

Burnham, Berrow and Brean - voluntary no-netting and longlining zone

The Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has a duty to seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.

In the Authority's Annual Plan, developing the Recreational Sea Angling (RSA) sector is one of the three main objectives. The recent report from the national, Sea Angling 2012ⁱ study supported the Authority's opinion that RSA is an important sector in the District and confirms that it would benefit from development.

The Authority has recently published its draft RSA Strategyⁱⁱ. The Authority has been looking for suitable locations around the District to introduce fisheries management that seeks to proactively develop the sector. Initial scoping of potential sites was carried out with the assistance of the RSA representatives on the Authority

The Authority has identified three potential pilot study areas, the Emsstrom wreck site and the Skerries Banks in the south of the district and Burnham, Berrow and Brean beaches in the north of the district, to assess the impact of introducing management measures to improve sea angling.

Burnham-on-Sea, Berrow and Brean beaches in Somerset form a continuous seven mile stretch of sand and mudflats. Fishing is possible from the sea wall in Burnham at high tide, whilst beach casting is popular along the rest of the shoreline. Brean Down itself is a popular site for more experienced anglers who often fish it at night. Species targeted include cod, codling, conger, whiting, sole, flounders, thornback rays and bass. On average 0.8 - 7.2 anglers per hour of sampling were recorded depending on the mark visited. As the survey technique did not target particularly favourable tides or times, this suggests a high level of angling activity. A large and active private boat owner's sea angling association also operates out of Burnham-on-Sea. The proposed area therefore encompasses Brean Down, and all of Burnham, Berrow and Brean beaches (Figure 1, Annex 1).

No commercial activity is known to occur in the vicinity of Burnham-on-Sea, Berrow and Brean. Occasional stake nets have been reported below the Lower Light on Burnham beach, and stakes have been noted by boat-users at the entrance to the Parrett. Stake-nets occur periodically around Brean Down, and in the 1980's some gill-netting for Salmon may also have occurred in the vicinity of Brean Down. No such activity has occurred in recent years.

The Authority is looking to consultⁱⁱⁱ with all interested parties on the proposal to develop RSA interests in the Burnham, Berrow and Brean site by removing netting and longlining activities along this stretch of coastline

If following consultation on the proposals the Authority believed that restriction should be introduced the Authority would look to introduce a code of practice in the first instance. The main benefits of such an approach are that the desired management can be introduced relatively quickly and provides flexibility to deal with unforeseen issues that may arise. The main disadvantage is that no formal action can be taken against any person that does not adhere to the code of practice.

However evidence that indicates unacceptable levels of non-compliance with the voluntary measures can be used to support the introduction of byelaws.

Annex 1. Position of the proposed Burnham, Berrow and Brean Angling Zone

Table 1: The co-ordinates of the corners of the proposed Burnham, Berrow and Brean Angling Zone

Point Number	Latitude	Longitude
1	51° 19.80'N	002° 59.17'W
2	51° 19.80'N	003° 02.36'W
3	51° 13.64'N	003° 02.36'W
4	50° 13.64'N	003° 00.11'W

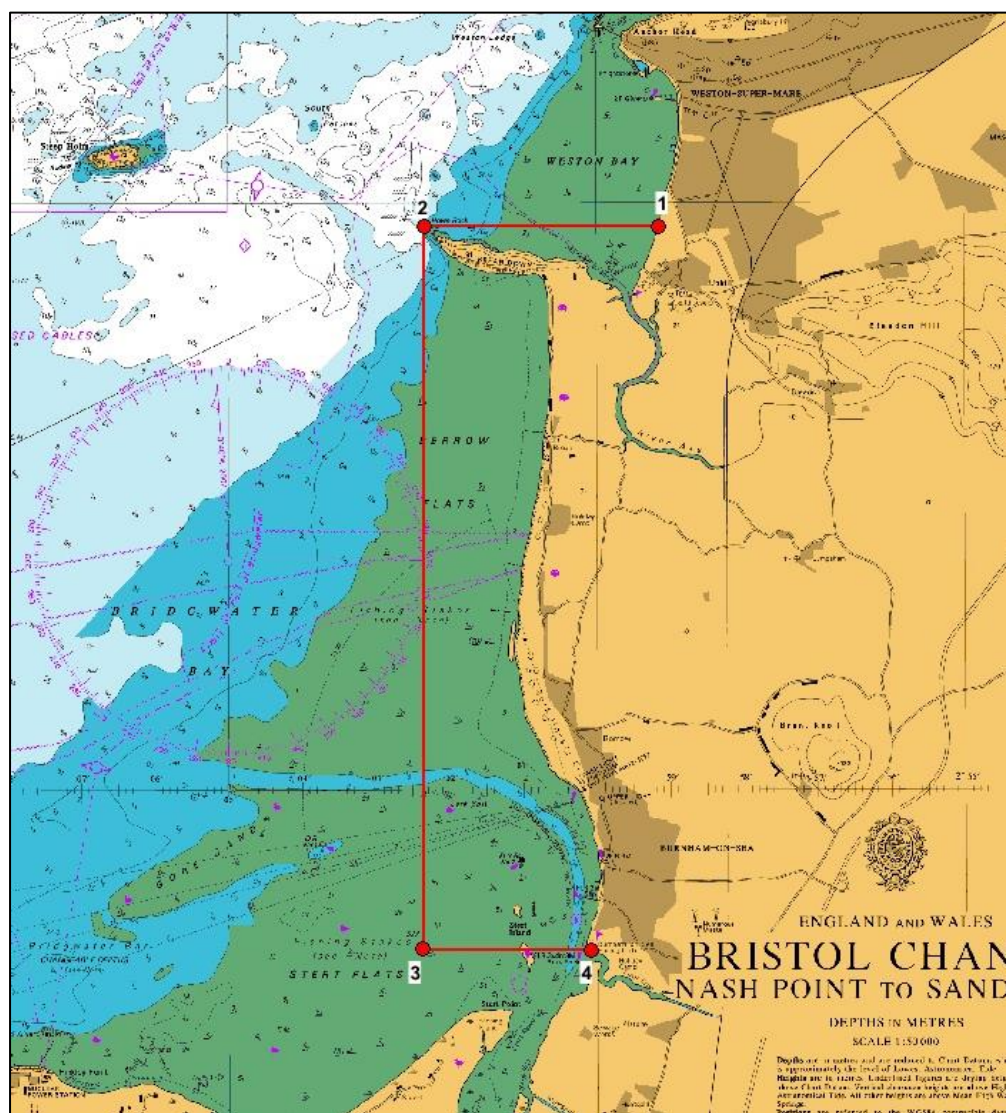


Figure 1 The position of the proposed Burnham, Berrow and Brean Angling Zone

ⁱ [MMO Sea Angling Report](#)

ⁱⁱ [RSA Strategy](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [RSA Consultation](#)