



The Exe Disturbance Study

Durwyn Liley





Exe Estuary SPA



Key Species

- Avocet
- Slavonian Grebe

Waterfowl Assemblage, inc.

- Brent Goose
- Wigeon
- Dunlin
- Lapwing
- Grey Plover
- R-b Merganser
- Cormorant
- Black-tailed Godwit



The Need to Study Disturbance

- Birds view people as potential predators – energetic costs, avoidance of busy areas
- Can result in mortality and consequences for population size sites can support
- Disturbance can be more damaging than habitat loss
- Winter a critical period





Why the Exe?

Cumulative (& gradual?)
effect as:

- Relatively small estuary
- Increasing population
- New housing
- Different kinds of access/use of estuary
- Climate Change



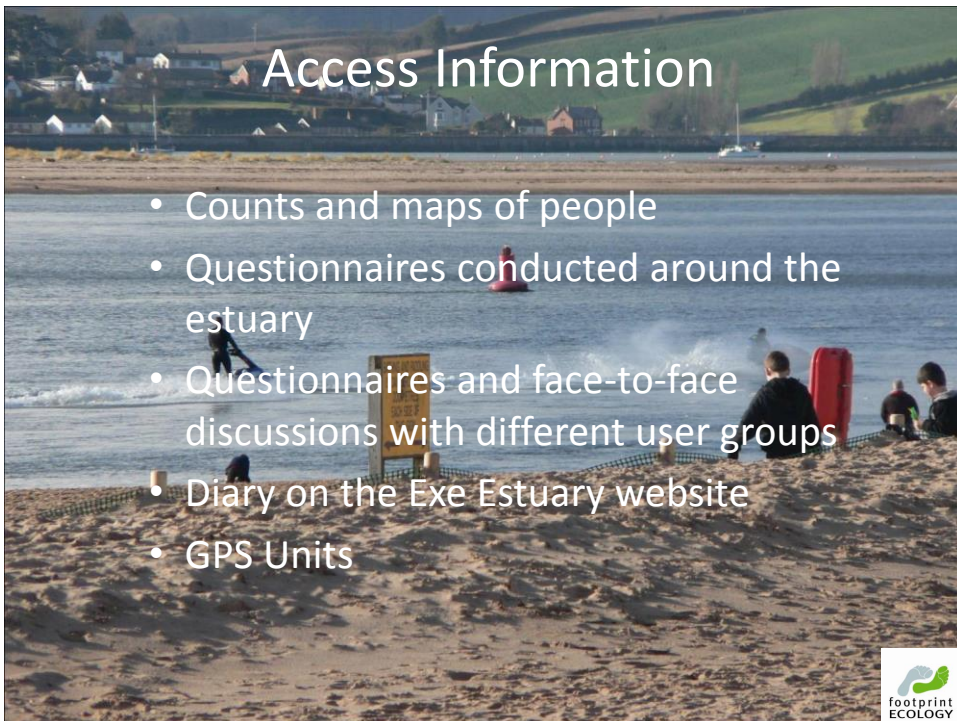
Activities on the Exe





Our Approach

- Existing count data to show key areas, trends and numbers of birds
- Which activities occur where and when?
• What are the factors influencing access?
- How do birds respond to different activities?
• Which activities result in lost feeding time / avoidance?
- Is there a need to do anything?
• Recommendations of ways to reduce disturbance



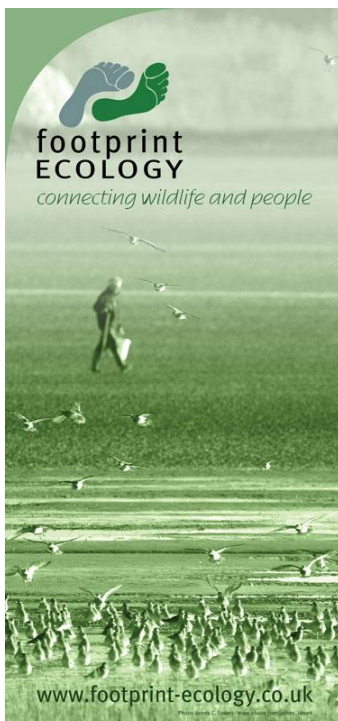
- Counts and maps of people
- Questionnaires conducted around the estuary
- Questionnaires and face-to-face discussions with different user groups
- Diary on the Exe Estuary website
- GPS Units



GPS Units



- One of a range of ways we are trying to capture information about activities on the estuary
- GPS units used to provide more detailed information on locations, speeds etc.



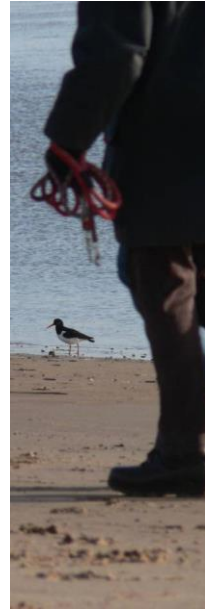
How you can help

- Name gathering: GPS units or happy to fill in questionnaire
- Diary page on Exe Estuary Partnership website
- Contact us directly:
durwyn.liley@footprint-ecology.co.uk



Workshops

1. Commercial fishing / angling / crab-tiling / bait digging / shell fishing.
John Day
2. Boating / water-based activities.
Jenny Lockett
3. Changes over time / current use.
Joanna Sharp
4. Options for managing access on the estuary. *Jim White & Durwyn Liley*



Options to resolve problems

1. If disturbance is an issue, what can be done?
2. Is there enough information for recreational users?
3. Are there places where new/improved facilities could change access?

