

The Seahorse Trust

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

Autumn/winter 2021/22
Ecomoorings special

NEWSLETTER



2021 has seen a major world change in the conservation of seahorses with the installation of Ecomoorings into Studland Bay in Dorset.

This innovative project is a partnership between [Boatfolk marina and boating services](#) and [The Seahorse Trust](#).

In 2019 the site became a [Marine Conservation Zone](#), because of you and our amazing volunteers who have worked so hard, Year after year since 2008 you, and they have pushed for the site to be protected, helped us collect data and knowledge about the site and ploughed on when others said no, but we did it.

Please enjoy this newsletter, and if you want to send us your feedback, send us seahorse sightings or support the Trust, through our adoption and membership scheme, or just make a donation to our work, then please email us on theseahorsetrust@gmail.com

Like so many charities we have been hit by COVID-19 so any support you can give us would be incredible.

Seahorse fact

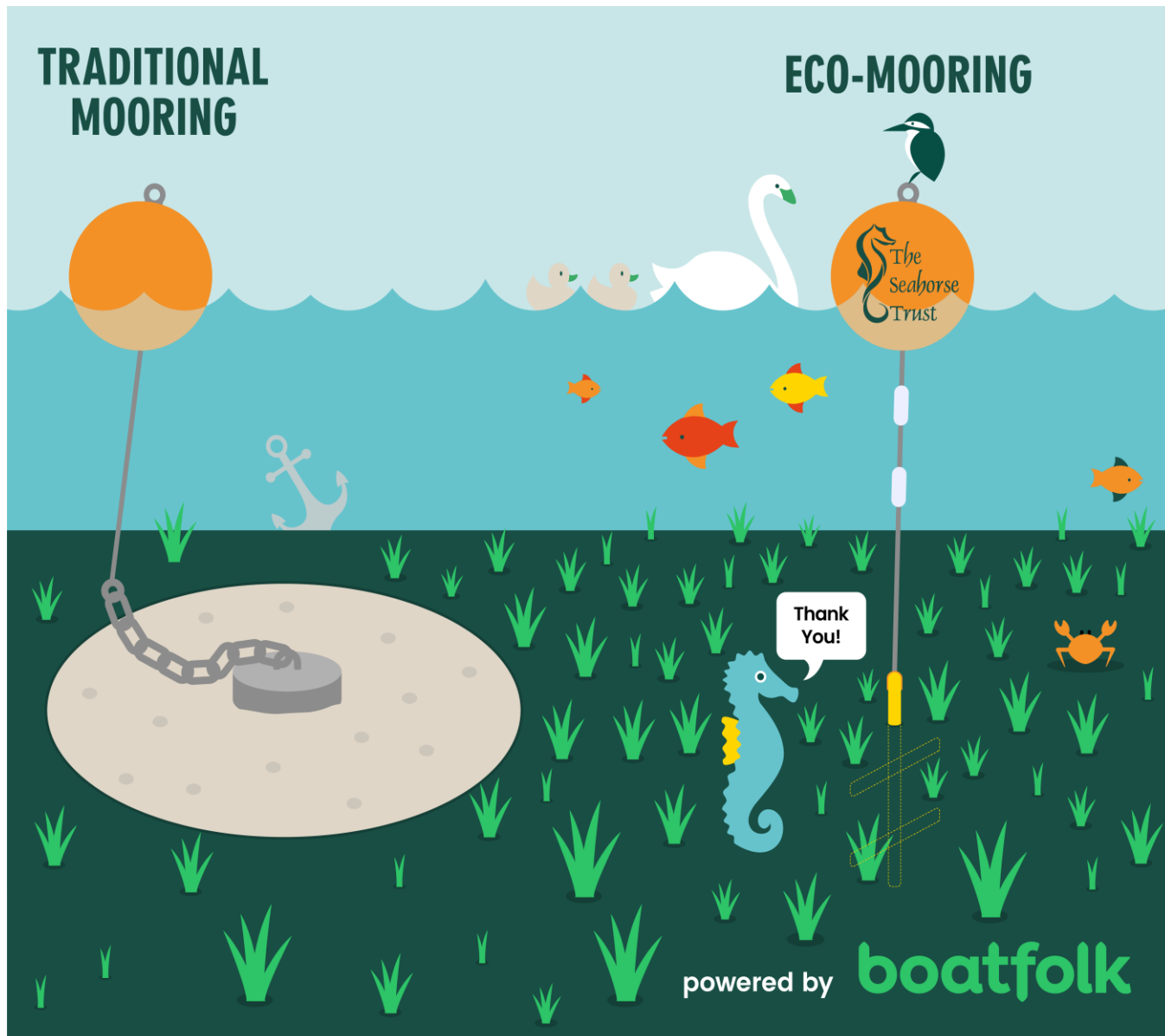
Seahorses tend to grow bigger in cooler water and so when you find a seahorse in cold water it can be bigger than the same species in warmer waters. The 2 British species are good examples of this.



Why Ecomoorings?

- Ecomoorings help to protect the natural world from damage
- They allow seagrass and other species to grow right up to them
- They allow access to leisure craft but protect the environment
- The riser (Rodes from them does not scrape the seabed
- They rise and fall with the tides but don't lay on the seabed
- Even if they did, because they are a form of rubber, they would just slide over the seagrass and not dig it up.
- Because of the Ecomoorings ecosystems can repair and return to favourable conditions, allowing the natural world to recover for all species in the area.

How do they work?



Swing moorings (traditional)

Traditional swing moorings rely on a large concrete block or lump of metal to hold them to the seabed.

The riser (rode) is a chain and when the tide drops this chain lays on the seabed. As the mooring moves around it drags the chain with it.

As the chain is dragged by the tide it cuts up or scours everything in its path and stops any regrowth, especially of seagrass which is easily cut down by these chains.

These traditional swing moorings are so damaging to the natural world.

Ecomoorings (Advanced Mooring System)

Ecomoorings or Advanced Mooring Systems are cleverly attached to the seabed with a long helical screw (anchor) that screws down into the sand below the mooring and all that can be seen is a few inches of the top of the anchor and it only has a footprint of a few inches. This allows the seagrass to grow right up to it.

Once the anchor is screwed into the seabed it can take up to 10 tons of weight pulling on it. From the anchor to the surface is a long rubber rode that rises up and is attached via a line to the mooring buoy.

Ecomoorings

How they work

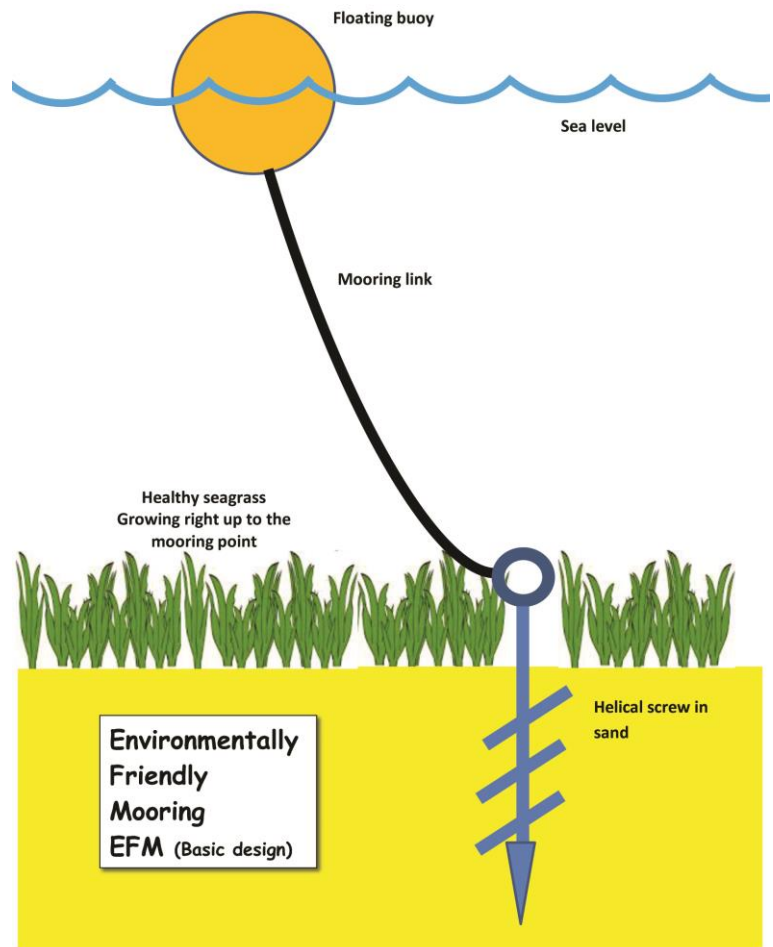
Ecomoorings provide a small footprint on the seabed that allows sensitive habitat to survive without the pressure that traditional swing moorings cause.

The use of the helical screw (anchor) into the seabed means that all the weight is taken on this anchor and nothing is above or on the seabed. The anchor is then attached to the mooring buoy by an elasticated, rubber riser (rode), which stretches and contracts as the tide rises and drops which stops the rode from dragging on the seabed.

If for some reason it ever laid on the seagrass below, it would not harm it as it will just slide over the seabed and not dig into the roots of the seagrass or the seabed.

Ecomoorings allow sensitive habitats like seagrass to expand and thrive because nothing is chopping it down and crucially it

means that the ecosystem of the seabed can be left undisturbed. Being undisturbed, seagrass flourishes and acts as a diffuser of waves. As the wave action slows down as it goes towards the beach it stops the sand of the beach and importantly the cliffs from being eroded. This 'free' beach and cliff defense is provided by nature and so it does not require expensive, manmade sea defenses that more often than not fail. Nature does it better!!



Boatfolk

None of this would have been possible without [Boatfolk marina and boating services](#). This amazing forward-thinking company and their incredible staff have made the installation of the Ecomoorings a reality. They believed in our project and back us in every way and we owe them a massive debt of gratitude for all their hard work. [THANK YOU](#).

Powered by **boatfolk**

A massive thank you to our dive volunteers, especially Kim, Paul, Nick and Pete who worked so hard getting the Ecomoorings into place and Colin, Ben, Flora and Michael from Boatfolk for their hard work on the boat, preparing the moorings and Trevor, the skipper from the Rocket.

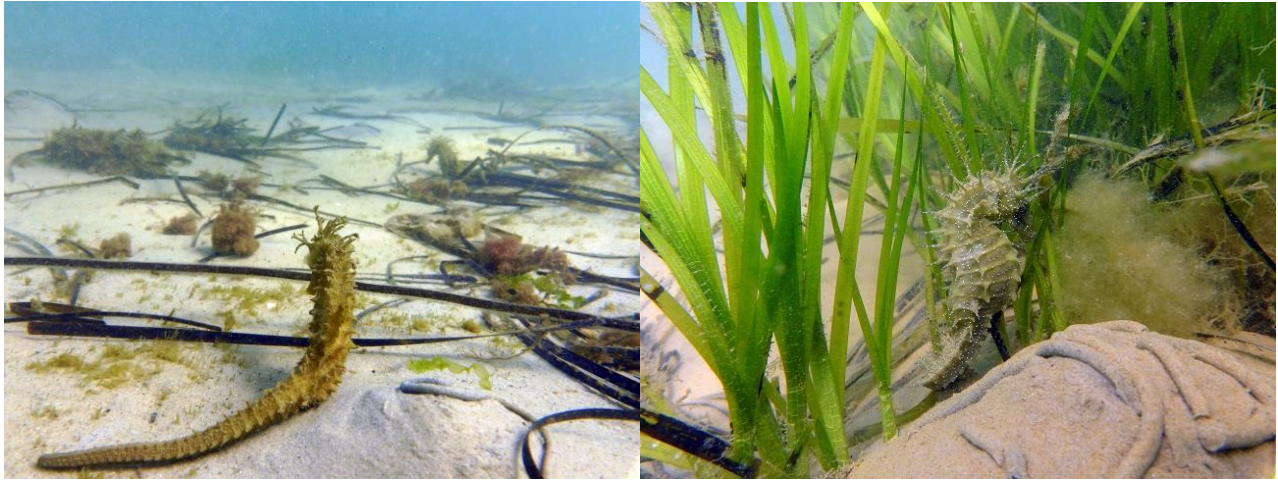
Why they're needed

- **Sensitive habitats.** Seagrass meadows are highly sensitive habitats that are home to so many species, including seahorses. Although it is mainly the Spiny Seahorses here in the UK that live in seagrass, just occasionally Short Snouted Seahorses are also found in them.
- **Nurseries.** So many species come into seagrass to breed and so Ecomoorings help to protect and restore vital breeding areas from destruction. Species like Bass, cuttlefish, Undulate Rays and seahorses use the seagrass areas as nurseries. Not only is this brilliant for all these species, it is also good for the commercial fishing industry.
- **Restore ecosystems.** Ecomoorings allow sensitive habitats like seagrass to restore. Installing Ecomoorings into the seagrass means that boats can moor up to them and not use their anchors, which dig up and destroy large areas of seagrass.
- **Allow access for boats.** By installing Ecomoorings into sensitive areas it allows boats to be able to still visit the area but stops them from wrecking the seabed with their anchors. It is a win-win situation.
- **Carbon sequestration.** Seagrass is an amazing plant that sequesters carbon. It is highly efficient and sequesters more carbon than trees in the Amazon, it allows us to fight global warming.
- **Wave diffusion.** Seagrass grows in shallow waters and as the waves come in from the sea, they lose their energy and the seagrass softens the effect of the wave, so by the time it reaches the shore it has very little energy left. This is great news as it stops the beach and cliffs from being eroded away.
- **Global warming.** Global warming is killing our planet. That much is not in doubt and so we need every tool in our toolbox to fight it. As a perfect seagrass meadow can sequester so much carbon it fights global warming. Ecomoorings allow the seagrass to restore back to favourable conditions and so putting in Ecomoorings not only protects seahorses and so many other species it also protects the planet
- **Seahorses.** Seahorses thrive in a healthy habitat like seagrass (it is mainly the Spiny that live in seagrass here in the UK) because the full ecosystem supports many species for the seahorse to feed on. It allows the seahorses to set up territories to breed in and it also provides shelter for them from predators and storms.
- **The future.** Ecomoorings are the way forward, they allow access for boats and they enable the seagrass to thrive and recover helping address global warming by carbon sequestration, it diffuses wave action and protects the beach and crucially is a nursery for commercial and non-commercial species and is home to seahorses. If we want a positive green future, then Ecomoorings protecting sensitive habitats are the only way forward.

Seahorse fact

Although thought of as tropical, a lot of seahorses are found in cooler waters. Recent work by The Seahorse Trust and its partners has shown seahorses are found in Denmark and just near Norway. They are also found on the north east of England, out onto Dogger Bank and into Scotland, which confirms that they are found around the North Sea as we suggested.





A world with no seagrass, no home for seahorses, or one that is healthy?
Ecomoorings give you that choice!

GoFundMe appeal

With our many partners in the project we hope to set up a not-for-profit company to oversee all the work with the Ecomoorings to increase the number and conserve this amazing bay for all. With this in mind we have set up a GoFundMe appeal to raise £100,000.

This will allow us to set up the not-for-profit company, employ staff to run it and crucially to buy and install more Ecomoorings.

The not-for-profit will be overseen by a board made up of interested parties and those with expertise to make this project happen.

Please help us make this a reality by donating at the link below.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/installing-ecomoorings?fbclid=IwAR2Lbo-e_R7yTN6XP2JuawwoyZcrffZU8ctBwjisDL4ysaHNijs51SlxOS8

Memorial Ecomoorings

If you or a loved one loved the sea, seahorses and nature what better way of being remembered than by having an Ecomoorings installed in your memory? We have started to do this at Studland Bay. Why not join the growing number of Ecomoorings that make a difference and remember someone?

Please contact us on theseahorsetrust@gmail.com to find out more details



Seahorses Environmental Communications

For all press and media enquiries please contact Amy at Seahorse Environmental Communications on info@seahorseenvironmental.co.uk

Check out their website at <https://seahorseenvironmental.co.uk/clients-and-experience>



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amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Adopt a Seahorse or become a member

Why not adopt a seahorse or become a member of [The Seahorse Trust](http://www.theseahorsetrust.org) and join the fastest growing and biggest seahorse charity in the world to make a difference to our planet?

Find out more at:- <https://www.theseahorsetrust.org/support-us/>

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