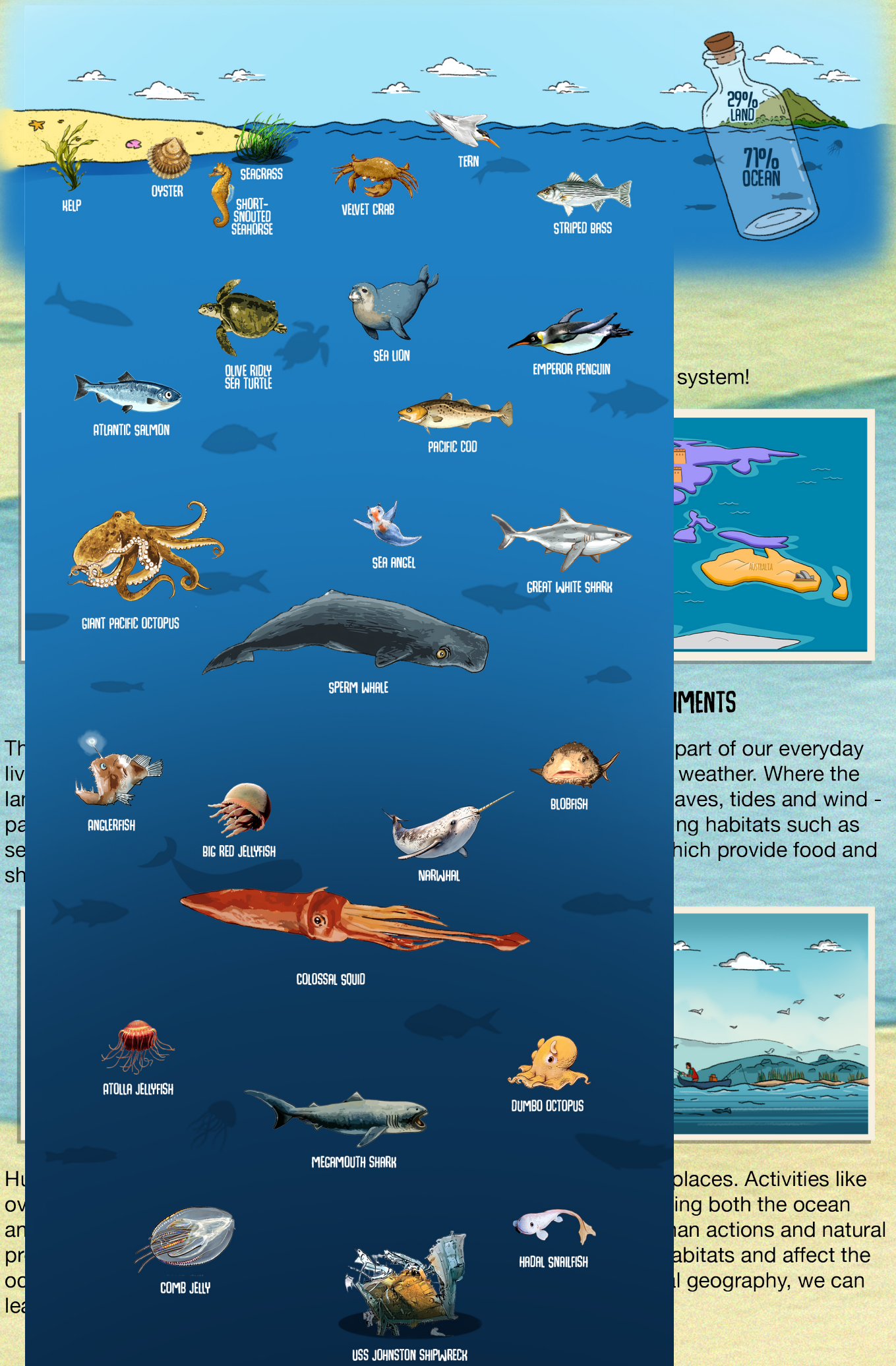


# DISCOVERING THE OCEAN

## WHAT IS THE OCEAN?

Did you know that most of our planet is covered by ocean? That's right - Earth is a blue planet! The ocean is a giant body of salt water that covers 71% of our planet. The ocean is huge, deep and full of life - from tiny plankton to giant whales, from colourful coral reefs to dark, mysterious deep-sea trenches.



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part of our everyday weather. Where the waves, tides and wind - ing habitats such as which provide food and

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# DISCOVERING THE SALTMARSH

## What is a saltmarsh?

A saltmarsh is a wet, marshy area near the coast where land meets the sea. Marshy means the ground is soft, squishy and often covered in mud. When the tide comes in, salty seawater flows through the plants and makes little channels and pools. These are tiny waterways for young fish and other small creatures and stay protected from bigger animals.

It might look marshy, but this place is bursting with life!

Saltmarshes are important for young fish, wading birds and rare seabirds who rest and raise chicks here. The mud is also packed with tiny animals, like worms, snails and crabs that birds feed on.

Saltmarshes help people too: they protect homes on the coast from flooding, clean the water and store carbon, which helps fight climate change.

## Why is it important?



These marshy homes help nature and people!

## What's the problem?

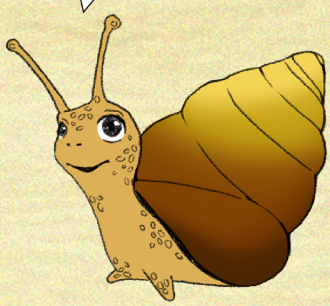


Open

These marshes are in trouble.



We're helping the saltmarsh recover!



## How can we restore the saltmarsh?



Open

Healthy marshes = healthy homes for wildlife!

# DISCOVERING THE SALTMARSH

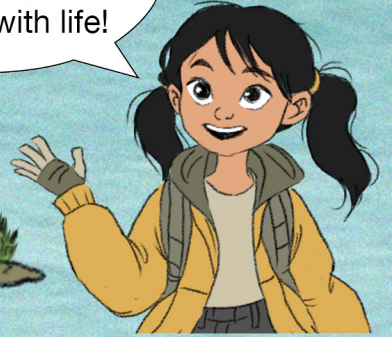
## What is a saltmarsh?

A saltmarsh is a wet, marshy area near the coast where land meets the sea. Marshy means the ground is soft, squishy and often covered with water. When the tide comes in, salty seawater covers the saltmarsh and makes little channels and pools in between the plants. These are tiny waterways and shelters where young fish and other small creatures can hide, feed and stay protected from bigger animals.

It might look marshy, but this place is bursting with life!

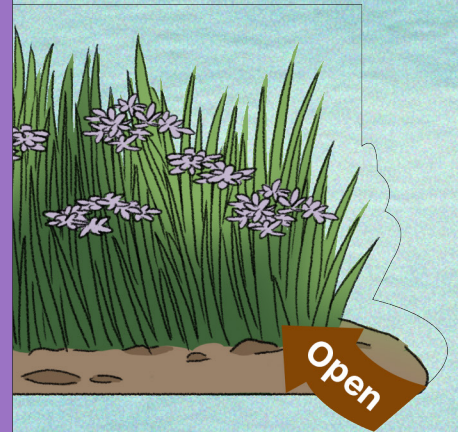


Saltmarsh



## Why is it important?

Saltmarshes are disappearing. Ports and buildings have taken over land that was once saltmarsh, and some saltmarshes have been drained for farming.

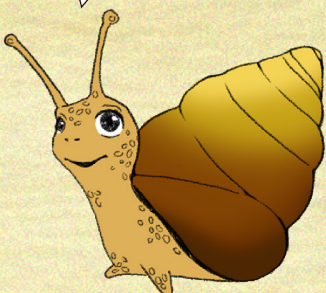


When we lose saltmarshes, animals lose their homes and we lose a natural way to protect the coast. Waves, boat traffic, weather and tides also cause erosion (wearing away). Saltmarshes are also in bad shape because the water is polluted.

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# DISCOVERING THE SALTMARSH

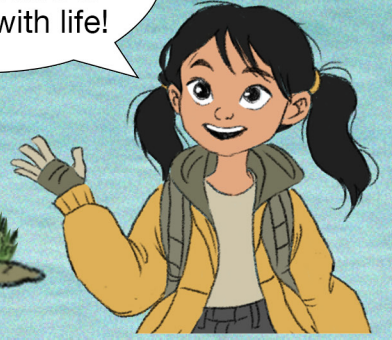
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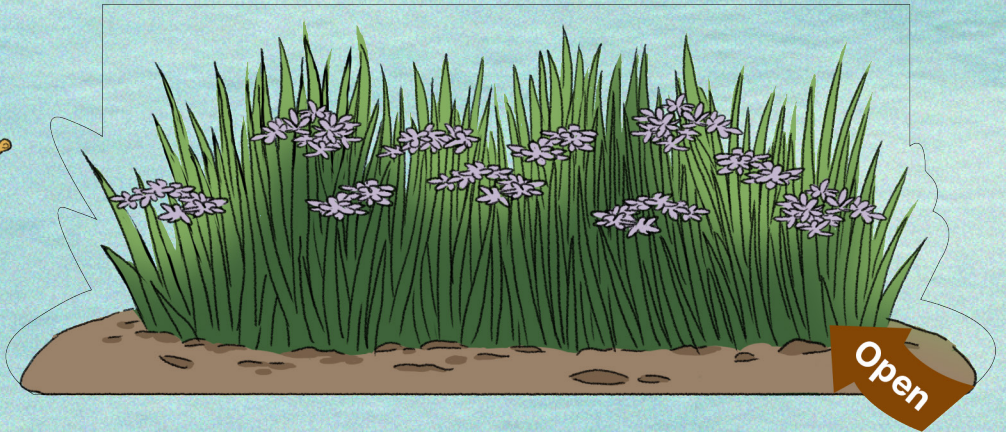


Saltmarsh



## Why is it important?

These marshy homes help nature and people!



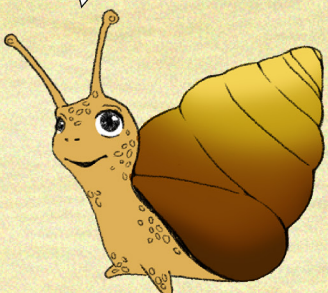
## What's the problem?



These marshes

The Solent Seascape Project is working to restore saltmarshes in the Solent. They're trying new ways to rebuild the marsh like using left over mud from nearby rivers.

We're helping the saltmarsh recover!



This gives plants and animals space to grow again and brings life back to the coast.

**Healthy marshes = healthy homes for wildlife!**

# DISCOVERING THE OYSTER REEF

## What is an oyster reef?

Oyster reefs are clusters of oysters growing close together on the sea floor. These clever creatures build reef structures like underwater cities and spaces where animals can live. Their shells form strong homes for fish.

**Oysters = amazing underwater cities**  
**Reefs = nurseries, shelters, and homes**

## Why are oyster reefs important?

Oysters create homes for everyone.



Each oyster acts like a mini water filter - cleaning the sea by removing dirt and extra nutrients. Their reef homes stop the seabed from washing away and make the coast stronger.

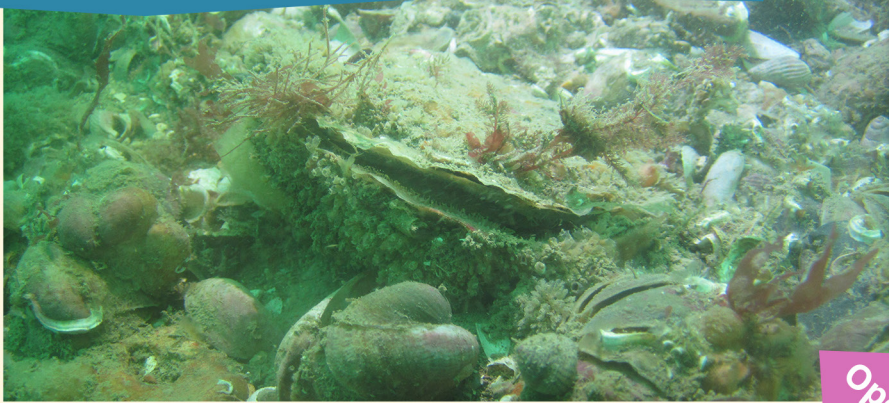
Reefs bring all kinds of creatures together and help whole ecosystems thrive.

**Cleaner seas. Safer shores.  
Happier habitats!**

We're small, but we make a big impact!



## What's happening to oyster reefs?

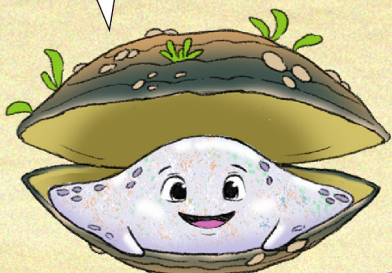


Open

These rich habitats are in serious danger.



We don't just live here, we build the habitat!



## How are people helping?



Open

**Teamwork, science and care are bringing back the oysters, and rebuilding the reefs!**

# DISCOVERING THE OYSTER REEF

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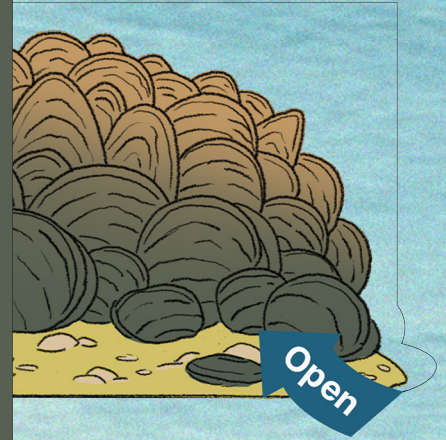
Oyster reefs are clusters of oysters growing close together on the sea floor. These clever creatures build reef structures like underwater towns, full of tunnels and spaces where animals can live and hide. Their shells form strong homes for fish, crabs and more.

**Oysters = amazing underwater builders!**  
**Reefs = nurseries, shelters, and snack stops!**



## Why are oyster reefs important?

Oyster reefs around the world have been damaged or destroyed. In fact, 85 percent have disappeared. Fishing, pollution, and changes to the coast have made it hard for oysters to survive. Native oyster reefs once grew in large, healthy numbers along the Solent coast.

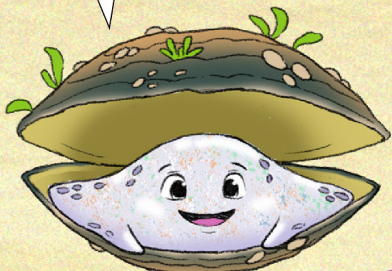


Now only small, scattered groups of native oysters remain. When oyster reefs vanish, sea life loses important homes, and people lose clean, healthy seas.

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# DISCOVERING THE OYSTER REEF

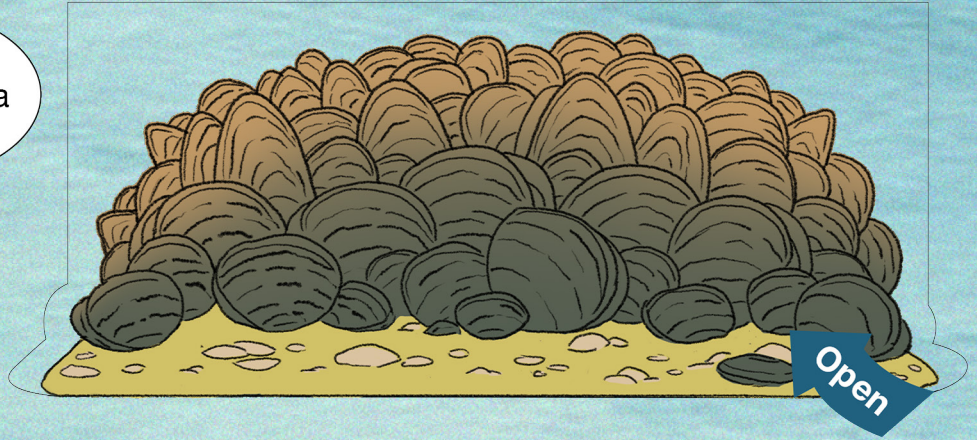
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## Why are oyster reefs important?



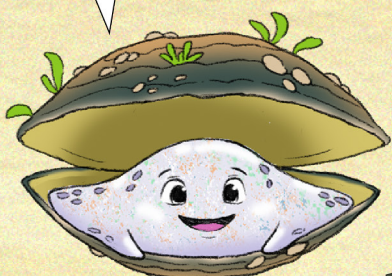
## What's happening to oyster reefs?

These rich habitats are in



The Solent Seascape Project is working with nature to bring native oysters back. We put down gravel and shells where oysters like to live, then we put grown-up oysters on top to make an oyster reef. These reefs are protected from fishing too, so the oysters are in a safe place where they can grow and get stronger.

We don't just live here, we build the habitat!



The grown-up oysters release millions of baby oysters which can settle on the reef and other places. Oysters help clean the water creating healthy environments that other animals love too. In fact, oyster reefs are full of life - they're like the coral reefs of the Solent.

**Teamwork, science and care are bringing back the oysters, and rebuilding the reefs!**

# DISCOVERING THE SEAGRASS MEADOWS

## What is seagrass?

Seagrass is a flowering plant, and it is the only type of flowering plant in the world that can live completely under salty seawater. It grows in shallow, sunlit parts of the sea, where it uses sunlight to make its own food through photosynthesis. Its long, green blades form underwater meadows, creating one of the most important habitats in the ocean. Seagrass meadows grow in soft, sandy or muddy sea floors.

It's not seaweed - it's real underwater grass!

These underwater grasslands are shelter, feeding grounds and nurseries where sea creatures can grow safely. Crabs, crabs, crabs. Seagrass meadows are li

Seagrass plays a big role in protecting the coast and helping our planet. Its roots hold the seabed in place and its long leaves trap sand - helping stop waves from washing away the shore. Seagrass also traps carbon from the air and stores it in the ground.

## Why is it important?



Seagrass is small but powerful.

At the same time, it makes oxygen, just like plants on land. That means seagrass helps fight climate change and keeps the ocean healthy for all living things. Seagrass protects the coast, stores carbon and makes oxygen - it's a triple hero!

## What's the problem?



Open

We've lost too much - and that puts nature at risk.



We're planting the sea's secret superheroes!

## How are people helping?



Open

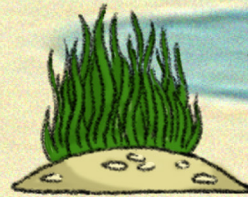
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These underwater grasslands are full of life, providing shelter, feeding grounds and nursery areas where young sea creatures can grow safely – like seahorses, fish and crabs. Seagrass meadows are like busy underwater cities.

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Seagrass

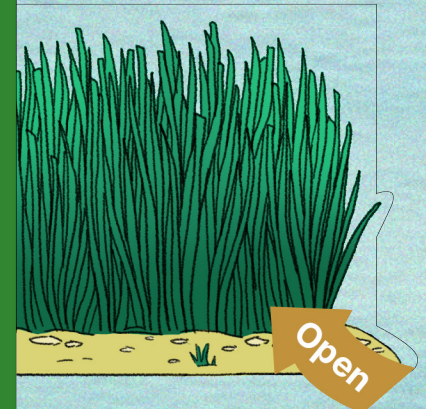


W

Over the last 100 years, the UK has lost more than 90 percent of its seagrass meadows. This happened because of pollution, damaging fishing, such as big, heavy nets dragging along the seabed and boat anchors scraping the sea floor. In the Solent, most of the seagrass meadows that are left are not very healthy. Without healthy seagrass, problems grow.

The coast can wash away more easily, the water gets dirtier, and there's more carbon in the air because less of it is being absorbed by plants in the sea. This makes climate change worse, for animals and for us. And when seagrass disappears, many sea creatures lose their homes too.

**Less seagrass = fewer fish, dirtier water, weaker coastlines.**



We've lost too much - and that puts nature at risk.



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Open

## How are people helping?



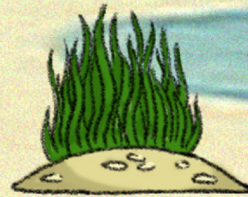
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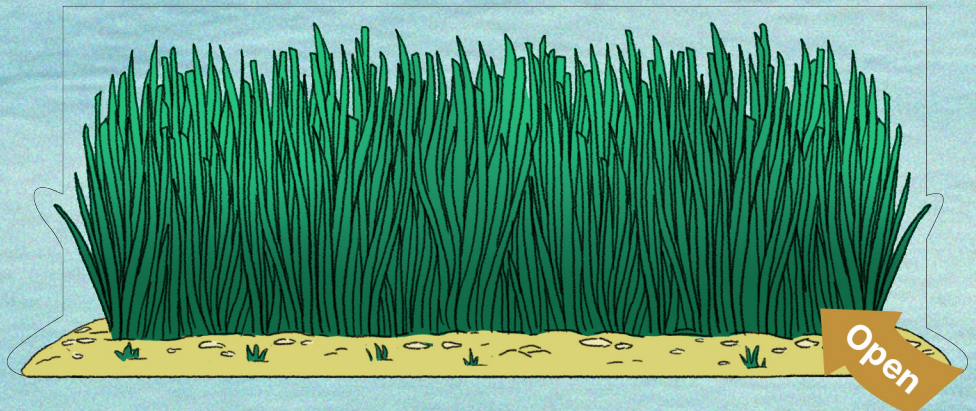
Seagrass



## Why is it important?



Seagrass is small but powerful.



Open

## What's the problem?



We've lost too much seagrass and that's a problem.

The Solent Seascape Project is restoring seagrass in the Solent by planting new seeds and shoots and protecting important areas. Seagrass restorers carefully plant the seeds when the tide is low and conditions are right for growing.



We're planting the sea's secret superheroes!

Once it grows, it becomes a healthy home for marine life again - and a big help in the fight against climate change.

Every blade of grass helps the ocean breathe better!

# DISCOVERING SEABIRD NESTING SITES

## What is a seabird nesting site?

Seabird nesting sites are special places where birds like terns, gulls and oystercatchers lay their eggs and care for their young. In the Solent, these nests are often on shingle beaches, saltmarshes or small islands.

## Seabirds need space, shelter and safety to nest and grow.

Many of the seabird species that nest in the Solent are migratory. That means they travel here from thousands of miles away to build nests, raise their chicks and feed on the fish that live amongst the oyster reefs, seagrass meadows and saltmarshes. Terns, gulls and oystercatchers are just a few species that migrate across Europe to the Solent, where they help to create a rich and diverse ecosystem of the Solent, which is vital for many other species.

Seabirds connect all the Solent habitats together, nest, moving nutrients and energy between them.

## Why is it important?



The Solent is one of the UK's most important places for seabirds. Over **11,500 pairs of seabirds breed** here in one year! Birds like the Dark-Bellied Brent Goose, Black-Headed Gull and Sandwich Tern rely on this habitat.

These nesting spots help birds rest, feed and raise their families - keeping bird populations strong.



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Seabirds connect all the Solent habitats because they feed in the sea and return to land to nest, moving nutrients and energy between different habitats.

Welcome to the cliff-tops and coasts where seabirds look after their chicks.



Seabird numbers are dropping fast. Some birds struggle to nest because of erosion and weathering (when waves or weather wear away the coast) or sea level rise (when ocean water rises and floods their nests). This means there is no space left for them to nest.



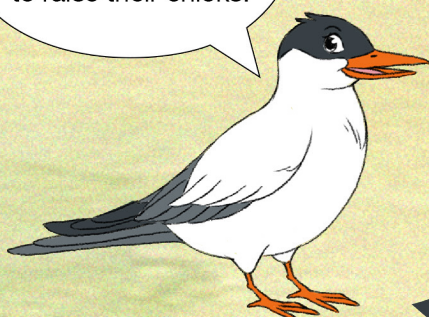
These homes are in danger from both people and environmental factors.

People also disturb birds by walking too close, building on coastlines or letting pollution reach the sea. Dogs can also scare birds off.

**Less space = fewer chicks = fewer seabirds.**



We're giving seabirds safe places to raise their chicks.



Open



**How can we help?**

# DISCOVERING SEABIRD NESTING SITES

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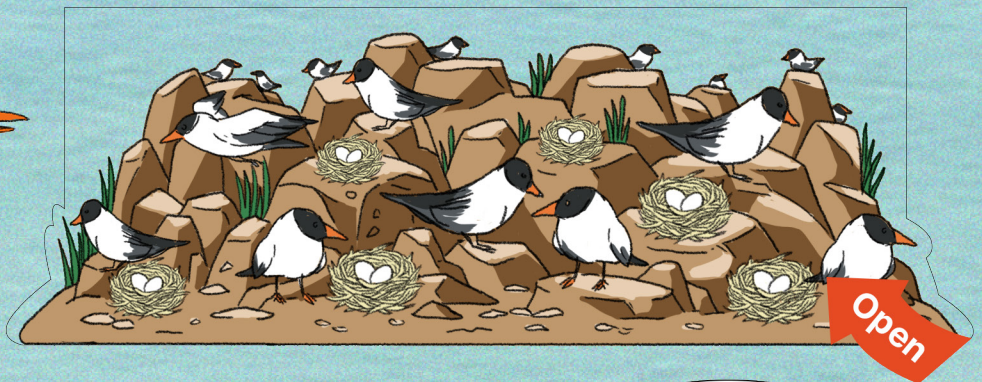
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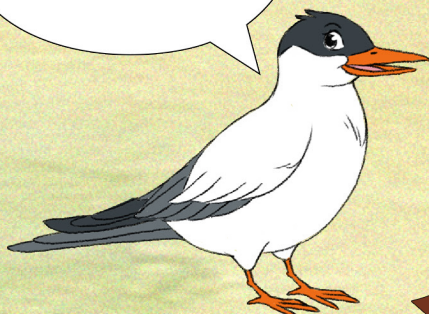
These homes are in danger from both people and

## What's the problem?



The Solent Seascape Project and scientists are working together to protect seabirds across the Solent. They monitor bird numbers and protect the places where they nest. In Langstone Harbour, they're building new nesting islands out of mud and gravel, raised high enough to stay dry when the tide comes in. These special spots help birds like terns lay eggs safely - away from rising seas, predators and people.

We're giving seabirds safe places to raise their chicks.



They also create quiet zones and help reduce pollution to keep the nesting areas clean and peaceful.

**Safe spaces = more chicks = more seabirds in the future!**