



Swanage Bay Seagrass Meadows Project

Isle of Purbeck Sub Aqua Club





www.ipsacdivers.co.uk

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Introduction

We are lucky to have two areas of seagrass adjacent to the Pier. Although there are records of seagrass in Swanage on the National Biological Network Atlas, neither bed in Swanage is currently included in the National Seagrass Layer (the national database of mapped seagrass habitats).

The project aims to address this by recording and mapping both areas. The data will be shared with the Ocean Conservation Trust and will go towards helping with the conservation of this important habitat. It will also allow IPSAC to develop partnerships with other local organisations involved in marine conservation (e.g. Sustainable Swanage, Planet Purbeck, Dorset Wildlife Trust) as well as the Town Council.

As the sites are shallow and easily accessible, the project will be able to include all members of the club, irrespective of their age and experience. Survey techniques will be relatively simple, and equipment used will be similar to that used during the 2025 Pier Leg survey.

The skills developed during the project will enable club members to play a role in other local projects such as Seasearch and the Studland Bay Seahorse Monitoring Project.



Project Aims and Objectives

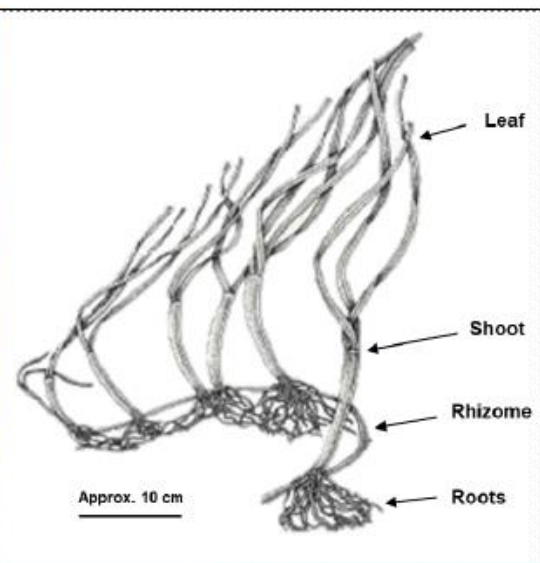
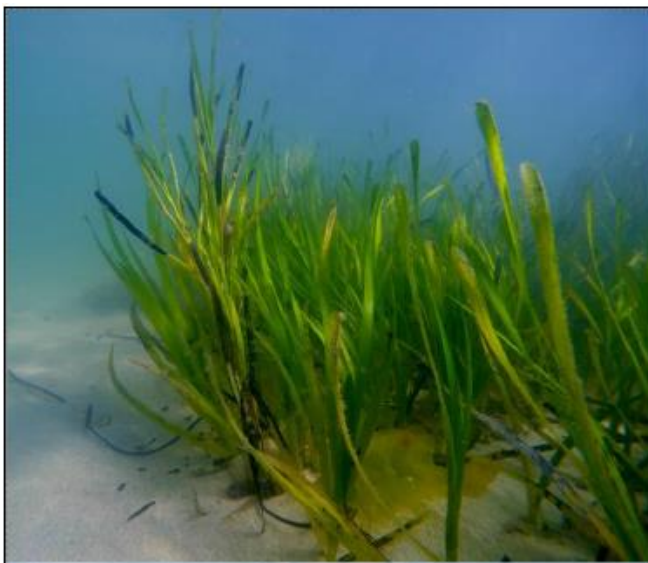
The aim of the project is to investigate and survey the two seagrass patches adjacent to Swanage Pier.

To achieve this, the project will:

- Map the distribution of the two seagrass beds
- Identify the species of seagrass in the beds
- Record the seagrass structure (height, density) within the beds
- Record the species living in the seagrass beds
- Produce a photographic (video and still) of the seagrass beds.
- Produce a record (e.g. display, leaflet, publication) of the project.



Background



Seagrasses are unique flowering plants adapted to marine life, with at least sixty species worldwide and two main types found along the UK coastline: *Zostera marina* and *Zostera noltii*. These species thrive in shallow, sheltered waters, where they photosynthesise, anchor in soft sediments, and reproduce by seed, forming underwater meadows.

Seagrass beds are highly valuable coastal ecosystems, storing carbon efficiently—accounting for 15% of the ocean's total carbon absorption and being thirty-five times more effective than



rainforests. This carbon capture is referred to as 'Blue Carbon', an important ecosystem service for mitigating climate change.

These habitats provide shelter for various marine species, including juvenile fish and seahorses, and help protect coastlines from erosion by binding sediments with their roots. However, seagrass beds are under threat from declining water quality, seabed disturbance, coastal development, disease, and siltation, leading to a dramatic decline in their extent.



In Swanage there are two seagrass beds. One (the Pier Patch) lies between the two piers and has been well established for over forty years. It is regularly dived but only casually and does not appear to have had any structured survey or mapping. The other area (Maria's Meadow) lies the northwest of the New Pier and appears to have been growing over the last ten years. It was recorded in 2025 by local environmental activist, Maria Munn and received considerable local and national press coverage. The IPSAC project hopes to extend the valuable work already begun by Maria.

Proposed Project Plan

The project will take place during the 2026 dive season. As the club has access to the Pier at any time diving will not be restricted to normal club dive sessions. As both areas of seagrass are prone to boat traffic it may be advisable to dive them at quiet times and, in the case of Maria's Meadow, have boat cover to protect divers. All diving must be done in buddy pairs and use a SMB.

Initial dives will involve establishing the extent of the two meadows. This will be carried out by attempting to follow the edges of the beds using a fixed starting point. Using aerial photos the starting point for Maria's Meadow would be a swim west from the end of Swanage Watersports'



pontoon. For the Pier Patch, the starting point would be the southern side of the Pier, adjacent to the middle boat deck.

Once an approximate orientation of the beds is established, a more structured approach will be used using a GPS unit attached to a SMB. Once downloaded these dives can be plotted on a digital mapping system (e.g. QGIS).

More structured recording will be accomplished by laying a tape measure (50M) out on the seabed to use as a baseline. The surveys will use a standard recording form and will record not only the presence and absence of seagrass but also density and length of the plants. For Maria's Meadow it is suggested that the baseline is the concrete section of the pier and that transect lines go due north. Transect spacing would be every ten metres. For the Pier Patch the transect lines would make use of the Pier legs and would go due south.

In addition to form recording, the survey should also make use of photographic recording of important points along the transect. It would also be useful to record some of the transects using video.

As well as transect recording, point surveying could be carried out. This could involve using existing mooring points that are geolocated using GPS or dropping markers at certain points around the meadows. Using these reference points divers swim out to five metres, ten metres and fifteen metres in each main compass direction . At each recording station they measure the presence or absence of seagrass, the density of the seagrass and measure the approximate the leaf length of the plants.

Seagrass beds are an important habitat for a large number of species, and part of the project will be to record what is living in the two beds. Key species should be recorded during any of the project dives.

As part of the project a dive using the Seasearch Observer form should be carried out. The results of these dives will be collated to produce a draft species list for each seagrass bed.

Proposed Project Timetable

It is envisaged that the project will start towards the end of April. In order to familiarise the club with the purpose and methodology, a club night should be held after Easter. This will involve a presentation about the importance of seagrass, a summary of the work being carried out across the UK and a review of how the project will develop.

Initial dives will probably take place on a Wednesday evening (club night) and will focus on familiarising divers with the equipment (tapes, quadrats, recording forms) and methodology. These dives should be carried out on the Pier Patch as there is less tidal restriction.

Once people are comfortable with the survey and recording methods, the first task will be to establish the rough boundaries of each patch. This will be done initially through a qualitative survey



with the familiarising the divers with the underwater topography. Recording will be by post dive sketches using a standard plan of the area.

Following this a quantitative survey should be carried out. This is likely to be carried out in June. The survey will use a portable GPS system to track the divers as they swim along the edge of the beds. This data will be downloaded and recorded on the project QGIS file.

When the approximate extent of each bed has been mapped, detailed mapping will take place. This will involve line and radial transects. Recording will focus on recording the presence and absence of seagrass, sward density and plant height. As well as recording these aspects of the bed using standard proformas the characteristics of the beds will be documented using still and video photography. The use of a portable GPS unit will allow the data to be geolocated. It is envisaged that this aspect of the project will take place from late June onwards and will take most of the summer.

Running throughout the project will be dives that focus on recording the marine life that lives in the seagrass. The fauna and flora will be recorded using standard Seasearch Observer forms as well as photographically.

The results of the project will be written up from September onwards and will form part of IPSAC's submission for the Heinke Award.

Data collected will be added to the NBN atlas and shared with the Ocean Conservation Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust.

Proposed Project Methodology

Phase 1 – Initial Survey

Initial dives will involve establishing the extent of the two meadows. The initial survey is designed to orientate the dive team and gain a general understanding of where the boundaries of the beds lie and what the bed characteristics are (density, damage etc).

Working as a buddy pair, divers follow the edge of the seagrass. Starting points for the dives will be fixed points to assist in geolocating the bed. Suggested starting points for Maria's Meadow would be the end of Swanage Watersports' pontoon (west), the pier steps (north). For the Pier Patch, the starting point would be the concrete wall (east) or the southern side of the Pier, adjacent to the middle boat deck.

On completion of the dive the buddy team would record their dive on a sketch map and complete a dive log.

Equipment for each dive team would be: smb, dive slate, 3m tape.



Phase 2 – GPS Survey

Using the survey details recorded in Phase 1, dive teams map the edge of the seagrass bed. Each dive pair will have a portable GPS tracker (e.g. Renkforce RF- GPS tracker Universal) attached to their SMB.

Working as a buddy pair, divers follow the edge of the seagrass. Starting points for the dives will be determined by the data collected in Phase 1. During the dive the dive team will note features such as general health of the seagrass, associated species, human impact etc. these details should be recorded against dive time.

On completion of the dive the divers will complete a dive log listing any information gained. The GPS track of the dive will be downloaded and input into QGIS.

Equipment for each dive team would be: smb, dive slate, 3m tape.

Phase 3 – Dive transects

Detailed Investigation of the beds will be carried out using a series of fixed transects. Divers will lay out a 50m tape measure from a base line (the edge of the concrete part of the Pier for Maria's Meadow and the south side of the wooden Pier for the Pier Patch).

A dive team will lay out a 50m tape from a fixed point along the base line. The tape will either go due north (Maria's Meadow) or due south (Pier Patch). At 5m intervals the pair will place a quadrat to the right of the tape with right hand corner on the distance. The divers will need to count the individual plants within the quadrat to establish the bed density. In addition, they will record the maximum and minimum lengths of the plants in the quadrat.

At the end of the dive divers will need to transcribe their record sheet and complete a dive log.

Equipment for each dive team would be: smb with gps logger, , 50m tape, 3m tape, dive slate with permatrace datasheet.

Phase 4 – Radial Transects

Radial transects will enable divers to carry out spot survey work. Initially these radial transects will be based around exiting moorings within the area. These transects will be most useful for surveying Maria's Meadow. To enable the location of the moorings to be determined , these surveys will be most effective carried out from a boat.

Once the location of the mooring has been determined, divers will descend the mooring line. They will then swim in each of the main compass directions (north, south, east and west). In each direction they will use a quadrat to determine presence or absence of seagrass; density; length of shoot; relative health of the plants. The quadrats will be placed at five, ten and fifteen metres in each direction.



Project dissemination and engagement

The data collected during the project will be collated into a project report. This will be placed on the club website and also shared with the Ocean Conservation Trust and Project Seagrass. As well as a written report data will be collated into a GIS file to be shared with these groups. Data will also be added to the National Seagrass layer and the National Biological Network Atlas.

Data and photographs collected during project will form the basis for a display board as part of Swanage Town Council's "Beyond the Beach" campaign.

The final report of the project will form part of IPSAC's submission for the BSAC Heinke Award.

The success of the project will be assessed by:

- Carrying out a questionnaire of participants
- Interviews with partners
- Acceptance of results onto the National Seagrass layer and the NBN Atlas





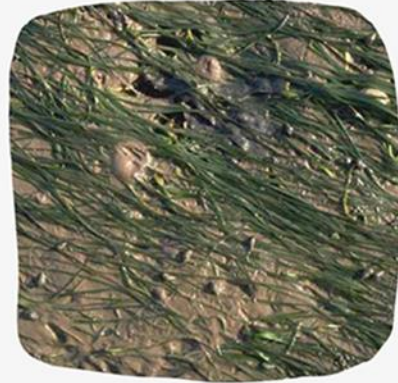
SEAGRASS ID GUIDE

Which species of seagrass?



Zostera marina

- The larger of the two species.
- It's flat, green blades often grow 20-50cm long but can be up to 2m.
- The blades are more than 1.5mm wide
- It grows in shallow, subtidal waters



Zostera noltei

- Zostera noltei is much smaller:
- Long, thin blades usually less < 20cm long.
- Narrow blades, less than 1.5mm wide.
- 3 irregular, longitudinal veins and blunt, notched ends.
- Noltei grows in the intertidal zone

Seagrass flowers



and seeds



Upload your data directly on the BSAC Great Seagrass Survey Portal

<https://www.bsac.com/forms/seagrass-survey-form/>

Zm *Zostera marina*

Bioregion
1



Key

- Flat leaves to 3 m with closed sheath
- Leaf tip smoothly rounded
- Rhizome robust with terminal shoots
- 2 bundles of roots per node
- Monoecious

Flowering Parts

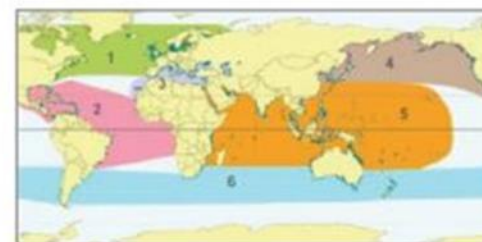


Extinction Risk: Least Concern



Zn *Nanozostera noltii*

Bioregion
1



Key

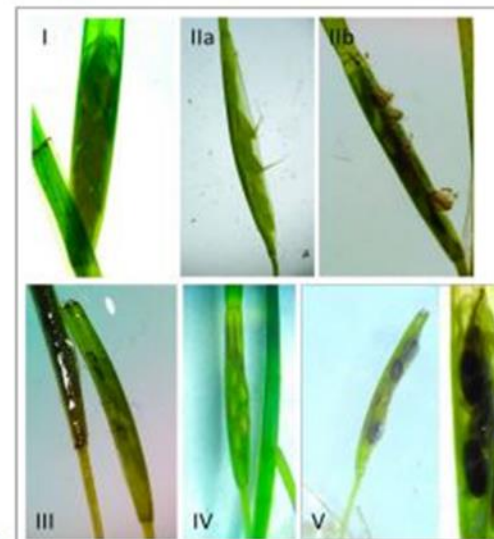
- Flat narrow leaves to 30 cm with open sheath
- Leaf tip rounded and unevenly notched
- Thin rhizome, shoots at each node
- Flowers on branched stem
- Monoecious

Extinction Risk: Least Concern



Found in the
Eastern Atlantic

Flowering Parts



Ankel et al 2021

Stage	Description
I	Yellow-green spathe, sheath closed; pistils and stamens are visible, aligned onto the stem
II	Pistils (IIa) and/or stamens erected (IIb); styles and stigma and/or anthers are outside the sheath
III	Stigma brown, start to depart from spathe; often with stamens already detached from the spathe
IV	Green spathe with immature seeds; sheath closed
V	Green/brown spathe, dark brown seeds are visible, sheath open

Appendix 2– Record Sheets



Seagrass Transect Recording Sheet

Date: **Sea State:** **Viz (m):** **Temp (°C)** **Duration of Surve(min):**
Surveyors:
Location: Maria's Meadow / Pier Patch **Pier Railing Post / Pier Leg Number :**
GPS Data Start: **Finish:**

Quadrat (metres from transect origin)	Sediment (eg sand / shingle / stones)		Seagrass Y/N	% Seagrass coverage	Sample Height (cm)	Notes
1 (0m)						
2 (5m)						
3 (10m)						
4 (15m)						
5 (20m)						
6 (25m)						
7 (30m)						
8 (35m)						
9 (40m)						
10 (45m)						
11 (50m)						

Appendix 2– Record Sheets



Seagrass Transect Recording Sheet

Date: Sea State: Viz (m): Temp (°C) Duration of Survey (min):

Surveyors:

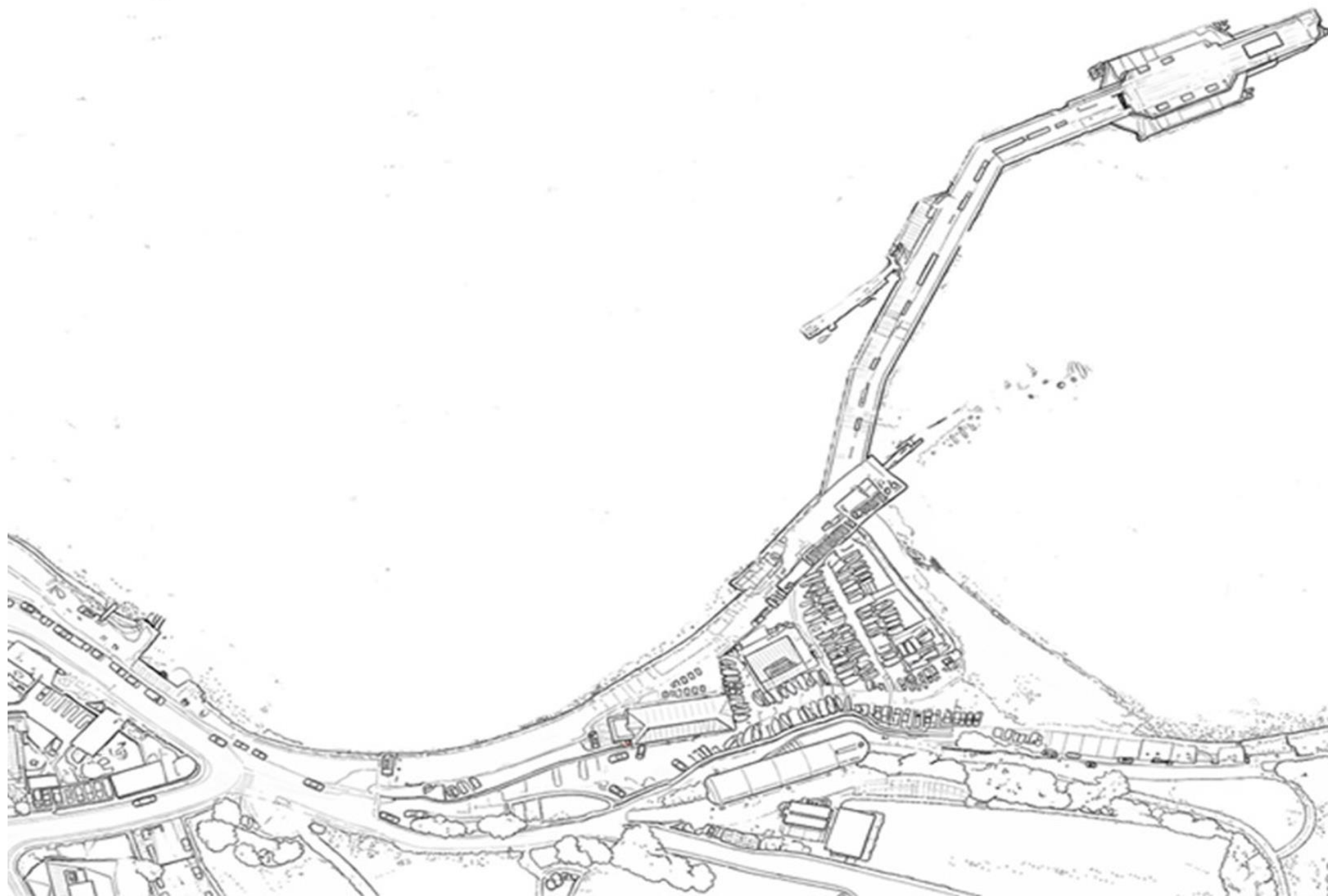
Location: Maria's Meadow / Pier Patch

GPS Data Start: Finish:

Quadrat (metres from transect origin)	Distance / time	Sediment (co sand / shingle / stones)		Seagrass Y/N	% Seagrass coverage	Sample Height (cm)	Notes

Appendix 2– Record Sheets

		Seagrass Circular Recording Sheet				
Date:		Sea State:		Viz (m):		Temp (°C)
Surveyors:		Duration of Surve(min):				
Location: Maria's Meadow / Pier Patch		GPS coordinates:				
Quadrat (metres from transect origin)	Sediment (eg sand / shingle / stones)		Seagrass Y/N	Seagrass coverage (%)	Sample Height (cm)	Notes
N (5m)						
N (10m)						
N (15m)						
E (5m)						
E (10m)						
E (15m)						
S (5m)						
S (10m)						
S (15m)						
W (5m)						
W (10m)						
W (15M)						



Appendix 2– Record Sheets



Project Seagrass Dive Recording Form

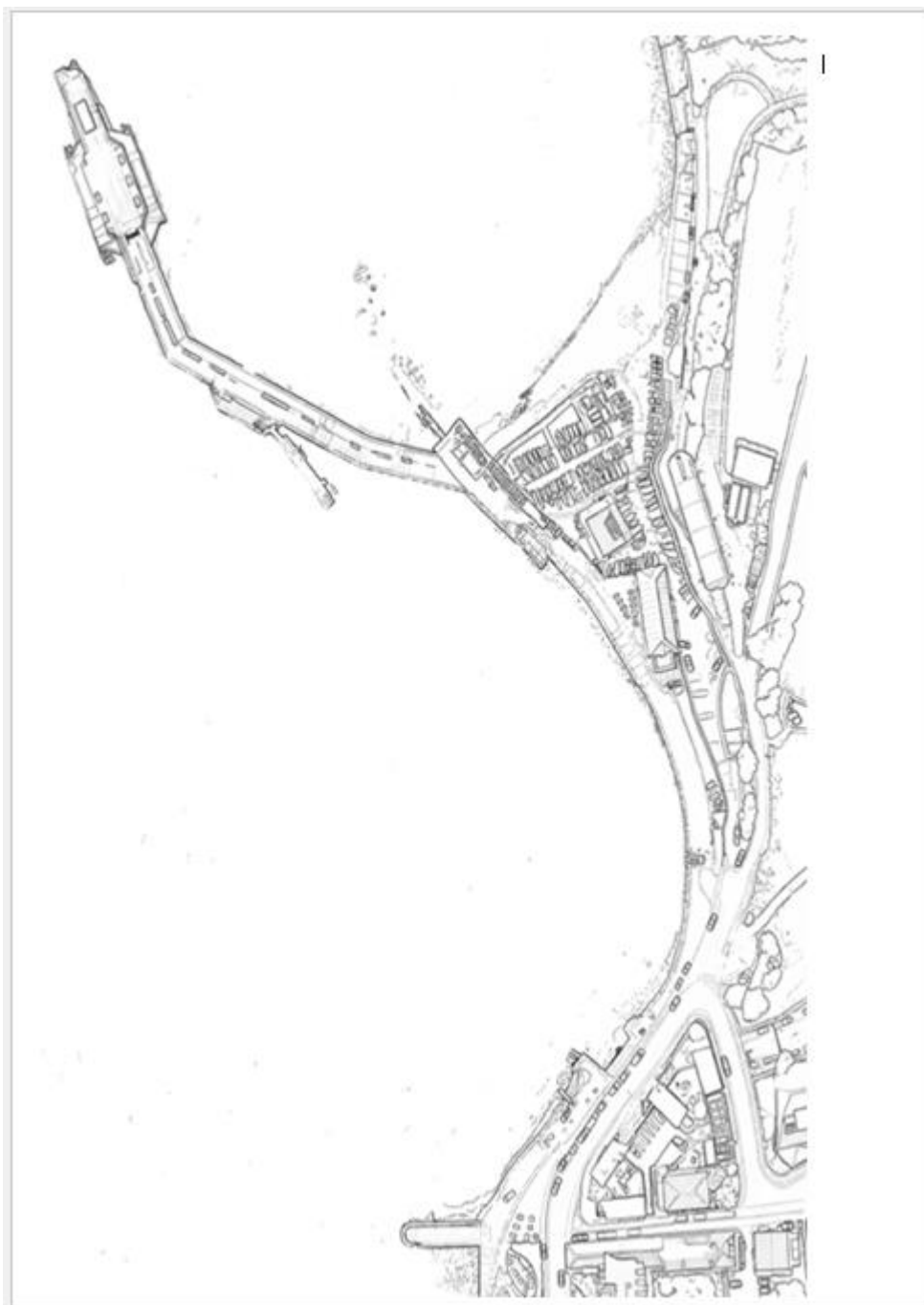
DETAILS		Form No:	
Date:	Site: Maria's Meadow / Pier Patch		
Divers Names	Tide Height (use OCO):		
1	Tide Cycle	(spring / neap)	+
2	Wind	Direction	Force
Dive Marshal:	Weather:		

START:		FINISH		DIVE TIME	
UW Visibility:	Excellent (3m +) / Reasonable (1m-3m) / Poor (less than 1m)			Circle	

TASK:

RESULTS:

PHOTOS TAKEN ON DIVE	Yes / No	VIDEO TAKEN ON DIVE	Yes / No
WHOS CAMERA:		WHOS CAMERA:	



Risk Assessment

Dive Survey of Seagrass Bed Surrounding Swanage Pier

Activity: Recreational scuba survey to map and photograph seagrass habitat around Swanage Pier, Dorset, using shore and/or boat-supported dive teams.

Scoring:

Score	Likelihood criteria	Severity criteria
1	Rare: not expected to occur during the activity.	Insignificant: no injury or negligible environmental, operational or reputational impact.
2	Unlikely: could occur, but only in unusual circumstances.	Minor: first-aid level injury, minor disturbance or short operational delay.
3	Possible: might occur during the activity if controls are not followed.	Moderate: injury requiring medical attention, noticeable habitat disturbance or significant disruption.
4	Likely: expected to occur in some circumstances during similar activities.	Major: serious injury, major environmental impact, emergency response or major operational disruption.
5	Almost certain: expected to occur frequently or in most circumstances without controls.	Catastrophic: fatality, life-threatening injury, severe environmental damage or major regulatory/reputational consequences.

Risk score = likelihood × severity.

Residual risk is scored after control measures are applied.

Risk Score (R):

- **1– 5(Low): Acceptable, monitor controls.**
- **6–14 (Medium): Incorporate strict control measures and brief the team.**
- **15–25 (High): Unacceptable. Stop operations until risk is reduced.**

Pre-dive risks

No.	Risk	Who/what is at risk?	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk
1	Manual handling injuries from moving cylinders, weights, survey equipment and personal dive kit.	Divers, surface support, pier staff and nearby public.	$3 \times 3 = 9$	Use trolleys or staged carries; split loads; use team lifting for heavy or awkward items; keep routes clear; avoid carrying kit through congested public areas.	$1 \times 3 = 3$
2	Collision with vehicles during unloading, loading, parking or access around the pier/car park.	Divers, surface support, pier visitors, drivers, pier staff and emergency responders.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Agree access and parking arrangements; use a banksman when reversing; keep vehicle movements slow; separate pedestrians from vehicles; do not block emergency routes.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
3	Slips, trips or falls on wet, uneven, algae-covered or cluttered surfaces.	Divers, surface support and nearby public.	$4 \times 3 = 12$	Wear suitable footwear; keep hands free where possible; use handrails; identify and maintain a clear route; keep kit tidy and away from walkways.	$2 \times 3 = 6$
4	Weather exposure causing heat stress, dehydration, cold stress or hypothermia.	Divers and surface support.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Check weather, wind chill and sun exposure; provide shade, shelter, drinking water, warm clothing and hot drinks; minimise waiting time in exposure suits; monitor divers.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
5	Inadequate diver competence, currency, medical fitness, equipment checks, permissions or emergency planning.	Divers, surface support, pier operator and project organiser.	$3 \times 5 = 15$	Confirm qualifications, fitness and role suitability; complete buddy, gas and equipment checks; confirm permissions, insurance, oxygen, first aid, communications and emergency action plan.	$1 \times 5 = 5$

Boat operations risks

No.	Risk	Who/what is at risk?	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk
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Appendix 3– Risk assessment

6	Injury during boat boarding, exiting or gear transfer.	Divers, coxswain, boat crew and surface support.	$3 \times 3 = 9$	Secure the boat before boarding; use agreed boarding order; hand gear between people rather than carrying awkward loads; keep clear of pinch/crush points.	$1 \times 3 = 3$
7	Man overboard or impact injuries during boat transit.	Divers, coxswain and boat crew.	$2 \times 4 = 8$	All persons remain seated while underway; secure loose gear; coxswain adjusts speed to sea state; maintain lookout and communication.	$1 \times 4 = 4$

Dive risks

No.	Risk	Who/what is at risk?	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk
8	Boat or propeller strike from local traffic, charter boats or live boating operations.	Divers, boat operators, surface cover and other water users.	$4 \times 5 = 20$	Use Alpha flag and SMB/DSMB; maintain surface lookout; notify local operator where appropriate; keep clear of traffic lanes; engines neutral during diver entry/exit; abort if traffic is unsuitable.	$2 \times 5 = 10$
9	Entanglement in pier structure, lines, fishing gear, survey tapes, SMB/GPS tethers or debris.	Divers.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Keep hoses and cameras clipped; avoid confined gaps; carry accessible cutting tools; manage survey lines and SMB/GPS tethers; avoid fishing areas and snag hazards.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
10	Contact with pier piles, braces, ladders or sharp heritage structure causing injury or damage.	Divers, pier owners/operators and heritage asset.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Keep a safe distance from piles and bracing; do not penetrate overhead areas; do not attach equipment without consent; wear suitable exposure protection; report damage without disturbing it.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
11	Loss of buoyancy control causing rapid ascent, seabed contact or collision with boats/structures.	Divers, marine habitat and other water users.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Conduct weight checks; pause survey tasks if buoyancy control slips; monitor depth and ascent rate; look up in shallow water; maintain good trim.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
12	Currents or tides causing separation, exhaustion or	Divers and surface cover.	$3 \times 3 = 9$	Plan around slack water; cancel if current exceeds team limits; maintain awareness of exit points; boat or shore cover monitors diver position.	$1 \times 3 = 3$

Appendix 3– Risk assessment

	inability to return to the planned exit point.				
13	Low visibility, silt disturbance or task loading causing buddy separation or disorientation.	Divers.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Use buddy pairs and lost-buddy procedure; maintain close contact; avoid finning into sediment or seagrass; limit task loading; terminate if visibility falls below the agreed minimum.	$1 \times 4 = 4$
14	Diving injury or medical emergency including barotrauma, uncontrolled ascent, out-of-gas or cold stress.	Divers, surface support and bystanders assisting.	$3 \times 5 = 15$	Stay within planned depth and no-stop limits; set turn pressures and times; monitor gas, depth, time and temperature; maintain buddy contact; keep oxygen, first aid and emergency communications available.	$1 \times 5 = 5$
15	Damage to seagrass habitat, sediment disturbance or disturbance to protected species.	Seagrass bed, marine life, protected species, project partners and survey credibility.	$3 \times 4 = 12$	Use non-invasive survey methods; maintain buoyancy and trim; do not kneel, stand, drag equipment or anchor on seagrass; photograph rather than sample; do not touch or pursue wildlife.	$1 \times 4 = 4$

Post-dive risks

No.	Risk	Who/what is at risk?	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk
16	Post-dive illness, delayed symptoms, fatigue or injury during de-kitting and recovery.	Divers and surface support.	$2 \times 5 = 10$	Conduct roll call and welfare check; monitor for delayed symptoms; keep oxygen and first aid available; provide warm clothing/drinks; use safe manual handling during de-kitting.	$1 \times 5 = 5$
17	Survey data loss or pressure to repeat/extend dives to replace missing data.	Survey team, project lead and data users.	$3 \times 3 = 9$	Back up photos, GPS tracks and notes immediately; assign responsibility for data checks; record limitations; only repeat work if safe and separately reviewed.	$1 \times 3 = 3$

Appendix 3– Risk assessment

18	Failure to report incidents, near misses, protected species observations, habitat impacts or pier-related issues.	Divers, project organiser, pier operator, regulators and future survey teams.	2 × 3 = 6	Complete debrief; record incidents, near misses, hazards, ecological observations and habitat impacts; notify pier operator/project lead as required; update the assessment before future surveys.	1 × 3 = 3
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Dynamic risk review:

The dive marshal must carry out a dynamic risk review immediately before the activity begins and continue reviewing conditions throughout the dive operation.

The dive should be delayed, modified or cancelled if weather, tide, visibility, boat traffic, diver fitness, equipment, access arrangements or any other site condition introduces an unacceptable risk.

Any significant changes, incidents or near misses must be recorded and used to update this assessment before future dives.

Project Seagrass

Recreational Dive Survey of Seagrass Beds around Swanage Pier

1. Emergency Plan

This emergency plan has been prepared for a SCUBA-based recreational diving project in the vicinity of Swanage Pier, Dorset/. Although no divers taking part in the project are counted as being a work, the plan follows closely the Health and Safety Executive Recreational Diving Projects Approved Code of Practice L105 and the Diving at Work Regulations 1997.

The emergency plan sets out the arrangements to be followed before, during and after the recreational dive survey. It is intended to support the project diving plan, risk assessment and diving operation record, and should be briefed to all members of the dive team before diving starts

2. Site and Emergency Location Information

Item	Details to brief and confirm on the day
Primary dive location	Swanage Pier and adjacent seagrass beds, Swanage, Dorset.
Shore rendezvous / ambulance access point	Swanage Pier entrance / pier-side access area. Confirm exact access, parking restrictions and any locked gates with Swanage Pier staff before diving.
Site address for emergency services	Swanage Pier, Marine Villas, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2AW. Give the precise casualty location, access route and any boat position if offshore.
Position reference	Record GPS coordinates and what3words for the dive control point and recovery point before the operation starts.
Nearest local healthcare facility	Swanage Community Hospital, Queens Road, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2ES. This is not a major Accident and Emergency department; use 111 for urgent advice and 999 for life-threatening emergencies.

3. Immediate Emergency Contacts

Emergency contact	How to contact / what to say
Life-threatening emergency	Call 999 and ask for Ambulance . If the casualty is at sea, missing, difficult to recover, or requires maritime rescue, ask for Coastguard .
HM Coastguard	Call 999 and ask for Coastguard . Use VHF Channel 16 if operating from a vessel and trained/authorised to do so.
Non-life-threatening urgent medical advice	Call NHS 111 before attending a minor injuries unit or urgent care facility.
Diving medical emergency / suspected decompression illness	Call 999 , state that this is a diving incident , administer oxygen if trained and safe to do so, and request urgent clinical advice and evacuation to the appropriate hospital or hyperbaric service.
Project contacts	Project Officer: Nick Reed 07711 272277. Diving Manager : to be decided on the day Pier contact: Andy Lang (pier master 01929 425806
Diver Emergency Contacts	Emergency contact sheets will be printed off by the dive manager and kept in the project file for the dive.

4. Defibrillator and First Aid Arrangements

The nearest available public-access defibrillator must be checked immediately before the dive day using DefibFinder or another live AED register, because public access, opening times and cabinet codes can change. If a cardiac arrest is suspected, call 999 first, start CPR if trained, send a nominated person to collect the AED, and follow the ambulance call handler's instructions.

Item	Requirement
Nearest AED	1. Swanage Sea Rowing Club, Encombe Road, Swanage, BH19 2FA (138 metres) 2. Masonic Hall, Marshall Row, Swanage, BH19 2AF (315 metres)
First aid equipment	First aid kit suitable for marine diving operations, thermal protection, casualty blankets, drinking water, shears/knife for entanglement release, and means of recording observations.
Oxygen	Provide sufficient emergency oxygen to support the casualty until handover to ambulance, hospital or hyperbaric care, including likely transport time and possible delays.
First aider / oxygen provider	Record named competent person(s) before diving starts: Nick Reed

5. Accident and Emergency Departments

For all serious injuries, near-drowning, suspected decompression illness, chest pain, stroke-like symptoms, loss of consciousness, major trauma, uncontrolled bleeding or breathing difficulty, call 999 and follow ambulance or Coastguard directions rather than self-transporting the casualty.

Facility	Address and contact	Use
Poole Hospital Emergency Department	Longfleet Road, Poole, BH15 2JB. Main switchboard: 01202 665511.	Nearest major 24-hour A&E identified for Swanage area planning. Use as directed by ambulance service.
Royal Bournemouth Hospital Emergency Department	Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, BH7 7DW. Main switchboard: 01202 303626.	Alternative 24-hour emergency department, subject to ambulance triage and service status.
Dorset County Hospital Emergency Department	Williams Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2JY. Main switchboard: 01305 251150.	Alternative 24-hour emergency department, subject to ambulance triage and service status.
Swanage Community Hospital / Minor Injuries Unit	Queens Road, Swanage, BH19 2ES. Phone: 01929 422282.	Minor injuries only, not a major A&E. Telephone 111 first unless directed otherwise by emergency services.

6. Decompression Illness and Hyperbaric Arrangements

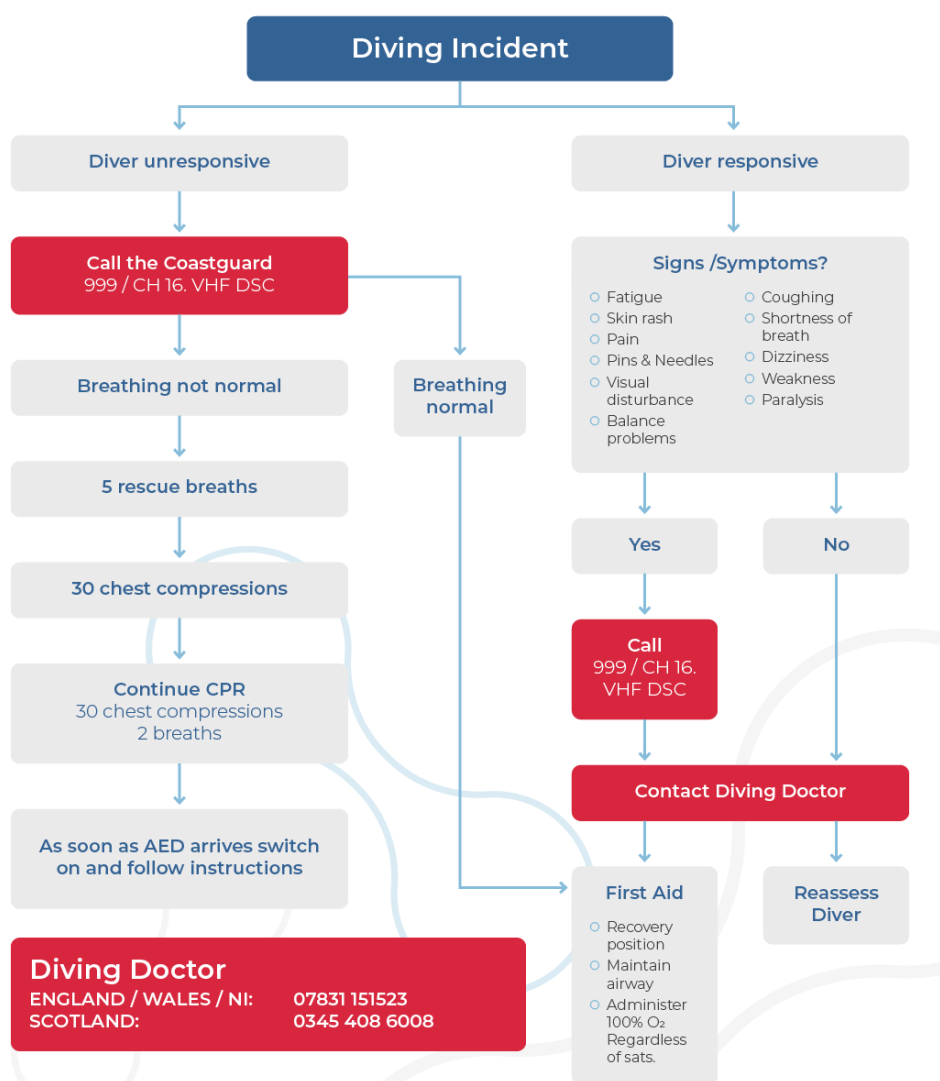
The HSE recreational diving ACOP notes that chamber availability planning has changed: the key requirement is to ensure sufficient oxygen for transport of an injured diver to a compression chamber or hospital, and to manage the incident through emergency medical services. The nearest operational chamber must therefore be verified during planning and again on the day through the British Hyperbaric Association chamber finder, Coastguard or ambulance clinical channels.

Hyperbaric planning item	Arrangement
Nearest operational decompression chamber	For a diving or medical emergency requiring an emergency hyperbaric chamber near Swanage, call 999 or the Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 immediately, and contact the 24-hour British Hyperbaric Diver Helpline at 07831 151 523
Likely regional options to verify	St Richard's Hospital, Chichester, and DDRC Healthcare, Plymouth, are likely regional hyperbaric providers listed by UK hyperbaric resources; confirm operational status and routing through emergency services.
Initial treatment	Stop the dive operation, recover the diver safely, administer 100% oxygen if trained and equipment is available, keep the casualty lying comfortably, protect from cold, monitor airway/breathing/circulation, and record dive profile, symptoms and times.
Transport	Do not delay calling 999. Evacuation route and destination must be decided by ambulance/Coastguard medical control, with oxygen maintained during transfer where practicable.



Diving Incident Management Flowchart

Includes rapid ascent, omitted decompression, any signs/symptoms after diving.



Give 1 Litre oral fluids if tolerated. Keep diver under observation, warm and sheltered. Review diving partner. Secure dive computer if possible. Keep any other equipment safe and do not dismantle. Record in writing as much information as possible.

7. Emergency Response Procedure

1. **Stop the operation:** The diving supervisor stops all diving, recalls divers if safe to do so, and prevents further entries to the water.
2. **Recover the casualty:** Bring the casualty to the pre-briefed recovery point or vessel, using trained personnel and avoiding additional risk to rescuers.
3. **Call for help:** Call 999. Ask for Ambulance and, where the incident is at sea or requires maritime rescue, Coastguard. State “diving incident” if decompression illness, omitted decompression, breath-hold/SCUBA incident, near drowning or barotrauma is possible.
4. **Give location:** Provide Swanage Pier, Marine Villas, Swanage, BH19 2AW, plus the exact casualty location, access point, GPS/what3words and any vessel details.
5. **Provide first aid:** Follow training and emergency service instructions. Prioritise airway, breathing, circulation, CPR/AED, oxygen administration, bleeding control and thermal protection.
6. **Preserve dive information:** Record diver name, buddy, qualification, medical issues if known, maximum depth, bottom time, gas used, ascent details, missed stops, symptoms, first-aid actions and times.
7. **Control the site:** Keep bystanders clear, maintain access for emergency vehicles, nominate a person to meet ambulance/Coastguard, and secure equipment unless required for casualty care.
8. **Handover:** Give emergency services a concise briefing, including dive profile, oxygen given, casualty observations and any changes in condition.
9. **Post-incident actions:** Suspend further diving until the diving contractor and supervisor have reviewed the incident, preserved records and completed required reporting.

8. HSE Recreational ACOP Alignment Checklist

- A diving supervisor / marshal is identified and responsible for ensuring the project is planned, risk-assessed and safely managed.
- A competent diving supervisor / marshal is appointed in writing for each diving operation and has authority to direct or stop the operation.
- The diving project plan identifies the operation, team, equipment, site hazards, emergency arrangements and records to be kept.
- Divers are competent for the planned task, hold appropriate qualifications and are medically fit to dive.
- Plant and equipment, including SCUBA, communications, oxygen and first aid equipment, are suitable, available and maintained.
- The risk assessment is reviewed on the day against weather, tides, visibility, currents, vessel traffic, entanglement hazards and public access around the pier.
- Dive profiles are planned conservatively, with no unnecessary decompression obligation for survey work unless specifically justified and controlled.
- Sufficient oxygen is available for the likely duration of casualty care and transport to hospital or hyperbaric care.
- Emergency services, AED, A&E and hyperbaric arrangements are briefed before diving starts.
- Diving operation records, incident notes and post-incident reporting are completed and retained as required.

9. Pre-Dive Emergency Briefing Prompts

- Who is the diving supervisor and who has authority to stop the dive?
- Where is the casualty recovery point and who will manage access for emergency services?
- Who calls 999, who meets the ambulance/Coastguard, and who collects the AED?
- Where are the oxygen kit, first aid kit, AED information and emergency plan kept?
- What are the recall signals, lost-diver procedure and abort criteria?
- What are the tide, current, visibility, weather, boat traffic and pier-user hazards today?
- What information must be recorded if a diver becomes unwell after surfacing?