across and down the estuary are high and the size and frequency of the traffic in the proposed channel is high. It is physically impossible to paddle against the flow with the obvious outcome that people will be swept out to sea. Additionally, sometimes in the main channel and often in areas next to it there are moorings for us to be swept into and possibly under the craft moored there.
- The proposed VEZs will be contrary to the statutory right of navigation up to the high water mark. You have succeeded in alienating groups such as sailors without any justification or need when we should be your natural allies. There is no evidence in the Footprint Ecology report that sailing has caused disturbance of birds in the proposed VEZs. Your WeBS surveyors, [REDACTED] have confirmed that they have seen no evidence of disturbance of birds caused by sailing vessels in their observation sectors in the proposed VEZs. Your proposal to exclude sailing vessels from these areas seems vexatious, unnecessary and contrary to your own evidence. Andrew Wood confirmed that the proposals would be evidence based so let's see your evidence for excluding sailing vessels from these areas.
- September and October are the best times for kitesurfing in the river as the winds tend to be stronger than in the summer. These are also good times to kitesurf for beginners, especially from Exeter University. The presence of younger people in town brings many benefits and this is an important way to grow this and other sports.
- Depending on conditions of tide and wind it may be necessary for SYC members under sail to enter these areas. This would not be planned and may be unavoidable. There may also be a safety issue.
- Reducing the freedom to explore and enjoy the estuary at key times of the year.
- Kayaking is quiet and unobtrusive. It is a simple activity with low impact navigational limits create a complication and difficulty to observe from a small craft.
- Exmouth provides an excellent training ground for those new to kayaking and paddle boarding on the sea. By implementing a total ban on sports in these areas it would make it very difficult for those new to the sport to gain valuable experience before venturing to more advance areas of our coastline.
- The exclusion zone would mean that we would need to be in the middle of the fast flowing channel - NOT the safest place to be for a canoeist.

- Restrict access to my estuary land, which has been part of my and many others pleasure to use.
- It may expand in the future and stop me from accessing or using our motor cruiser, not a power boat but a pleasure boat

**Q3b Please tell us how we could improve our proposals so they would cause fewer problems for you or your organisation, and explain how this would decrease the problems caused:**

114 respondents commented

- I believe there is a suggestion that we restrict our sailing to high tide only-this would have a massive negative effect as we normally sail on an outgoing tide just before low tide. We are aware of the need to avoid disturbing feeding/resting birds and already take steps to do this.
- Allow unpowered craft to pass through the VEZ when it is covered with sea water on the basis that they will do so quietly and with consideration for wild life. I have seen no studies or impact assessments which show evidence that resting birds are disturbed by quiet unpowered craft.
- Allowing Rowing, Kayaking and other un-powered craft in the VEZ - especially the Duck Pond, which is a well-used area.
- Canoeists should be asked to paddle well away from resting and feeding birds where possible but they shouldn't be asked to stick to the main channel at all times. Dinghy races should occur around high tide but on those occasions when other events take place at low tide, sailors should stay well away from areas where birds are resting and feeding. These measures would allow a good balance of safe recreational use of the estuary by sailors and canoeists, while allowing birds to rest and feed undisturbed.
- Ensuring enough 'safe' usable area is outside of the exclusion zone in the duck pond.
- Present the evidence base. Reduce the size of the proposed areas.
- Permit sailing at all times in the exclusion zone (there is NO evidence that sailing affects the wildlife).
- I cannot see why we need an exclusion zone for wind powered craft. As a sailor, the birds often alight nearby whilst we are sailing and do not seem to be bothered
- Limit them to low tide.
- More accurate assessment of the actual use by the species for whose benefit the zone is proposed particularly an accurate count of the number using, over what times of a day, and number of days in the proposed period. Similar info re the other users. Then balance the conflicting interests more equitably. The proposal appears to be too broad for the numbers anecdotally to be protected.
- Reduce flow of sailing traffic at certain times rather than prohibit it altogether.
- minimise area
- Revise and limit the proposed exclusion zone (s) substantially to allow sufficient space for all recreational water users, thereby minimising conflicts and potential Health & Safety incidents.
- Abandon the plans as they are flawed , the birds only use the area at low tide when the mud is exposed , which will not conflict with water sports which require water therefore people will only use it at high tide when the birds are elsewhere.
- Drop the lot. We have far too much regulation, and this sly way of introducing more has been seen through. We need less interference, and fewer people employed by the council with no meaningful jobs, who come up with this sort of nonsense as a way of trying to justify their salaries.
- In the first instance to recognise that kayakers in the main are responsible and would avoid disturbing feeding wild life. With the shallow depth of water along the east bank, kayakers would only venture there an hour either side of spring tides. Marker buoys or posts indicating the concentrated feeding areas would help.
- The zones should be voluntary only at all times, to enable dangerous situations from developing. They should only be in place when absolutely necessary, as demonstrated by evidence, to prevent complacency by water users. They should only

be in place at low tide when birds can wade, this would have minimal effect on water users as the areas are non-navigable at those times.

- Listen to the advice of the RYA Listen to the advice of Canoe England. Sit round the table with all the boat user clubs on the estuary and listen. Please!
- I see no problems in using these areas when it is covered by water (the only time I would want to use it anyway). When kayaking I keep clear of birds. In any event when there have been birds in the vicinity they seem totally unphased by kayaks and canoes.
- Please leave the water as it is. There are too many restrictions on the water for boaters.
- Rather than a blanket exclusion of all human activity. I am in favour of excluding activities only if there is evidence that they are harmful to wildlife. The noise caused by the powerboat races that are currently held far exceeds that of other activities. I imagine that wildlife would be disturbed by this as well as by dogs or young children chasing birds, power boats and jet skis being driven at speed. However I wonder if there is any evidence that peaceful, sailor's paddlers or walkers significantly disturb wildlife.
- Don't introduce exclusion zones at all for watercraft/users. The evidence produced to support the proposed exclusion zones is insufficient to warrant their use. .
- Think bigger. Don't define the proposals simply in terms of "constraints" but match with proposals for "capabilities". Provide mechanisms for expanding access to water sports and developing a national quality set of facilities that attract people from across the UK, but shape their usage of the Estuary in a way that supports habitats alongside the existing proposals.
- By dropping this idea completely. I get fed up with limitations on activity being dictated by organisations waving a 'green flag'. The fences, gates and locks upon the latter installed on Woodbury common are particularly annoying as a dog walker of over 30 years up there and this smacks of a first step to restrict access and activity in the way the aforementioned is. The area is below the mean high water mark and can and should be used by all in a responsible manner when they want to. The birds in the area do feed well, they are seldom disturbed.
- If the North margin of the proposed conservation area around Dawlish Warren was moved South by 150 metres, there would be a small safety zone for kayaks to avoid large powered craft in the main navigation area. If the proposed area North West of Exmouth was accessible 2 hours either side of high water then training could continue, and access for safety would permit trips down the estuary in all conditions.
- Allow use of the Duck Pond to Exton area in the three hours preceding and post high tide.
- To allow use of those areas when the tide is in and the birds will not be there to be disturbed.
- Take no action over the zoning proposals and diligently verify if possible any and all claims of human/wildlife conflict.
- Do not implement this exclusion zone
- Do not proceed with them and find a more remote site to improve. Or find ways to work with the balance of current users if the estuary.
- Only do this at low water
- Do not implement any exclusion for none powered craft
- We have had meetings with [REDACTED] so hopefully we are on top of this
- It is my understanding that the reason for the exclusion zone is to prevent wildlife from being disturbed at low tide. This is the time when the majority of water sports participants are not on the water. Perhaps only restricting access at low tide may be more appropriate if this is need at all.

- Don't have this exclusion zone, then we can all go about our business as normal. The birds will just have to get used to us.
- Be realistic about when the birds actually use the area, and be realistic about whether there is, indeed any conflict.
- Drop the proposals. The Exe Disturbance Study shows that there was not a single recorded disturbance event for the birds that was caused by small sailing boats - ref page 64. There is absolutely no justification in banning dinghies from the area.
- Make the areas smaller and advisory rather than rigidly governed. The need to use the areas would be naturally limited by the tides and the numbers and frequency of use small and not disruptive.
- The VEZ Exmouth would only be in force over part of the tidal cycle, this would allow sailors access when there is sufficient water to sail and leave the area to the birds for feeding when the tide is low and the river bottom exposed or the river very shallow. This would be self-policing as ALL sailing craft (and just about all paddle craft) require in excess of 0.5m of water and most a lot more. This depth of water will still be too deep for waders. Diving birds are less restricted. Allowing non-powered craft access to the shallower water within the proposed VEZ would reduce the likelihood of the above scenario where unlit craft are out on the river, most of which do not (by function of their size) carry auxiliary engines.
- Leave us alone. There is no need for all this nonsense.
- Leave things as they are
- Only have zones at low tide. The birds are rarely there at high tide.
- Extend the proposed period of the VEZ to cover the whole winter. See answer above.
- Reasonable allowance for the tacking needs of sailing dinghies, especially as they will only use relatively deep water.
- Let the river be...
- Allow fishing and bait digging. Although digging could be restricted. Usually this is done at low water when the birds are at some distance from the shore.
- I do not understand why when your research clearly states dog walkers and kitesurfers cause the flights why then do you not ban them- dogs on leads seems a bit lame- whereas I do not in my travels 6-9 times a winter cause any disturbances- But I understand a total ban may in fact be coming...SO I am contributing.
- Not introduce them, who is to police this and at what cost?
- Proper full use of the estuary will keep the channel open, allowing Topsham to be what it always has been - a port. This means people boats and wildlife. Opposite the Retreat is old farmland that has been allowed to deteriorate. Grazing cattle and/or sheep would give wonderful winter pasture for birds. Allowing areas to be neglected does not work. I am happy for the protection of wildlife, but worry that the lack of maintenance of the estuary will affect the whole. I live next to the grand western canal, which was ignored for years, and almost ended up as a muddy ditch. Luckily we were able to reverse the trend. The Exe estuary has up to recently been maintained little or not at all, and we see the result. The Grand Western is now a healthy man made waterway, the wild life has much improved, by maintenance. The Exe has been used and looked after by man for thousands of years, please don't let it become a muddy ditch. The wild life has always been good living alongside man.
- By engaging with all water users and getting them to assist in best practice on the Estuary in accordance with agreed guidelines. Visitors need to be made aware of local issues as happens elsewhere.
- Canoes cause minimal impact on wildlife, but could cause a major hazard if forced out of the quieter areas and into main channels. Allowing canoes etc. passage over water the canoeist feels best would be the ideal for me. If the water is too shallow then the canoeist won't be on it as no one wishes to get stuck until the tide comes back. If the

water is deep enough to paddle then the kayak causes minimal impact. They don't even scare the fish.

- Allow access to the area when it is covered by water.
- Stop this fascination that nature can't look after its self, it's done quite well up to now.
- Bring things publicly out into the open, showing the same level of respect for mankind as for nature. All decisions need to be made Public, and any warning signs need to be clearly visible. The River Exe is a very busy river, and the public also need protecting from danger, because nature can become very violent at times, due to the forces of nature (winds and tides).
- Your proposals seem to reflect the needs of migratory birds to eat the eel grass. This can only be reached by birds at low tide which is the one time that canoeists would wish to avoid the area.
- Reconsider the proposals so that kayakers/canoeists are not effectively banned from enjoying the Exe estuary.
- No exclusion of the public from our waterways should even be considered.
- Restrict access to dog walkers, keep dogs on leads as it appears that it is dogs who run amongst wildlife that cause the issues.
- Allow windsurfing. There is no problem in relation to windsurfing to solve
- Can be the surveillance improved by local authorities or the Council?
- Retain the bottom channel access for kitesurfers at mid tide. Your text suggests retaining the current voluntary exclusion zone which is much smaller than the proposed zone. I have no issues with the current zone but the map suggests the majority of the usable duck pond area for Kitesurfing and paddleboarding will be out of bounds
- Creating smaller exclusion zones would protect migratory birds whilst still allowing safe passage of kayaks and other manual watercraft. Most manual watercraft users respect the environments that they pass and would be happy to work around sensible exclusion zones to protect nature as long as this does not put themselves at risk
- If the restriction to the entire duckpond is not limited to just around high tide as written in the proposal, the safety issue lessens as learners can launch kites on the sand. I am also seeing 2 different zones on maps on the website (one with 1st sept-31st Dec and the second 1st sept-31st march), it needs to be made clearer as to exactly which area is included in the zone, as at present, 2 versions are being shown. The current zone would not make too much of an impact, however, one of the maps shows an additional 50m or so included in the exclusion zone which would have significant impact on kites like myself.
- Keep them as they are! We all agree and abide by these rules
- Give us at least 100 metres either side of the main channel to undertake our normal paddling activities in relative safety. We are responsible people and we make a point of not going close enough to the birds to disturb them. We also need to be able to land in case of mishap.
- As above comments.
- Scrap them completely. I do not believe that further additional protection for the birdlife is necessary.
- As wildlife are still are in the estuary it can't be such a problem and realistically the only craft which can affect the estuary are powered ones and so specific areas should be designated for powered craft and speed zones through other areas to keep traffic safe for all
- DO NOT include non-powered craft from any 'exclusion zone'.
- Scrap the proposals.
- More open and well-advertised public consultation/discussion with proposals supported by statistically robust evidence where possible and a more open attitude to alternative proposals forwarded from interested parties.

- To improve proposals: A proposal that does not deny unmotorised sailing on a metre plus of depth of water. For sailing, the situation is self-regulating since it is impossible to sail without the depth of water. During the period of the tidal cycle, much of the area is dry for over half of the time.
- Don't change anything
- Restrict the use of noisy Jet Skis and motor boats from the affected areas and educate dog owners not to allow their dogs to chase birds.
- Do not implement your proposals. They are not needed and will make no difference to the bird population.
- You need to produce specific evidence (not opinion) that activities such as rowing, kayaking & stand-up paddle-boarding are damaging & detrimental. Allow environmentally-friendly activities to continue using the existing areas in a manner they do currently. The users are responsible and do not disturb the habitat or birds.
- Leave things as they are now
- Drop the proposal
- Reducing the size of the proposed VEZ is a possible solution, perhaps moving it further north towards Lympstone where it is so shallow and muddy it would seldom be used by water users. Mooring management to the south may need to change to ensure safer routes for all craft and less pinch points where boats could collide.
- Allow access. Birds do not feed unless area is uncovered. The disturbance rates given in your evidence are very low and from my experience I have seen very little disturbance while either fishing or boating.
- Do Not Include manually powered craft in the ban, I can see no evidence that supports your reasons for doing so.
- The current proposals are totally out of proportion and need serious amendment to reflect the reality and practicalities of water users.
- If this truly is for overwintering birds, there is no need as there is very limited use of the river through the months concerned.
- Allow access to sailing craft
- See above in point 2.
- It is my belief that we do not disturb the birds, after all if that were the case there would be none there to protect. We make not pollution, very little noise and move in a way that does not have any startle factor. As powerboats are exempted, albeit by a by-law it seem ridiculous that we would be banned.
- I do not think that kayak users should be subject to these voluntary exclusion zones.
- Happy for education and advice about where i should sail but not unfounded bans
- You could involve Exe estuary users and be more open
- making the exclusion area smaller
- AS HAS HAPPENED ELSEWHERE THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE ACTIVITIES CO EXIST IS TO SECURE ENGAGEMENT FROM ALL PARTICIPANTS.THE ORGANISATIONS WILL WILLINGLY ASSIST IN POLICING CODES OF CONDUCT ,PROVIDED THEY ARE SENSIBLE,WHICH ARE NORMALLY BROKEN BY VISITORS TO THE AREA WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF A CLUB.
- 1. As a keen kitesurfer I am used to abiding by the existing exclusion zone and would continue to support and abide by this. However whilst I think the proposed exclusion zone (updated version) is more pragmatic, I think that the range of activities will prove almost impossible to enforce, particularly if the power boat zone is allowed to remain. Secondly I think the southern corner of the zone should be removed as this is a critical safe area for many water sports users (shallow water, out of main tides etc.). 2. Please provide the terms of reference that were given to Footprint Ecology for the development of their existing study. There are a number of questions / uncertainties associated with this work. Whilst I am broadly supportive of all efforts to improve the wildlife on the Exe, it appears the proposed exclusion zones most heavily affect water

users who (according to the Footprint Ecology) provide the least impact on birds. Focus should be made in the first place on those activities which have the greatest influence.

- Not limit boat movements to high water only
- If proposals had been drawn up in consultation with water users rather than just being presented to them it might have been possible to arrive at a mutually agreed solution to the issue. A code of conduct that users adhere to unless unavoidable would be preferable to a blanket ban with the threat of enforcement.
- No need for a voluntary exclusion area for sailing boats. There is no evidence there is any problem.
- I don't think that wind powered craft have a detrimental impact in the area. I also feel that walkers have minimal effect. The only real potential issue is with dogs, especially when off a lead.
- Restrict any exclusion zone to an area well to the north of the Duck Pond and minimise the buffer zone to 50m.
- Narrowing the zone running parallel to the Exmouth-side shore north of the recreation ground would give us sufficient room to row with some shelter from adverse weather.
- Apply the zones to the disturbance that is actually caused. The evidence does not show that kayaking causes a significant problem. If necessary start with a dog exclusion zone.
- If you must have a zone then it should operate only during the bottom half of the tide. Paddling could therefore occur when the tide is in. Allow activities to continue when the wind exceeds force 3 or 4 as the birds are not there anyway but paddlers like to be there. There is no reason to restrict people's activities when they have no impact on the birds.
- Remove proposal. This would restore freedom of navigation.
- As a minimum the requirement for organised sailing to be restricted to high tide should be removed. However, the proposals are based on very sketchy evidence which needs to be thoroughly revisited - see response to question 6.
- Live and let live
- Reduce the VEZ so small craft such as canoes, kayaks and dinghies can manoeuvre safely in quieter water near to the shoreline if necessary. Make an exception for small craft to land on sand banks or at the Warren at the designated landing zone in emergency situations such as injury, unforeseen events like capsizes, or unexpected damage to the vessel, where safety may be compromised or if urgent action needs to be taken.
- Possible problems could be reduced by: - Having some understanding of the requirements of wind and paddle powered craft. - Meaningful consultations with all river users in order to understand their relationship with the river and the safety requirements of their sporting activities. - Representation by a wider variety of river users on the committees and discussion groups who are making decisions on these matters. - Engagement and meaningful consultations with river users about how best to protect sensitive areas while understanding the needs of water sports. - Having a questionnaire which does not limit the respondent to stating a single interest that they have in the river. Many people have a variety of interests and most also wish to see the protection and preservation of wildlife which rely on the river. It is essential to keep river users on the side of the Wildlife Trusts in order to involve them in understanding how best to protect the wildlife and bird populations.
- A solution needs to be reached that enables us to continue our recreation safely whilst minimising our impact on the migrating birds. Canoeing and kayaking activities cannot be restricted to the main channel and if they are then we shan't be able to use the river at all. We also need to be allowed to land on the exposed sand in cases of an emergency.

- You should abandon the proposed VEZs and look instead at models such as Pagham Harbour which is successfully run by the RSPB in cooperation with user groups. You should enforce the existing statutory controls on dog walking in and around the proposed VEZs. Until you do this, none of your proposals can be taken seriously. You should negotiate with motorboat users to repeal the byelaw allowing use of the duckpond area. You should enforce the existing speed limit in the harbour.
- Do not extend the exclusion zone beyond that which is already in place, and start it from mid-October. Please be aware that there are only some days that are suitable for kitesurfing on the river, i.e. with a moderate or strong Northerly wind and a high tide. If inexperienced kitesurfers are not able to use the duckpond in these conditions they are likely to launch from the seafront and will inevitably cause safety issues.
- A change in nomenclature would be a help. Terming them Wildlife or Bird Reserve or Refuge would bring an immediate understanding to why they exist. It would also help to dampen down the idea of statutory areas and enforcement measures that were so prevalent at the start of the consultation process. Actually, it would be helpful to start the process from scratch, involving water user groups in developing initial suggestions in the first instance. This would remove the feeling that something is being imposed on users. Some positive responses to compromise suggestions would also help. There are sensible compromises that have been suggestion but it appears that there is no desire to compromise in any way. It would show a bit more understanding of the point of view of water users if the areas were defined use Hydrographic Office charts rather than OS maps which are inaccurate, particularly when it comes to water features.
- Cancel your proposal.
- Do not apply a restriction, buoy off roosting zone or post educational info to clubs waterway users
- By allowing watersports to occur in the main estuary and have clearly defined access points I am sure many watersports users would be more than happy to avoid the edges of the proposed area - this is because most birds etc. if they are nesting are going to be towards the edges as opposed to the middle and therefore the impact would be minimal
- Exclusion zone needs to be variable as the tide moves in & out.
- Nothing could improve these proposals .They are extreme unwanted measures imposed by non-locally elected bodies possibly motivated by monetary gains.

**Q4 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this have any benefits for you or your organisation?**

**Q4a Please explain what the benefit for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these benefits will happen:**

19 respondents commented

- It would enhance my enjoyment of the hundreds of wading birds which use the mudflats here.
- It would increase the richness of wildlife in the area.
- Reduce disturbance at one of the estuaries critical roost sites, having potential benefits both to stop and reverse declines of waterbirds on the entire estuary, and also boosting the quality of the spectacle for the thousands who visit the estuary each year to watch them.
- Protect the wildlife from disturbance
- As a keen birdwatcher this would improve my enjoyment by allowing the birds less disturbance, particularly a ban on dog walkers.
- It would considerably improve the ecological integrity of the warren and its adjacent area, which in turn would benefit all the local wildlife, and the businesses who benefit from our wonderful local environs.
- Would continue to enhance opportunities for enjoying the very varied birdlife Usually found here especially in winter
- Reducing disturbance to birds feeding on the mud, enhancing the experience of those interested in birds and watching them, and promoting the conservation of the preferred habitats and feeding grounds of both migrant and resident birds.
- This should help limit the declining quality of the high-tide roosting sites that are critical to the SPA.
- This would also ensure that the bird population of the Exe Estuary has a defined feeding area where disturbance is minimized.
- Will give birds a chance to be natural in their habitat without human disturbance. They need all the help they can get.
- As with Exmouth, this will help to ensure minimizing of disturbance to migratory birds that depend on this part of the estuary for feeding at key points in the tidal cycle
- As proposed: avoidance of disturbance to internationally important site & species
- The necessary roosting sites at the Warren would be preserved
- Enjoy wildlife so like to see it protected
- It would provide a safe area for birds and I am concerned that the management of the Exe Estuary is truly beneficial to its special wildlife. Safe, undisturbed roosting sites are essential. Ensuring sufficient undisturbed areas for birds to roost (and feed) in, based on the areas preferentially used by the birds themselves, is necessary to retain the important bird populations on the estuary. Green tourism is an increasingly important income stream for Devon and so it is also important to ensure that those attracted to visit the Exe to see its wildlife continue to do so, without disturbing that wildlife.
- I would be far better able to enjoy the estuary's wildlife, which is currently frequently disturbed by recreational activities on the water, shore and mudflats.
- Reduce human impact on wildlife
- More wildlife to look at.

**Q4 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this have any benefits for you or your organisation?**

**Q4b Please tell us about any suggestions you have for how we could we improve our proposal to increase the benefit to you or your organisation, and explain how this would increase the benefit:**

There were 4 comments:

- It would enhance my enjoyment of the hundreds of wading birds which use the mudflats here.
- Protect the wildlife from disturbance
- Visible patrols to educate people about how to conduct themselves in such sensitive areas.
- Effective publicity and education about the restricted areas, effective monitoring of compliance/non-compliance and effective means of addressing any problems.

**Q5 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this cause any problems for you or your organisation?**

**Q5a Please explain what the problems for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these problems will happen:**

120 respondents commented.

- Less water to sail in, more congested and therefore more dangerous with all types of craft (power boats and sailing, paddle boarders, kayaks all forced into a smaller area.
- I believe there is a suggestion that we restrict our sailing to high tide only-this would have a massive negative effect as we normally sail on an outgoing tide just before low tide. We are aware of the need to avoid disturbing feeding/resting birds and already take steps to do this.
- The current proposal takes the VEZ right up to the navigation channel. Canoeists passing on that side of the estuary are forced into the dangerous main channel.
- Similar to the Duck Pond we use the waters inside of the Dawlish Warren when the tides are rushing as rest area, in the calmer waters - which may also be part of the VEZ (maps don't appear accurate).
- Our sailing club now has a canoeing section. Expecting canoes to stick to the main channel is dangerous. 1. This means that they are in all the traffic and they are slow, so cannot move out of the way of larger, faster vessels easily. Also, with their low profile they may not be seen. 2. The tide is at its strongest in the main channel and paddlers can become exhausted trying to stem the tide. Also, being in the area where there the tide is strongest makes them vulnerable to be swept down river, into moorings or out to sea. Expecting a sailing club to stage all its events at high tide might seem logical because we already do all our racing around high tide. However, we also run dinghy cruises and these are often arranged around low tide, so that slow boats can sail with the tide when heading for Exmouth and then with the tide as it comes in again, when they want to return to Powderham. Sailing against a strong tide in a slow dinghy is hard work and exhausting, which is dangerous.
- Reduced utility based on the assumption that current estuary users are preventing successful roosting and nesting that in turn is reducing populations across the estuary. This seems tenuous reasoning.
- The estuary is already naturally limited for sailing, due to shallow waters and tidal constraints. For this reason, the estuary sailing clubs are not as active as sailing club in deep waters (like e.g. Torbay). If you further restrict the area that it is permitted to use, or the times when it is allowed to do so, it is probable that the sailing clubs will be pushed towards shutting down.
- It would make sailing and canoeing very difficult for local areas. I cannot see how motor boats can remain whilst wind craft which have minimal impact on the environment can be disturbing. We sail at Starcross and often sail down to Exmouth
- Presumably would preclude the environmentally friendly sailing boats from enjoying the area & at high water, a vital channel to be able to get in & out of the Estuary safely.
- Occasionally I may have cause to sail - slowly and quietly- in those areas due to wind and tide conditions. I think my approach and passage would not be disturbing to birds, and would only be at high tide.
- This is a favoured dinghy cruising area and an exclusion would severely hamper cruising
- It would stop me and other windsurfers from setting up and launching from the railway crossing (just south of Cockwood) across past "the wreck". This is usually only around high tide with a north or south wind in excess of 10 knots. I have never noticed birds on the water in this vicinity under these conditions as they are mostly further south sheltering by the warren proper.

- Forces boats in to stronger tides which can be dangerous.
- The area at the back of the warren would appear to encroach on some of the moorings and our sailing area.
- Reduce the amount of water in which to sail. This will cause difficulties during periods of strong tides.
- The proposed area or at least the northern part of it is used on a regular basis for dinghy sailing and racing to allow safe transit outside of the main tidal flow and also outside the areas of moored boats.
- We have already lost use of part of the Warren, and do not wish to lose more - voluntarily or otherwise.
- The inability to seek safety along the west bank from a strong westerly wind and/or busy traffic using the main channel.
- I use this stretch of water for boating activities, wind surf and kite surfing. We only have a small space
- As for the Exmouth exclusion area.
- I also regularly sail through this area on recreational outings. The proposed Exclusion Zone would prevent this and I object strongly. I've been sailing in these waters regularly for nearly 20 years and have at no point been aware of my disturbing any wildlife. I also kayak in the estuary and the proposed exclusion zones would mean having to go up/down the sometimes fast moving estuary channel, a hazardous process and definite safety risk Restricting access to a beautiful part of the estuary for largely unsubstantiated claims that sailors and kayakers disturb the wildlife is unacceptable.
- It is very difficult to attract talented software engineers to Devon. But it is critical that we do so otherwise when many of the local industries become automated over the next 20 years (marine, agriculture etc.) then we shall simply be consumers of solutions built in alternative locations resulting in high unemployment. Access to water sports on the Exe Estuary is a critical and unique selling point in the ongoing efforts to attract and retain talented engineers to and within the area.
- Again for sailing instruction, being able to land on Dawlish Warren beach (never seen a nesting bird on the sand) is of benefit as dependent upon wind and tide, seamanship skills can be practised and consolidated through handling boats in tidal streams and lee and onshore landing techniques.
- It could cause access restrictions when travelling up river towards, say, Turf Locks. Stopping off at Dawlish Warren is also pleasant if not abused. Access to a friends moored yacht off of Dawlish, who I crew for, could also be impinged?
- They will cause safety problems because in some conditions of weather / tide / traffic with powered craft, kayaks would need to paddle in the proposed zones. They will restrict use of the estuary severely because many trips could not be planned if the option of paddling in these areas was not available. The safe training area in the "duckpond" would be drastically reduced.
- The existing proposal would exclude anglers from an important fishing mark at the wreck. The proposal would also exclude Cockwood residents from access to the estuary from the village.
- It would prevent my sailing, rowing or motor boating in those very tranquil areas. It would also prevent my collecting data for my project to chart the tidal flow currents of the lower Exe estuary. It would prevent my access to Turnbull Dock adjacent to the most northerly holiday camp at Dawlish Warren.
- I sail regularly in parts of this area. At the time I sail there is at least a metre of water depth over the area thus no wading birds are feeding. Due to the gentle shelving nature of the sea bed in this area, feeding waders and roosting birds are well away (hundreds of metres usually) from any areas that I sail in and I know that I and my fellow sailors cause no disturbance to these birds on the shoreline. It is pointless having an exclusion zone out to the line of MLWS when the tide is in. By definition no

sailing can take place over these feeding grounds until there is at least a metre of water covering them. We need to use these areas to escape the full force of the tide in the estuary and the removal of our ability to use them will affect our sport that has been taking place in an organised manner in these waters for 100 years. There is also a safety aspect to this. Things do go wrong with boats and crew and there are occasions when you have to make to the shore to facilitate repairs or seek help for the crew. Whilst I have never in my recollection used this particular piece of shore line for this purpose, I have certainly had recourse to Bull Hill and the northern shore of the Warren nearer to the estuary entrance for this purpose. In an emergency, however trivial, I need to be able to make for the nearest most suitable shoreline.

- Dawlish warren has been used for decades by the boating community and me personally for 58 years. I have never killed any birds or seen any evidence of birds in distress. I have witnessed wildlife interacting with humans showing no negative behaviour. Yet again there does not seem to be any real evidence to support any form of exclusion.
- Any restrictions to how people are currently allowed to enjoy the estuary would be a loss to recreation disproportionate to the increased benefit to birds who already enjoy the area.
- Possible loss of access for fishing
- It would mean that further advance planning was required.
- In certain conditions i.e. Spring Tides, unexpected high winds, there may be a need to "run for shelter" into the VED... The tide here can run extremely fast. This would apply mostly to canoeists and some dinghy sailors. In short, this is a safety issue.
- Yet more restrictions on where we can go. Not good at all.
- Potential for conflict between user groups if implemented poorly. Bait diggers, crab tilers & anglers in particular around Cockwood, Inability to view large areas of the estuary from either the hide on Devon Wildlife Trust land at Dawlish Warren - the only access is below MHT line - or the steps at Cockwood.
- The safety aspect of excluding anyone from this area could potentially be a problem, and if there are moorings in this area, people need to be able to get to their boats and use their boats safely, which occasionally might mean going further into the area.
- As explained the tides are a major factor on the estuary. While sailing and not using a motor there is a vital need to avoid the main stream of the currents which means using the marginal areas.
- The problems with restricting all non-motorised craft but especially sailing craft to the deep non-drying channels outside the VEZ are when trying to get home against the tide. When cheating the tide, shallow water is sought as the foul tide doesn't run as hard here. By forcing ALL craft to use the deepest parts of the river with the strongest tide potentially turns an inconvenience into a safety issue where unlit craft are returning after dark - all because they were forced into the strongest foul tide that prevented them making much or any progress over the ground. As Exe uses, we all know that the spring ebb starts at between 6pm and 9pm on the fortnightly cycle making this scenario a real possibility. This will be exacerbated as the wind frequently dies away in the evening, especially in thermal sea breeze conditions.
- Again.... As a sailor I may need to access beach in bad weather.
- Just outside the edge of the channel area at Dawlish Warren is used by canoes as a safe paddling place away from the big boats and the strong tides. If I had to only paddle in the channel I would not be able to take my children with me which would prevent them from learning in a safe environment. They would not have the opportunity to experience a beautiful wildlife area.
- In a similar way to the Exmouth exclusion area but being nearer the channel there will be times that a tacking sailing dinghy might inadvertently enter this zone. As before it's unlikely to be in less than a metre of water. Quite a lot of mixed sailing still takes place in the autumn and limited racing through the winter.

- This would seriously affect my ability to go fishing.
- Only in the event of a safety incident!
- During strong high tides it would reduce the area in which a dinghy could escape the influence of the tide.
- Ignoring the state of the estuary will cause further degradation, and perhaps loss of the estuary as we know it.
- As a long term boat owner as well as kite surfer we have respected and enjoyed the Estuary for many years. The fear is that this is the first stage in creeping regulation driven by other groups.
- Many.. Inability to be safe on the water when tide is streaming or river use in the channel is high Inability to reach certain areas of beauty to continue my hobby Inability to obtain bait Inability to reach certain moorings
- The water over these areas is slower moving than in the main channel providing a much safer place to paddle. Obviously these areas can only be accessed when there is enough water over them. When the water is too shallow then even canoes can't pass over them.
- Again it removes an area we can use to avoid large powered craft in the main channel.
- Yes, if the winds or tides force you into these areas against your own will. When you are out in the open, nature does catch people out, and suddenly you are exposed to danger. If the wind capsizes your boat, and your life is under threat, you may have no choice, and be forced into the exclusion zone.
- Because of the speed of flow in the main channel of the Exe, and the speed and size of other vessels present, it is totally unsafe for kayakers/canoeists to paddle in the main channel. Therefore this exclusion zone would effectively ban kayakers/canoeists from the Exe estuary. To put it mildly, this seems very drastic. Is there any specific evidence that kayakers/canoeists are adversely affecting wildlife in the estuary? The vast majority of kayakers/canoeists are very respectful of wildlife.
- You would be restricting a known fishing mark, used and enjoyed by many. Been going there for more than 35 years. See lots of birds fly past, but Cockwood area doesn't seem to be a favoured low tide feeding area. Dawlish Warren high tide roosting area is already fenced off, and I think that this is quite sufficient.
- As previously mentioned, I believe public access to the Exe for recreational purposes should be universal without prejudice. Why should certain groups be "policed" out?
- Again, safety of Kayakers. Dependent on flow, it can be safer to 'hug' the coast line than battle a wind/flow further out. There are a number of known 'get outs' within this area, this is a large safety issue for kayakers as if a paddler has an issue and we no longer are able to access points that allow us to safely exit the tidal stream/estuary this could in theory put a group of paddlers in danger!
- I totally support the idea of improving the condition of local animal environment. But I really enjoy practicing water activities in the issued area.
- Again the current proposals would put kayakers and other manual watercraft users in danger by putting them in faster channels with motorcraft
- Restricted area for kitesurfing
- The zone as proposed would prevent us from using any of the river outside the main channel. This is a problem for us because we paddle craft with a maximum top speed of 3 knots and the water flow in the channel reaches about 6 knots. Therefore, we cannot make any headway against the flow, indeed, we will be swept backwards. This presents obvious dangers. We risk being swept out to sea or, worse, under moorings and moored boats. This zone as proposed would prevent all but the most experienced paddlers from using the estuary at the times when the exclusion zone applies which is, exactly the time we currently use the estuary for training most at present.

- At high tide it would restrict the area available for sailing, particularly avoiding the strong tides in the main channel. It also conflicts with the statutory right of navigation. Also there is no or minimal bird disturbance at high water because the birds are not feeding or roosting there. I also strongly doubt that a 200 m exclusion zone is required for sailing boats around nesting sites when the high speed train line runs alongside that area and apparently does not disturb the birds.
- People have been going to the warren for years and do not interfere with the birds, you still will have jet skis and speedboats using the water. The Warren is a great place to visit, and should continue.
- Same answer as for the other area as the gig club use both areas as 'safe' areas
- The comments made in my reply on the Exmouth VEZ proposal all apply to the Dawlish proposal - they are not all duplicated here. Additional comments a) this zone is huge and applies at all states of the tide and all year - this is just stupid given that it is supposed to be there for roosting birds. Most of the time they'll drown as they will be under 4 metres of tide! b) Again this is an area - at high tides - that is safely away from the fast flowing tides in the main channel. This means that it is a good spot for safe sailing away from the strong tides and any large craft using the channel
- Area is used as a safe rest area from strong tides and currents.
- Health & safety. Lack of sheltered water from strong winds/currents especially for young & inexperienced gig rowers.
- Safety of small craft being forced into the main channel and liable to be involved in collision with large and commercial vessels.
- Again, in so much as it erodes my personal freedom to enjoy the local countryside (in which I pay taxes including council tax) and appears to be based on very little supportive evidence of efficacy. I fear this would also set a dangerous precedent for further similar initiatives.
- I kayak with my children around this area at both high and low tide. For safety we need to stay away from the main channel (due to currents and power boats), and reasonably close to the shore. We have never come close to feeding birds. We also sail a small sailing dinghy and prefer to avoid the channel to stay away from motorised craft. When sailing towards the wind we have limited choice over our route and avoiding ferries etc. is a challenge when in the main channel.
- I would lose my right to benefit from the enjoyment I currently gain from this area
- If this exclusion would interfere with the channel as you enter or leave the river Exe.
- Losing a sheltered spot to briefly pause when rowing, especially useful to get out of the tidal stream and especially helpful when teaching new rowers. Lack of safe water to stop out of the way of other vessels. Lack of sheltered areas, especially in a prevailing south-westerly wind.
- If there were a ban on organised or non-organised sailing down the estuary (around low water) from September onwards this would be a big problem, and telling all canoeists to always remain in the main channels would infringe their rights to safety when avoiding other water users or obstacles or when the weather is not as expected. Massive safety risks! Health is also at risk as many people, myself included use water activities as a means of staying fit and active. Any restrictions to these activities or measures which would make them unsafe would affect my health.
- This is the area that provides an area of safety and protection from the elements within the estuary, when other areas are more dangerous through tidal movement, adverse weather or high usage by other estuary users - particularly motor craft. Such enforcement action being proposed will force other users of these areas to practice their sport in other areas of the estuary, thereby increasing traffic and the likelihood of accidents e.g. motor craft v rowers. In my opinion, that I row only when there is enough water, any disturbance to the birds or the habitat is non-existent

- The estuary is so tidal that over 50% of it is inaccessible to sailing boats for 50% of the time. Keeping dinghies out of part of the estuary at high water is tackling an unproven problem (bird disturbance from sailing) by restricting a healthy and environmentally friendly activity unnecessarily.
- Low impact on our activity. We have been known to go close to this area and gently row past the bight at the back of the Warren with no disturbance of roosting birds. We could avoid this area if this helps increase the usable habitat and encourage high tide roosting.
- Again it is an area that I cover in my Kayak and the exclusions would prevent this.
- We regularly have kayak trips down the river to Topsham, coming back via the Canal, or all the way to Exmouth over the Estuary. We always go at high tide, and are mindful of all wildlife. Most of us are nature enthusiasts and we all respect the bird and sea life around Exeter. The proposed restrictions would not allow us to go down the Estuary any longer, given that it is unsafe for use to go down the channel, due to the strong currents. This would mean that we have to drive to other estuaries nearby, increasing the hassle to transport kayaks and increasing traffic on the already congested roads.
- When sailing in light winds, it is often necessary to avoid adverse tides by keeping out of the fast moving channels. The tide is very fast behind the warren and thence round the Exmouth and out to sea.
- Restricted access for both fishing and boating at all times during the year. Your proposals are both draconian and unnecessary. You base your proposal on what may be a decline but provide no realistic scientific evidence to back this up. This is more wishful thinking than concrete reasoning. There is no reason to ban access during the summer months
- At times of half tide falling there is significant flow down river, particularly adjacent to the Warren towards Exmouth. Vessels entering the river meet this head tide made more testing by the prevailing southwest wind. To deal with this situation the vessel can navigate between the line of moorings and the Warren where the shallower water flows much slower. Using this method enables under powered vessels to avoid a potentially dangerous situation. A similar situation occurs at half tide rising for vessels leaving the river any restriction to the use of this zone could have disastrous consequences. Use of the zone as described would only occur when high tide roosts were not under threat and not disturbing low water feeding.
- My son, who has Autism, paddles a sea kayak with Exeter canoe club. He regularly uses this part of the Estuary and imposing this ban would severely affect his safe use of the estuary. The narrow pathway proposed that will be allowed would make it far too dangerous for manually powered sea kayaks to pass through safely, along with all other craft that would be squashed into this narrow channel. I see NO evidence to support your reasons for imposing this ban on such craft, there is no pollution, damage to the estuary or wild life from club members or indeed any kayak users.
- I fully support protection of the environment and wildlife. I also expect humans to be treated with due regard. Water users need to be free to choose where to navigate as they take account of the winds and the tides.
- Safety to river users such as myself would be put at risk. Assuming the area would be marked, this would make parts of the river unavailable at a times that life could be at risk. It will also make the area, river and estuary less attractive for visiting boat users like myself.
- Possibility in future of limiting wildlife photography
- Walking full length of Warren
- Severely restrict access to the area and waterways
- In certain conditions of wind and weather I may need access when there is sufficient water particularly for safety reasons.

- During incoming tide there is an area of "slack" water to the North of Dawlish Warren. This is a "safe haven" for us when we are Gig Rowing and enables us to have a rest or break from the physical activity. We also use this area to instruct beginners and will, in the future, junior crew.
- I cannot see any evidence to support the proposal from the point of view of a kayak user - on the contrary it may put myself and my family members at increased risk through the consistent suggestion that we use the "main channel". This is deeper, and faster flowing, than other parts of the Estuary and may also place us in danger from other users of the Estuary.
- As a user of the estuary for many years I have always been aware of the need to avoid disturbing the wildlife. Your proposals are costly and draconian.
- The exclusion zone proposed is unrealistic and too large. There are certain wind/tide conditions where a boat may have to enter the zone.
- INADEQUATE CONSULTATION CAUSING CONFLICT.
- It would affect the use of our tender to access areas of the Ex
- Small sailing craft have no engines and can therefore sail only courses made possible by wind direction / strength, taking into account the effect of the strong tidal flows found between Starcross and Exmouth, and behind the Warren in particular. The risk of damage and/or injury increases sharply the more constricted the area available for manoeuvre. These observations apply not only to craft sailed in a 'straight' line - forced tacks or gybes can lead to disastrous loss of way against the current following a wind-shift, discovery of a semi-submerged mooring buoy or the thoughtless actions of other water-users. Impediments to getting out of the current are therefore a significant safety issue for both cruising and racing dinghies. Placing the onus upon helms to demonstrate sufficient experience and skill to manoeuvre safely without intruding on the proposed Exclusion Zone is unrealistic and can have serious consequences as soon as a less-skilled helm encounters adverse conditions. Even skilled helms can be caught out by a sudden squall or a thoughtlessly driven RIB.
- As a dinghy sailor based at Starcross Yacht Club, my main concern is one of safety. The River Exe is used by many different types of craft including Power Driven Vessels (PDV) and some commercial craft. Whilst the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea (1972), require a PDV to give way to a sailing vessel, the constraints of the safe navigable channel and used by relatively deep draft vessels often mean that a small sailing dinghy will be obliged to give way and take action to avoid a collision. This is one reason why it is often preferable to sail a dinghy outside the defined navigable channel. Another issue is one of the tidal flow. The tidal streams in the Exe are quite strong and in light airs it is often not possible for a dinghy to have sufficient speed to overcome an adverse tide, and as the tide flows faster in the main navigable channel, sailing outside of this in shallower water may be the only way to go faster than the tide. I have mentioned the risk of collision with moving craft, particularly power driven vessels (motor boats or yachts under auxiliary power). There is another consideration and that is moored craft and Navigation buoys. Whilst static over the ground, in a tidal flow, these will be seem to be moving. There is a real danger of a dinghy being sept onto a static object particularly if there is little wind, and the consequences especially with some of the larger craft moored on the Exe is that the dinghy or a person may be sucked under a 'static' vessel. The same of course applies with larger vessel making way through the water. Equipment can fail on dinghies and often the only safe course of action is to head for the shore so that a repair can be (if possible) undertaken. It may well be if the equipment failure is such that it is expedient in the interest of safety of the craft and the occupants to head straight for the nearest shore. Dinghies are also prone to capsize (even for experienced sailors) and it takes time to right the boat and it may well be that the boat would be carried by the tide and wind into one of the exclusion zones.

- There are certain conditions of tide and wind when it may be necessary, for safety reasons, to enter these areas.
- Potential restriction in sailing area. Already restricted with moorings and the need to avoid strong tides.
- We occasionally sail to the Warren and land on the beach there, it would be a real shame if this could not happen in the future. The tide there is very strong I also windsurf in the duck pond area so any restrictions there would have a significant impact
- I travel through this area about 150 times a year to access the river ,there is another 30 people who do the same ,The slipway they use is private it was hoped to increase the usage of the slipway and land by offering boat training ,educational activities , water based team building activities and boat hire . This expansion will now be impossible.
- The zone and its accompanying buffer zone of 200m would restrict access down the main channel at low water or force sailors into the fastest part of the channel where the water runs so fast it is impossible to sail against unless there is a lot of wind. For canoeists it is totally impossible to paddle the strong currents in the main channel at low water.
- The VEZ encompasses areas of the estuary used to shelter from strong tides and adverse weather. Not having this option severely limits when we can take out novice rowers and potential future junior rowers.
- When paddling from Exeter to Exmouth sometimes we keep to the Western edge of the estuary, depending on the wind direction. We prefer to avoid the channel so as to avoid large vessels and the strong tide. This means we skirt around the edge of the channel and would be paddling in the proposed DW zone but not very far into it.
- Not being able to paddle in the zone means that paddlers would have to paddle in the channel. This is unsafe for taking a group as there are strong tides which can cause kayaks and canoes to be swept onto moored boats. The zone has more sheltered water and generally slower tides. The channel is also unsafe for kayaks as there are large vessels and motor boats which can run down small craft. Small craft should keep out of their way.
- Needs guarantees that these will only be voluntary and not made permanent in years to come This area is customary used by boaters and other water uses to get out of strong tides Once again no proof has been given to the need for this, wildlife is not affected by these activities.
- The area proposed is to large there is a fast flow in the main channel at certain times of the tide, being restricted to that main flow is not a safe option.
- This will interfere with freedom of navigation. The wildlife that we are all proud to host in our area irrespective of our water use has thrived without these regulations and there should not be a presumption that some disturbance to wildlife is unnatural or should be unlawful.
- I am concerned that this may restrict the opportunity for dinghy sailing and paddle sports in the estuary when there is no evidence to suggest that restrictions are necessary.
- From the survey report, the zone is not warranted 12 months a year on any possible basis; implementation of the zone in summer months would prevent use of an area potentially critical for small boat safety in adverse wind/weather/sea conditions.
- The proposal would limit access to the estuary. The proposal in the code of conduct for sailing clubs to only hold events at high tide is particularly restrictive since there is a public right to navigate the estuary.
- Anything that prevents usage of the estuary is a problem. The estuary has been used for hundreds of years without issue. Any restrictive usage plans are a slippery slope for power hungry greens to enforce their views.

- Same reasons as outlined in question 3. Races mostly take place between Starcross, Powderham and Lympstone, but occasionally utilise the downriver parts of the estuary and out to sea.
- Safety Concerns: It is essential for small craft, especially sailing dinghies, kite surfers and kayaks to have unrestricted access, not only to the buoyed channel but to areas outside the main channel to allow for safe navigation, avoiding the strongest tides or currents, and to avoid larger, powered craft using the main channel. In fact small craft have an obligation to allow safe passage for craft which are restricted by their draught to deepest parts of the buoyed channel. Excluding small craft from using areas outside the main channel would cause serious safety issues. One proposal states that Kayaks would be restricted to using the main buoyed channel although there is no evidence provided in the Exe Disturbance Study of 2011 to suggest that kayaks cause disturbance to roosting or feeding birds. Although small craft do not need deep water to navigate, they need some water in which to sail so cannot closely approach the foreshore, except when launching and recovering. They are unlikely to cause disturbance to birds. The Disturbance Study itself confirms that water craft users cause very little disturbance to birds and where disturbance has been noted, the cause has not been clearly attributable to water craft. Leisure concerns: The local authorities have spent considerable sums of money encouraging people to use the estuary for leisure and exercise. The cycle track alongside the river attracts many visitors and users along the length of the river. This is also used by dog-walkers as are the foreshores and beaches. The Disturbance Study concludes that there is far more disturbance of birds from these sources than from water users but, in the Codes of Conduct Proposals, these exclusion zones would seem to affect and penalise mainly water craft users, almost completely ignoring land based and shore based leisure activities. Funding concerns: The monitoring of these Exclusion zones, buoyage etc. could prove to be very expensive. What provision has been made to fund them and who would be charged?
- If the proposals are put in place, canoeing and kayaking activities in the estuary will be restricted to the main channel. Same safety issues as question 3
- The proposed VEZs will be contrary to the statutory right of navigation up to the high water mark. You have succeeded in alienating groups such as sailors without any justification or need when we should be your natural allies. There is no evidence in the Footprint Ecology report that sailing has caused disturbance of birds in the proposed VEZs. Your WeBS surveyors, [REDACTED] have confirmed that they have seen no evidence of disturbance of birds caused by sailing vessels in their observation sectors in the proposed VEZs. Your proposal to exclude sailing vessels from these areas seems vexatious, unnecessary and contrary to your own evidence. Andrew Wood confirmed that the proposals would be evidence based so let's see your evidence for excluding sailing vessels from these areas.
- Sailing is dependent on wind and tides and it is not always possible to foresee conditions. It may be necessary for safety reasons to enter these zones.
- As before. It will reduce the freedom to explore and enjoy the estuary in its entirety.
- Places a restriction on navigation and safety of a small craft at sea.
- No evidence that sailing provides a disturbance to birds.
- Canoeists need to be out of the dangerous fast flowing channel - very unsafe.
- Unnecessary restriction on public access. Regulation imposed by non-elected bodies. Local human inhabitants having their estuary lands taken from them by money motivated non-elected bodies.
- Reduce my freedom to use the river and surrounding area

**Q5 If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this cause any problems for you or your organisation?**

**Q5b Please tell us how we could improve our proposals so they would cause fewer problems for you or your organisation, and explain how these improvements would decrease the problems caused:**

93 respondents commented.

- I believe there is a suggestion that we restrict our sailing to high tide only-this would have a massive negative effect as we normally sail on an outgoing tide just before low tide. We are aware of the need to avoid disturbing feeding/resting birds and already take steps to do this.
- Pull back the boundary of the VEZ to allow a reasonable channel of slack water so groups can pass the area safely without being forced into the main channel.
- We have never noticed that we disturb any resting birds on the water.
- Canoeists should be asked to paddle well away from resting and feeding birds where possible but they shouldn't be asked to stick to the main channel at all times. Dinghy races should occur around high tide but on those occasions when other events take place at low tide, sailors should stay well away from areas where birds are resting and feeding. These measures would allow a good balance of safe recreational use of the estuary by sailors and canoeists, while allowing birds to rest and feed undisturbed.
- Permit sailing at all times in the exclusion zone (there is NO evidence that sailing affects the wildlife).
- I cannot see why we need an exclusion zone for wind powered craft. As a sailor, the birds often alight nearby whilst we are sailing and do not seem to be bothered
- Limit to low water.
- At present the exclusion zone coincides with the National nature reserve boundary but amending it to only start from just south of the railway crossing would allow windsurfing at high tides and walkers and dog walkers at low tide to walk along from Cockwood harbour to the railway crossing.
- Curtail the zone at OS 80 northing. Birds do not use area further north
- Reduce the size of the area so that it accurately reflects the area of shallow water used by wildfowl.
- Drop them. You are aiming to cure a problem that doesn't exist. Wildlife works round us - always has, always will.
- Restrict the proposed VEZ to the actual feeding areas. Recognise that kayakers in the main are responsible and would avoid disturbing feeding wild life. With the shallow depth of water along the west bank, kayakers would only venture there an hour or two either side of spring tides. Marker buoys or posts indicating the concentrated feeding areas would help.
- Please leave the water as it is. There are too many restrictions on the water for boaters.
- AS for the Exmouth area.
- Withdraw the proposals. The evidence provided does not in my view present a case to introduce exclusion zones in the areas proposed.
- Think bigger. Don't define the proposals simply in terms of "constraints" but match with proposals for "capabilities". Provide mechanisms for expanding access to water sports and developing a national quality set of facilities that attract people from across the UK, but shape their usage of the Estuary in a way that supports habitats alongside the existing proposals.

- Drop the proposal, please see my previous comment about micro-managing people under a pseudo green flag.
- If the North margin of the proposed conservation area around Dawlish Warren was moved South by 150 metres, there would be a small safety zone for kayaks to avoid large powered craft in the main navigation area. If the proposed area North West of Exmouth was accessible 2 hours either side of high water then training could continue, and access for safety would permit trips down the estuary in all conditions.
- The voluntary exclusion zone starting downstream of the steps across the railway and thereby allowing access to the wreck and shoreline towards Cockwood Bridge will significantly reduce any impact on anglers and residents.
- To allow use of those areas when the tide is in and the birds will not be there to be disturbed.
- Removal all restrictions and throw out all proposals allowing life to go on quite happily as it did before these wildly inaccurate claims were dreamt up.
- Listen to anglers at the meetings
- Note needs to be taken that it could be unsafe to paddle a canoe in the main tideway especially in busy periods when bigger craft are on the water. There should be an awareness of the Stuart Line and ferry skippers who are inclined to disregard small craft like canoes and dinghies, all this added to the rapid currents except in a neap tide period. Therefore there is a need to avoid the above, using, perhaps, the VED as described. How to improve? Leave the areas as they are. After all, in general there is not a great deal of traffic and the birds can be left alone to feed and to roost as they may.
- At low tide this area is not well used by birds, as they move up estuary to feed elsewhere as the tide drops (as evidenced by organised low tide counts) however on the dropping tide it is well used. Suggest exclusions are based around the tide times rather than simply geography, this would allow bait diggers, crab tilers & anglers to continue to operate and reduce the potential for disturbance. Ensure access is maintained to established viewing structures e.g. the Dawlish Warren hide
- Be realistic about whether there is, indeed any conflict between uses, as water users use the area when the tide is high and birds when the tide is low.
- Drop the proposals. The Exe Disturbance Study shows that there was not a single recorded disturbance event for the birds that was caused by small sailing boats - ref page 64. There is absolutely no justification in banning dinghies from the area.
- By making the areas advisory, not rigidly governed, and somewhat smaller. I have to say I have never seen a sailing boat because a problem for the birdlife, if anything, the birds seem to be attracted to the rigs and decks.
- The VEZDW would only be in force over part of the tidal cycle, this would allow sailors access when there is sufficient water to sail and leave the area to the birds for feeding when the tide is low and the river bottom exposed or the river very shallow. This would be self-policing as ALL sailing craft require in excess of 0.75m of water and most a lot more. This depth of water will likely still be too deep for waders. Diving birds are less restricted. I would support a ban on landing on Dawlish Warren (over much of the length fronted by the proposed zone) to protect nesting sites should such a compromise as that suggested above be agreeable. Allowing non-powered craft access to the shallower water within the proposed VEZ would reduce the likelihood of the above scenario where unlit craft are out on the river, most of which do not (by function of their size) carry auxiliary engines.
- Leave us alone. There is no need for all this nonsense.
- Allow activity wider than only the channel.
- Again, as per the Exmouth zone - an understanding that a quiet sailing dinghy in 1 metre of water is a long way from the tide-line feeding zone.

- Allow fishing and public access at all times. I think that global warming has more effect on over-wintering bird populations than human activity, although it could be argued that global warming is caused by humans. Therefore any resources or money spent on preserving over-wintering sites should be spent further north in the UK. The Exe now has a population of egrets and other warm climate birds are expected to populate the area in the coming years. - Perhaps a study on their impact would be of more benefit.
- Reduce the size
- Honest cooperation with all groups and authorities.
- Introduce a code of conduct which is manageable and will be respected without introducing exclusion zones
- Canoes cause minimal impact on wildlife, but could cause a major hazard if forced out of the quieter areas and into main channels. Allowing canoes etc. passage over water the canoeist feels best would be the ideal for me. If the water is too shallow then the canoeist won't be on it as no one wishes to get stuck until the tide comes back. If the water is deep enough to paddle then the kayak causes minimal impact. They don't even scare the fish.
- You need to make allowances for sudden weather changes, strong tides, and winds (because it can be extremely difficult and life threatening, just to try and return home). You can start out on a lovely day, enjoying everything, then suddenly everything changes, and you are fighting for your life, and don't know if you will ever get home again (I am speaking from personal experiences on the River Exe).
- Reconsider the proposals so that kayakers/canoers are not effectively banned from enjoying the Exe estuary.
- Ban dogs off a lead, yes, but not anglers, bait collectors, birdwatchers etc. Make it clear, using signage, that it is a sensitive area for wildlife, and any disturbance is too kept at a minimum.
- I have yet to see any findings showing issues caused by kayakers. Allowing access to these area would dramatically increase safety options on journeys.
- Perhaps an improved access control to the area by the local authorities may help
- Marked channels for manual watercraft users could allow safe passage of these craft while still protecting the wildlife. These could be achieved with small reductions to the exclusion zones
- Give us at least 100 metres either side of the main channel to undertake our normal paddling activities in relative safety. We are responsible people and we make a point of not going close enough to the birds to disturb them. We also need to be able to land in case of mishap. We also appreciate the opportunity to land to take a break while the tide turns.
- Scrap them completely.
- As wildlife are still are in the estuary it can't be such a problem and realistically the only craft which can affect the estuary are powered ones and so specific areas should be designated for powered craft and speed zones through other areas to keep traffic safe for all
- As per the Exmouth zone comments, if you want to gain the support of sailors and canoeists, come up with a sensible proposal that balances the protection of the birds, the councils needs to show they are doing some "habitat mitigation" to enable them to draw down CIL money and fair access for sailors and canoeists! So why can't the zones be such that Exe users are asked to keep 50 metres from where the water meets the land (at the current state of tide). I see the 100 page Footprint Ecology report talks about 200 metres being necessary. I simply don't believe this. My view is based on having sailed the Exe for 10 years and walked along side it just about every day for the last 10 years. The birds are habituated to the presence of people - in the same way that they are habituated to the regular passing of several 100 tons of noisy

steel every 5 or 10 minutes (the trains obviously). I have heard some people say that the council's position is that the whole zone is needed at all states of the tide to give the birds somewhere to fish. I don't know if this is true but it is so absurd I wonder if it just might be. It would be utterly ridiculous - the Exe Estuary when the tide is in is about 8 miles long and a couple of miles wide - there is plenty of room for birds to fish.

- DO NOT include non-powerboats from any future 'exclusion zone'!
- Scrap the proposals.
- Again, more open and transparent public consultation and debate and a more evidence-based proposal (if there is evidence that such an initiative is actually needed at all).
- You could allow small unpowered craft to use this area, since there doesn't seem to be any evidence that they disturb birds. If necessary, these craft could be asked to stay a minimum distance away from the shore line at the time: i.e. not the mean high-tide line or low-tide line, but where the water meets the land at the time the craft are passing. This distance should be based on some evidence of how such craft disturb feeding birds.
- Don't change anything
- Allow gig boats to pause briefly (but not land on) the Warren, in the water just to the North of the Warren.
- Do not implement your proposals and remove the SSSI status of the area it is damaging to many of the businesses in the area.
- Allow environmentally-friendly activities to continue using the existing areas in a manner they do currently. You have not produced any specific evidence that activities such as gig-rowing, kayaking & stand-up paddle-boarding, are damaging & detrimental. The users are responsible, use slow moving craft and do not disturb the habitat or birds.
- Drop the proposal
- It would be great if this could just be a seasonal restriction for the overwintering birds, but if we could still paddle in Spring and Summer.
- Since there is no evidence in the report of major flight events caused by sailing, this is trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. Don't do it at all.
- Allow full and free access to all estuary users all year round. But at the same time apply limited access during the winter months as is the current practice for angling when tides are above certain height. Currently this is a compromise on the part of anglers because those times coincide with the best periods for fishing. I haven't seen any jet skis in the proposed exclusion zone, but if they were to encroach significantly I would consider excluding them if sufficient and accurate evidence was provided
- Do Not Include manually powered craft in the ban, I can see no evidence that supports your reasons for doing so.
- The current proposals are totally out of proportion and need serious amendment to reflect the reality and practicalities of water users.
- Use some common sense. This is not needed, especially all year round. This is a ridiculous waste of time and money to address an issue that does not exist.
- Allow walkers at non roosting times
- Allow access for sailing craft
- Provide/create an exception for certain craft such as our Gig. We make no pollution and very little noise and move in such a way that we do not startle wildlife. We certainly cause less disturbance than any water craft/taxi that uses the landing area on the Warren
- I do not think that kayak users should be subject to these voluntary exclusion zones.
- Education not enforcement.
- Make the zone smaller or remove it altogether.

- ALTHOUGH WATER USERS HAVE BEEN CONSULTED A LARGE AMOUNT OF THE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN PREPARED WITH NO PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES AND THE HISTORY OF THE ESTUARY. THE PROPOSALS APPEAR TO BE DRIVEN BY ORGANISATIONS WHO SEEM UNWILLING TO ENGAGE DIRECTLY WITH THOSE WHOSE LIVING AND INTERESTS WILL BE COMPROMISED BY THE PROPOSALS.
- 1. The safety aspects associated with the proposed zone concern me the most and it very much appears these have been drawn up by individuals with limited / no experience of participating in many of the activities which are to be regulated. Given this I think many water users will ignore the "voluntary" zone particularly during high tides which is in no-one's interest. The updated version allowing a 5m zone outside the main channel is grossly inadequate and I suggest a more workable buffer (e.g. stay at least 100m from the water's edge) would be more effective.
- Lack of navigational detail on the drawing makes it difficult to assess the exact profile of the Zone vis-à-vis moored obstructions, but careful cross-referencing of charts and OS maps with the drawing strongly indicates that the generous margin allowed to roosting birds leaves dinghy sailors with just too little room for safe manoeuvring in a crisis. It is essential that there should be turning room at a safe distance from moored obstructions. A more generous profiling of the zone edges would also have crucial safety benefits for canoeists and kayakers, who are likewise limited in their ability to accelerate out of trouble.
- There is no evidence from the EEMP report that dinghy sailing actually causes disturbance to wildlife on the shore. Sailing dinghies do not use an engine for their propulsion and emit no exhaust fumes. They are also quieter than power driven vessels and cause much less wash when making way. Therefore if the exclusion zones are implemented, I would like to see dinghies and other non-powered craft be exempt.
- If proposals had been drawn up in consultation with water users rather than just being presented to them it might have been possible to arrive at a mutually agreed solution to the issue. A code of conduct that users adhere to, unless unavoidable, would be preferable to a blanket ban with the threat of enforcement.
- There is no need for a restriction on sailing boats - and no evidence of any problem.
- I don't think that wind powered craft have a detrimental impact in the area. I also feel that walkers have minimal effect. The only real potential issue is with dogs, especially when off a lead.
- evidence for the imposition of an exclusion area is weak it is being driven by a body with a strong commercial interest with no regard for others using the estuary. The bylaws if enforced along with a communication and education programme would be sufficient these additional levels of voluntary control are a nonsense as they stand there is no provision to audit their value at this time or in the future so I am very concerned about future actions as the commercial driving force will still be present. In my varied collection of friends and acquaintances I know of NO ONE who thinks this overpriced action is required.
- Reduce any buffer zone to 50 m to allow sailing craft to sail down close to water's edge out of the main current.
- Removing the exclusion zone at the east end of Dawlish Warren, including and to the west of the defined landing area (not including the small 'bay'), as this is the region most often used for shelter.
- Allow a much wider area on the outside of the channel to allow small craft to travel safely. 100m is a suitable additional distance. The 5m mentioned at the Consultation event on 20 April is laughable. The North edge of the zone should be restricted to the grid line so that the zone is much closer to DW. This would enable paddlers to continue to be close to the western wall for longer which can be a safer location for paddling when the winds are strong.

- Remove proposal. This would restore freedom of navigation.
- There is no evidence whatever in the survey report that small boat usage (cruisers, dinghies, kayaks and canoes) has caused or is likely to cause significant (or nay material) disturbance to wintering wildfowl in this area. More disturbance is caused by dog walkers (particularly inter-tidal), kite surfers and windsurfers than any other. Any exclusion action should be limited to these activities and between October and March (inclusive) only.
- As a minimum the requirement for organised sailing to be restricted to high tide should be removed. However, the proposals are based on very sketchy evidence which needs to be thoroughly revisited - see response to question 6.
- Live and let live
- Reduce the VEZ so small craft such as canoes, kayaks and dinghies can manoeuvre safely in quieter water near to the shoreline if necessary. Make an exception for small craft to land on sand banks or at the Warren at the designated landing zone in emergency situations such as injury, unforeseen events like capsizes, or unexpected damage to the vessel, where safety may be compromised or if urgent action needs to be taken.
- Possible problems could be reduced by: - Having some understanding of the requirements of wind and paddle powered craft. - Meaningful consultations with all river users in order to understand their relationship with the river and the safety requirements of their sporting activities. - Representation by a wider variety of river users on the committees and discussion groups who are making decisions on these matters. - Engagement and meaningful consultations with river users about how best to protect sensitive areas while understanding the needs of water sports. - Having a questionnaire which does not limit the respondent to stating a single interest that they have in the river. Many people have a variety of interests and most also wish to see the protection and preservation of wildlife which rely on the river. It is essential to keep river users on the side of the Wildlife Trusts in order to involve them in understanding how best to protect the wildlife and bird populations.
- A solution needs to be reached that enables us to continue our recreation safely whilst minimising our impact on the migrating birds. Canoeing and kayaking activities cannot be restricted to the main channel and if they are then we shan't be able to use the river at all. We also need to be allowed to land on the exposed sand in cases of an emergency.
- You should abandon the proposed VEZs and look instead at models such as Pagham Harbour which is successfully run by the RSPB in cooperation with user groups. You should enforce the existing statutory controls on dog walking in and around the proposed VEZs. Until you do this, none of your proposals can be taken seriously. You should enforce the existing speed limit in the harbour.
- A change in nomenclature would be a help. Terming them Wildlife or Bird Reserve or Refuge would bring an immediate understanding to why they exist. It would also help to dampen down the idea of statutory areas and enforcement measures that were so prevalent at the start of the consultation process. Actually, it would be helpful to start the process from scratch, involving water user groups in developing initial suggestions in the first instance. This would remove the feeling that something is being imposed on users. Some positive responses to compromise suggestions would also help. There are sensible compromises that have been suggestion but it appears that there is no desire to compromise in any way. It would show a bit more understanding of the point of view of water users if the areas were defined use Hydrographic Office charts rather than OS maps which are inaccurate, particularly when it comes to water features.
- Cancel your proposal and spend time and money on other necessary services in the area.
- Post local roosting site restriction zones only. Do not buoy off the whole area or place restrictions on quiet passage

- Allow flexibility and trust so that water users are expected to act responsibly.
- Again make the voluntary zones variable with the tide edge.
- Cannot think of any possible improvement to an unwanted scheme .it is not a scheme that is proposed by local human inhabitants and as such the question is irrelevant. No consultation has taken place.

**Q6 Please tell us about any other comments you have on our proposals, and any other suggestions you have for improving our proposals that you have not already mentioned:**

140 respondents commented

- Please keep a dedicated water-ski zone by the floating bar in the deep water channel as this is often used by responsible persons and it would be a shame to lose it as the sea is often too fought to board in comparison. Thankyou
- It is quite unacceptable that in all the consultations no members of the decision making body have deigned to attend, to listen to concerns and respond, leaving it to a council officer to take back apparently unmounted requests and comments, which seem to be routinely rejected. This has been a token consultation with decisions already made, as evidenced by expenditure already committed. It has failed utterly to follow the government's guidelines for public consultation and from my perspective constitutes maladministration.
- Any attempted restriction in The Duck Pond area will cause confrontation. I often pass this area and it is constantly being used from dog walkers to paddle boarders and rowers like ourselves. Further north does not appear to be used as much and to draw a line for the zone north of the Duck Pond would save a lot of friction.
- We are all interested in maintaining wildlife and allowing birds to rest and feed in relative peace. There is, however, a balance to be struck and dinghy sailing and canoeing are low impact, green and healthy pursuits that should be encouraged. The estuary is large enough for us all and dinghy sailors and canoeists are not in conflict with birds. As a dinghy sailor I can say that we never come near feeding and resting birds. We stage most of our events at high tide and our required draught doesn't allow us into shallow water, so not only is there no conflict, there is actually no contact. Therefore, I firmly strict extra measures to control sailing and canoeing are entirely unnecessary on the Exe estuary. Sailors, canoeists and wildlife are all already in total harmony.
- Just give the dogs parks & exercising areas - tell them that's how it is and stop pandering to them. It's disturbing the birds. Not to mention the anti-social aspect of dogs running loose - annoying people, intimidating children (& adults!), leaving dog poo for people to walk in. Those of us who love the wildlife should not have to put up with this and have other people's dogs impacting on the rest of us so much.
- Conduct more rigorous peer reviewed research before suggesting change. Be more proactive in engaging sporting clubs and estuary users when proposing change.
- The estuary is already naturally limited for sailing, due to shallow waters and tidal constrains. For this reason, the estuary sailing clubs are not as active as sailing club in deep waters (like e.g. Torbay). If you further restrict the area that it is permitted to use, or the times when it is allowed to do so, it is probable that the sailing clubs will be pushed towards shutting down.
- Pleas distinguish between noisy, fast users and those of us that proceed more discreetly.
- Insufficient time for consultation; insufficient involvement of affected parties from the outset.
- The Exe Estuary natural assets are of such importance for biodiversity and to the thousands of people who visit each year that human and dog pressures need to be controlled.
- Very little disturbance caused by boats. Most by pedestrians.
- I worry that the areas currently marked are significantly larger that make sense. In particular, the area at the back of the Warren looks as if water users might easily stray into it accidentally. Scaling back the area so that it only covers shallow water would be a good idea.

- Both migrating birds and resident species have been happily returning to the estuary for hundreds of years whilst there have also been human users of the estuary also for hundreds of years a harmony has always seemed to exist. I think we all can agree that climate change has had a dramatic effect on the habits of migrating birds throughout the world and I honestly don't think that it has anything to do with any increased human activity on the water. As a person who both partakes in water based leisure activities I'm also working on the river, I spend on average 12 hours a week on the water and quite regularly have migratory birds coming in to roost on the boat in which I am using, do you propose that upon their choosing to land next to me I am to stop what I'm doing or better still jump overboard before I disturb it.
- People and wildlife can peacefully coexist, there are no fewer birds now than 50 years ago when I first started boating on the Exe. If you want to improve the habitat for wildlife, ban jet skiing and high speed powerboat racing which are noisy, polluting and definitely do disturb wildlife, not sailing, windsurfing and such like sports which have no effect on wildlife.
- Re-direct the attentions of those engaged in this project to something meaningful - like improving the lot of people - plenty of opportunity with inadequate care in the community etc.
- I welcome the need to protect the wild life in the river but feel the safety of kayakers and the encouragement to get people to look after their health and exercise on the water must also be considered. The noise of power boats, jet skis, and the Royal Marine helicopters is surely more of a nuisance than the quiet and sedate paddling of kayakers.
- Until very recently these proposals have been hidden behind layers of committees, self-selecting groups with little access for the public and in my opinion the government guidelines on consultation have been largely ignored. This is anti-democratic. This needs to be slowed down. As far as many of us can tell there is no real evidence that boat users cause bird disturbance on the Exe. Many of us are now asking for this so called evidence - the data underpinning the various reports - to be made available and for the SEDHRP to justify its proposals publicly and properly with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Suggestions that kayak and canoes should use the channel is totally unrealistic and when asked what other alternatives could be suggested none could be given.
- Please please do not try to exclude boating activities on the water
- I am not happy at all about your proposals which I see as an imposition on the rights of local citizens pursuing their normal activities. The report, on which these proposals are based, provides no evidence to support the exclusion of dinghies, cruisers or canoes/kayaks from these areas. Only 8% of the observed activities that caused disturbance that provide the evidence for the report, were waterborne. Of these, 3% were RIBs or small motor boats, 1% kite surfers and 1% windsurfers. Of all the observed activities (including dog walking, crab tiling and bait digging) only 14% caused major flight events. It is unclear whether any disturbance by dinghies, cruisers or canoes/kayaks was observed.
- Drop the plan and tell the RSPB to stop playing the officious and aggressive part in restricting pleasure activity. Sorry, but they are a subscription organisation not an elected one.
- The Exe is a lively and challenging waterway all year round and I maybe wrongly assume that nature finds its level and the birds and wildlife generally seem, to me, to live fairly harmoniously with the Exe users?
- It would be much better if you renamed them -"special conservation areas" or some such. The present proposals seem almost to invite confrontation. As well as kayaking, I watch birds and enjoy botany: I studied both zoology and botany at university and I didn't like the way the questionnaire assumed that you are either a water user or a

Bird watcher but not both. I'm also unhappy about the use of a harbour launch type powered boat, which will certainly disturb birds, to police silent non-polluting kayaks!

- The part of the Lympstone to the Duck Pond area with the Shoreline from Lympstone to the Lympstone end of Mudbank lane has minimal amenity value for people when the tide is out due to the mix of mud and sand and would make a good compromise as the voluntary exclusion zone for watersports and would be a much safer option leaving a safe zone for less experienced and less capable boaters.
- As this represents a proposal on a voluntary basis I think it is fine. If consideration is ever given to extending it either in enforceability or area then more objective evidence must be provided to be widely acceptable.
- They are unnecessary, there is no evidence of human disturbance of the bird life of the Exe
- EDUCATE not REGULATE! We all love the wildlife on the estuary, from the sand eels and mussels to the oyster catchers and Brent geese. The RSPB are losing lots of supporters, myself included, by their heavy handed lobbying on this matter. They would do much better to talk to us and the other interest groups on the river so that we can help the wildlife to flourish and yet enjoy the quiet and beauty of the river in our own chosen way.
- My main point is that the numerous conservation groups never seem to have their data checked for accuracy or true intent. Too much credibility is afforded just because they have government funding or royal patronage. I do not believe such claims by a member of the public would be afforded similar credibility.
- I am concerned about the scientific veracity of the report on which these proposals are based. Very few of the observations seem to have sufficient sample sizes to ensure accuracy and the 'fit' plot is remarkably smooth. The fact that all incidents and types of disturbance were aggregated seems to support this hypothesis.
- Where is the evidence to say this will have any benefit? What is the cost/benefit or child's life for what? The currents in the river Exe can be strong, i hope to continue to teach my children safe water use and stay within the law. This proposal will mean i cannot do both on the river EXE. If this does go ahead, the publicity of a child and their family been killed because they followed the councils rules will be hard to explain. This will not be myself as a fine for me will be a small cost for me and my family to be safe and enjoy our right to navigation.
- At low tide the area is not useful for water sports and wading birds are not disturbed. I cannot see how none powered craft have any effect on wildlife, particularly as the period of possible friction is very short and usually the wildlife activity is minimal during high water
- The estuary is an important part of our local economy and has functioned well for many years with many water sports enthusiasts enjoying the beautiful setting. Any unnecessary restrictions placed on users of the estuary are likely to detract from the amenity and could potentially result in participants going elsewhere.
- I support the proposals.
- The estuary is one of the most important sites for nature in the South West, and a place enjoyed by thousands of nature lovers each year. Many local businesses are dependent upon this natural capital, making it essential that everything is done to protect it. Many of the species that choose the estuary in winter are in decline, and it therefore plays a vital role in their future survival. The State of Nature report shows 6 out of 10 of species in decline, with 1 in 10 at risk of extinction... these proposals are essential to protecting our natural heritage for future generations. The proposals enable multiple audiences to be able to enjoy the estuary without causing conflict between each other.
- Please see comments at Q 5 The duck pond is rarely frequented by dinghy sailors, indeed the only time I have sailed over it, I had to get out and push!
- More red tape, rules and regulations. Thankfully, these proposals are only voluntary.

- I do not feel exclusion zones are needed however educating people about what the environment in the area needs and the needs of wildlife. The area has flourished for years without exclusion zones.
- Exclusion zones are a great idea as already mentioned this should not be up for discussion as the various laws protecting habitat and food for the local and migrating birds should be protected.
- I welcome the desire to reduce disturbance but a blanket zone albeit voluntary is heavy handed. These areas have varying levels of importance depending on time of tide and year and proposals should be brought in to take these into account. Thought should also be given to differing levels of access as happens with dogs at present. E.g. water based access at high tide in both areas should ideally be restricted during the winter months - with designated roost areas out of bounds all year round.
- Publicity is required to educate people about their responsibilities when out and about in such sensitive area.
- I support sharing the river with the birds who make it home, we all live on planet earth and must share it. This word 'share' seems to have been forgotten with is proposal. The proposed areas are for birds exclusively, even when the tidal state is such that they seldom use it. The tide is a cycle, birds move on and off the water with the tide, water users move on and off the water with the tide but these two cycles are out of synchronisation so why can't we 'share' the river?
- I fully support the voluntary exclusion zone.
- Please stop all this nonsense. Have you not learnt from your ridiculous tariffs on development around the river that you're not behaving in a 'real world' fashion? All you've done, is enable landowners with previously low value land to exhort development land values for your SANGs spaces: to have not seen that coming was appalling. Now you're wasting money on this consultation, upsetting residents and no doubt, planning to waste more money paying people to run about in a little boat to go round telling people what to do and where to go. Please leave us alone.
- I think there is a strong argument for extending the exclusion zones not only in size, but in duration, in order to protect the wildlife of the Exe. I am however willing to concede that many people have an interest in the river and its use. I have concerns about how rigorously the exclusion zones can be kept disturbance-free. Having birded Exmouth for a number of years I have seen the disturbance increase year on year. I am troubled by the rights of hunters too. In the autumn hunters move out on to the mudflats off Exmouth just before dark. I cannot for one moment see how they are able to identify different duck species when the light levels are so low. Surely the exclusion zones should be 'hunter-free' in the autumn.
- The Exe Estuary can only benefit from protection of its wonderful wildlife, enhancing birdwatching in particular as well as protecting species
- Important to have all slipways available to everyone because the new slipway is dangerous with side swells last week causing a big boat when launched to hit the rocks.
- For a number of years now the weather has been perfect throughout October for watersports users and other recreational activities across the proposed area. If you introduce this proposal people will use the water less - and we are supposed to be encouraging our youngsters (and not so young) to become more active. You also run the risk of visitors not bothering to come anymore and loss of revenue to the town
- I have looked at the information on your website and I cannot see any evidence that your proposal will achieve your objectives of protecting the birds. It appears only to be satisfying your need to comply with planning legislation following significant residential developments some distance from the estuary. This is not a valid legal reason to implement these specific proposals. The procedures that you are currently following also do not appear to follow the process required under current legislation. In reality,

I would continue to use the zone on occasion as a safety escape to keep away from large boats and big tides in the channel.

- Excellent proposals.
- I support your work to protect our wildlife, and I think it is important to take steps for future growth.
- I'm not aware that migrating bird numbers have reduced over the years due to relatively deep water sailing activities.
- There appears to be a pre-determined skew to your decision to impose exclusion zones on the Exe. Major organisations such as Natural England, and the Environment Agency and RSPB have their own agenda. These groups have a more national point of view and so do not appear to be considering the effects that their proposals have on the local population of people rather than that of birds. Although the current proposal is for voluntary exclusion, it is but a short step before it becomes compulsory. The sad thing is that in all likelihood Dawlish Warren will be breached by the sea within a relatively short time and the whole ecology of the proposed area will change anyway; this despite the current attempts at controlling the unstoppable erosion and change. So, you'll have caused this disruption to the lives of local people in vain and at the great cost of restricting their liberties and not unreasonable belief that they can do as they choose in their leisure time. Unfortunately it appears that your whole scheme was pushed through with very little publicity locally- very few of the people and groups that I have spoken to recently about your proposal have heard of it - this in itself hints at a degree of lack of transparency on your part. My view is that people are more important than birds and that you should change your aims for their benefit, and accept the inevitable that the ecosystem of the Exe will change with or without your interference.
- While I feel the voluntary exclusion zones are an excellent idea for the maintenance and protection of the Exe estuary bird population, there are other aspects of the proposal documents relating to codes of conduct that need further review in the future and separate consultation with the other interested parties of the Exe. While they may be an important aspect of protecting the estuary wildlife, they must not cause unnecessary conflict between the various user groups.
- I think the idea of a winter voluntary exclusion zone is a good idea if well-articulated and supported. I am also in favour of banning the mass flight causers totally DOGs and Kitesurfers seem obvious choices as they travel on little or no water when feeding takes place- Other bans voluntary or otherwise seems regressive step....This should be researched further during a trial period to see the cause has reduced the effect- before moving on.
- Maybe some kind of volunteer group could erect signs or maybe temporary fencing around specific areas, or volunteer wardens on patrol. Set up crowdfunding to finance this, or set up a Facebook page with a PayPal link for funding. Apply to government for grant as funding
- The users of the river and current overwintering birds have coexisted for many years without any significant detriment to either, setting up exclusion zones means someone has to police it all and who is to pay...the benefit from all this extra regulation to say the least is marginal at best. The golf course (mowing vast areas of the spit)and dog walkers cause far more disturbance to the environment for the bird than a few sailing dinghies and yachts ever will, in the most part moored yachts provide a safe haven for these birds away from predators and human interference
- Some of the data the proposals are using are incorrect and need reviewing independently. The effects of Global warming on bird population/distribution is not sufficiently recognised.
- Poor advertising of the proposals and not enough time to consult Changing dates of public meetings Public meetings during the working week The Exe has a thriving bird habitat, please respect the humans as much as the birds

- It appears that these proposals are well intentioned but drawn up with little understanding of the abilities of many of the water users. I'm sure the canoe club would be happy to help committee members experience canoeing, as I am sure the same is true for the various sailing and fishing clubs. I'm sure we all wish to help the estuary wildlife flourish especially if we can all visit it within the abilities of our various craft. My suggestion is that the committee members experience the abilities and impact the assorted craft have.
- I along with so many other users of the Exe and its surroundings are against the strangle hold you are trying to achieve. This is my estuary as much as anyone else's and I'm totally against being told I have to stop doing what I enjoy i.e. Walking, relaxing, out on my kayak or my powerboat.
- Communication with all parties is the Key thing. It's vital to remember that when the weather suddenly becomes bad, then mankind can become the endangered species. It's vital to remember that not everybody has access to a computer, even management can be computer illiterate (I know this from personal experience at work). Some people cannot read, other do not read newspapers.
- None
- Your proposals seem ill conceived. In over 50 years of canoeing activity it is clear to me that small hand propelled craft pass by wild life with little or no disturbance.
- I don't think your proposals are required at all. My understanding of a Councils responsibility, regarding SSSI and SPA status, etc., is that they are legally bound to maintain that protection. But what is occurring is an apparent desire to improve the habitat for wildlife. This clearly means the human element on the estuary will have to be excluded, thus enabling wildlife to proliferate, where they may never have been before. If a continuation of improvements go ahead then there can be no future for estuary users. I don't think your disturbance study shows that wildlife is being adversely affected, and it's generally accepted that you can make statistics pretty much say what you want them to anyway. In the meantime all these studies, plans, and consultations, keep a large group of people busy as bees, and it's all being paid for by the taxpayers, and local residents. I wonder if the RSPB, Devon Wildlife Trust, NE, EA, SEDHRP, or any other organisation on the EEMP, contribute towards the cost of any of this?
- It should be remembered that the Exe draws a large number of dedicated small craft users, sailors, cyclists and walkers to the area. All of whom enjoy the slightly wilder aspect of the estuary compared with other large south coast rivers. They go away and tell their friends and family, this, along with the long term efforts of its numerous clubs, pubs and services, is how the Exe has gained a great reputation for freedom and tranquillity. To start fencing off large areas and then policing the resulting confusion is not only going to cost a large annual sum, but it's going to drive these loyal, paying users away.
- There are numerous safety issues that would be caused by implementing these zones. Not only to Kayaking but many water based activities.
- Excellent proposals, which I hope will be implemented
- I fully support the proposals which would give the wintering flocks (including some species that are declining considerably) the protection from disturbance that they need.
- Be very careful about restricting kitesurfers to high tide only (2 hours as per page 13 of the proposal) this would cause a significant safety risk as there isn't a safe way to launch once the sand is covered for beginners which can be before 2 hours. The bottom channel is one of the best spots for Kitesurfing in the world and restrictions would significantly affect EDDC's plan for Exmouth to be a top watersports venue. The map is not clear - it highlights a much larger exclusion zone than the existing area forcing kitesurfers towards the moorings and yachts which then poses a significant safety issue. I personally don't understand this whole project when it comes to a

blanket ban. None of the research suggest that Kitesurfing, windsurfing or sailing have caused any significant disturbances so why include them in the ban? Why not focus on what actually does disturb the birds.

- These proposals seem to have been drawn up with little regard for the safety of manual watercraft users and with very little consultation with the same. This is a shame for a county which draws much revenue from recreational watersports users.
- I would like to know why there is a proposed blanket ban on all users in the duckpond area when none of the research suggests there is any significant disturbances in the area. Less than 1% of disturbances were caused from kitesurfers and the same for windsurfers. Perhaps not having carnivals at the duckpond would cause less disturbances?
- This survey is very poor - it doesn't highlight exactly what you are trying to do it gives very vague details and the online report is also very poor being unclear and vague. It seems as though you have already decided what you want to do and are merely putting this consultation up because you have to. It should be fully informative, clear and open and it is not
- There should be an enforced speed limit on the water. Driving on Shelley Beach should be prohibited. Night time fishing should be regulated.
- I have every sympathy with the need to protect the birds in the estuary. However, I am not sure this should be at the expense of: Human Safety; Opportunities for human recreation and physical activity; Human fitness; or Local businesses and employment opportunities. I also believe that the birds can continue to enjoy protection alongside continuing human activity on the river estuary. The proposals as I currently understand them will, effectively, preclude the safe activities currently undertaken on the river estuary from continuing. These proposals need to be modified to recognise legitimate human activities undertaken on the river now and in the future.
- It appears these proposals have been forward without proper evidence and without proper consultation with the organisations who would be most affected. For these proposals to come as such a surprise to sailing clubs on the Exe is unacceptable.
- I am totally against any further restrictions or limitations on usage of the river. The findings of the Exe Estuary Recreational Framework 2014 are indicative that most respondents thought the level of control was generally about right. Regarding the speed limit issue, the important byelaw is number 6 - operating in a safe manner and in consideration to other users, which is more important and relevant than particular speed limits in various areas.
- The vast majority of people are very responsible and would wish no harm to the birds and wild life, these exclusions take away the rights of people to enjoy the river.
- The Exe estuary exclusion should include a ban on shooting duck within the exclusion zone. Currently each autumn I watch people using the Withycombe brook as cover at low tide to shoot duck flying in the estuary. The proposal would have little effect on the sailing community as the bank is a lee shore to the prevailing south westerlies, and with shallow water (even at high tide) any sailor with decent knowledge of the estuary avoids the extended exclusion zone already. It will mean the jet skiers having to move further out into the estuary, which should benefit local residents by keeping the noise further away.
- Please be realistic in the proposals of what harm a rowing boat can do
- Eh? Last question? Where are the questions asking for comments on the many proposed "codes of conduct"? The EEMP web site says that consultations would take place to further shape the proposed codes of conduct. This is essential as the project proposal document - <https://www.exe-estuary.org/documents/172437/3586998/Exe+Zonation+%26+CoC+Review-Proposal.pdf/4fe7a34f-9efa-41db-b013-52551c004e58> - has suggestions that make it very clear that the author has no knowledge of sailing or canoeing and did not bother to ask people with such knowledge before writing the proposal paper. As this

questionnaire doesn't ask about the codes of conduct, when is this presumably separate consultation going to happen? Ahead of that consultation, here are two specific concerns about what I can see in the proposal document. It says "Canoeing: guidance on where to canoe, requesting users to stick to the main channel within the estuary and a map shaded to show the main channel; the map should show the Clyst, the Bight, Shutterton Creek, Cockle Sand and Lympstone Lake as areas which canoeists should avoid between 1 September and 1 April; the map should highlight areas where canoeists can launch/land without likely disturbance; a requirement to avoid roost sites (the mitigation strategy suggests a 200m buffer drawn around roost sites)" This is just dangerous. You are going to ask all canoeists - including novices - to always stay in the deep and fast flowing main channels. Shame on whoever wrote this! Additionally this seems to be like a "stealth" introduction of a series of other "no go" zones - hidden away within the depths of yet another referenced document from the EEMP website. Next "Sailing: clear guidance on location of roosts and a requirement to avoid sailing close to roost sites (a 200m buffer should be drawn around roost sites); a requirement for all races and events between September and March to take place only at high tide" I am a member of Starcross Yacht Club. We have "dinghy cruises" that sail SYC down to the Exmouth Beach Cafe and sometimes out to sea. Unsurprisingly, these happen around low tide (the proposal document author has presumably not tried sailing against the tide on the Exe Estuary). You can see a sample GPS track of such a dinghy cruise at <https://thegpsblog.com/activities/beach-cafe-sail-april-2017> . These activities have no possible impact on the bird life or any other wildlife. However, the proposed codes of conduct mean that they'll be "banned" in the later months of the summer / autumn e.g. September and October. Why? If they are banned as "club events" they will still happen - it just means there won't be safety boat cover - so another proposal that affects the safety of Exe Estuary users.

- As a member of the Starcross Fishing & Cruising Club and a local resident and recreational estuary user I am extremely concerned about the opaque nature of the "consultation" process surrounding these proposals and the apparent lack of willingness to engage with the club or any other third parties in looking at constructive alternatives.
- The Dawlish Warren VEZ is shallow, and is not a through-route to any other part of the Exe estuary for me.
- 1. There doesn't seem to be any evidence to support the exclusion of kayaks and sailing dinghies from these areas. 2. It was only by chance that I heard about this. I cycle from Dawlish Warren to Exeter regularly, and read the local press, but haven't seen any notices about the proposals or consultation.
- The VEV should not be implemented.
- Dredge the entrance channel and stop the river from silting up
- The implementation of previous do good proposals has ruined the access to and from the river exe, this would be yet another nail in the coffin for our beautiful river exe, this should be left as a place for enjoyment for current and future river users and access to the open sea from our inland waterway. **JUST LEAVE IT ALONE.**
- Thank you for considering my comments, I know this is a complicated. Gig rowing is non-intrusive in terms of pollution, craft and impact. We love the estuary and rowing on it, I hope we can continue to do so safely.
- Can the speed restrictions be enforced in the river?
- I do not understand how this would be enforced. There are many people who use the estuary path.
- There is a lack of evidence to support an exclusion zone for dinghies, cruisers and canoes/kayaks. Also there has been a severe lack of consultation and I have been unable to have direct contact with the body making the decisions. As an estuary water-borne user I have no representation on that body. One of the problems with this

process is the lack of structure to the information presented on the Exe Estuary Management Partnership website. There is nothing to guide an interested party through the background to the process or the evidence. The average person may not have time to wade through the 100 page scientific evidence. Codes of Conduct I am concerned about the multiple proposed new "Codes of Conduct". It is very hard to find out the latest versions of the proposed Codes of Conduct.

- The measures being proposed appear to be draconian and appear disproportionate to the issues. Although it is stated that the Duck Pond zones would be seasonal and time restricted, the fear shared by fellow-rowers is that such proposal restrictions would likely to be enforced permanently
- Before taking such relatively drastic steps in restricting estuary usage I would wish to see firm published evidence of the harm caused to migrating birds by sailing and kayaking, both of them low-energy, low-disruption activities.
- I feel that it does not warrant the sort of expenditure mentioned (some £3m). I think that it would mean the displacement of some sailing moorings next to the main channel as shown on the proposed Dawlish VEZ. These people may want compensation or provision of a mooring elsewhere on the estuary. Many people who moor sailing boats on the Exe estuary are normal working class people with limited funds who could not afford to relocate to other mooring grounds. If it has to be imposed, you would only need to put clearly identified marker buoys in place, linked with stainless steel cable. It certainly would not cost £3m! QUESTION 17 LINE ONE, SHOULD THIS BE Q16 NOT 14?
- These restrictions are much needed. Estuaries are vital for many bird species and the Exe is a particularly important element of the network of UK estuaries that provide vital safe habitat for birds, particularly wildfowl and waders seeking feeding and roosting sites over winter. There may be talk of the need for 'balance' between economic and wildlife interests. My experience is that, all too often, this means that wildlife can lose out. Please ensure that the Exe is better managed so that its internationally important waterfowl populations are safeguarded and that the Exe has properly safeguarded areas where birds can feed and roost.
- There are no refuges for wildlife on the estuary despite it benefiting from the highest level of designation for ecological importance. With ever increasing recreational demands from users, it's critical for such refuges to be created in order for the estuary to continue to support its internationally important wildlife. There is real doubt as to whether voluntary zones will be effective. It may be that mandatory zones need to be introduced.
- As water users of this unique and beautiful place, we should expect a degree of compromise to ensure the wildlife and habitat are protected. I think that lower impact activities such as rowing, kayaking and paddling should perhaps be afforded a slightly closer berth with the proposed zones. (Jet skis, power boats and even kite surfers understandably should perhaps give these zones a much wider berth due to the potential pollution and bird strike potential).
- Having paddled the Exe estuary and many other waterways there is no evidence to suggest that a kayak would disturb or pose any type of threat to any other type of wildlife.
- I believe that global warming may have more of an effect on declining populations of some species of bird rather than roost disturbance. Current estuary use does not appear to have affected the steady increase in egret numbers and therefore a more detailed and unbiased bird survey should be completed before any imposition of your proposals. A matter that does concern me is the lack of publicity for the exclusion zones that has been provided which hints at back-door tactics on behalf of interested parties. I'm also of the belief that although these exclusion zones would be voluntary at first they would soon become compulsory- given the amount of financial investment

that is intended on your part. There should be a more balanced approach to estuary use which should have more emphasis on people rather than a skew towards birdlife.

- The details of your proposals have been publicised very little if at all. I could be forgiven in thinking your intention is to sneak changes in "under the radar" before estuary users realize how they are affected
- This seems to me as another reason for local government to waste money that we haven't got in times of austerity, the local environment has been perfectly fine in all these years, and why impose restrictions that cause problems for people using the estuary just to make life just that little bit harder?? It cost money to hold all these consultations, do all the surveys, 'important officials' salaries, all the signage that will be required so people are aware of where they are allowed and not, let alone the policing of it and imposing the fines... I personally do not want you wasting public money on such things.... please end it now and don't waste any more money on something that had no evidence that it will make any difference!!
- I see no clear evidence to support an exclusion zone for dinghies, cruisers and canoes/kayaks. Where are the facts about the benefits to birds/wildlife of these proposed VEZ? There has been very little active consultation about this and I have not been able to have direct contact with the body making the decisions to understand the true drivers for the proposal. I do not agree with the proposals or the benefits they are supposed to bring.
- Have we got a problem? The commentary on the River Exe bird watching trip says that wildlife on the Exe is increasing. The factual evidence to support proposal, the disturbance report, does not provide substantial evidence that the amount of bird disturbance is significant. Example 1) para 5.40 "Most activities result in the loss of less than 1% of intertidal habitats present within the estuary (i.e. 1ha per group)". Example 2) The report actually says (Fig 12) small sailing boats have no impact on the habitats
- Start addressing real issues that affect the tax payers, businesses, visitors and less fortunate of the region. Don't try and mess with nature.
- Why is there a need for these exclusions as water can only be used for recreational purposes at high water when birds are on land. WHY the secrecy? This move involves the general public. I feel the committee have no right to conduct meetings in private that concern the tax and rate paying public
- Better widely advertised meetings Complete transparency AND honesty re proposals and costings Inadequate job description for monitoring officer- driving licence needed but what about boating qualifications if she/he will monitor on water activity?
- I have sailed on the estuary for much of my life and I have not seen sailing craft disturb wild life unless they are in very shallow water and people are disembarking. I very good way to observe the bird life is to drift down in a small sailing or rowing boat.
- From the point of view of dog walkers at Dawlish Warren I can see there may be some objections to the dog on leads area and ban outside certain months BUT I think this promotes responsible dog ownership and is a positive step for the local wildlife.
- These proposals will have a negative effect on the ability of the Gig club that I row for to operate safely and to offer the sport to beginners, juniors or any rower who may be slightly weaker. The level of disturbance caused by the activity that I take part in pails into insignificance when compared to: Exempted power boats in the Exmouth Zone. First Great Western train services adjacent to the Exmouth Zone. Walkers and cyclists on the path adjacent to the Exmouth Zone. Water taxi and other craft landing on Dawlish Warren. First Great Western train services adjacent to the Dawlish Warren Zone. Golfers on the Warren. 4x4 ATV patrol vehicle that operates on the Warren. In order to maintain fairness these activities should also be restricted and included in the proposals.
- I feel strongly that the Estuary has been a shared space with responsible users of non-powered watercraft such as myself causing a minimal impact upon wildlife.

Speeding powered watercraft may cause both a disturbance and potential pollution but I do not think that introducing these voluntary exclusion zones for users such as myself is proportionate or evidence based.

- It is ignorant to propose 'voluntary' exclusion zones where people who use the estuary are not being properly consulted. There should be full public consultations representing all groups of people who currently use the estuary for work or recreation BEFORE any decision is made to create exclusion zones.
- There aren't such restrictions on land so it's hard to see why they are needed on water. I am happy to keep a fair distance from nesting birds but this just takes common sense not blanket exclusion
- I would like to see this process more open and accountable. It is only by chance that I have found out about these proposals.
- I don't feel that it is necessary to have these zones at all.
- INFORMATION USED IN THE EXE ESTUARY DISTURBANCE STUDY WHICH LIES BEHIND THE VEZ WAS INCORRECT. IN PARTICULAR THE CLAIM THAT THE INTERTIDAL HABITAT LOST TO A WINDSURFER/KITESURFER IS 8 HECTARES. WE OBJECTED TO THE STUDY AT THE TIME AND ARE THEREFORE RELUCTANT TO AGREE ANY PROPOSALS FOUNDED ON INCORRECT DATA.
- I would like to know how much the areas are affected by small boat and kayak use?
- 1. Thank you for organising the recent consultation events, including the event on Thurs. 20 April which I attended. My main comment is that a consultation should start with the "do nothing" scenario, i.e. whether or not to have any exclusion zones, whereas this fundamental step has been ignored and the consultation is purely on their size/area and restrictions. 2. There needs to be separate consultation events on the Codes of Conduct please. 3. Please can the draft report (to be prepared by Stephanie Cook) include copies of all consultation responses, in particular from the stakeholder organisations, and identify how these have been incorporated and/or addressed. 4. I think Stephanie did a great job under difficult circumstances at the consultation event on Thurs. 20 April.
- The proposed exclusion zones & restrictions on boat activity does not appear to differentiate between different types of vessel, which have very different potential to disturb wild life. The measures do not seem to be based on hard evidence of disturbance caused by boating activities. Water based activities are targeted, what about other potential disturbances e.g. low flying aircraft (helicopters in particular), walkers (& dogs), cyclists, vehicular traffic, trains, all of which use the margins of the estuary. Restricting movements to high water is nonsensical in that for a substantial part of the tidal cycle the intertidal zone is covered and prevents access for birds to feed. Limiting canoeists to the main channel, which is narrow will expose them to the serious risk of being run down, in particular by power boats which traverse the channel for its whole length (from Topsham to Exmouth) at high speed, often with water skiers in tow. Water skiers regularly traverse the channel from buoy 31 down river to the designated ski area (and back using channel markers as turning points) creating risk and nuisance to all other water users. Canoeists are safer out of the channel and should be discouraged from using it. The actions are being taken by an unelected, uncontactable body, whose consultation has been poorly promoted. The result appears to be an intention to spend large amounts of public money (which is in short supply we are told) to solve a "problem" for which no firm evidence has been provided, by restricting the activities of only a section of the community which uses the estuary, and whose practical suggestions have been disregarded.
- I wish to object to the proposals. The consultation document refers to the Exe Estuary Management Plan 2016 - 2021, this document certainly does not advocate the use of multiple zoning for multiple parties at different times of the year. It does however promote the use of the estuary for all different uses taking into account all different types of needs Social, economic and financial. Clearly in this form with such

ambiguity and little consultation, the only recommendation is to clarify the areas / restrictions (WITH JUSTIFIED REASONS) and put it out to consultation in a form where "consultation" is a means of gaining information and views, rather than the exhibition material a narrow group of users have put forward.

- 1. While the report giving rise to these proposals rests on scientific observation (from perhaps an unrepresentatively small sample), the assumptions arising from the report are not the only possible ones and are not necessarily correct. 2. Dinghy sailors love the estuary and its wildlife. They are motivated to respect wildlife voluntarily for its own sake but are deeply concerned at the looming shadow of compulsion. It has been suggested that the replacement of the words 'exclusion zone' with 'wildlife refuge' would emphasise shared objectives rather than imposed restrictions, whilst also gaining the goodwill of newcomers to the area. 3. Codes of conduct are for discussion at a future date, I understand, but the waters have been muddied by talk of heavy-handed restrictions which it will be impractical to observe and which go beyond the bounds of common sense.
- Start again, this time involving water users from the outset. This is a very one-sided proposal that has had no input from Exe Estuary users. The consultation process has been flawed and poorly publicised. Show that you have an understanding of sailing on the estuary. For example the VEZ's have been illustrated using an OS map which is inaccurate and out of date rather than using a chart from the Hydrographic Office which sailors use. This demonstrates sloppiness, lack of attention to detail and disrespect to the water users who these measures will have an impact on. Equally there is little or no evidence that sailing per se has an impact on bird populations. Despite this being pointed out on numerous occasions no-one has provided any. There is no direct access to the decision makers who are heavily weighted towards the environmental lobby and have no representation from the water users. The so-called EEMP has no powers at all and its views are in danger of being misrepresented.
- Outdoor recreational activities should be encouraged and can coexist with the wildlife on the warren. From my experience the recreational use on or near the warren is fairly minimal (if you walk a short distance away from the amusement arcades) and is not detrimental to the warren or its ecosystem. The proposals are unjustified and disproportionate I oppose the proposals.
- There has been a 25% decline in water activity on the Exe over the past 20 years the TAX being applied to new build to mitigate there impact on the river and pebbled Is based on flawed assumptions that there will be a substantial increase in usage over the next five years if this fails to happen at the predicted levels will the moneys levied be returned and the nonsensical exclusion zones be revoked?? Any money spent SHOULD be on mitigating the risk of bird flu reaching our country which will have a far greater impact than a few crab tilers and dog walkers on the bird life and farmed animals and children's health of our country and when this happens we will have spent our money on NEEDLESS follies instead of focussing on the real problems.
- 1. Access to the estuary is already very constrained by the railways that extend along both banks, so bird protection is very high already. Reducing the number of access points still further discriminates against water sports at a time when society is trying to encourage more people to take up sport. It also ignores the fact that the Exe Estuary has produced many internationally renowned sailors, windsurfers and kite boarders and we should be building on that pedigree not making it harder for youngsters to take up these sports that have won us so many Olympic medals. 2. The purported evidence in the 2011 report on disturbance to bird life by sailors and canoeists is very poor as there were hardly any recreational water users around at the time it was undertaken in the winter. 3. Natural England's own guidelines concerning disturbance, talk about 'Significant Disturbance', and this is clearly not the case with sailing boats and canoes. Birds have even been seen perched on the spreaders of a

dinghy whilst it was sailing along - so clearly it didn't feel very threatened. 4. Sailors and Canoeists are very quiet and there is no data at all to show that sailors and canoeists cause any disturbance to feeding birds as they pass by, perhaps because water users need a minimum depth to navigate which is always a few yards from the edge of the mud banks. 5. Observation shows that birds adapt very well to sailors and canoeists and return even to active access points like Sailing Club slipway areas immediately the boats have launched or recovered. 6. For most of the week you get no more than 50 users on the water at any one time and even at weekends there are only a few hours of the day when you will have more than 200 users over the whole area of the Estuary, so any disturbance in any particular area is very transitory and infrequent. 7. Most of the bird feeding grounds on the Exe are in areas where sailors and canoeists do not go, so why do they need more exclusion zones. 8. The government is trying to encourage more sporting activity to combat obesity and diabetes, yet the Environmental Lobby groups want to restrict access to the water and make it more difficult to practice a healthy pastime outdoors. 9. Having 200m exclusion zones around many of the areas proposed, both the existing and new ones, will effectively make water sports impossible except at high tide as it will extend right across the navigable channel in many places at lower states of tide. 10. Forcing water users to stay in the channel will be very unsafe as the strong current in the Exe will lead to many water users being swept out to sea or upstream as they cannot sail or paddle against the current, leading to potential risk of exposure or injury, and further burdening the maritime rescue services.

- The zones have been poorly thought through. The Disturbance Study that has been published does not show evidence that an exclusion zone is required to restrict paddling. It is not reasonable to stop all human activity when the evidence does not demonstrate a significant problem from all human activity. Apply the zones to the actual risk that can be demonstrated. Neil Harris has said that the comparator site is the Solent (the other two sites are heathland and can be ignored). The Habitat Mitigation for the Solent does not have any exclusion zones so there is no reason to have them on the Exe Estuary. Here is the advice for the Solent: <http://www.birdaware.org/article/28066/Follow-the-coastal-code> you should follow the example of the Solent properly, not continue with the proposal that has been started for the Exe.
- Response to Consultations for Exe Estuary Voluntary Exclusion Zones (VEZ) I am a local Topsham resident, and have been a member of Topsham Sailing Club, for over 40 years; also a member of Exe Kite boarders/British Kite sports and a water user with my family. I object to the proposals on the following grounds: The science behind the restrictions is flawed. Eminent research has shown that bird life and human activity can and does co-exist happily. What research has been carried out to relate the perceived increase in Estuary usage to new houses being built away from the Estuary (Countess Wear for instance)? There seems little emphasis on improving the ecology and environment of the Estuary generally. Specifically – increased flooding and run off of pollutants has increased. The proposed restrictions will adversely affect the people who use and care about the Estuary. The bird lobby is strongly perceived as being antagonistic and dictatorial in its attitude to other Estuary users. We have personal experience of the damage and uncaring attitude of 'twitches', when a rare bird is sighted where we live. These people are not true 'nature lovers'; they often park unthinkingly and show complete lack of consideration. This proposed restriction is unnecessary, it is not an area that is over used and has not caused problems in the past. Windsurfing on 'the duck pond' has been enjoyed in excess of 35 years with no adverse effect. In fact sailing and water sports generally provide a strong impetus for pollution control that otherwise would be lacking. I strongly object to Bye Law Powers being miss-appropriated. This is wholly unnecessary and will alienate the majority of responsible water users and local residents, who fully support improving the ecology but not creating 'no go zones'.

- Recognise that the Disturbance Study does not show that paddling causes a significant problem. Follow the example of the Solent which was put forward by Neil Harris as the comparator site. This site does not have exclusion zones so they should not be introduced on the Exe Estuary. You can see the Solent requirements here: <http://www.birdaware.org/article/28066/Follow-the-coastal-code>
- No proof is given for the need of this exclusion zone. People walking, in boats or trains passing by does not affect wildlife. There are many wildlife sanctuaries next to industrial estates, motorway etc. You are imposing this on the vast majority for no reason
- Many users of the Exe Estuary do not fit into the exclusive categories you have defined. It is perfectly possible to be a sailor, dog walker, and local resident, have a motorboat and be interested in birding and conservation all at the same time (indeed my wife is an RSPB volunteer). It is divisive to categorise users and say that canoeists say this and birders say that
- I note with surprise the lack of a proper and publicised consultation. The Estuary is not particularly heavily used and I am not aware of any evidence that there is a substantial problem (or the slightest risk of one) which justifies the proposed restrictions. I cannot see how the expense of what is proposed can possibly be justified.
- Both Exmouth and Dawlish proposals are unwarranted and unsubstantiated by the survey report on potential over-wintering of wildfowl. If any exclusion provisions are warranted - which I do not accept - they should first apply to intertidal off lead dog walkers and then kite surfers and windsurfers in that order of priority. These are what the survey report itself identifies as the factors causing most if not all 'major disturbances' to wildfowl groups. In any event the survey is a 'snapshot' from 6 winters' ago without any comparative data before or since. Such selective data is patently inadequate to provide a basis for exclusion action.
- The main problem is that there is no substantial evidence to support the proposed restrictions. The trends in bird numbers are no different from other sites, and a link to recreational activities rather than environmental factors has not been established. The study simply assesses whether birds have undertaken a flight, but ignores the fact that they likely return shortly afterwards to resume feeding. Furthermore, the projected disturbance footprints are based on statistical models fitted to sparse data, and important factors, such as the fact that dogs frequently disturb a much larger area than their owners, have not been taken into account. There is also no reason at all to restrict organised sailing events to high tide. In summary, a much more thorough assessment of the significance of changing bird populations, and the causes of any significant trends, needs to be undertaken.
- The Exe estuary is a navigable waterway and vessels have the right to have access to it at all states of the tide. Larger sailing vessels may be using the estuary at states of the tide more than 2 hours before or after high water and which may bring them within the 200m VEZ. What consideration has been given to the safety aspects of imposing a VEZ on water users? What evidence is there that sailing dinghies, canoes and kayaks cause disturbance to birds roosting or feeding at the shoreline?
- Having read the Exe Disturbance Study of 2011, it appears that the statistics quoted in the Summary are very contradictory, the study does not reach a conclusion as to the major cause of disturbance to the birds on the estuary. Water based activities are stated to account for only 8% of all observations, leaving 92% of the observations relating to land and intertidal activities. The Study states that around 14% of recreational events observed caused a major flight event and almost two-thirds (62%) of events evoked no response at all from the birds. From our own observations of using the estuary for over 50 years, the birds seem to be able to adapt to and accommodate all other users and distractions including the trains which run up both sides of the estuary, cyclists on the cycle tracks, gunfire from the Royal Marines

Training Base, helicopters flying along the river, in fact, taking all these things into account, it would appear that water based leisure activities account for very little disturbance to bird populations. Most people who use wind or paddle powered craft also care deeply for the estuary and the wildlife that depends upon it. We would be upset to think that our activities caused distress to birds or other wildlife and, having read the Disturbance Study, this would appear to support our belief that our activities cause no harm to the birds on the estuary.

- The consultation appears to have been patchy to say the least. Topsham Sailing Club, for example, has not been invited by you to take part in the consultation. That is in spite of us having around 500 members, having been active in the Estuary for more than 130 years and having a wealth of experience in the Estuary.
- The reason there aren't more birds is habitat loss. The resources proposed to enforce a voluntary exclusion zones could be better spent protecting wetlands from agriculture and development. Disturbance is also a problem and everyone agrees the disturbance problem is dogs, but most of the effort appears to be concentrated on kitesurfers, windsurfers and canoeists. More effort should be put into informing dog walkers about the problems caused by letting their dogs loose on the estuary. At a meeting to discuss the voluntary exclusion zones on 20/4/2017, a man who's involved in the Wetlands Estuary Bird Count Survey gave a talk about the numbers and said there's been a decline in bird numbers since 1993 This is caused by • Global warming • Disturbance • Draining of salt marshes for use as grazing marshland and other uses (he went very quiet when he said that) • Changes in the amount of vegetation and invertebrates (although later he said no data or information has been gathered to see if there is actually the same amount of food in the estuary for birds) A wildlife photographer called Sue has seen and reported many times that birds have been disturbed. She gave the following examples: • Dogs • Fireworks • A Drone • Children But she did not give us an example of water users disturbing birds. The Wetland Bird Survey figures do not appear to add up. I've just had a look at the bird survey At <http://app.bto.org/webs-reporting/> and I think these are the figures: Avg in: 93/94 2005/06 Increase Brent Goose (Dark-bellied) 1126 1212 8% Shelduck 121 104 -14% Wigeon 1535 1811 18% Teal 392 534 36% Mallard 490 318 -35% Pintail 67 60 -10% Oystercatcher 1873 1429 -24% ...so I cannot see where they got the figures for the alerts (at <http://app.bto.org/webs-reporting/> ) from
- We need to enter the zones if necessary, depending on tide and winds and it may be a safety issue. There is no evidence that sailing, per se, impacts on birds. The consultation process has been flawed and shows scant regard for water users, even disrespect. i.e. the use of OS maps to show the areas rather than Hydrographic Office charts, a complete ignorance of the effect of tides and currents on small craft and the fact that the zones were initially devised without any input from water users. If the process had been different we could have reached a mutually agreed solution that was voluntary. It is wrong that the decision makers are all council and environmental organisations and there are no representatives from water users. Enforcement appears to have a large part to play in what is supposed to be a voluntary zone. It is ridiculous that powerboat users will still be able to use the area that sailors will be excluded from! Better solutions have been suggested and ignored Councillors appear not to be listening
- Educate please about wildlife and litter/ pollution. Do not please! Blanket restrict access where it has not got evidential benefit.
- The R Exe is not easily accessible to water users due to train tracks on both sides. There is no evidence that the building so far has had any impact on the amount of recreational activity in the estuary, in fact there is probably less than 5 years ago because sailing is not a growing sport on the Exe. There is no evidence that sailing has an adverse effect on birds. The whole consultation process is flawed. There has been scant regard to water users. A different approach could have led to mutually

agreed solutions to the satisfaction of all sides. The plans were devised without consultation of water users. Water users should be present on the controlling committee (not just so called environmentalists - which we all are). Councillors have avoided public scrutiny, have refused to engage in meaningful discussion and shamefully were not present at the so called 'consultation' meeting on 20th May. They are not responsive or prepared to listen. Are they not supposed to bathe servants of the community? That any comments within the code of conduct have any clauses attempting to limit the time of sailing to high water (whenever that is) as all have a legal right of navigation on the river. This has generated profound suspicion and mistrust which could all have been avoided if a cooperative and consensual approach been adopted. This will take many years to be forgotten. Finally I believe that the proposals are the solution to a problem which does not exist

- The whole plan seems to have been driven by councils wanting their payoff for allowing all the new houses to be built. The Exe is a stunning location & should be kept for all users to enjoy.
- Your insistence on asking for comment on an unwanted scheme is ridiculous. It should never have been proposed as it has no litigious start point as no indigenous local human Exe estuary inhabitant has requested it.

**Q14. Which town or village do you live in?**

208 respondents commented.

- lypstone
- Broadclyst
- Budleigh Salterton
- Exmouth
- exeter
- Budleigh Salterton
- Newton Abbot
- Exeter
- Teignmouth
- Exeter
- Bradninch
- Craddock
- topsham
- Woodbury
- Exmouth
- Woodbury Salterton
- Exmouth
- Exeter
- Budleigh
- Exmouth
- Exeter
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Lypstone
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Honiton
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Poole
- Exmouth
- Taunton
- Exmouth
- Exmouth

- Ottery St Mary
- Exmouth
- Broadwell, Rugby
- West Hill, Ottery St Mary
- Tiverton
- Topsham
- Kenton
- Exmouth
- dawlish
- Halberton
- Exton
- Honiton
- Exeter
- Starcross
- Exmouth and Dawlish.
- Crediton
- Exeter
- Combe Raleigh
- exeter
- Budleigh salterton
- Exeter
- Exmouth
- Exeter
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Moretonhampstead
- Kennford, but with sons and daughters and seven grandchildren living in Exmouth.
- Topsham/Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Budleigh Salterton
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Starcross
- Kenton
- Exmouth
- Exminster
- Exminster
- Exmouth
- Kennford
- Exmouth
- Exminster
- Clyst st Mary
- Exeter
- Exmouth
- Exeter

- Kenton
- Bow
- Exmouth
- Potterne
- Exeter
- Norhtleigh, EX24 6BS
- Exmouth
- Exmouth
- Cockwood
- exeter
- Exeter
- Sidmouth
- Cockwood
- Exmouth
- Bournemouth
- Topsham
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Brampford Speke
- Payhembury
- Exmouth
- Doddiscombsleigh
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Topsham
- Exmouth
- honiton
- Mamhead
- Exeter
- Powderham
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Topsham
- Exmouth
- Starcross
- Exeter
- Exeter
- Cockwood
- Exeter
- Starcross