

River Itchen:

Importance, opportunities & threats

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River Itchen

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Important asset for people, wildlife and the economy.

Its environment is highly protected.

Like many tidal rivers it has a long history of human use.

Strong contrast between tidal and non-tidal stretches.

Above Woodmill; the Itchen is a classic example of a chalk river: clear water, high biodiversity & globally rare.

Below Woodmill; its more industrial, more modified but still important.



Environmental Importance

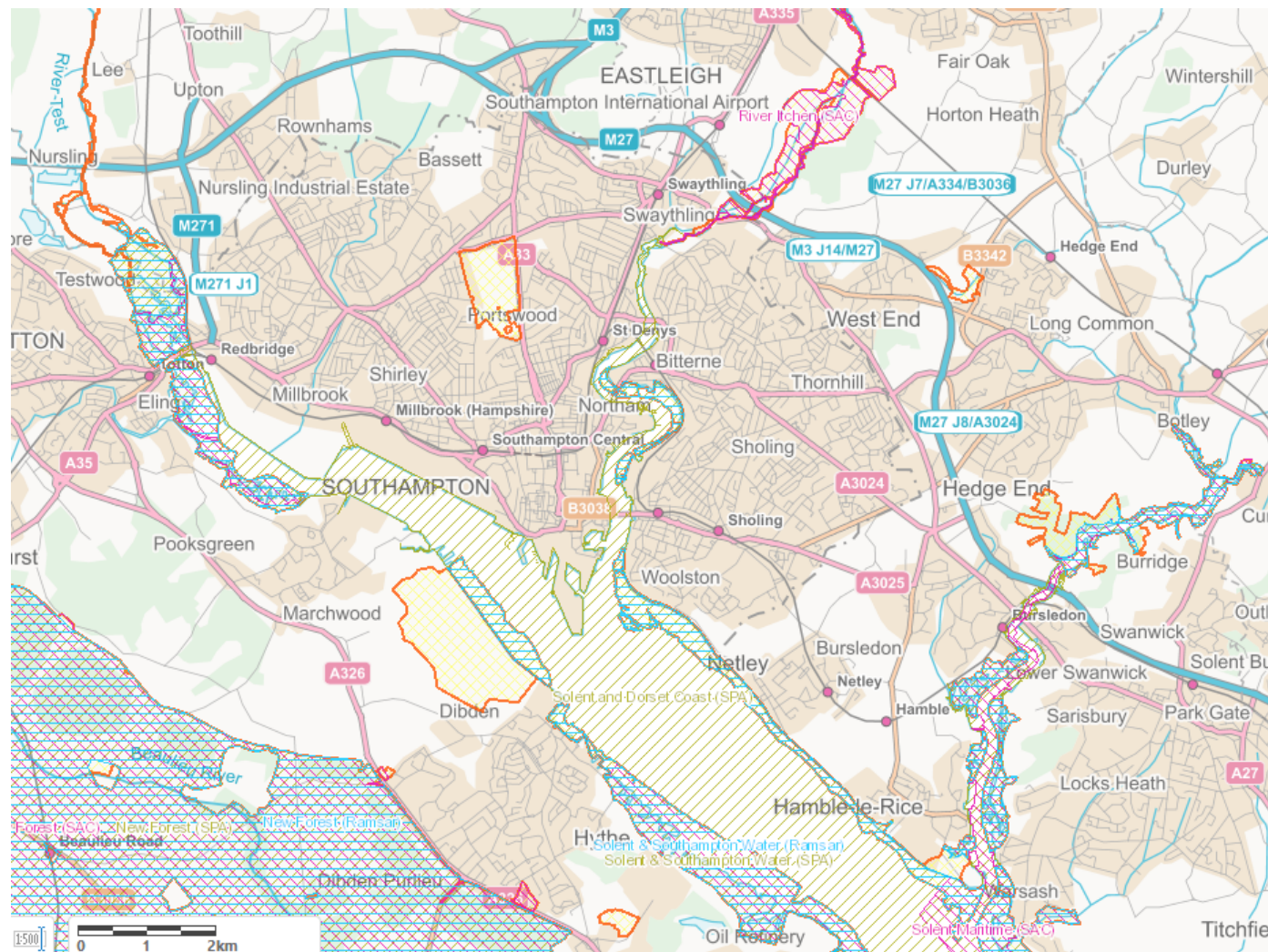
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Protected by several pieces of legislation

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Protection Area
- Special Area of Conservation
- Ramsar site

In recognition of its national and international importance

This legislation places a requirement upon public bodies to consider impacts when permitting activities



Environmental Importance



Tidal part of the Itchen:

- Mudflat and saltmarsh habitats
- Overwintering birds: brent geese
- Breeding birds: terns
- Migratory fish: salmon, trout

Non-tidal part of the Itchen:

- Chalk river habitats
- Lots of invertebrates: dragonflies
- Important fish species



Threats

Like many rivers and estuaries in the Solent (and England) the Itchen is facing a number of threats:

- Population pressures
- Development pressure
- Pollution:
 - Nutrients – nitrogen/phosphorus
 - Plastics
 - Other sources
- Climate Change
 - Sea level rise - loss of habitats
 - Increased drought
- Invasive species



Opportunities



Fantastic asset providing direct access to blue/green space.

Strong evidence of benefits to mental and physical health, wellbeing.

England Coast Path nearing completion.



Promoting recreation?



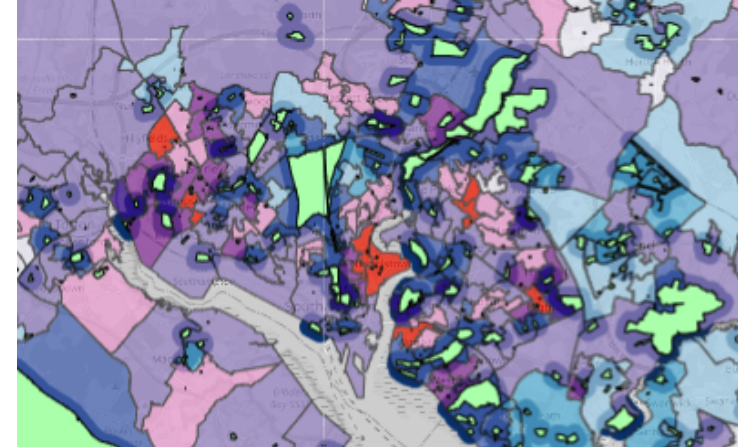
The Itchen environment, particularly in the tidal areas, is pretty robust.

Much of the sensitive, easily disturbed wildlife interest has probably already disappeared.

Could accommodate increased recreational pressures - if well managed

Significant opportunity to increase access provision, build a stronger relationship with 'place' and with the natural environment

More & Better Green/Blue Infrastructure



Legend

- Accessible Green Infrastructure i
Opacity
- ANGSt Doorstep Standard i
Opacity
- Accessible Natural Greenspace Inequality and Deprivation. Doorstep Buffer Coverage. i
Opacity

Class

L1	M1	H1
L2	M2	H2
L3	M3	H3

Questions?

