

14 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

This section consider the effects of the proposed placement operation on recreational activity in the North Edinburgh Channel.

14.1 Existing Environment

The outer Thames Estuary is a popular area for leisure craft, particularly during the spring and summer months. However the North Edinburgh Channel is used only by the occasional recreational vessel and there is no other recreational activity (pers. comm.. PLA Harbour Master). Yachts and leisure cruisers cross the sandbanks by way of the buoyed channels, such as Foulger's Gat.

There is the potential for amateur archaeologists to dive on the Hawksdale wreck in the centre of the North Edinburgh Channel, however, this wreck is becoming progressively covered by sand and is, therefore, not presently of interest to divers.

14.2 Interference with Recreational Activity

The limited recreational activity in the North Edinburgh Channel limits the potential for interference. The RYA has been consulted and advises that, subject to the issuing of Notices To Mariners, they do not anticipate any problems. The dredger will travel to and from the site using the main navigational channels and this information will be included in the Notice To Mariners. Post-placement depths for the Channel have been agreed with the PLA Harbour Master and will not prevent any future navigation by recreational craft. It is considered that there is a potential **negligible impact** on recreational activity.