



**THE BRISTOL  
PORT COMPANY**

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## Marine Environment

As a Statutory Harbour Authority we take our environmental duties and responsibilities seriously



Site of Special Scientific Interest at Portbury Dock



Survey & Plough Dredger 'Graham Robertson'

The importance of the coastal and marine environment of the Severn Estuary is recognised in its designation under international, European and national law. The Severn Estuary is one of the largest estuaries in the UK, with the third highest tidal range in the world. Its extensive mudflats, saltmarshes and sandbank habitats support internationally important populations of overwintering migratory birds and its waters are home to over 100 different species of fish.

We take account of these environmentally sensitive features in all our functions and we manage our operations in a responsible and sustainable manner. EC Nature Conservation Designations in the vicinity of the Port of Bristol can be seen [here](#) [1].

- Oil Spill Contingency
- Port Waste Management
- Environmental Monitoring
- Conservancy and Survey
- Maintenance Dredging
- Estuary Management

The Bristol Port Company maintains an [Oil Spill Contingency Plan](#) [2] in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (OPPRC Convention) Regulations 1998. The plan has been developed through consultation with local bodies and is approved by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

The plan details the structured response to a pollution incident.

To support this the Port retains equipment and trained personnel on site ready to respond to any medium sized incident (Tier 2).

A series of periodic exercises ensures that the plan, personnel, communications and equipment levels are reviewed regularly.

[Oil Spill Contingency Plan](#) [2]

The Bristol Port Company's [Port Waste Management Plan](#) [3] for ship-generated wastes in Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Docks was approved by the MCA in 2013. We provide ships

visiting the Port with skips for the disposal of garbage and International Catering Waste, as required. The Port has a list of [approved waste contractors](#) [4] for Agents to contact to arrange the reception of all other ship-generated wastes. Summary guidance of the Ports waste management system and the use of garbage reception facilities can be found [here](#) [5]

All vessels entering Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Docks must:

- give prior notification, at least 24 hours in advance, of waste to be landed or retained on board using a [waste declaration form](#) [6] and submitting it to [arrivals@bristolport.co.uk](mailto:arrivals@bristolport.co.uk) [7]
- deliver all wastes to reception facilities, unless the vessel has sufficient dedicated storage capacity to store waste for delivery at the next port
- pay the mandatory waste management charge. The level of this charge is reviewed annually and published in The Bristol Port Company Vessel and Cargo Dues Schedule

Vessels, and their Agents, are requested to report any inadequacies in the provision of waste reception facilities to Marine Admin on +44 (0) 117 982 0000 (out of office hours +44 (0) 117 982 2257) or by completing a [waste complaint form](#) [8] and sending it to [marine.admin@bristolport.co.uk](mailto:marine.admin@bristolport.co.uk) [9].

#### Waste Management Plan [3]

Bristol Port monitors the marine environment in which we operate, in order to improve the efficiency of our operations, to understand and minimise our environmental effects and to support effective decision-making. Environmental monitoring undertaken includes bathymetric surveys, sediment sampling and analysis for physical characteristics and contaminants, over-wintering bird surveys in intertidal areas, and occasional biological surveys of the animals living in and on the seabed.

We also undertake regular monitoring of terrestrial wildlife and habitats within the Port's environmental corridors and green areas, as part of the Royal Portbury Docks Ecological Management Plan. This Plan describes the ecological and landscape management measures required to maintain and enhance key areas within Royal Portbury Docks. The results of ecological monitoring studies are reported every two years, including monitoring of flora, water voles, breeding birds, amphibians (great crested newts), invertebrates, and pond and woodland habitats.

As a Statutory Harbour Authority our conservancy duties include: undertaking hydrographic surveys in our harbour area to provide safe navigable access to the Port, maintaining navigation marks, monitoring and charting variations in the sea bed, providing information to vessels and harbour users, managing wrecks and obstructions and maintaining hydrographic records.

All hydrographic surveys performed by the Marine Department are carried out to International Hydrographic Organisation Special Order standard (full seabed coverage). Estuary and River Avon surveys, upon completion, are sent to the United Kingdom Hydrographic Organisation (UKHO) and are used in the compilation of the Admiralty Charts that encompass the Port Limits (namely Charts 1859 and 1176).

#### King Road Multibeam Survey <sup>[10]</sup>

We manage our maintenance dredging and disposal operations in a responsible and sustainable manner, in accordance with a marine licence issued by the Marine Management Organisation. Maintenance dredging is necessary to provide safe navigable depths for commercial shipping. Large quantities of mud present in the waters of the Severn Estuary are deposited in the docks and their immediate entrances which means that these areas require frequent dredging to remove the accumulating sediments. The dredged muds are placed at nearby licenced disposal sites in the estuary where they are dispersed and redistributed naturally by strong tidal currents. All dredged muds are retained within the estuary where they can contribute to the maintenance of mudflats and saltmarsh habitats.

We carefully target dredging only where and when it is required so that access for ships is maintained most efficiently. The Port strives to continue to increase dredging efficiency to make dredging more economically and environmentally sustainable.

You can watch a timelapse video of the Dredger UKD Bluefin [here](#) <sup>[11]</sup>.

Over the past decade, we have taken a key role in the work of the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) <sup>[12]</sup>, working together with statutory bodies and nature conservation agencies to develop and implement a management scheme for the Severn Estuary European Marine Site.

The Bristol Port Company is also working in partnership to implement the EU Water Framework Directive and is a member of the liaison panel for the Severn River Basin. This panel advises on river basin planning in the Severn region, promoting the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment.

#### Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities <sup>[12]</sup>

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#### **Links**

[1] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/about-us/map-listing/bristol-statutory-harbour-area-designations>

[2] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/emergency-response/oil-spill-contingency-plan>

[3] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/waste-management/waste-management-plan>

[4] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/waste-management/approved-contractor-list>

- [5] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/waste-management/waste-management-summary>
- [6] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/waste-management/ms-49-bpc-waste-declaration-form-0>
- [7] <mailto:arrivals@bristolport.co.uk>
- [8] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/marine-documentation/waste-management/ms-55-waste-reception-facilities-complaint-form>
- [9] <mailto:marine.admin@bristolport.co.uk>
- [10] <https://www.bristolport.co.uk/about-us/map-listing/king-road-multibeam-survey>
- [11] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhqflgTQqO8>
- [12] <http://www.severnestuary.net/asera/>