Water-Based Sport and Recreation: the facts

School of the Environment
University of Brighton
Brighton BN2 4GJ
WATER-BASED SPORT AND RECREATION: THE FACTS

Prepared for
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Countryside Division)
&
British Waterways
Countryside Agency
Countryside Council for Wales
Environment Agency
Sport England

The Research Team
Professor Andrew Church, University of Brighton
Professor Nigel Curry, University of Gloucestershire
Dr Neil Ravenscroft, University of Brighton
Dr Niall Burnside, University of Brighton
Dr Paul Fish, University of Brighton
Dr Chris Joyce, University of Brighton
Denise Hill, University of Brighton
Trevor Smith, Hill-Smith Associates
Peter Scott, Peter Scott Planning Services
Susan M arkwell, Independent Research Services
Brenda Mobbs, Underline Marketing
Solveig Grover, Graphic Design

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# Contents

**Executive summary**  
vi

**Section A. Introduction**  
1 Context, aims, methods, data and definitions

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Study Aims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Research Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Research Tasks and Report Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>The main research methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>The Geographic Decision Support System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Data layers and data definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Spaces and features not included in the GDSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Collating data for the GDSS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Government Policy on the Provision of Facilities for Water-Based Sport and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Public rights and inland waters - Rights of passage in navigable waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Public rights and inland waters - Rights of fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Private Rights and Inland Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>The 'Known About' Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>The Impact of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Water resources and maps of open country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Dedication Under s.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>The impact of the new nature conservation regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>The role of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Access Forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 - Access Agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>Implications of the Current Legal and Regulatory Framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section B. The Facts**  
3. The Consumption of Water-based Sport and Recreation

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Current levels of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Participation characteristics: the trip and the user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Consumption trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Disability and social inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>The relative popularity of different water-based sport and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Sport and recreation types - Static participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Sport and recreation types - Declining participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Sport and recreation types - Growing participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Evidence of latent demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Barriers and constraints to participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Travel and Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 The water sport and recreation resource

| 4.1 | The inland water resource - canals and rivers | 30 |
| 4.2 | The inland water resource - enclosed waters | 34 |
| 4.3 | The inland water resource - launching and mooring facilities | 35 |
| 4.4 | The inland water resource - clubs and other facilities | 37 |
| 4.5 | The inland water resource and urban settlements | 38 |
| 4.6 | The inland water resource and environmental designation | 40 |
| 5.7 | Summary | 43 |

5 The use of the water resource for sport and recreation

| 5.1 | Introduction | 44 |
| 5.2 | The use of enclosed waters and rivers | 44 |
| 5.3 | The use of major rivers and canals | 45 |
| 5.4 | Current use of space - angling | 46 |
| 5.5 | Current use - different angling types | 48 |
| 5.6 | Aspiration spaces - Angling | 51 |
| 5.7 | Current use of space - canoeing | 51 |
| 5.8 | Aspiration spaces - canoeing | 54 |
| 5.9 | Current use of space - sailing and windsurfing | 54 |
| 5.10 | Aspiration spaces - sailing and windsurfing | 55 |
| 5.11 | Current use - rowing | 56 |
| 5.12 | Aspiration spaces - rowing | 56 |
| 5.13 | Current use - water-skiing | 57 |
| 5.14 | Aspiration spaces - water-skiing | 58 |
| 5.15 | Current use of space - scuba diving | 58 |
| 5.16 | Aspiration space - scuba diving | 60 |
| 5.17 | Current use of space - cruising and canal boats | 60 |
| 5.18 | Aspiration space - cruising and canal boats | 61 |
| 5.19 | Current use and aspiration - Power boating and personal water craft | 62 |
| 5.20 | Current use and aspiration - Swimming | 62 |
| 5.21 | Current use and aspiration - Dragon boating and triathlon | 62 |
| 5.22 | Shared and sole use of enclosed waters | 62 |
| 5.23 | Overused and underused spaces and hot spots | 63 |
| 5.24 | Aspiration spaces | 64 |
| 5.25 | Unused waters - suitability analysis | 64 |
| 5.26 | Summary | 66 |

Section C - The Issues

6 Access arrangements and agreements

| 6.1 | Introduction | 69 |
| 6.2 | The nature of access arrangements and agreements | 69 |
| 6.3 | Access arrangements - Satisfaction and dissatisfaction | 71 |
| 6.4 | Changes to access agreements - Attitudes and perceptions | 73 |
| 6.5 | Summary - Access as a constraint on supply participation | 74 |

7 The environment and water-based sport and recreation

| 7.1 | Inland water spaces and environmental designations - current use | 76 |
| 7.2 | Water spaces and environmental designation - aspiration spaces | 77 |
| 7.3 | Water quality and the supply of water spaces | 79 |
| 7.4 | The relations between environmental bodies and water sports and recreation - attitudes and perceptions | 79 |
| 7.5 | The evidence on the environmental impacts of water based-sport and recreation | 80 |
8 Water spaces, relations between users and governance

8.1 Water spaces and conflict
8.2 Water spaces and conflicts - canoeing
8.3 Water spaces and conflicts - angling
8.4 Water spaces and conflicts - other sports
8.5 Conflict between water and bankside users
8.6 Water conflict and water sport and recreation governance

9 Synthesis: Issues, Implications and Possible Solutions

9.1 The major issues
9.2 Participation in and latent demand for water-based sport and recreation activities
9.3 Imbalances in the supply of resources for water-based recreation
9.4 Local and regional planning and strategy issues
9.5 The impact of conservation designations
9.6 Conflict and conflict resolution
9.7 Rights and responsibilities
9.8 Administration and regulation of access to inland water
9.9 Barriers to participation
9.10 Key Implications Arising from the Issues
9.11 Current Users of Inland Water
9.12 Current Non-Users of Inland Water
9.13 Water Recreation and Nature Conservation
9.14 Options for addressing the Issues
9.15 Possible Scenarios for Change
9.16 Assessing the Scenarios
9.17 Evaluation Tests
9.18 Minor development of current planning policy and strategies
9.19 Targetted purchase of services and revised funding arrangements
9.20 The Targetted Acquisition of Land and Water Rights
9.21 Voluntary Agreements
9.22 Voluntary Agreements with Dedication
9.23 Compulsory Access Orders
9.24 A Selective Increase in Statutory Rights of Navigation
9.25 Statutory Rights of Navigation to all Major Rivers, Canals and Water Bodies
9.26 Meeting the needs of existing and potential users- Existing Users
9.27 Potential Users
9.28 Recreation and Conservation
9.29 Conclusions

10 Conclusion

10.1 Research findings
10.2 Policy structures and mechanisms for supplying access to inland water
10.3 Data requirements for achieving more effective decision-making
10.4 The potential application of the GDSS

Appendix 1
Appendix 2
Appendix 3
References
Executive Summary

Section A: background

- This report is produced as a final output of the research project Water-based sport and recreation: the facts. The research followed from a meeting, hosted by officials from the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, with representatives from groups interested in water sport and recreation. The meeting participants agreed that there was a need to establish some clear facts about current levels of participation and the extent of problems about access to water for sport and recreation. DETR (now Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)) awarded a research contract in February 2001 to a consortium led by the University of Brighton. The project was also sponsored by British Waterways, Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency and Sport England.

- Concerns about recreational access to inland water in England and Wales have been evident for many years. While having potential as a recreational resource it has been noted that there are a number of issues to address: opening more inland waters to public navigation; addressing the conflicts between navigators and anglers; and removing uncertainties about the legal position of public rights of navigation.

- Public rights of navigation and water available for licensed navigation amount to 4,700 km of inland canals and major rivers in England and Wales (approximately a quarter of the major river and canal network). Just over 40% of this resource is within 15 km of a major urban area. It is however unevenly distributed, with a relatively high per capita resource in East Anglia and a low per capita resource in the South East of England.

- The navigation rights on the remaining major river and canal network are privately owned, usually by those owning the adjacent watersides. Some of this resource is available, mainly to clubs, through voluntary agreements with the landowner. In some cases, clubs have bought the adjacent land to secure their rights.

- Some of the principal user groups feel strongly that the extent and permanency of access to inland water for recreation is inadequate. Problems are perceived to persist through a mix of complex, inadequate and inappropriate navigation rights, which often lead to tension and conflict between user groups, particularly anglers and canoeists.

Section B: The Facts

- Approximately 3% of all day leisure visits from home in 1998 (14% of all countryside visits) made some use of inland water. These visits involved approximately 5 million people (12% of the adult population) and were predominantly local. Regular dedicated water sports enthusiasts tend to travel long distances to participate.

- Approximately 3% of the population regularly participate in water-based sport and recreation. In most water-based sport and recreation activities the participation rate for women is considerably lower than for men. In terms of participation, angling is by far the most popular water-based sport and recreation activity.

- A range of evidence suggests about three-quarters of regular dedicated water sports participants are likely to be men aged 18 to 60 years. Over 60% of participants in inland water-based sport and recreation are from social groups A, B, and C1, although these groups comprise less than 50% of the UK population.

- The overall level of water sports participation has been static since 1995, although there has been a perceived structural shift in participation, away from formal club use to informal and
casual participation. Participation rates are expected to remain static or fall slightly over the next 20 years.

- There is little evidence of widespread unmet demand for inland water-based sport and recreation activities. Rather, there are specific ‘hotspots’ and sub-areas of England and Wales where demand is greater than supply, particularly for specific resources such as white water. However, there is currently a significant lack of information about water-based sport and recreation opportunities which, if addressed, could lead to greater demand and potential consumption.

- While some reports suggest that there are no overriding barriers to participation in water-based sport and recreation, there are some significant constraints, including: the quality and proximity of facilities; the exclusiveness of some clubs; cost, perceptions of pollution and safety; lack of appropriate blocks of time; and lack of skills and experience.

- There are case study examples of where environmental designation has prevented the use of inland waters for sport and recreation. There are many concerns and claims that local planning authorities restrict the development of moorings, slipways, marinas and other associated facilities.

- Approximately 8% of the major rivers and 3% of the canal network in England and Wales is covered by a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation. Almost 500 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in size (24% of the total) are covered in part or whole by a SSSI designation.

- There are approximately 2,500 clubs associated with inland water sport and recreation in England and Wales. Approximately 50% of these are angling clubs; 13% are canoe clubs.

- In addition to major rivers and canals, there are nearly 2,000 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in size in England and Wales, with a mean size of 27 hectares. Of these, approximately half are known to be used for sport and recreation. The mean size of those used for sport and recreation is 41 hectares. Angling occurs on 88% of these enclosed waters, sailing on 28%, wind-surfing on 19% and canoeing on 14%. All other water-based sport and recreation activities occur on less than 10% of them.

- The position with regard to the use of waterways is more difficult to establish. Current data suggests there are fisheries on 13,700 km of major rivers and canals (68% of the total) and this figure is likely to be an underestimate. On these waters there are 8,800 km of well-known angling resource identified for use for in guidebooks and by public organisations.

- Cruising and canal boats have access to the major river navigations and canals, although there are some depth and width constraints. Canoeing takes place on all major river navigations and canals. There are also formal access agreements over 812 km of waterways that are not subject to a public right of navigation. Informal canoeing is promoted in guidebooks on some 7,000 km of major rivers with no public rights of navigation (46% of the total).

- Most user and representative groups desire more spaces in which to undertake their activities. This is less relevant to angling than to the other activities. Many angling organisations are particularly concerned to maintain the quality of waters to which they currently have access. In some cases, canoeing for example, the desire is for particular types of resource, especially white water and longer lengths of waterway for canoe touring. In other cases, the desire is to obtain space in areas of shortage. For example, rowing and windsurfing organisations both identify locations on the fringes of London where access to more inland waters is desirable. More rowing spaces are also desired in and around other major cities, such as Birmingham. For water-skiing, the desire is to obtain more space in the shortage regions of the West Midlands and the west country and to retain the spaces currently used (especially in National Parks), or to find suitable local alternatives.
Section C: Major Issues

- Participation in and latent demand for water-based sport and recreation activities: Water-based sport and recreation activities are undertaken by a small minority of the population. However, many of these activities are, or have the potential to be, socially inclusive and, with a modest level of skills training, can be undertaken by a wide age and ability range. The latent demand for these activities is currently low. However, if information about the activities were made more accessible, and a more comprehensive and inclusive approach taken to facility development and management, the demand for some activities, particularly sports where national participation appears to growing (e.g. canoeing and rowing), could be stimulated. Furthermore, good quality water spaces have an amenity value for non-participants in water-based sport and recreation.

- Barriers to participation: While water-based sport and recreation activities have the potential to be inclusive, many people currently experience barriers to access. These barriers can be related to a perceived lack of appropriate skills, or they can be financial and time-related. Equally, they can relate to a sense that some people have that many of the activities are elitist, not only requiring skill, time and money, but also social class or connection. More generally, there is a widespread fear of water, especially among older people, and a perception that most inland waters are polluted to unacceptable levels.

- Imbalances in the supply of resources for water-based recreation: There is no overall shortage of water resources in England and Wales. However, the volume and type of water resources - and their availability for recreation - vary between regions. Some areas experience competition for the available space, while in others the available resource is underused. Improvements in information about the available opportunities would mitigate some of the problems. Where this is not sufficient, there is potential to gain recreational access to some of the many enclosed waters and stretches of major rivers that do not currently support recreation activity.

- Local and regional planning and strategy issues: There is much concern about the lack of planning policy guidance on water-based sport and recreation, particularly where it has led to local authorities failing to identify and plan for additional facility provision. There are many claims that this has resulted in an unfavourable planning environment for some operators, particularly inland marinas. There is also concern that this failure has been exacerbated by the administrative division of responsibilities for water-based sport and recreation (between DEFRA, DLTR & DCMS).

- The impact of conservation designations: There is no available and reliable evidence regarding the overall degree to which inland water-based sport and recreation is restricted by environmental considerations. However, many stakeholders are concerned that changes to the designation process arising from the European Habitats directive and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) may mean that some resources would no longer be available for sport and recreation activity.

- Conflict and conflict resolution: There are many claims about the level of conflict occurring between people on some inland water resources. There is little independent evidence to substantiate these claims. In the main, conflict arises either when the objectives of different water space users differ, leading to competition to control the space, or when legal users of space encounter illegal users. Traditionally, anglers have been able to assert control on non-navigable waters by acquiring rights over the water. This has led to tension and conflict with others - usually canoeists - wishing to use the water. A number of agencies in England and Wales have prepared model agreements for anglers and canoeists, and provide guidance on conflict resolution. There is no assessment of the effectiveness of these approaches.
Section D: Potential Solutions

The report considers the 8 following policy scenarios for addressing user wishes and the problematic issues associated with water-based sport and recreation:

- Minor development of current planning policy and strategies
- Targetted purchase of services and revised funding arrangements
- Targetted acquisition of land and water rights
- Voluntary agreements
- Voluntary agreements with dedication
- Compulsory access orders
- A selective increase in statutory rights of navigation
- Statutory rights of navigation to all major rivers, canals and water bodies

The potential of each scenario was assessed using the following six evaluation tests:

- Extent of access
- Quality of access
- Permanency
- Clarity and certainty
- Cost
- Time to implementation

The report concludes that elements of certain scenarios could be implemented relatively rapidly especially much needed improvements for water-based sports and recreation in terms of:

- Information availability on provision
- Co-ordination between central government department and their agencies
- Planning policy guidance.

In addition, it is also tempting to believe that voluntary measures and public land purchase, perhaps funded by the Lottery or landfill tax credit scheme, could address the current lack of access to some types and locations of water. However, there is little empirical evidence that such approaches would be successful in achieving the desires of all stakeholder organisations.

The way forward may therefore lie in a hybrid approach based on elements of the different scenarios in which achievable gains, such as improving information about opportunities, developing better planning policy guidance and purchasing key sites, could be pursued in tandem with longer term approaches that may eventually yield the strategic inland water network envisaged by some stakeholder organisations. Whichever approach is adopted it is also apparent that better co-ordination and communication amongst government bodies is required, especially at the national level, to ensure users receive the guidance and information they need to access satisfactorily inland waters.
Section A. Introduction

1.0 Context, aims, methods, data and definitions

1.1 Context

1.1.1 This report is produced as a final output of the research project Water-based Sport and Recreation: The Facts. The research followed from a meeting, hosted by officials from the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, with representatives from groups interested in water sport and recreation. The meeting participants agreed that there was a need to establish some hard facts about current levels of participation and the extent of any problems about access to water for sport and recreation. DETR (now Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)) awarded a research contract to a consortium led by the University of Brighton from February 2001.

1.1.2 Concerns about recreational access to inland water in England and Wales have been evident for many years, with the issues remaining relatively consistent over time. In its 1973 report, the House of Lords Select Committee on Sport and Leisure recognised the potential of inland water as a recreational resource. In being able to fulfil its potential, however, the Select Committee noted that a number of problems had to be addressed, including: opening more water to public navigation; addressing the conflicts between navigators and anglers; and removing the current uncertainties about the legal position of public rights of navigation.

1.1.3 A later study by the Sports Council (O'Riordan and Paget 1978) suggested that the conflict between anglers and navigators was not as severe as the House of Lords Select Committee had suggested. Indeed, the Sports Council report found that most anglers and boaters experienced very little conflict and believed that both could co-exist through voluntary co-operation. However, in a somewhat prescient warning note, the authors cautioned against complacency, suggesting that increases in boating traffic could upset this balance. In a later report for the Sports Council (Telling and Smith 1985), the growing conflict between different users was blamed, in part at least, on the lack of certainty over people's rights.

1.1.4 The Sports Council issued a consultation paper on potential changes to the system (Sports Council 1985), and the Government issued a statement for its policies for the waterways (Waterways for Tomorrow, DETR 2000) but no substantive changes have been made. Indeed, the Government has recently confirmed the status quo, although recognising that there is a need for new management and working practices (House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and the Regions 2001).

1.1.5 Nevertheless, a number of the principal user groups feels strongly that many aspects surrounding access to inland water for recreation require attention. This is mainly to do with the extent and permanency of current arrangements, rather than the quality of provision. There is clear support from the general public for a greater level of access to inland water, particularly for non-powered craft (MVA Ltd 1999). Similarly, many of those responding to the recent Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review (MAFF 2000) felt that problems persist through a mix of inadequate and inappropriate navigation rights, which often lead to tension and conflict between different user groups, particularly anglers and canoeists.
1.1.6 What emerges is that there is a lack of clear information on the facts surrounding the recreational use of inland water. This makes it difficult to substantiate claims such as those made in the MAFF review, and equally difficult to implement changes that are capable of making a substantive difference to people's experience of inland water-based recreation.

1.2 Study Aims

1.2.1 The aim of research is to identify and compile the relevant data in a form that enables the Government to consider what action - if any - is necessary to secure access to inland waters. The coast and tidal waters were not part of the study. The data will also provide the basis for discussing with the relevant agencies, user groups and landowner organisations the way forward in achieving this aim. This overall aim has to be set within the context of wider government policy. On the supply side, this would involve addressing issues related to sustainability, both in terms of nature conservation, within designated sites and in the wider countryside, and in terms of transport (particularly access to the appropriate resources). In demand terms it would involve addressing social inclusion. This could be achieved in part by recognising that individual participant interests may not always be congruent with those of the relevant user groups, and that some social barriers to access may be sufficiently great that conventional studies of latent demand may be unaware of them.

1.2.2 The brief was widely circulated to interested parties and the detailed requirements of the brief are:

- To establish the current levels of participation in water space for water-based sport and recreation;
- To establish the availability of water space, including the nature and extent of the access arrangements currently in place - including voluntary, informal and statutory - and to what extent payment is made in return for the provision of water space. This should be developed around a description of the 'current legislative and regulatory framework within which water-based sport and recreation is conducted';
- To establish the effectiveness of the current arrangements in meeting the demand for different types of water-based recreation and sport;
- To provide information about the scale and nature of unmet demand and to identify the demand for new resources. This should include a consideration of the opportunities and potential for greater access by different types of users;
- To identify waterways and other water resources that are important to the different interests including the linkages between particular interests and specific water spaces;
- To identify the limiting factors to increased participation for different types of water-based activities;
- To provide information about the scope for negotiating new access agreements with landowners; and
- To identify any other issues affecting access for water-based sport and recreation, such as nature conservation, areas of conflict and how conflicts are being resolved.
1.3 Research team

1.3.1 The approach to this research has been fundamentally interdisciplinary, in requiring the skills of economists, geographers, ecologists and nature conservationists, lawyers and experts in water-based recreation provision. The core team comprised Professor Andrew Church (geography and recreation), Peter Scott (recreation planning and provision), Dr Neil Ravenscroft (land management and countryside recreation), Professor Nigel Curry (economics), Dr Chris Joyce (ecology), Dr Niall Burnside and Dr Paul Fish (Geographical Information Systems and data collection) and Susan Markwell (administration). Other important inputs were made during the project by Denise Hill and Trevor Smith (focus groups) and Brenda Mobbs (water-based recreation).

1.4 Research Tasks and Report Structure

1.4.1 The aims of the study have been grouped into three research areas: the supply of resources; the demand for access; and mechanisms for reconciling demand and supply (see Appendix 1 for more details). Each of these areas is the subject of a specific research task:

Task I: assessment of the current and potential supply of inland waters and current levels of participation in water-based sport and recreation;

Task II: assessment of the potential for additional future consumption of water-based sport and recreation opportunities;

Task III: assessment of the effectiveness of current arrangements and the ways in which this can be improved in the future.

1.4.2 The report is divided into four main sections that reflect the task based aims of the research:

- Section A Introduction
- Section B The Facts
- Section C Issues
- Section D Key Directions and Conclusions

1.4.3 The remainder of this introductory chapter discusses the methods and data used to complete these tasks. A chapter follows on the legal framework that completes the introduction section. Section B contains chapters on participation, the inland water resource and the use of the water resource. Section C focuses on the key issues of access, the environment and conflict. Section D synthesises the key findings and presents a series of scenarios for change.

1.5 The main research methods

1.5.1 These tasks were addressed using the following data collection exercises:

- Interviews with national stakeholder organisations.
- A questionnaire of local water sport and recreation clubs and groups.
- The development of a Geographic Decision Support System (GDSS).
- Focus groups on the nature and extent of potential demand.
- Expert panels on the policy context.

1.5.2 The methodological approach was devised to ensure integration between the three tasks and data collection exercises. In particular, the GDSS was designed to produce outputs relevant to all three tasks. Integration across the tasks was also to be based on a stakeholder-inclusive research process and a project-wide focus on nature conservation and environmental issues. In the context of the survey, ‘stakeholders’ include
government departments and agencies, representative bodies (e.g. for landowners and local government), voluntary organisations, groups and clubs with an interest or ‘stake’ in inland water-based sport and recreational activities. Representatives of these stakeholder organisations also took part in the expert panels. The general public, both those who participate in water-based sport and recreation and those who do not, also have a ‘stake’ in the use of inland waters and their views were obtained through the focus groups. A detailed discussion of the methodology is given in Appendix 1 and a list of the stakeholder organisations who were interviewed is included in Appendix 2.

1.6 The Geographic Decision Support System

1.6.1 The Geographic Decision Support System (GDSS) is one of the key methodological components of the project and provides integration between the research tasks (See Appendix 1 for details). The establishment of the GDSS has required a complex process involving:

- data collation from stakeholder organisations and published sources
- assessment of data quality
- digitising of data
- integration of data into the GDSS

1.6.2 The GDSS is a computerised database which is structured around geographic features. At the heart of the GDSS are a series of computerised maps (layers). These layers can be overlain with each other for analytical purposes. Such databases are sometimes referred to as Geographical Information Systems (GIS). The term GDSS was used for this project to stress that the database has been designed for future use by relevant organisations to assist decision-making at a strategic level. The GDSS acts as a comprehensive and reliable geographically referenced database containing digital information on:

- the availability of inland water space (canals, rivers, lakes, flooded gravel pits, and reservoirs)
- navigation rights and access arrangements
- environmental designations and management relating to water spaces
- river and canal fisheries
- major water-based sports and recreation facilities
- transport networks and urban areas
- population and social characteristics

1.6.3 For completeness, the GDSS contains information on tidal waters such as estuaries, but the study was only concerned with non-tidal waters. In addition, for each different water-based sport and recreational activity the GDSS is designed to contain data on:

- The current supply of inland water spaces with navigation rights, formal access arrangements of informal use
- Points of ingress/egress
- The location of voluntary, informal and payment-based access arrangements
- Supply locations known to experience underuse, overuse and conflict
- Inland water spaces lacking access or navigation arrangements to which access is desired - spaces of aspiration

1.6.4 The first stage of the construction of the GDSS was to establish a data layer of the principal inland water features for England and Wales. The basis for this was the Ordnance Survey (OS) computerised Strategy database (OS Strategy) that is derived from 1:250 000 scale mapping of the United Kingdom. The database is designed for mapping applications centred upon a national and regional theme and requiring a national overview. All geographical features are represented in a standard vector format and are composed of points, arcs and polygons. Vector data are regarded as particularly useful where individual features are to be represented and analysed within
a mapping system, or where the attributes of single entities or grouped features are to be collected and interrogated. The advantage of OS Strategy is that water features are available in vector format. Computerised OS maps are also available at smaller scales but did not at the time of the project contain vector data on water features.

1.7 Data layers and data definition

1.7.1 Further details of the GDSS map layers are contained in Appendix 1. The data layer of principal water is composed of enclosed waters, canals and rivers. In OS Strategy the river network is divided into primary, secondary and minor classes on the basis of channel width (see Table 1.1 for definitions). The OS Strategy data required considerable cleaning to make them operational in the GDSS. Rivers were comprised of a series of arcs rather than a single line and a number of arcs on primary and secondary rivers were wrongly defined as minor rivers. Also the majority of enclosed waters lacked names and some canals were identified as rivers. The data have now been cleaned so that all lakes have a name, usually taken from OS 1:50 000 map sheets. Rivers are stored as single lines within each river category from source to high water mark. A point is then identified where each river enters a tidal estuary, below which the river is no longer classed as 'Inland Water'. In the remainder of the study a series of different types of inland water are discussed and the nature and identification of these spaces is defined in Table 1.1.

1.7.2 The major rivers along with canals constitute nearly a third of the total linear water network. They are the main focus for analysis in this study, as minor rivers are used far less for sport and recreation, except for angling. For a strategic overview of water sport and recreation it is necessary to focus on the spaces where activity is most common rather than becoming lost in the detail of minor rivers. Furthermore, mapping the recreational use of over 20 000km of major rivers and canals is a major achievement and represents a significant advance in terms of the factual knowledge-base relating to water sport and recreation.

1.8 Spaces and features not included in the GDSS

1.8.1 In all subsequent analysis of inland waters estuary areas are not included but for legibility reasons they will be marked on maps. OS Strategy identifies enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in size. With the exception of angling, sport and recreational activities that take place on water very rarely occur on enclosed waters smaller than 1 hectare. Thus, the decision was taken to exclude all enclosed waters smaller than 1 hectare. The 1 982 enclosed waters in the GDSS are all 1 hectare or more in size. Other data sources were used to generate information on angling on enclosed waters smaller than one hectare but these data were not incorporated into the GDSS.

1.8.2 Docks were a further group of water spaces that were excluded from the GDSS. The OS Strategy included in its enclosed water layer a number of mainly working docks. These were removed and a decision was taken that for the current analysis all docks would be excluded since many are still operational and nearly all are alongside rivers in locations downstream of the tidal limit, in estuarine locations. This means that certain significant water sport sites, in particular the decommissioned docks in east London and in Cardiff, have been excluded from the database. However, their importance is noted in the discussion of individual water-based activities.

1.8.3 The project had initially planned to add geographically referenced data on the locations of moorings as they represent important facilities for water users. These have not been included because of technical difficulties of identifying 'linear' canal moorings along significant lengths of waterway that could not be overcome within the timescale of the project. A number of stakeholders with inland waterway responsibilities suggested moorings currently mapped in guides are inaccurate and incomplete. British Waterways is currently seeking to complete a map of moorings within its own GIS system. This prevents a detailed geographical analysis of moorings,
but the issues associated with moorings are discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 using secondary sources and the results of the stakeholder interviews.

### Table 1.1 Definitions of inland waters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major rivers</td>
<td>The combination of the primary and secondary rivers identified by OS Strategy. Primary rivers are defined as being greater than or equal to 8 metres wide at their widest inland point. Secondary rivers are defined as being greater than or equal to 4 metres wide at their widest inland point. The analysis in this report mainly focuses on major rivers (primary &amp; secondary) which are all greater than or equal to 4 metres wide at their widest inland point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor rivers</td>
<td>Minor rivers as identified by OS Strategy which are less than 4 metres wide at their widest inland point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canals</td>
<td>Canals as identified from Geoprojects maps and entered into the GDSS after cross-referencing with a number of organisations including British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association. These are all made available for public navigation. They do not include canals that are disused or under restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers with public navigation rights</td>
<td>Major rivers (see above) where a current public right of navigation is recognised by public bodies. Identified from Geoprojects maps and entered into the GDSS after cross-referencing with a number of organisations including British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association. In the remainder of the report the navigations on the Upper Wye, Lugg and Upper Severn are excluded from all analyses concerning rivers with public navigation rights. This is because on these three rivers passage is only possible by small craft, normally canoes; and in some parts of these navigations riparian landowners are disputing the current existence of the right of navigation. Where the exclusion of these three rivers is significant for the analysis this is noted in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland waterways</td>
<td>Collective term used to refer to canals and rivers made available for public navigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosed waters</td>
<td>Lakes, flooded gravel pits, ponds and reservoirs identified in OS Strategy. Does not include canals. The analysis in this report mainly focuses on enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosed waters used for sport and recreation</td>
<td>An enclosed water is defined as used for sport and recreation if information collated for this project indicates that it is available for legal use by individuals other than the owner or their personal guests. The use allowed may be continuous and for the whole enclosed water or limited spatially or by time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland waters</td>
<td>The collective term used in the report to refer to all of the above, and does not include any tidal waters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.8.4 Despite the qualifications detailed in table 1.1, it should be stressed that for the first time a comprehensive database exists on the use for sport and recreation of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more. This is a powerful tool in allowing strategic overviews of enclosed water space at the regional and sub-regional scale. The regions used for analysis are shown in Figure 1.1.

1.9 Collating data for the GDSS

1.9.1 The development of this GDSS requires the collation of large amounts of existing data held in digital and non-digital form. Certain types of data, such as boundaries of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were obtained in digital form. For each water-based sport and recreational activity most current use data that were obtained were in non-digital form and had to be entered into the GDSS. Where relevant, data on aspiration spaces, overuse, underuse and conflict were also included. A wide range of data sources was used. Appendix 3 lists the main published non-digital sources of use data. Each national governing or representative body was approached for data on water spaces and for angling, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and rowing it was also necessary to have extensive contact with regional and local officers for further
information. Over 70 local and regional stakeholders were contacted either face-to-face, by phone or post. Data on use were also obtained from enclosed water owners and operators, the Environment Agency, British Waterways and Sport England. National governing body facilities strategies were also used, as were pilot list of SASPs prepared by some governing bodies in England.

1.9.2 For certain sports data obtained from these sources were cross-referenced and supplemented with data in published sources and on Internet sites. These sources were essential for sports where the scale of activity is extensive, such as angling, and for sports where there is considerable informal activity, such as canoeing. Details of some of the guides used are listed in Appendix 3. In chapter 5 where each sport is discussed separately the different sources are outlined in more detail. Some of the data collated is analysed by region and the regional boundaries used are shown in Figure 1.1. Other forms of data that might be added to the GDSS in future, such as data on land ownership or local environmental designations, is discussed in Appendix 1,
2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter sets out some of the key elements of the legal and regulatory framework that informs inland water-based sport and recreation. In particular, the section deals with land use planning policy, as the framework within which facilities are provided, and the law of access to water. The aim here is not to provide a comprehensive review of all provisions, but rather to establish a series of signposts to the types of issues raised in the research.

2.2 Government Policy on the Provision of Facilities for Water-Based Sport and Recreation

2.2.1 It is Government policy to make inland waterways available for sport and recreation:

‘The Government wants to encourage people to make use of the inland waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism and sport. Many waterways are well used for pleasure boating; and rowing, canoeing and sailing are widespread. Angling is very popular. Much larger numbers of people use the waterways for informal recreation such as walking, cycling and exploring the waterway heritage. The waterways are an important tourism resource, supporting a large holiday hire-boat industry. We will encourage their greater use for recreation; increased access for the young, disabled and disadvantaged; and better communication with the widest possible range of users’ (DETR 2000: p7).

2.2.2 This has since been endorsed in planning policy in England, in the draft revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, Sport, Open Space and Recreation (DETR 2001). The Welsh equivalent (Welsh Office 1998, 1999) is silent on this matter. In England, therefore, local planning authorities have direct guidance to take inland water-based sport and recreation into account when setting out development plan policies and operating development control. In Wales, the requirement is a more general one to provide adequate resources for sport and recreation:

‘The planning system should ensure that adequate land and water resources are allocated both for organised sport and for recreation taking full account of the need for recreational space and current levels of provision and deficiencies and the impact on location’ (Welsh Office 1999: para. 12.2.1).

2.2.3 A common observation by many stakeholders - of both English and Welsh policies - is that they lack sufficiently specific guidance on all types of sport and recreation provision (see also Butter 2001, Scott n.d.). This is very much the case at present, with the new draft Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 in England (DETR 2001) and Technical Advice Note 16 in Wales (Welsh Office 1998) being largely devoid of detailed reference to water-based sport and recreation. Indeed, in Wales for example, the guidance is to plan land allocation on the basis of local need, with guidance from the Sports Council for Wales. The Land Use Planning Forum (2000), in its report to the National Assembly of Wales, has found little wrong with this stance, and has offered few suggestions for amending the guidance. There is little difference in England.

2.2.4 As a result, a number of stakeholder organisations and individuals in the focus groups argued that water-based sport and recreation provision is vulnerable to other competing land uses, particularly conservation interests in rural areas. The clearest statement of policy currently available on the relationship between recreation and conservation relates to National Parks in England:

13. The National Park Authorities should continue to promote the widest range of opportunities for recreation to reflect the variety of ways in which Parks can be enjoyed. But the conservation values which the parks represent and which have led to so many
appreciating their special qualities must be fully respected. The National Park Authorities will need to take into account the Parks' limited environmental capacity. It will not be appropriate for all forms of recreation to take place in every part of the Parks and the Government accepts that some recreation activities could cause unacceptable damage or disturbance to their natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage. The intrusive nature of some recreational activities or the damage they cause to conservation interests may unacceptably affect other people's understanding and enjoyment of the Parks.

14. Nevertheless the Government does not accept that particular activities should be excluded from throughout the Parks as a matter of principle.

(Department of the Environment 1996: paras 13 and 14).

2.2.5 While relating only to National Parks, this statement reflects a more general disposition in England and Wales that recreations access should be accommodated where possible, but not to the extent that it damages the natural environment. The position in England is set out clearly in the Lake Windermere Decision Letter (DETR 2000).

2.2.6 There are also concerns expressed by stakeholders that water-based sport and recreation may lose out to residential and commercial development in urban areas. This is part of a more general concern about the place of recreation development within development plans and development control (Ravenscroft 1992). There are no known data on the extent to which water-based sport and recreation provision actually does lose out to other types of development. However, work by Davies et al. (1991) indicated that, once development sites have been allocated, recreation projects have tended to proceed through the statutory planning system with greater ease than other types of development of a similar scale and impact. It is not known whether this is still the case.

2.2.7 More generally, concern has also been expressed about the extent to which government is really committed to encouraging all uses of inland water. As an example of this concern, users cite the Environment Agency's duty to maintain, improve and develop salmon fisheries, trout fisheries, freshwater fisheries and eel fisheries (Environment Act 1995, s.6(6)) so that 'everyone will have the opportunity to experience a diverse range of good quality fishing' (Environment Agency Vision for Fisheries). It has no similar remit for other forms of water-based recreation. However, the Agency also has a general duty to promote the use of inland and coastal waters and associated land for recreational purposes under s.6(1)c. In its policy statement on recreational access to waterways (ILAM 2000), the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management is critical of this apparent privileging of angling over other recreational uses of inland water:

'For Government to have an objective that supports one form of recreational activity over another is inappropriate and ill-advised. The Government's policy should be to advocate the benefit of all forms of water related recreation. The recommendation that new legislation will help to achieve this objective is also alarming. The Environment Agency, as the Government's Agency, has an existing duty to promote water-related recreation to the extent it deems desirable and this should be sufficient in terms of primary legislation to achieve this objective'.

2.2.8 Concern has been further expressed that restrictions on access to inland water - however caused - may limit the growth of water sports participation (BMIF 1997). In the National Youth Watersport Audit (Anderson et al. 1996), competition from other sporting users for the available water was a particular issue for rowers and canoeists. In the same study, local authority respondents suggested that the main limitations on water sports included limited physical access to water. This is also an issue for many disabled people, although the English Federation of Disability Sport (2000) has not prioritised access to water in its strategy to 2004.
2.2.9 In overall terms, therefore, it is apparent that land use planning for water-based sport and recreation takes place in something of a policy vacuum, with few data or standards to guide planners. This is the case even in technical advice notes and policy guidance, where there has been an alleged reluctance, certainly in Wales, to seek the advice of experts when drawing up the guidance notes (Land Use Planning Forum 2000; Scott n.d.). This is seemingly exacerbated by the perceived fishing-oriented remit of the Environment Agency. As a result, many of the complexities of water-based sport and recreation are not set out clearly for local planning authorities, navigation authorities, stakeholders or any other bodies seeking to influence the use of inland waters for sport and recreation. This includes guidance on issues such as rights of fishing and navigation, and the relationship between sport, recreation and the environment. The remainder of this section considers some of these issues.

2.3 Public rights and inland waters - Rights of passage in navigable waters

2.3.1 Public rights are those that are exercisable by anyone. Some public rights involve a right to take from the environment, as in the case of a public right to fish. Other rights relate to passage along a route. There can be more than one public right attached to any given resource, implying a ‘layering’ of rights, while the existence of one right (say a right to fish) does not presuppose other associated rights (such as access to the water or obstruction of a highway while casting). The principal rights related to water are the rights of passage in navigable waters and rights of fishing.

2.3.2 There is a common law public right of navigation at will over all navigable tidal waters. Telling and Smith (1985) explain this by describing such waters as ‘arms of the sea’. There is no such presumption on other waters, which are the property of the riparian owners (including public bodies). Because of these differing legal contexts tidal waters are not included in this study. However, the public may have acquired rights of passage over inland waters, through prescription, dedication or enactment. This is a difficult area of law, with few certainties about how rights arise. Telling and Smith suggest that the mere fact of boats passing and repassing probably does not lead to a right being acquired in common law. Equally, while rights may have arisen in the past to facilitate the movement of freight, it is doubtful whether now similar rights can be acquired through recreational use. Thus, as Gray (1993) suggests, where recreational use of water occurs it is often a ‘tolerated’ use for which the owner has not sought a remedy in trespass.

2.3.3 It would seem, however, that some navigation rights have been created on non-tidal waters. In general, there are prescriptive rights over natural rivers that have been used for navigation since time immemorial, and statutory ones over artificial waters such as canals and rivers which have been made navigable. These latter statutory rights have often come about as a result of seventeenth and eighteenth century private Acts of Parliament to allow entrepreneurs to make or improve waterways. Many of these inland waters are now made available for navigation by British Waterways, the Environment Agency, the Broads Authority and a number of other small navigation authorities.

2.3.4 Although this is the general rule, the situation is a little different with respect to British Waterways. Section 105(5) of the Transport Act 1968 abolished public and private rights of navigation on some British Waterways waters because they were seen to be inconsistent with the new classification of waterways and their specific maintenance requirements set out in the Act. Since section 105(5) applies to all rights of navigation conferred by private enactment, canals are no longer subject to a right of navigation, although rivers deriving the right from prescription or dedication are unaffected.

2.3.5 Although separate from rights of navigation, licensing of vessels is a related issue. Although there is no legislative authority concerning licensing, the view has been taken in England and Wales that a charge for a licence allowing use of a waterway cannot be made where a public right of navigation is in existence. However, in the case of canals, where public and private navigation rights have been abolished, licence
fees can be - and are - levied. British Waterway’s licensing system is complex, relating both to the type of use and the waterways used. Vessels are subject to different licensing requirements depending upon whether they are used for carrying freight or for pleasure. The general position for pleasure boats is that those using the canals must be licenced (the BCU, for example, pays a block licence on behalf of its members), with this licence also covering the river waterways. Pleasure craft using only the river waterways (as defined in the British Waterways Act 1971) must be registered. In practice, British Waterways will subsequently issue a licence to craft registered to use the river waterways only.

2.3.6 Even where navigation rights exist, case law suggests that - on non-tidal water - craft are restricted to passing, repassing and ‘standing still for a reasonably short time’. The test in each case is reasonableness, related to the capacity and quality of the river or canal. However, such rights do not infer any additional or related rights, such as fishing, wildfowling, ingress/egress from the water or, normally, static training operations and other such activities (see Gray 1993). It is estimated that such navigation rights amount to no more than 5 000km of main river and enclosed water in England and Wales, or approximately 16% of the available resource (House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs 2001).

2.3.7 Concern has been expressed about the level of bureaucracy inherent in the current system, with each navigation authority issuing its own licences and adopting its own environmental and maintenance standards. The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee (1999) has argued that a new national body is required to undertake the long-term conservation and maintenance, regulation and sustainable management, development and promotion of the rivers and canals. However, the House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs (2001) did not share this view and found that few actual problems of accessibility were caused by the multiplicity of authorities.

2.4 Public rights and inland waters - Rights of fishing

2.4.1 There is a public right to fish in the sea and all tidal and salt waters. As in the case of rights of navigation, the right to fish does not presuppose any right of access to the resource. There are no public rights to fish on non-tidal rivers and canals, while Gray (1993) considers it ‘highly unlikely’ that such rights exist on inland non-tidal enclosed waters.

2.4.2 Anglers are required to pay an annual fishing licence. This entitles ‘the person to whom it was granted … to use an instrument specified in the licence to fish for any fish of a description, in an area and for a period so specified’ (Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, s. 25(2)). This entitlement does not cover access to inland waters, nor acquisition of the relevant riparian rights.

2.5 Private Rights and Inland Waters

2.5.1 The ownership of the remaining inland waters is predominantly in private hands (mainly water companies, farmers and rural estate owners). As such, the owner of the freehold interest in the underlying bed of the inland water is able to ‘carve out’ lesser interests that can be sold to third parties. While some of these inland waters are wholly inaccessible in legal terms (that is, no lesser interests have been created), others are subject to licence and lease agreements with angling, canoeing, boating and other water-based sport and recreation clubs. Unless there is a public right of way adjacent to the water, these leases and licences will comprise rights associated with access to, as well as use of, the water. Water companies are under a duty to ‘take such steps as are (a) reasonably practicable; and (b) consistent with the purposes of the enactments relating to the functions of that body, for … ensuring that the water or land is made available for recreational purposes and is so made available in the best manner’ (Water Act 1989, 8(3)). There is no evidence to substantiate the permanency of Water Companies’ approaches to this obligation (Gray 1993). Details of the approaches adopted by water companies are made available in annual Conservation, Access and Recreation (CARs) reports.
2.5.2 The recent Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review (MAFF 2000) concluded that the ownership of fishing rights in particular and private rights of access to watersides in general are longstanding rights under English law. However, there are no comprehensive data on the extent of any of these types of ownership, nor of the access that they afford. Curry, in his survey for the CLA (CLA 1998), found that such rights are relatively common, with 30% of the landholdings offering permissive access doing so to water (mainly for fishing) and a further 16% offering access to areas of land and water. The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (2000) estimate that access is gained in this way to approximately 2% of the main rivers and lakes in England and Wales.

2.5.3 Although commonly thought of as giving exclusive use of the water body to the lease or licence holder, the actual rights being passed are subject to the wording of the individual contract. Thus, it is quite possible to separate out a private right to fish from the remaining bundle of freehold rights. This could allow the freehold owner to subsequently grant a right of navigation to a boating club, subject only to the boaters respecting the angling club’s right to fish. Corresponding rights – and appropriate responsibilities - could be granted to others in respect of the watersides. To secure absolute exclusivity, therefore, a lessee would have to acquire all the riparian rights relating to the water and all the access and use rights relating to the neighbouring land. In some cases this has been achieved by the club (usually angling) purchasing the freehold right to the land and water (see Coalter and MacGregor 1987 for examples). In other cases, voluntary access arrangements have worked well, particularly where canoeists have restricted their use to the close season for coarse fishing on running waters. The Environment Agency’s (1999) guide on agreeing access for canoeing is well regarded in this respect.

2.6 The ‘Known About’ Resource

2.6.1 While there may be a range of access options, it is clear from most of the focus groups that many people do not know what rights they have, nor where they can exercise these rights. Indeed, many people commented on the utility of the focus groups as a means of getting to know more about the access opportunities in their local area. As Curry and Ravenscroft (2001) have argued with respect to access to land, the key concept is thus the extent of the ‘known about’ resource. Later chapters in this report suggest that with respect to inland water it is apparent that the ‘known about’ resource is currently lower than the total resource that is legally available. For many people, lack of knowledge of the available resource is a barrier to access. For others, it may mean that, in order to enjoy their chosen activity, they access water for which they have no right or agreement to do so. The extent of this type of activity is, by definition, hard to determine.

2.7 The Impact of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

2.7.1 It is generally agreed that, although there are similarities between public rights of way and public navigations, legal precedents relating to one branch of the law are unlikely automatically to apply to the other one (Telling and Smith 1985, Gray 1993). It is becoming apparent that the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, although ostensibly dealing with access to land and public rights of way on land, may have implications for access to inland water. This is the case in a number of distinct areas:

- Water resources included in areas of open countryside as identified on maps of open country;
- The dedication of access to water resources under s.16 of the Act;
- The impact of the nature conservation regulations introduced by the Act;
- The role of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Access Forums.
2.7.2 Each of these distinct areas are discussed separately below. This is followed by a discussion of the earlier legislation under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

2.8 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Water resources and maps of open country

2.8.1 The approach taken by the Countryside Agency in mapping open country is likely to exclude discrete parcels of land that are not in themselves open country (such as substantial lakes, canals and large rivers). In some cases, no doubt, the edge of a waterbody will form a natural boundary to the mapped area. Where this is the case, people may gain land-based access to the waterside, but not to the water itself.

2.8.2 It is likely that some bodies of water will be included in the areas mapped as open country although the maps are likely to exclude discrete parcels of land which are not in themselves open country, such as substantial lakes, canals and large rivers. The right of access extends over all the land (and water) included in the map unless it is excepted land but, under the restriction set out in Schedule 2 to the Act, does not extend to bathing, fishing or using craft. Except in shallow water, and unless the restrictions in Schedule 2 are removed or relaxed with the consent of the land owner, it is difficult to see how in practice the right would extend beyond the bank.

2.9 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Dedication Under s.16

2.9.1 Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act allows landowners to dedicate their land for the purposes of the Part 1 of the Act, regardless of whether it is access land. Since the Interpretation Act 1978 and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 both define land as including 'land under water', water could be dedicated under this section. However, the restrictions in Schedule 2 to the Act apply to dedicated land as well as access land and so, unless these are relaxed or removed, there would be no gain to recreational water users from water dedicated under section 16.

2.10 The impact of the new nature conservation regulations

2.10.1 The European Habitats Directive, which came into force in 1992 and was transposed into UK legislation in 1994, and the Part III of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 could have impacts on access to inland water where Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are involved. As far as notification goes, if an activity has been carried on for some time at a site considered suitable for notification as an SSSI, then the legislation should have no impact. There may be an impact where a change in the type of activity or in the intensity of the existing activity is proposed. If the new activity is listed in the notification as an operation likely to damage the special interest of the SSSI, the consent of English Nature must be obtained. There is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State if English Nature refuses to give consent. The operations that require consent will vary depending on the special interest features concerned. A waterway or a body of water may be notified for a variety of reasons - the marginal habitats, or the fauna or flora within the water itself, for instance, so the impact of notification on different recreation uses is likely to be different in each case.

2.10.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on public bodies, including local authorities and statutory undertakers, to take reasonable steps consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which a site is of special scientific interest. Where a body is granting a consent on or affecting an SSSI, it is required to consult English Nature and take its advice into account although the body may go against the advice if it considers it inappropriate. Parliament did not give absolute precedence to nature conservation; the Conservation
(Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 allow development to take place if it is in the overriding public interest. Planning Guidance (Wales) (Welsh Office 1999) recognises the potential difficulties that could be created, but defends a precautionary approach in respect of access to the countryside for water-based recreation, encapsulated by the Sports Council for Wales as ‘access for all, but not to all places’.

2.10.3 In 2000, British Waterways published “British Waterways and Biodiversity: A Framework for Waterway Wildlife Strategies”. This was conceived as a result of the 1992 Earth Summit on biological diversity and the Government’s national response to encourage organisations like British Waterways to prepare Biodiversity Action Plans. It will also help British Waterways to meeting the new duties imposed by Part III of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

2.11 The role of Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Access Forums

2.11.1 Under section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, local highways authorities are under a duty to produce statutory rights of way improvement plans within 5 years of its commencement. These plans could be used to enhance access to watersides, as well as addressing explicitly the needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, under sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, local highways and national park authorities will be under a statutory duty to establish local access forums covering their administrative area. The primary purpose of the Forums is to provide an opportunity for user, land manager and other representatives to advise the appointing authorities on the improvement of public access to land in their area for the purpose of open air recreation and enjoyment of that area. This is a broad function that is not limited to access on foot. It could, potentially therefore, include access onto water. Guidance on the formation and operation of LAFs was published in July 2001 (DEFRA 2001), following guidance published by the Countryside Agency (2001). Since sport and recreation on inland water fall within the ambit of the Forums, it would seem that they could be a relevant body for advising local authorities on improving recreational access to inland water. However, with a maximum of 20 members per forum (DEFRA 2001), it seems unlikely that there will be more than 4 or 5 user representatives. Most of these are likely to be drawn from walking, cycling, horse riding and other such land-based activities, rather than from a range of water-based interests. The exception to this might be in areas where water recreation is important, where there could even be a separate LAF covering the water interests.

2.12 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 - Access Agreements

2.12.1 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (section 64) established the access agreement as the central means by which local authorities could negotiate public access to private land (and water). Rather than compulsion, the access agreement was part of a formal legal process through which landowners could voluntarily grant access to their land, in return for consideration from the local authority. Access orders can be made, under section 65 of the 1949 Act, by local authorities (subject to ministerial confirmation) where it appears to the authority that making an access agreement is impracticable (see Hughes 1996). In practice, agreements have been difficult to make, even in areas where they have been relatively well received, such as the Peak District (Peak District National Park Authority 1998). Despite this, few orders have been made. By 1989, the area of land subject to access agreement totalled only 35 000 hectares, more than half of which were in the Peak District. Parker and Ravenscroft (1999) assert that this figure has changed little over the last 10 years. Notwithstanding specific provisions for access agreements and orders over water contained in the Countryside Act 1968, there is little evidence of such mechanisms being used to improve access to inland water.
2.13 Implications of the Current Legal and Regulatory Framework

2.13.1 There is no doubt that the law and wider regulatory frame regarding access to inland waters is both complex and uncertain. This has led to much confusion about accessibility, as demonstrated in most of the focus groups, which in turn has probably contributed to social exclusion of some social groups from the use of inland water resources. However, this state of confusion has not been to the disadvantage of all, with many angling clubs exploiting private property rights to secure access to fishing which, itself, is being enhanced through the Environment Agency’s fisheries remit. Since it is widely accepted that angling in terms of social background is one of the more socially inclusive water-based activities, it might be argued that complexity and uncertainty are, in themselves, not a barrier to access. Indeed, this has been supported in principle by the House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs (2001), which felt that wholesale ‘open country’ access to watersides would be detrimental to the interests of anglers. It was thus felt that any broadening of general access to watersides would probably have to be done on a case by case basis, embracing the interests of all interested parties, taking into account any existing legal rights.

2.13.2 It is clear that in some cases, individual rights holders are able to influence adversely other people’s ability to enjoy access to and use of the resource. This is exacerbated by a statutory planning system that is largely silent on protecting or enhancing people’s access to important resources such as water. The apparent inadequacy of current planning guidance is the result of a number of factors. Both the stakeholder interviews and the focus groups demonstrated clearly that water-based sport and recreation does not have a high profile in central government, with much current confusion over the separation of responsibilities between different departments. It is also apparent that water planning is essentially a regional-level function, meaning that the local implications for water-based recreation can easily be overlooked. The resultant ability of individual parties to use their property power to restrict the enjoyment of others may, in some cases, be a reasonable position, particularly where one use impacts adversely on another. This can be the case with respect to some angling environments and it may also be the case in some instances with respect to nature conservation.

2.13.3 In other cases, however, the ability to restrict may be out of proportion to the scale of the potential impacts. This is certainly the message underlying the Environment Agency’s (1999) approach to access agreements between anglers and canoeists. It was also a common point of discussion and comment by stakeholder organisations. For landowners and managers, for example, all riparian rights have a value, and any user should be encouraged to acquire only those rights needed to pursue their particular interest. In this type of case it is felt that there are occasions when anglers do not need – or do not own – the navigation rights to a river stretch. In such a case it may be possible for a licence agreement to be brokered between boat users and the navigation rights holders that allows passage along the river stretch while protecting the fishing rights of the anglers.

2.13.4 The mechanisms for creating these types of brokered arrangements already exist. For example, access agreements and access orders can be made under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Access agreements would allow the rights holders and beneficiaries to agree the terms and conditions of use, as well as the consideration to be paid – and by whom. However, it must be recognised that the 1949 Act access agreements have not been universally popular, particularly with respect to water, even when financial consideration was available (Parker and Ravenscroft 1999). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 offers the potential to dedicate inland water. However, unless landowners were willing to remove restrictions on the use of the land or water, the Act does not offer opportunities for water sport and recreation interests to gain access to inland water.

2.13.5 For this type of arrangement to be successful it is clear that a number of conditions would need to be met. Most importantly, it would need to recognise and protect the
interests of existing associated rights holders, probably through a mix of consideration paid and restrictions (time and space) accepted. There would also need to be some agreed and enforceable code of use of the resource, backed by effective policing. This undoubtedly has implications for the licensing or other registration and recognition of all resource users. The stakeholder interviews reveal that it remains a bone of contention for anglers that they are the only users to pay a licence fee in addition to charges for using the resource. Any shift from club-based negotiation to other forms of brokerage may bring with it a need to consider licensing all users as an input to effective policing and control. It is recognised that this is unlikely to be popular with most water users other than anglers.
Section B. The Facts

3. The Consumption of Water-based Sport and Recreation

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter examines various aspects of the nature of water-based sport and recreation consumption, drawing from both existing data sources and the four principal empirical components of this research - the questionnaire of clubs, the stakeholder interviews, the focus groups and the expert panels. The existing data sources used include the findings from large scale surveys of participation in sport. It is recognised at the outset that existing data sources are considered partial (DETR and Welsh Office 1998 and the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review, MAFF 2000). This review therefore provides 'best estimates and information' drawn from all of these secondary sources. The focus groups and stakeholder interviews are useful for understanding how and why participation has changed.

3.2 Current levels of participation

3.2.1 The UK Day Visits Surveys (UKDVS), conducted in 1994, 1996 and 1998 (Social and Community Planning Research 1995, 1997 and 1999), are the most comprehensive data available for outdoor visits. The data cover day trips from home by adults aged over 15 years within Great Britain.

3.2.2 In 1998, 72% of all such visits were to, or within, towns and cities and 24% were to the countryside. The remaining 4% were to the seaside or coast. Within the countryside visits 14% made some use of inland water and half of these were to waters navigable by powered boats and the other half were to waters not navigated by powered boats. In overall terms, therefore, around 3% of all day leisure visits from home in 1998 made some use of inland water and according to UKDVS these leisure visits to inland water involved 12% of the adult population. What people did (such as walking on riversides, sailing, water-skiing) are not identified in the survey and the use of water, as opposed to the use of land adjoining water, is not distinguished.

3.2.3 Evidence of the popularity of the use of inland water for recreational and sporting activity also comes from a 1998 Gallup poll of 1,000 adults conducted for the Country Landowners' Association as part of its response to the Access to the Open Country consultation paper. The survey covered England and Wales and was designed to determine the extent to which people had undertaken different types of recreation activity in the countryside during the previous year. This embraced visits both from home and whilst on holiday. The survey indicated that around 6% of the population (roughly 2.5 million people) indulged in some form of inland water-based recreation (making use of the water rather than just watersides) in the countryside at some time during 1998. The survey did not indicate, however, how many more people use inland water as an instrumental part of their recreation experience (walking or cycling on river and lake sides, for example).

3.2.4 The General Household Survey (GHS)(Sport England 1999) assesses water sports in terms of the number of active participants. In the GHS, water sports are considered to be the 16th most popular active outdoor pursuit, ahead of cricket, rugby, skiing, table tennis and hockey. It is hard to establish the total numbers of water sports participants in the UK from the GHS but it suggests that participation is unlikely to be more than 3% of adults on a regular basis with a further 4% taking part occasionally (Mintel 1998). Data provided for this study by the Sports Council for Wales based on a survey of 23,200 adults in Wales conducted in 1998/9 is presented in Table 3.1. The

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1 These include swimming, canoeing, board sailing, rowing and sailing, as well as motorised water sports, such as power boating, jet-skiing and water-skiing. The GHS, however, excludes angling from this definition, which itself may have 3 million regular participants (MAFF 2000)
data produces estimates for regular participation similar to those in the GHS. Table 3.1 indicates that 3.1% of adults aged over 15 in Wales had participated during the previous four weeks in at least one of seven water-based activities. The most popular of the seven sports was angling with 2.0% of the respondents having participated in the last four weeks. The other six sports all recorded participation levels below 1%. Indeed, the General Household Survey and the Sports Council for Wales data both suggest that for most water-based sports, apart from angling, regular participants constitute less than 1% of the adult population.

Table 3.1. % of adult (15+) population to participating in selected water-based activities in Wales during the previous four weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angling</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sports Council for Wales. % that participated in at least one of: canoeing, angling, rowing, sub aqua, surfing, windsurfing or sailing during the previous four weeks. Sample size is 23 206.

3.2.5 Partial information from other national surveys suggests that 29% of visitors to private woodlands undertook fishing as part of their overall recreational experience (Scott 1997) and that between 10 – 12 million people visit the River Thames each year for leisure purposes (Leisure News 2001).

3.2.6 From the postal questionnaire of 252 clubs conducted as part of this research, it was estimated by clubs that 45% of members were active in water recreation on a weekly basis and around one third on a monthly basis. For 10% of members, however, their chosen activity played a central part in their lives and is estimated to take place on an almost daily basis. Around 11% of the total membership of clubs was classed as social membership.

3.2.7 In the focus groups conducted with the unaffiliated public, however, general water-based participation was commonly not on a regular basis – it was considered too time consuming. Many in the groups also considered water recreation either somewhat elitist or old fashioned, relative to other forms of keeping fit:

"Fishing is the sort of thing that your dad does" (16+ young active woman, Bristol).

3.2.8 This lack of regular participation articulated in the focus groups was influenced by a reluctance to join sports clubs of any type. People were not put off by cost but wanted to remain flexible in their leisure choices. This was especially true of young people. This was particularly important because many articulated the limited and constrained amount of leisure time that was available to them. They wished to sample a range of leisure activities without commitment. People were prepared to pay for day tickets in preference to annual memberships. For women in particular, a strong motivation for this casual preference was being able to try out new sports in a non-judgmental manner without having to invest in a lot of equipment.
3.2.9 The reluctance of people to join clubs is partly reflected in the data provided by the Sport Council for Wales based on the survey of 23,200 adults. Only 15% of those who had participated in angling during the previous four weeks were members of an angling club, 14% of those who had canoed in the same period were members of canoeing clubs and 23% of those who had sailed were members of a sailing club.

3.3 Participation characteristics: the trip and the user

3.3.1 The average length of stay for those visiting navigations for powered craft, from the UKDVS was 3.52 hours and visits to navigations not used by powered craft was 3.30 hours (1998 UKDVS). Countryside visits overall lasted an average of 3.08 hours. Visits to all inland water from home were a year round activity, with slight peaks in the spring and autumn. East Anglia appears to be the most popular destination for inland water use, and Northumbria the least popular, although with regional disaggregation, the reliability of the data diminishes.

3.3.2 From the UKDVS, around three quarters of all inland water-based trips are by adults only, with lone adults comprising the single largest group of participants. From other surveys it is likely that these are young adults (over half of all active participants are under 35, Coalter and MacGregor 1998), for whom participation begins to decline with the arrival of the family (Mintel 1998). The West Country Tourist Board (1992) estimates that people without children under 15 are three times more likely to have taken an activity holiday than people of a similar age with children. It should be noted that within this overall picture there are likely to be significant gender, ethnicity and age differences between individual water sport and recreation activities.

3.3.3 From the 1998 UKDVS survey, some 55% of users of inland water are male and 45% female. Coalter and MacGregor (1998) and Anderson (1994) suggest that of regular active users of the water itself, the gender imbalance is likely to be greater than this. Between them, they estimate that approximately 75% of regular, dedicated water sports participants are male. It is likely, however, that a higher percentage of occasional participants are women (Coalter and MacGregor 1998).

3.3.4 The data provided by the Sports Council for Wales in Table 3.1 produce similar findings. 5.5% of male adults had participated during the previous four weeks in at least one of seven water based activities. The participation figure for female adults was only 0.8%. There were also differences by age with a participation figure of 5.6% recorded for 15-24 age group compared to 2.0% in the 55-64 age group.

3.3.5 Well known participation differences by gender also exist amongst young people. A 1999 Sport England survey revealed that 10% of boys aged 6 to 16 had participated in angling at least 10 times in the previous year compared to 2% of girls (Sport England 2001b).

3.3.6 In the questionnaire of clubs, of the 205 clubs who were able to give a gender breakdown of their membership (c. 50 000 members), 73% were male, 11% were female and 16% were juniors. In respect of age distributions of club membership, 25% were under 18 and 13% over 60. In the focus groups it was considered that participation appeared to fall off almost totally amongst those over 60 years of age, even when people had been previously recreationally active on water. Many older people had never learnt to swim and were commonly afraid of water. Males over the age of 18 and under 35, in contrast, were felt to be the most active group. The stakeholders also suggested that those active in water sports were ageing, leading to a longer-term structural decline in participation.

3.3.7 Various measures of social group were deployed in the UKDVS survey but, in summary, 63% of inland water users were in social groups A, B and C1. Coalter and MacGregor (1998) and Anderson (1997) also concluded that water sports participants predominantly came from the professional and managerial groups. More than two thirds of participants in their studies were in social groups A, B and C1. These social
groups comprise 48% of the population of Great Britain (Market Research Society, 1999). More than twice as many people in social groups A and B compared to those in social group E have experience of water sports. Peak penetration for interest occurs in the C1 group (Mintel 1998). Participation in inland water-based recreation in Great Britain is therefore skewed towards males and higher social groups.

3.3.8 Similar conclusions can be drawn from the data provided by the Sports Council for Wales in Table 3.1. This indicates that 3.3% of adults in social classes A and B had taken part in the previous four weeks in at least one of seven water-based activities compared to 1.9% for social group E. Participation was highest in the C2 group at 3.8%.

3.4 Consumption trends

3.4.1 Mintel (1998) suggests that the level of water sports participation overall (including coastal as well as inland water use) has remained static since 1995. This is supported by a Scottish Sports Council desk survey of water sports participation on Scottish inland waters (Coalter and MacGregor 1998). Data provided for this study by the Sports Council for Wales for the years between 1988/9 to 1997/8 reveal a similar trend. The data in each year indicates that between 3% and 4% of adults aged over 15 claimed to have participated in the last 4 weeks in at least one of seven water-based activities (canoeing, angling, rowing, sub-aqua, surfing, windsurfing and sailing). Others have suggested that there is a gradual increase in casual participation, which is not reflected in competitive water sports, whereas numbers of people competing at clubs and national level has declined overall (Anderson et al. 1997). Certainly, it is most likely to be the case that some individual water sports have remained static whilst others have increased or declined. Mintel (1998), for example, have provided estimates for this, presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 - Participation estimates for a range of water sports in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club members</th>
<th>Regulars</th>
<th>Occasional</th>
<th>Trends over time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinghy sailing</td>
<td>87 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>640 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-skiing</td>
<td>9 000</td>
<td>80-100 000</td>
<td>400 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>35 000</td>
<td>100 000</td>
<td>500-1 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1 500 000</td>
<td>3 000 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mintel 1998

3.4.2 A recent assessment of participation projections in watersports (which includes swimming) by Sport England (2001) suggests that overall participation rates will fall from 21% to 19.1% of the total population undertaking at least one water-based activity a month, between 1996 and 2026. The questionnaire of clubs was more neutral in respect of future trends. More than half of club memberships had remained constant over the previous two years with the remainder being split equally between those where memberships had risen and those where it had fallen. In terms of demand over the next three years, half of the questionnaire respondents articulated a need for new water space but this invariably was to improve the quality of the experience and reduce conflicts rather than to cater for increased consumption (see chapter 6).

3.4.3 The expert groups overall felt that there was unlikely to be any significant future growth in water-based recreation consumption. Decline in some water sports was noted. Sailing facilities in Wales (for example) were considered to be generally lightly used. To the extent that there will be any new consumption, expert groups felt it was likely to be concentrated in particular geographical areas and may stem from newly-developed features such as gravel pits, where “supply will create its own demand”.

3.5 Disability and social inclusion

3.5.1 Whilst there is little systematic information at the national level in relation to water use, disability and social inclusion, the Sport England (2001b) survey of young disabled
people does note that of all sports undertaken frequently out of school by children and young people, swimming (including diving and life saving) is the most popular and fishing was the least popular of 20 activities articulated. These were the only two of the 20 activities that can be associated with water use. The survey suggested 2% of young disabled people had participated in fishing 10 or more times in the previous year compared to 5% of all young people.

3.5.2 The Sport England survey considered the barriers to participation in sport by young disabled people. A significant proportion (37%) of the 2 300 young people surveyed felt they were limited by their health or disability. Lack of money, problems with transport and dependence on others were also major barriers. 19% of the sample claimed that the inhibition or discrimination from the general public was one reason for not participating in more sport. The survey also asked the main reason for not participating in sport in the last 12 months and 18% of the sample identified a lack of disabled sports facilities (Sport England 2000). Evidence on the nature of provision of disabled sports facilities for outdoor water-based provision is very limited. From the questionnaire of clubs just under one third of clubs (30%) have facilities for those with impairment but no information was forthcoming in respect of the extent of use of these facilities. This issue is discussed in more detail in future chapters but evidence presented in chapter 4 suggests that in one guidebook covering 4 500 fisheries, 9% are identified as having facilities for disabled people.

3.5.3 In respect of social inclusion, Slee et al. (2001) suggest that care must be taken for countryside recreation generally not to confuse exclusion from a more general preference not to participate. In this respect, barriers to participation (see section 3.7 below) must be examined with great care to identify whether they are circumstantial or self imposed.

3.5.4 The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee (2001) concluded that there were no barriers to participation in water-based recreation specific to those living in areas of acute social and economic deprivation, and no specific barriers to use of the waterways and banksides in relation to ethnic composition. Such barriers as exist pertain to the whole population and not just the socially excluded. Some interviewees from stakeholder organisations questioned this view arguing that whilst barriers effect many groups of people, many members of ethnic minority groups are more likely to experience these barriers on a regular basis.

3.5.5 Furthermore, a Sport England (2000) survey of sports participation by ethnicity revealed that participation levels and barriers to participation vary quite markedly between ethnic minority groups. For example national participation rates of 39% for women were matched by Black Other (45%) and Chinese (39%) women but Indian (31%) and Bangladeshis (19%) had lower participation rates. In the Sport England survey, swimming was the only water-based activity for which data were obtained. Swimming had a lower popularity ranking in terms of participation amongst ethnic minority groups than amongst the population as a whole. Levels of participation in the last four weeks rank swimming the second most ‘popular’ sport behind walking amongst the population as a whole. For ethnic minority groups it is ranked much lower. It is seventh in the case of the Black Caribbean population and sixth for Black Africans. The lack of data in the survey on any other water sports was in part determined by very low levels of participation in other water sports by the sample of 3000 adults from ethnic minority groups. The report notes that angling is one of a group of sports where more than 1% of the population as a whole take part but where none of the 8 ethnic groups covered by the survey have more than 1% of the sample taking part (Sport England 2000).

3.5.6 The expert groups felt that social inclusion was inherently important. They felt that it was important for social inclusion (along with environmental priorities and alternative transport modes) to be included in applications for funding for new water-based sport and recreation facilities. The groups also felt, however, that the limited evidence available suggested the degree of social exclusion from sporting activities varied by
sport and recreational activity. The focus groups were clearer cut, arguing that a variety of types of water-based clubs were perceived of as ‘snobbish’, ‘elitist’ and ‘unwelcoming’. This view was strongly articulated by male members of ethnic minority groups in Birmingham and Leicester. For many women, water-based sport clubs were usually seen as very male oriented.

3.5.7 The expert groups also felt social inclusion has become an important issue in determining attitudes towards the provision of new water based facilities. Arguments that new provision should be linked to demand are now recognised as too limited. Some expert group members claimed that new provision maybe justified by its ability to create new demand amongst those experiencing social inclusion who then benefit in a variety of ways from involvement in sport.

3.6 The relative popularity of different water-based sport and recreation

3.6.1 In general terms, a study by MRSL (1997) for the Environment Agency and British Waterways estimated that the principal water sports (excluding swimming and fishing) in order of popularity were sailing, power boating, board sailing, canoeing, rowing, water-skiing, and jet-skiing. In addition, there is much use of inland waters by pleasure craft serving both holidaymakers and day visitors. In 1996, the Environment Agency issued 21,000 licences for powered watercraft and 16,000 for unpowered craft. British Waterways issued 29,000 licences for powered craft and 500 for unpowered craft (excluding those issued to the British Canoe Union) (MRSL 1999).

3.6.2 In respect of these general preferences for different types of water activity, there was a preference in the focus groups amongst the young in particular for more ‘intensive’ and, as they themselves characterised them, extreme sports such as jet-skiing and scuba diving. This desire is rarely translated into demand because of constraints such as costs and the need for training. Across the focus groups overall, however, an interest was expressed in most available types of water activity. If there was a common theme in respect of type of activity, it was for that which could be closely managed in a controlled environment, such as a gravel pit, where new skills could be learnt in comparative safety.

3.6.3 The relative popularity of individual water activities was widely considered in all of the empirical elements of this research. The pre-focus group questionnaire, for example, was completed by over 150 group members and suggested that in terms of recent participation coarse fishing was the most popular water-based recreation activity with dragon boating, water-skiing and scuba diving being the least popular. The focus groups themselves expressed the importance of the instrumental value of water – it was attractive to walk and picnic beside rather than necessarily use per se. For focus group members who were disabled, in particular, proximity to water had a significant value in itself.

3.6.4 Stakeholders generally acknowledged that national data (the UKDVS) were the principal source of information for them on overall participation. Information about individual types of activity was more anecdotal but organisations themselves were able to provide a view on whether their activity was generally static, growing, or in decline. The remainder of this section examines a range of activities in these groups, drawing from both the empirical surveys and secondary information.

3.7 Sport and recreation types - Static participation

3.7.1 Sub aqua was considered by stakeholders to have levelled off (at around 200,000 active participants) although British Sub Aqua Club membership has declined nearly 20% since 1995. Membership of the British Triathlon Association is also felt to be stable at 4,500, after an earlier period of growth. Similarly after growth from the formation of the Dragon Boat Association in 1987 active participation in this sport also levelled off in the late 1990s. Membership of the British Long Distance Swimming Association is described as stable at around 450.
3.7.2 Private boat cruising and narrow boating also was felt to be static by the stakeholders. There has been a growth in boat purchases but a decline in the hire market. It is estimated that there are more than 2 million privately owned boats in the UK (embracing all types of craft including inflatables), and a third of all leisure cruising takes place on inland waterways (House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and R egional Affairs 2001). There are approximately 100 000 licensed boats on inland waterways, with a holiday hire-boat industry comprising a further 3 000 craft. The hire fleet attracts approximately 250 000 customers per annum, 10% of whom are from abroad. The hire fleet customers contribute more than £ 40 million to local economies (DETR 2000). Within an overall static situation for cruising, canal cruising is growing if measured by the number of privately owned boats on the British Waterways system but canal hire boating is, at best, static (BWB 2001). Membership of the Dutch Barge Association, a particular type of private boat cruising, has expanded considerably in recent years, although it still has fewer than 1000 members.

3.7.3 Changes in the use of watersides over time is harder to determine but the RSPB for example, estimate that the number of bird watchers in England and Wales (around 250000) is likely to be static.

3.8 Sport and recreation types - Declining participation

3.8.1 Despite angling being the water-based activity with the highest levels of participation, evidence on changing levels of participation is unclear and suggests a static or slightly declining trend. Data provided for this project by the Sports Council for Wales suggest a static picture between 1988 and 1997 with around 2% of the adult population aged over 15 participating on a regular basis. Stakeholder interviews, however, suggest some forms of angling club memberships and sales of rod licences have declined recently. Some clubs have given up water because of underuse. For game fishing the decline is far less marked and in some areas commercial fishing has grown. Some stakeholders felt canal fishing has declined in the last ten years.

3.8.2 Fishing is of three generic types: sea, coarse and game. In 1995/6, approximately 1 million coarse fishing licences and 34 000 game licences were sold in England (Environment Agency 1997). However, other data suggest that the total number of anglers far exceeds the number of licences sold. The National Rivers Authority (1995) estimated that 2.9 million people had gone fishing in England and Wales in 1994, a drop of some 1 million since 1980. In 1997, there were estimated to be 1 630 000 coarse anglers, 750 000 sea anglers and 570 000 game anglers in England and Wales (Cobham Resource Consultants 1997). A number of these anglers, however, participated in more than one type of fishing. The National Rivers Authority (1995) estimated that 79% of anglers participated in coarse fishing, 38% in sea fishing and 29% in game fishing. Clearly, overall these people make use of sea as well as inland water fishing.

3.8.3 The National Rivers Authority (1995) survey for 1994 estimated that there were overall some 3.3 million anglers aged over 12 in Great Britain, where an angler was defined as anyone who had been fishing in the previous 2 years. This represents 7.2% of the population aged over 12. Since the 1980s, there was considered to be a decline in sea angling, but no trend conclusions were drawn about coarse and game anglers on inland waters in this survey. Moon and Souter (1995) concluded that there were 20% fewer households with anglers in 1994 than in 1980. There were considerable variations in the household angling population by region in the NRA study, from 9% of households in the Thames Region to 15% in the Southern Region.

3.8.4 NOP conducted an angling survey in 1994 (Moon and Souter 1995), which suggested that just over 50% of anglers were members of an angling club and a further 20% had previously been a member. This represented a marked increase in club membership.
since the previous 1980 survey. The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review (MAFF 2000) cite this survey in estimating that in 1994 there were 2.3 million coarse anglers (people who had fished during the previous two years) and 0.8 million game anglers in England and Wales. However, another survey by Cobham Resource Consultants (1997) suggested that the number of anglers declined by about 15% between 1992 and 1997.

3.8.5 Data held by the National Angling Alliance and the Association of Still Water Game Fishery Managers suggest that the number of stocked still water fisheries increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s. More recently, however, some commercial still water fisheries have been closing. Stakeholders suggested this recent decline in still water fisheries was partly caused by time constraints on anglers but also the growing sophistication of some game anglers who increasingly prefer the challenge of river to still water. Nevertheless, well-stocked still water fisheries containing large carp were still very popular.

3.8.6 There were an estimated 640 000 board sailors or windsurfers in 1991 (Leisure Consultants 1991) making use of both coastal and inland waters. Board sailing enjoyed significant increases in the 1980s and declined steadily through the late 1980s with a small resurgence in the early 1990s. Mintel (1998) reported a slight reduction in board sailing in the United Kingdom between 1991 and 1995. In Scotland a decline is reported between 1995 and 1997 (Coalter and MacGregor 1998). The overall decline in board sailing may indicate a maturing and consolidation of the market, with a higher proportion of expert windsurfers and a reduction in casual participation. However there are fewer elite young windsurf racers nationally than in the late 1980s (Coalter and MacGregor, 1998). A new type of short but high volume board came on to the market in 2001 and this may stimulate demand by making windsurfing easier for beginners. The stakeholders agreed with this notion of declining participation in windsurfing, although many felt that such a notion was hard to measure, as windsurfing is highly non-affiliated.

3.8.7 Powered boat sport participation (power boats and personal watercraft) involving inland waters was believed by stakeholders to be declining slightly as a result of increased regulation.

3.9 Sport and recreation types - Growing participation.

3.9.1 In its stakeholder interview, the BCU speculated that participation in informal canoeing is growing. It estimates there are 100 000 boat-owning paddlers in UK who could be said to be regular canoeists. There has been an increase in the number of certificates issued for canoeing and increased equipment sales. In addition the BCU estimates that there are between 0.5 million and 1 million people who ‘have a go’ every year. The Environment Agency (1997) believes that, overall, more than 1 million people canoe each year.

3.9.2 Despite this growth in informal activity, membership of canoe clubs has declined in the last couple of years. The BCU is uncertain as to whether this is a dip or longer trend. The BCU has 20 000 members and 15 000 affiliated through clubs. There has been a steady increase in BCU membership over the last 30 years and a slow fall in numbers of clubs since the mid 1980s. The BCU, through its latest Development Plan 1997-2001, has invested resources to make clubs more accessible by young people. By ensuring boats and equipment are made available to young people and by setting up some new clubs they are confident more young people will be attracted into the sport. There are 10 000 registered instructors (10% drop out every year replaced by 10% who are newly registered).

3.9.3 The Amateur Rowing Association estimate from club membership data that rowing participation has grown by 2-3% per year over the last five years.

3.9.4 According to anecdotal evidence, participation in ‘have a go’ and ‘pay and play’ is also
increasing for a number of sports. Participation in water-based sport and recreation by disabled people is believed to be increasing according to anecdotal evidence from stakeholders.

3.9.5 There is also evidence from stakeholders that dinghy sailing is growing in popularity. The Royal Yachting Association had approximately 90,000 members in 2001. Despite a 33% increase in subscriptions (to fund computerisation), membership was higher than in the previous year. Membership has risen every year for the last 20 years. The expected attrition rate in 2000 was between 7,000 and 9,000 members. Within the various classes of dinghy, participation in the more traditional classes is declining whilst participation in the new Asymmetric classes is increasing. The mass middle market has remained static for some time although it is felt that in the longer term this might decline as a result of the ageing of current participants. There are no data available to determine the extent to which different sailing participants use inland waters or tidal waters.

3.9.6 Estimates of participation in water-skiing vary from 70,000-80,000 (O'Dell 1999) to 100,000 (BMIF 1997) making use of both inland and coastal waters. In addition O'Dell (1999) suggests up to 400,000 people may 'have ago' each year. The British Water-ski Federation had 9,600 members in 2001, up from 9,000 in 1990. Wake boarding has recently become popular with young people and newcomers (in a similar way that snow boarding expanded alongside skiing). Another innovation is knee boarding, which has a lower skill threshold than water-skiing. Again there is conflicting evidence on the future outlook for the sport. The Scottish desk-based study suggested that there was little evidence of an overall increase in water-skiing (Coalter and MacGregor 1998) but evidence from Mintel (1998) is that, in terms of activity holidays, there is growing interest in water-skiing. There is significant interest from young people in water-skiing as a sport they might take up in the future (Anderson 1996). Most water-based sports have developed initiatives to encourage participation amongst the young. For example, the Royal yachting Association Champion Clubs and youth Training initiative aims to attract young people into sailing and then provide a clear training progression programme up to Olympic Standard. This was seen by some non-yachting stakeholders as a successful use of Sports lottery money since it caters for the complete ability range and also aims to be socially inclusive. Other well-developed youth training initiatives include the Amateur Rowing Association's 'Project Oarsome' and the Salmon and Trout Association courses to introduce young people to fly fishing.

3.9.7 All of these patterns in relation to growing, declining or static consumption might well be geographically uneven, with growth more likely in the south east because of growing populations. Overall, however, the perception amongst stakeholders and expert groups is one of decline rather than growth in most water uses. To some degree, clubs have responded to this by attempting to broaden the social and age base of membership.

3.9.8 From the questionnaire of clubs some variations in club memberships between different activities could be discerned. Canoeing (+8.9%) rowing (+3.6%) and dragon boating (+0.3%) have all experienced a positive increase in membership, while angling showed the largest overall decrease in activity - down by 1.7%. Water-skiing and sailing showed falls of 1% and 1.3% respectively, while sub aqua showed a fall of 1.2%. Five activities have shown no overall change in membership (cruising, motor boating, outdoor centres, small boats and triathlon). These figures seem to confirm the flattening out of participation in many water sports identified by stakeholders. Overall, 81% of respondents reported that membership fluctuation has had little effect on access to either sites or facilities.

3.10 Evidence of latent demand

3.10.1 There is little evidence in any of the secondary literature to support the existence of widespread unmet demand for inland water sport and recreation. This is not to deny
the existence of pockets of unmet demand, such as for access for boats to popular inland waterways in southern England. Where this does exist, the Environment Agency (1997) in its study of the Southern region attributes unmet demand to the lack of accessibility:

"The general shortage of inland river canoeing is due mainly to the limited areas of public right of navigation even where waters are suitable for canoes and that riparian owners in the Region have traditionally leased their river banks and fishing rights to anglers. However there may be opportunities for canoeists to use these stretches during angling close seasons or even on certain days of the week. Such arrangements exist in other Agency regions ..." (p49)

3.10.2 From the focus groups, the likelihood of participation in water based recreation is strongly influenced by the extent of parental involvement and the extent to which it was taught at school or in higher education. Lesser influences are friends and childhood holidays. Clearly, these kinds of influence will impact upon the propensity to consume water-based recreation in the future. Stakeholder interviews produced contrasting views on the effects of recent changes in schools on the future of water-based sport and recreation. Over the last twenty years it was claimed many more schools were seeking to teach children to swim. More negatively, it was felt that curriculum pressures, resource shortages and safety concerns meant that in many parts of the country there was a reluctance in schools to encourage outdoor education activities involving water-based sport and recreation. On this issue the Sport England (2001b) survey of young people with a disability and sport reports a “glimmer of hope” that participation in school organised outdoor activity holidays was higher for young disabled people (18%) compared to the population of young people as a whole.

3.10.3 There was also explicit evidence from the focus groups of the existence of latent demand. This pertained largely to the fact that if information about where to go and what to do was better, more participation might follow. Certainty and security were important elements of this information, particularly for women. Some in the groups felt that they would become more active simply because awareness had been raised within the focus group itself. Some suggested that an improvement in the quality and safety of inland water facilities also might trigger additional participation. Overall, however, even with such changes, little additional participation on the ground was expected. Because of this, aggressive marketing would be required to shift participation to any noticeable extent.

3.10.4 The Sport England (2000) survey of sport participation and ethnicity also produces evidence of latent demand but only indirectly relating to outdoor water sports. A large proportion of the ethnic minority respondents said they would like to take up a further sport. The proportion ranged from 81% for the Black Other group to 51% amongst Bangladeshi people. The study found that swimming had the highest levels of "frustrated demand" with 21% of ethnic minority women and 13% of men saying they did not participate but would like to in future.

3.11 Barriers and constraints to participation

3.11.1 In discussing participation it is necessary to distinguish between barriers effecting non-participants and constraints which limit the existing user. Given that most people from the focus groups felt that there was no real shortage of available space for water recreation, barriers to participation consequently were unevenly articulated tending to vary by age and gender.

3.11.2 In focus groups where constraints were noted, they related largely to the quality of facilities (including pollution, water quality, overcrowding and the cold climate for much of the year) and their proximity to home. The perceived ‘exclusive’ nature of some clubs also inhibited some participation, especially by the young, as did cost and safety considerations. The cost of equipment purchase was considered more of a constraint to participation than an entry fee. Lack of time and experience were other barriers articulated in the focus groups but with less frequency than the quality of
facilities. Time was seen as a growing barrier as work and family life became more pressured, especially for female focus group members.

3.11.3 Similar barriers have emerged in Sport England surveys of participation amongst particular social groups. The barriers preventing young disabled people from taking part in sport were discussed above in section 3.5 but included health/disability, money, transport, dependence on others and a lack of facilities. In the study of ethnicity and sports participation domestic responsibilities, work, lack of local facilities, cost and laziness/embarrassment were the reasons most often given for not taking part on further sport. The report notes that after domestic responsibilities a “lack of unsuitable local facilities ranks for most ethnic groups as the second most frequently cited reason preventing women from taking part in sport” (Sport England 2000). These findings did not relate specifically to water-based sport and recreation but indicate that even when improved facilities are provided there are a range of other barriers that may prevent use by disabled people and certain members of ethnic groups.

3.11.4 Non-participants can be introduced to a sport through casual use. Past studies identified a number of barriers to casual activity. Multiple water use conflicts can deter participation, particularly amongst casual users (BMIF 1997). A significant number of infrastructure requirements (such as slipways and other launching points, wind, water depth and so on) also limit casual participation (Anderson 1997).

3.11.5 The expert groups and stakeholders also highlighted a number of constraints on existing participation. A range of regulatory frameworks (health and safety, qualified instructors, the vetting of instructors, changes to rateable values for club houses and licensing) were seen as a constraint on the use of existing water spaces but their effects varied between activities. A number of stakeholders felt that owners of water, especially water companies, were increasingly reluctant to allow users to regulate safety. Also some expert group members noted it was hard for some clubs to maintain health and safety standards in the light of rising levels of casual non-club member use of water.

3.11.6 Stakeholders saw the planning system in rural areas as restricting the development of moorings, slipways and marinas, especially where they could conflict with green belt policies. Negative reactions to suggested new moorings also tended to occur most often in the South East region. In urban areas the planning system was seen as less of a constraint. Some stakeholders suggested there was anecdotal evidence that waterfront redevelopment had supported the development of new moorings and slipways. Equally, other stakeholders claimed that waterfront redevelopment can displace sporting activities. Loss of tenure as a result of leases coming to an end was considered to be a significant threat to a number of private clubs with bank side facilities. Stakeholders tended to argue that the impacts of waterfront development on sport and recreation facilities tended to vary according to whether new development was on rivers, canals, enclosed waters or estuaries, but the negative effects tended to greatest on certain key stretches of urban river in the South East.

3.11.7 In the questionnaire of clubs, a number of clubs considered the need for, and relative lack of availability of, qualified training represented a significant constraint on active participation. The quality of the facilities at the club house (particularly storage) and environmental designations were also seen as a barrier to participation (see chapter 7).

3.12 Travel and Transport

3.12.1 In the 1998 UKDVS, the majority of visits to inland water were local (over 60% of all visits were to destinations less than 5 miles from home), possibly because of two principal factors. First, the most active inland water recreationists might be those who live closest to the available water resource. Second, those travelling further to take part in water-based recreation may well stay away from home overnight, and so would not be picked up in the UKDVS. Reflecting this ‘localness’, 45% of visits to inland water from home were on foot. A further 7% of visits were by bicycle. Thus more than half
of all trips from home to inland waters were by non-motorised transport. (Nearly 45% were by car). Some 13% of those identified as using water for recreation purposes in the UKDVS did not have access to a car.

3.12.2 The results from stakeholder interviews revealed some contrasting trends in travel patterns. For most water-based sports the most serious participants tend to travel long distances. These journeys are unlikely to be significantly affected by more local provision. By contrast, stakeholders claim that novices and irregular ‘have a go’ participants in rowing, sailing, canoeing and diving are keen to limit travel distances and desire water spaces close to home.

3.12.3 From the focus group questionnaire, most journeys for water-based recreation were undertaken by car, were between 0 and 10 miles, and lasted up to half an hour. However, a large proportion of journeys were on foot or bicycle, were between 0 and 5 miles and lasted up to 15 minutes. In the focus groups, it emerged that the need to travel to many water facilities by car severely limited access by young people. Even young people who could gain access to a car felt restricted by a lack of car parking or the need to pay for parking. Disabled young people were found in a Sport England Survey (2001b) to be particularly constrained in sport participation by dependence on others for transport and this point was made strongly by disabled members of the focus groups.

3.12.4 In the questionnaire of clubs, the majority of clubs claimed that the vast majority of members (88%) use the car as the main means of travel, both to the club and for reaching venues outside their local area. 4% of members are transported by minibus or private coach, 4% reach the sites on foot and 2% by bicycle. The train and scheduled bus services each transport a further 1%. The dominance of car journeys differs to the result of UKDVS, but this reflects the questionnaire’s coverage of more regular, rather than casual, participants. Most journeys (40%) to rivers and water spaces by club members were averaging 15-30 minutes (one-way), although there is also a large contingent (30%) who take 30-60 minutes to reach their destination and 18% take one hour or more. Just 13% of journeys were to very local destinations, taking up to 15 minutes.

3.13 Summary

3.13.1 Best estimates suggest that around 6% of the adult population indulge in day visits for inland water-based recreation in any one year, and a further 6% make day visits to inland waters without using them directly. Regular participation in outdoor water-based sport and recreation involves approximately 3% of the adult population. Whilst members of water-based sport and recreation clubs are regular participants, the unaffiliated tend to be only occasional consumers because of the time commitment that water recreation is perceived to require. Relative to the population as a whole, active participants are more likely to be male and from a higher social or occupational group. Swimming, usually indoors, is a popular sport amongst young disabled people but is an activity with a high level of ‘frustrated demand’ amongst some ethnic groups (Sport England 2000 and 2001b). Participation levels in other water-based sports and activities by ethnic groups and young disabled people appear to be below the levels for the population as a whole.

3.13.2 There is little evidence from any of the surveys conducted as part of this study that aggregate water-based consumption will increase markedly into the future. Indeed Sport England predicts that because of age-related changes in the population overall participation levels may fall slightly by 2026. Any increases are likely to be localised and possibly linked to new supply.

3.13.3 The most popular water-based recreation activity is coarse fishing, although this is considered to be in decline. Data for game fishing suggest participation is either stable or in slight decline. Windsurfing and power boating also are considered to be becoming less popular. In contrast, informal canoeing, rowing, dingy sailing and
water-skiing are felt to be becoming more popular whilst sub-aqua, cruising and narrow boating and the use of watersides are considered generally to be static.

3.13.4 There is little evidence of any appreciable latent demand for any type of water-based recreation although, as far as the lay public is concerned, better information, increased safety and a sense of security might encourage more participation. Some groups of people, especially the young, have a desire to participate in certain ‘high octane’ water-based activities such as jet-skiing but this is rarely translated into actual latent demand because of other constraints such as time and money. Conflicts between users, the restrictions imposed by environmental designations and the impact of over-regulation deter participation. Improvements in the quality of facilities might generate more participation. Whilst regular users are very car dependent and will travel long distances for water recreation, causal users require facilities much closer to home.
4 The water sport and recreation resource

4.1 The inland water resource - canals and rivers

4.1.1 This chapter assesses the scale, location and nature of the inland water resource in England and Wales. The main source of data used in the chapter is the GDSS. Analysis generated by the GDSS is also supplemented by information from stakeholder interviews, expert panels and the findings of previous studies. Section 1.7 Table 1.1 defines the different types of inland waters.

4.1.2 Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 indicate the lengths of inland canals, major and minor rivers in England and Wales. The GDSS analysis focused on the 17 705km major rivers and 2 361km canals, which together constitute 30% of the inland linear water resource in England and Wales.

Table 4.1 Inland water resource: rivers and canal lengths (km)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Major rivers</th>
<th>Canals</th>
<th>Minor rivers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14 862</td>
<td>2 307</td>
<td>42 740</td>
<td>59 909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>2 843</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7 865</td>
<td>10 762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>17 705</td>
<td>2 361</td>
<td>50 605</td>
<td>70 671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

4.1.3 Table 4.2 shows the lengths of rivers with public navigation rights and canals available for navigation in England and Wales. This mirrors the finding of ‘Waterways of Tomorrow’ (DETR 2000) which estimated there are about 4 700 km fully navigable non-tidal inland waterways. Canals account for a little over half of the available public navigations in England and Wales, which are shown in total in Figure 4.2. The footnote to Table 4.2 indicates that three river sections available for public navigation are excluded mainly because navigation is only possible by small craft such as canoes. These three river sections with navigations total 138km (see Section 1.7, Table 1.1 for a further discussion).

Table 4.2 Inland water resource: rivers with public navigation rights and canals (km)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canals</th>
<th>Rivers with public navigation rights*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2 307</td>
<td>2 001</td>
<td>4 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>2 361</td>
<td>2 179</td>
<td>4 540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS *excludes 138km of navigation on the upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn navigable only by small craft

4.1.4 The total length figure for available navigations on rivers and canals in England and Wales in Table 4.2 is 4 540km and this represents 23% of the major river and canal network and 6% of the canal, major and minor river network.

4.1.5 Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 show for major rivers, canals and rivers with public navigation rights the length in each region as a percentage of the total for England and Wales. The data show that the regions with the highest percentages of major river lengths are Wales, the South East and the South West, while the North West and East Anglia have the lowest. The North West and West Midlands regions have the highest percentage of canal lengths, together accounting for 52% of the total England and Wales canal network. Both these regions have a relatively small percentage of rivers with public navigation rights. East Anglia has less than 1% of the total canal navigations in England and Wales, but it has a high percentage of rivers with public navigation rights, accounting for 28% of the total for England and Wales. The relatively low percentage of rivers with public navigation rights in Wales (8%) is based on the total figure of 178km shown in Table 4.2. This percentage would increase to 13% if the calculations included the 138km of navigations for small craft on the Upper Wye, Lugg and Upper Severn. These regional percentages in part reflect the differing land sizes and physical characteristics of the regions.
Figure 4.1. The inland water resource: canals, enclosed waters (1ha or more), major and minor rivers.
Figure 4.2. Rivers with public navigation rights and current canal network

*Note: Map includes river navigations and canals (excludes upper Wear, Lune and upper Severn in unclassified navigable by a small craft)*
Figure 4.3. Inland water resource: % of major river lengths by region (total England and Wales 17 705km)

- East Anglia: 8%
- East Midlands: 11%
- North: 10%
- North West: 11%
- South East: 11%
- South West: 4%
- South East: 14%
- South West: 16%
- West Midlands: 10%
- Yorks & Humberside: 10%
- Wales: 14%

Figure 4.4. Inland water resource: % of canal lengths by region. (total England and Wales 2 361km)

- East Anglia: 2%
- East Midlands: 13%
- North: 1%
- North West: 24%
- South East: 14%
- South West: 6%
- West Midlands: 28%
- Yorks & Humberside: 11%
- Wales: 2%

Figure 4.5. Inland water resource: % of length of rivers with public navigation rights by region (total England and Wales 2 179km. Excludes 138km of upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn used only by canoes)

- East Anglia: 12%
- East Midlands: 28%
- North: 5%
- North West: 10%
- South East: 20%
- South West: 28%
- West Midlands: 0%
- Yorks & Humberside: 8%
- Wales: 2%
4.1.6 Many water-based sports and recreation activities either need or benefit from inland waters available for navigation. The total lengths of rivers and canals available for public navigation are shown by region in Table 4.3. This suggests there are relatively small lengths of navigation in the North, the South West and Wales, and the longest lengths in the West Midlands and South East. The West Midlands has the highest length of canals available for navigation, accounting for 28% of the total for England and Wales but only 5% of the rivers with public navigation rights. Table 4.3 also compares the supply of canals and rivers available for navigation with potential regional demand as measured by population levels. In the South East there is a large total supply of rivers and canals available for navigation but the high population levels result in a figure of 0.4km of available navigations per 10 000 population, which is half the figure for England and Wales. Clearly, the lack of available navigations in the North leads to a low supply per head. The figure per 10 000 population in Table 4.3 is also low in Wales and the South West. In Wales the figure would rise to 1.2km per 10 000 population if the three rivers mentioned in the footnote to the Table were included in calculations as available navigations.

Table 4.3. Inland water resource: combined lengths (km) of rivers with public navigation rights and canals by region per head of population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population 10 000s (1997)</th>
<th>Total length of rivers with public navigation rights and canals*</th>
<th>Length per 10 000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>216.2</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>415.6</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N orth</td>
<td>308.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N orth West</td>
<td>639.3</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>1825.3</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>487.6</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>532.1</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>503.7</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>4928.3</td>
<td>4308</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>292.7</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>5221.0</td>
<td>4540</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS *excludes 138km of navigation on the upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn navigable only by small craft.

4.2 The inland water resource - enclosed waters

4.2.1 Table 4.4 and Figure 4.6 indicate by region the numbers and area of the enclosed water resource of England and Wales. The data highlight the large number and area of enclosed waters in the South East, which is especially marked when compared to the South West. The large areas covered by enclosed waters in the North and Wales reflect the presence of large-sized lakes and reservoirs, which also shows in the high mean areas for enclosed waters in these regions.

4.2.2 Table 4.4 also shows the significance of the supply of enclosed waters in relation to population. It indicates that there are nearly three times as many enclosed waters per 10 000 people in Wales than for England and Wales as a whole, but many of these Welsh enclosed waters are geographically remote. The high figures for areas of enclosed water per 10 000 people in Wales and the N orth reflects the size of the lakes in these regions, as identified above. The supply of lakes per 10 000 people is lowest in the East and West Midlands and the South East and South West, but they are only marginally below the mean value for England and Wales.
Table 4.4. Inland water resource: enclosed waters (1 ha or more) by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>Total area (ha)</th>
<th>Mean area (ha)</th>
<th>Population 10 000s (1997)</th>
<th>Area of enclosed waters per 10 000 people</th>
<th>Number of enclosed waters per 10 000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>3 336</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>216.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>7 059</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>415.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>10 237</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>308.6</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3 307</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>639.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>9 481</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1825.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4 199</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>487.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2805</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>532.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; H’side</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>4 196</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>503.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1 720</td>
<td>44 171</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4928.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>8 280</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>292.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>1 982</td>
<td>52 451</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5221.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

Figure 4.6. Inland water resource: % of length of rivers with public navigation rights by region

4.2.3 Recent evidence on enclosed waters smaller than one hectare in size suggests that they're use for water-based sport and recreation is mainly confined to angling. The Lowland Ponds Survey (Pond Action and ITE 1996) conducted in 1996 on behalf of DETR identified 230 000 lowland ponds in England and Wales that were smaller than one hectare in size. Approximately one in seven ponds were used for leisure activities with angling and shooting being the most popular amenity use.

4.3 The inland water resource - launching and mooring facilities

4.3.1 Many water sports require a range of facilities for launching, storage, training, changing, refreshments and social activities. This report is more concerned with the availability and use of water rather than land-based facilities. However, some useful data on facilities were obtained and analysed using the GDSS. Furthermore, the responses in the stakeholder interviews and focus groups provide some useful insights into the role of facilities, which can be compared with the findings of previous studies.

4.3.2 River and canal launching sites for boats were a particular focus of attention since they are fundamental to many water sports and recreational activities. Launch sites are used
by a variety of sports to access inland water and for craft-based activities they provide
the practical means for getting afloat. For larger craft, such as yachts and power boats,
moorings, boat yards and marinas are necessary. For trailered craft such as dinghies
slipways are essential. Rowing requires river bank launch sites that can accommodate
lengthy boats and outriggers. For smaller, portable craft such as windsurfers and
canoes, beaches and riversides can be sufficient. The number of launch sites for larger
craft available at public slipways, marinas and boatyards on the canal and major river
navigation network identified by various published guides were entered into the
GDSS. The regional breakdown for these sites is shown in Table 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of launch sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

4.3.3 The total of 533 sites in table 4.5 compares to 650 sites in the British Marine Industry
Federation (BMIF 1997) study which included coastal and tidal sites. The numbers in
Table 4.5 are related to the geography of the inland major rivers and canals.
Concentrations of launch sites, such as in the West Midlands, are in part associated
with former industries that utilised launching sites for canals. Equally the low numbers
in Wales and the North reflect the lack of available major rivers and canals available
for navigation in these regions. The overall impression in the 1997 BMIF study was
that physical access for water-based recreation is adequate but much could be done to
improve the quality of access. Further growth at popular launching sites was limited by
environmental and planning pressures rather than by size of the market.

4.3.4 There is further evidence of quality issues on inland waters from a 1997 survey of
1616 boat owners. 23% of those surveyed mentioned depth of water as a concern;
clearance of rubbish, litter and weed were also mentioned (British Waterways 1997a,
b). On the plus side the courtesy, helpfulness, and efficiency of waterside staff have
been highly rated in recent studies as have the improving quality of the bankside

4.3.5 Chapter 1 indicated that for technical reasons details of moorings had not been
entered into the GDSS. For many cruising and canal boating stakeholders pressure on
moorings was an important issue. These stakeholders claimed that planning restrictions
on the development of new moorings and marinas in South East England were partly
responsible for the shortage of certain facilities, particularly moorings that were secure
with good support facilities. Sailing stakeholders also claimed there are a growing
number of ‘liveaboards’ on sailing boats, although precise data are lacking. Many of
these people are living on boats moored in marinas and other spaces in tidal locations.
Nevertheless, this creates further space pressures for mooring. The issue for
‘liveaboards’ has recently been exacerbated in the South East by the loss of moorings
in Chichester Harbour and by the Queens Harbour Master increasing charges on the
south coast.
4.4 The inland water resource - clubs and other facilities

4.4.1 For certain major water-based sports and recreational activities data from national, regional and local stakeholders made it possible to identify the approximate numbers of clubs in England and Wales whose use of water relies mainly on inland waters:

- **Rowing** - 220 clubs based on inland water out of a total 254 Open Clubs (excludes approximately 280 clubs based in schools and universities who often share facilities and space with Open Clubs)
- **Sailing** - Just over 300 inland water clubs out of a total of 1,500 in England and 110 in Wales.
- **Water-skiing** - 92 inland water clubs out of a total of 150 (130 affiliated to the British Water-ski Federation)
- **Canoeing** - There are 321 BCU clubs in England and 50 clubs affiliated to the Welsh Canoe Association. Many are mobile and few are attached to particular pieces of water but only 30 clubs identify themselves as specifically coastal.
- **Angling** - The National Federation of Anglers the governing body for coarse fishing has 1,100 affiliated clubs in England for both game and coarse fishing. The Salmon and Trout association the governing body for game angling has 375 affiliated clubs. The Fishooked Freshwater Fishery Guide (Fishooked) lists 940 angling clubs in England and Wales.

4.4.2 Some of the clubs for water-based sports and recreational activities have relatively good levels of facilities. The collation of data for the GDSS suggested that the vast majority of sailing clubs based on inland waters will have boat and equipment storage facilities. The Amateur Rowing Association conducted an audit of Open Clubs in 2000 and fund that 40% of Open Clubs had some form of social facility that members could use. Angling clubs exist in most parts of the country but many smaller clubs do not have any physical facilities and their main assets are their river stretches. The Fishooked directory contains information on 4,512 freshwater fisheries in England and Wales and of these 308 (7%) have tuition facilities, 415 (9%) disabled facilities, 950 (21%) toilets, and 493 (11%) refreshments. Whilst the proportions seem low many of the fisheries are river stretches where there would not be space for facilities. The proportion of stillwater fisheries with these facilities is considerably higher with 39% having toilets and 18% having disabled facilities.

4.4.3 Whilst accurate measures of facilities for many water-based sports and activities are not readily produced, it is necessary to acknowledge their primary importance for some participants and stakeholders. For example, the focus groups explored the constraints on participation by individuals currently active in water sports and recreation. Amongst adult male participants in Birmingham the main limiting factor was time. Other than fishing, most water-based sports are felt to involve the commitment of relatively large blocks of time, meaning that they are mainly limited to weekend activities. Thus focus group participants argued that facilities should be of a quality that matches their time commitment and should aspire to the standards at public sector leisure centres. Most participants felt this was rarely the case.

4.4.4 A number of stakeholders also stressed the importance of facilities for the future well being of their sports and activities, as participants become more demanding. Some angling stakeholders argued that the attraction of commercial fisheries for some anglers was the related facilities especially secure parking close to the water. Generally, improvements to changing rooms, car parks and launch facilities were seen as central to the on-going development of many water-based sport and recreation activities. One angling stakeholder summarised the view held by many:
“If existing facilities were improved more people would take up the sport and current users would go out more. People are now looking for pleasant surroundings, they don’t want to spend time walking far or go to the toilet in the bushes. Better facilities would attract all ages from youth to the pensioners.”

4.4.5 Stakeholders with a specific remit for disabled people stressed that constraints on demand were far more likely to stem from access difficulties to riparian sites and facilities rather than a shortage of water space. These stakeholders also claimed that in some locations other participants use facilities set aside for disabled people and that facilities to access boats for disabled people could be improved in most major inland moorings and marinas.

4.5 The inland water resource and urban settlements

4.5.1 Levels of use of the water resource will in part depend on its proximity to major population concentrations. British Waterways suggest that 50% of the population live within 5 miles of a British Waterways river or canal. The nature of that close to home resource and the activities available will vary hugely. The GDSS allows an analysis of the relationship between population concentrations and the types of water used by the differing sports and recreation activities. The aim of this analysis was to reveal the nature of the water resource in and around major urban settlements and to illustrate how the GDSS can be used to assess strategically the potential of certain water spaces for increased recreational use. The rural white paper ‘Our Countryside the future. A fair deal for rural England’ provides a policy framework for England for improving access to the countryside around towns. The Sports Council for Wales (2001) has produced a Strategy for Welsh sport which in reference to water-based recreation supports the view that sport in the countryside must be carried out in keeping with the principles of sustainable development. Thus the Council’s policy on access to the countryside is summarised as “access for all, but not access to everywhere” (Sports Council for Wales 2000).

4.5.2 The GDSS functions were used to draw 5km and 15km surrounding zones for urban settlements of different sizes. These distances of 5 and 15km were chosen to reflect the distances that focus group respondents (in the pre-meeting questionnaire) indicated they were willing to travel for water-based sport and recreation. The Department of Transport, the Regions and Local Government (DTRL) produces a 1997 GIS-based map of urban areas in England. This defines urban settlements on the basis of areas of contiguous built up land and was used to identify the boundaries of urban areas for analysis in England. The boundaries for urban settlements in Wales were identified using the OS Strategy database, which contains much more generalised boundary data. Analysis of urban settlements in England and Wales typically identifies the major urban areas as comprising 9 conurbations and a series of free standing ‘cities’ based on a series of contiguous urban areas with populations greater than 200 000. A selection of these major urban areas is shown with their respective surrounding zones in Figure 4.7. Collectively the urban areas shown on Figure 4.7 have a population of nearly 22 million and contain 41% of the population of England and Wales. Their large populations mean that they are major ‘generator areas’ of demand for water-based sport and recreation.

4.5.3 Table 4.6 shows the numbers of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in size which used and unused for sport and recreation within the conurbations and free-standing cities of England and Wales and their surrounding zones (see section 1.7, table 1.1 for a definition of used). Half of the enclosed waters in England and Wales of 1 hectare or more are used for recreation and sport. A number of the unused enclosed waters will be used for recreation by their owners and personal guests or illegally, but none of the data collated for this project indicated that these enclosed waters are available for other individuals either through clubs or other arrangements. Of all the unused enclosed waters, 24% lie within the major urban areas and their surrounding 5km zone and 42% lie within major urban areas and the 15km surrounding zone. Whilst the enclosed waters in these areas have a smaller average area compared to all enclosed waters many
are of a size that is suitable for certain water sports. Of the 238 unused enclosed waters within urban areas and the 5km surrounding zone, 171 are greater than 6 ha in size, meaning they could support dinghy sailing, and 58 are greater than 15ha, meaning that if water is the right shape there is sufficient space for water-skiing. Further analysis of the use and potential of urban area and urban fringe lakes is included in Chapter 5.

Table 4.6. Enclosed waters (1ha or more) in urban areas and surrounding zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of enclosed waters</th>
<th>Total area (ha)</th>
<th>Mean area (ha)</th>
<th>Single largest area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used for water-based sport and recreation</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>40 442</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unused for water-based sport and recreation of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unused within urban area and 5km zone</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>12 009</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unused within urban area and 15km zone</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>3 422</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>422</td>
<td>5 752</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total England and Wales</td>
<td>1 982</td>
<td>5 254</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

4.5.4 Table 4.7 contains the results of a similar analysis for the lengths of canals and rivers with public navigation rights within major urban areas and the surrounding zones. The data indicate that 25% of canals and river navigations are within 5km and 40% are within 15km of conurbations and free-standing cities. Table 4.6 and 4.7 both suggest there is a considerable supply of inland water space in or near major urban areas. The importance of this inland water resource will be partly determined by whether the urban area is on or near the coast. Nevertheless, inland waters near to major urban areas due their countryside location have a different amenity value compared to coastal waters. Overall, there is also a significant unused resource of enclosed waters in or near to major urban areas.

Table 4.7. Rivers with public navigation rights* and canals in urban areas and surrounding zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rivers with public navigation rights and canals</th>
<th>Total length (km)</th>
<th>% of total in England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total England and Wales</td>
<td>4 540</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within urban area and 5km zone</td>
<td>1 125</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within urban area and 15km zone</td>
<td>1 948</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS *excludes 138km of navigation on the upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn navigable only by small craft
4.6 The inland water resource and environmental designation

4.6.1 The GDSS contains a wide range of data on the location of environmental designations. The Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) data layer contains vector based information on a number of relevant nature conservation designations within England and Wales, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsars and range of other designation types. For the ease of analysis these have all been grouped in a single data layer and are referred to collectively as SSSIs, since by far the bulk of them by number and area are SSSIs. Furthermore, some environmental designations such as SACs also maintain their SSSI designation.
4.6.2 Table 4.8 shows that 16% of SSSIs in England are water-based accounting for 30% of the total area of SSSI in England. However, many of these designations are likely to be on relatively large coastal sites. The mean area of water-based SSSIs is almost twice as large SSSIs on land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.8. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): numbers, areas and links with water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSIs in England and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSIs in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-based SSSIs in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-based SSSIs with water-based recreation in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSIs in Wales*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: GDSS. * data are not available for water-based SSSIs in Wales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.3 Table 4.9 indicates the extent to which inland major rivers and canals lie within SSSIs. Table 4.9 shows that 8% of the total length of rivers with public navigation rights in England and Wales lie within an SSSI. The proportion of the canal network within SSSIs is much lower at 3%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9. Major rivers, rivers with public navigation rights* and canals within an SSSI in England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number covered by an SSSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers with public navigation rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: GDSS * excludes 138km of navigation on the upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn navigable only by small craft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.4 Table 4.10 indicates that over half of the major river lengths in the North West region lie within an SSSI. In East Anglia 107km of rivers with public navigation rights lie within an SSSI and this represents 60% of the total of 174km in England and Wales. The figures for Wales exclude the three river sections mentioned in the footnote to Table 4.10. This makes a significant difference to the calculations for Wales since 190km (32%) of these three rivers with public rights of navigations lie within an SSSI. The proportion of canals within SSSIs is low overall, but those in Wales and the South East have the greatest percentage of total lengths within an SSSI.
Table 4.10. Major rivers, rivers with public navigation rights and canals within an SSSI by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Major rivers</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Rivers with public navigation rights*</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Canals</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total length within an SSSI (km)</td>
<td>% of total length in region</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total length within an SSSI (km)</td>
<td>% of total length in region</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total length within an SSSI (km)</td>
<td>% of total length in region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; H’side</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>1343</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS *excludes 138km of navigation on the upper Wye, Lugg and upper Severn navigable only by small craft

4.6.5 Table 4.11 provides an analysis of the relations between enclosed waters and SSSI designations. Almost 500 enclosed waters (24% of the total) in England and Wales have part of their area within an SSSI. The figures for the regions vary from 39% of enclosed waters partly within in an SSSI in the North to 13% in the East Midlands. The SSSI designations include parts of enclosed water and these waters have in total cover 16 832 hectares, which is 32% of the total enclosed water space. Figure 4.8 illustrates the relationship between SSSIs and enclosed waters at the local level in the western fringe of London. Some enclosed waters are major areas of conservation whereas others are largely unaffected by designations.

Table 4.11. Enclosed waters (1ha or more) partly covered by an SSSI by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total area of enclosed water (1ha or more)</th>
<th>% of total area in region</th>
<th>Number of enclosed waters</th>
<th>% of total number in region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>1 333</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>2 419</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>3 660</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>3 269</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>1 143</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; H’side</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14 018</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>2814</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>16 832</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

4.6.6 These tables suggest that environmental designations have considerable potential to shape the use of water space for sport and recreation. The actual influence of these designations will of course depend on a range of other political, social and economic factors. Furthermore, that data in Table 4.11 suggests that many enclosed waters because of their SSSI status play an important role in conservation and promoting biodiversity. The issues relating to environmental designation and water-based sport and recreation are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.
4.7 Summary

4.7.1 This chapter has outlined some of the details of the inland water resource and has explored its geographical characteristics in some detail. The regional patterns are complex. For rivers with public navigation rights and canals the total length figures suggest the North, South West and Wales lack this type of resource in terms of absolute lengths. Measures of rivers with public navigation rights and canals per head of population, however, suggest a shortage of resource in the South East. Similarly the South East contains the highest number of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more for any region but its large population means that the region has one of the lowest numbers of enclosed waters per 10,000 population, along with the North West and the South West. The South East is also the region where stakeholders suggest water users are most constrained in terms of facilities, especially inland marinas and moorings. Another factor that will influence the use of inland waters are environmental designations and they also have an uneven geographical distribution. Environmental designations are relatively more present on major rivers in the North West, rivers with public rights of navigation in East Anglia, canals in Wales and enclosed waters in the North and South East.

4.7.2 The different forms of data presented in this chapter are significant in that they establish factual information on topics that have been the subject of considerable debate in the past. The data in this chapter, however, need to be interpreted alongside the information on current use patterns for water-based sport and recreation presented in the next chapter. Nevertheless, this chapter has already established that a considerable inland water resource exists in and around major urban areas. Perhaps as much as half of the enclosed water resource in major urban areas and their fringes in unused for water-based sport and recreation. Thus the information presented in this chapter is also significant for those seeking to influence the nature of water-based sport and recreation in a strategic manner by identifying new inland waters for sport and recreation use. A significant unused enclosed water resource appears to exist in or near major urban areas of demand. The suitability of these enclosed waters for use by sport and recreation is examined in Chapter 5.
5 The use of the water resource for sport and recreation

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 One of the key aims of the GDSS was to generate factual information on current use of the water space resource by different sports and activities. The general approaches for collating the data on use were discussed in Chapter 1. This chapter outlines the key datasets used for each specific sport and activity. Evidence on current use is presented along with details of aspiration spaces that stakeholders and clubs in each sport wished to use but were currently unable to access. For each sport and activity the nature of these spaces is discussed further using findings from the questionnaire of clubs, stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

5.2 The use of enclosed waters and rivers

5.2.1 The accurate collation of data on the use of enclosed waters is made possible by the relatively clear locational attributes of lakes, reservoirs, ponds and gravel pits. Once all the enclosed water of 1 hectare or more had been named in the GDSS then all the relevant sport and recreation data could be attached to the individual water spaces as a series of attributes. Enclosed water space names sometimes differed between data sources but the use of local maps could ensure activities were attached to the appropriate water space.

5.2.2 The GDSS was seeking to identify only if an enclosed water was used by a sport or activity and was not concerned with the spatial sections that were used on each water. Despite this reservation, the collation of the information on enclosed water into a single database provides a powerful tool for comparing use between sports and activities.

5.2.3 Table 5.1 contains details of the enclosed waters used for sport and recreation in each region. Overall, 998 (50%) of the 1,982 enclosed water spaces of 1 hectare or more in England and Wales are used for some form of water-based sport and recreational activity. Table 5.1 also indicates that in the West Midlands only just over a quarter of enclosed waters are used for recreation compared to 59% in Wales. The South East, partly because of past gravel extraction, has a large number of enclosed waters used for recreation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number used for sport and recreation</th>
<th>% used for sport and recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.2.4 Tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate the use of enclosed waters in England and Wales by each of the main water-based sport and recreational activities. The significance of these figures for individual sports is discussed in more detail in the sections on each sport that follow in this chapter. Angling makes use of 45% of the enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in England and Wales and 56% of the enclosed waters in Wales. Sailing uses 14% and windsurfing 10%. All other sports and activities use less than 10%. Canoeing uses 8% of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in Wales compared to 7%
in England and Wales. By contrast, sailing, windsurfing and water-skiing have use of a lower proportion of the enclosed waters in Wales compared to England and Wales as a whole.

Table 5.2. Enclosed waters (1ha or more) in England and Wales: use by sport and recreation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>England</th>
<th></th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of all enclosed</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of all enclosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of all enclosed waters in region</td>
<td>% of all enclosed waters used for recreation</td>
<td>region</td>
<td>% of all enclosed waters used for recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterskiing</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-aqua</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon boating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet-skiing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power boating</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise boating</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS. Some enclosed waters are used for more than 1 sport and recreation type

Table 5.3 Enclosed waters (1ha or more) in England and Wales combined: use by sport and recreation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of all enclosed waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterskiing</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-aqua</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon boating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet-skiing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power boating</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise boating</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS. Some enclosed waters used for more than 1 sport and recreation type

5.3 The use of major rivers and canals

5.3.1 Compared to enclosed waters the identification of inland major river and canal stretches used by the differing sports and activities was a more complex exercise. For some sports very little formal use is made of inland major rivers and canals (e.g. water-skiing) and thus identifying stretches was relatively straightforward.

5.3.2 For the activities that make significant use of rivers and canals, especially canoeing and angling, a customised approach to data collation had to be adopted. The approaches used are discussed separately in the sections that follow along with the estimates of major river and canal lengths used. It should be noted that some sports, such as jet-skiing, that make little use of inland major rivers and canals do make significant use of tidal estuaries, which are not included in this study.
5.4 Current use of space - angling

5.4.1 Of all the water sports and activities covered in this study angling presented the greatest challenges in the collation of data. The large numbers of participants and the huge range of large and small water spaces used means that no governing body has the resources to collate data on all the spaces used. Governing bodies can identify key water spaces of national and regional significance but tend to refer users to certain published guides for more detailed information, such as the Fishooked directory and the Where to Fish guide. Some individuals and groups of anglers, however, are unwilling to supply information on their waters to the compilers of guides since they appear keen to limit use. The introduction to the Fishooked directory notes that information on fishing locations "is shrouded in mystery and secrecy" which the directory claims is not beneficial to angling as a whole. One fishing stakeholder claimed that angling was possible on most major river stretches if an angler knew who to ask and was willing to pay. Given this complex situation a two stage approach was taken to identifying river and canal stretches used for angling.

5.4.2 The first stage involved using Environment Agency digital vector data on fisheries which can be used to identify the major river and canal stretches classified as fisheries. Environment Agency officers claim the data are not always consistent in its definition of fisheries. Some fisheries refer to river and canal stretches where fish are present and other fisheries refer to where fish are present and angling is known to occur. Nevertheless, Environment Agency officials suggest that most fisheries will experience fairly regular angling even if only by the riparian owners.

5.4.3 Thus the digital fisheries data were used as a 'proxy measure' to calculate total major river and canal lengths used for angling. The total fisheries on major rivers and canals calculated in this way is 13,728km (69% of major rivers and canals combined).

5.4.4 The Environment Agency officials also claim that given the sheer extent of the canal and major river network some fisheries will not have been identified in the database and the total lengths of fisheries are likely to be an underestimate.

5.4.5 The second stage of the analysis involved identifying the 'known about' resources for angling on enclosed waters, major rivers and canals that are promoted by an organisation or in some form of published or unpublished guide. The focus groups and previous studies (see Chapters 2 and 3) had already identified the importance of the 'known about' resource in determining participation in countryside and water-based sport and recreation. The 'known about' resource promoted by an organisation or in some form of guides can be legally used subject by anglers to licences, permits, fees and permissions. It should be available to a large range of anglers. It excludes club stretches not promoted in some form of guide since this is only 'known about' to club members. The following information sources were used to identify the 'known about' resource:

- The Fishooked Freshwater Fishery Guide that is available in book form, on CD-ROM and the Internet
- Published Guides such as Where to Fish
- Maps in paper form or on the Internet of waters available to members of the major angling clubs with the largest numbers of members (e.g. Prince Albert Angling Society; Warrington, Milton Keynes and Birmingham angling clubs)
- Environment Agency and British Waterways guides
- Information provided by clubs in response to the questionnaire
- Water company and reservoir owner guides

5.4.6 Detailed cross-referencing between the different sources was undertaken. This suggested that Fishooked was the most comprehensive source of data for enclosed waters. This merges data on enclosed waters from all the other published and Internet sources and is regularly updated. Where to Fish was a slightly more comprehensive source of data for rivers.
5.4.7 Identifying the ‘known about’ enclosed water resource for angling was a relatively straightforward process compared to the procedures used to identify the ‘known about’ resource on rivers and canals. The details of fisheries on enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more identified in the different guides and data sources were attached to the relevant enclosed water space in the GDSS. Details included information on the type of angling, licence requirements, fishery and water size. In England and Wales the total of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more used for angling identified in this manner is 883 (see Table 5.3). Individuals other than the owners and their invited guests can fish these enclosed waters. Fishooked also includes data on a further 1,588 stillwater fisheries on enclosed waters less than 1 hectare in size. These were not incorporated into the GDSS but some separate analysis has been undertaken on these enclosed waters.

5.4.8 Calculating measures of the ‘known about’ resource for angling on rivers and canals promoted by organisations or in guides had to involve a variety of assumptions and estimating procedures. The main assumption concerned rivers and canals available for navigation that were the responsibility of British Waterways and the Environment Agency. Discussions with officers from both organisations suggested that the vast majority of the river and canal network available for navigation overseen by these organisations can be used for angling, especially by an angler in a boat, providing they hold a licence and have obtained permits and permissions from the owners of the fishing rights. The exceptions are locks and other places where fishing would be dangerous. Furthermore, if an angler wished to fish a particular stretch of river or canal, staff from these organisations might be able to assist in identifying who to contact for access. British Waterways and the Environment Agency are responsible for a total of 3,746km of rivers and canals available for navigation and these were therefore included as part of the ‘known about’ fishing resource promoted by organisations or in guides.

5.4.9 Estimating procedures had to be used to identify the length of the ‘known about’ resource on other rivers and canals. Unlike with other water-based sports and recreation activities minor rivers were included in the estimations since they are important for angling. The estimates were produced using data in the Fishooked directory contains some useful data on the lengths of river and canal stretches for angling. The directory identifies the following:

- A total of 1,852 angling stretches on major and minor rivers and canals in England and Wales.
- 372 of the total stretches are on canals or rivers made available for navigation by either British Waterways or the Environment Agency and so were not analysed as they are included in the ‘known about’ resource figure in the previous paragraph.
- 605 of the 1,852 river stretches are on other major rivers included in the GDSS which are not canals or major rivers made available for navigation by either British Waterways or the Environment Agency.
- For 315 (52%) of these 605 major river stretches a measure of length of fishery is provided and the total length is 1,781km with an average stretch length of 5.6km.
- 875 stretches are on minor rivers
- For 220 (25%) of the minor river stretches a measure of length is provided and the total length is 418km with an average stretch length of 1.9km.

5.4.10 A check was made on the accuracy of these stretch length measures. Mapped data for major river and canal fishing stretches were obtained from angling clubs and were entered into the GDSS so that stretch lengths could be calculated. For a selection of stretches it was possible to compare the length measured by the GDSS and the length given in Fishooked. These were found to be broadly comparable.

5.4.11 An averaging process was used to estimate the fisheries with unknown lengths. This produces the following estimates:
290 major river and canal stretches, that are not canals or major rivers made available for navigation by either British Waterways or the Environment Agency, have unknown lengths. They are assumed to have the same average length (5.6km) as the stretches where the length is known. This produces a total length for these 290 stretches of 1,624km.

655 minor river stretches have unknown lengths. They are assumed to have the same average length (1.9km) as the stretches where the length is known. This produces a total length for these 655 stretches of 1,245km.

5.4.12 The averaging process is statistically robust since the total population of fisheries in Fishooked is known and the initial averages are based on substantial proportions of the total population of major rivers/canals and minor rivers.

5.4.13 Thus the total length of ‘known about’ river and canal angling resource promoted by organisations or in guides is based on the following estimates:

- 3,746km of British Waterways and Environment Agency rivers and canals available for navigation
- 1,781km of other major river and canal stretches where lengths are known
- 1,624km of other major river and canal stretches where lengths are calculated using the averaging procedure
- 418km of minor river stretches where lengths are known
- 1,245km of minor river stretches where lengths are calculated using the averaging procedure

5.4.14 These estimates produce of a total of 8,814km of ‘known about’ fishing stretches on major inland rivers and canals that is promoted by organisations or in guides. 7151km are on major rivers and canals and 1,663km are on minor rivers. These estimates are summarised in box 5.1 along with the data for enclosed waters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5.1 Key use facts on current use – Angling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of 883 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (45% of total).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole use of 590 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (30% of total).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,588 fisheries on enclosed waters less than 1 hectare in size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,728km of fisheries identified by the Environment Agency on major rivers and canals (69% of total). A ‘proxy measure’ for total major river and canal lengths on which angling occurs and which is likely to be an underestimate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An estimated 8,814km of ‘known about’ fishing stretches on major inland rivers and canals that are promoted by organisations or in guides (44% of total).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An estimated 1,663km of ‘known about’ fishing stretches on minor inland rivers that are promoted by organisations or in guides (3% of total).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Current use - different angling types

5.5.1 The various data sources used normally disaggregate their information at least into game and coarse fishing. Of the fisheries on major rivers and canals in Fishooked 63% were coarse fisheries, 25% game and 11% combination. Table 5.4 outlines the different types of fisheries on enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in the GDSS. The majority by number are coarse fisheries, but game fishing occupies a greater area. This is because game fishing lakes are, on average, three times the size of coarse fishing lakes. Not unexpectedly the lakes with the greatest average size accommodate combination fishing. For over 300 of the stillwater fisheries Fishooked identifies both the size of the
fishery and the water (the area fished) are identified. On average, fished water constitutes 44% of the stillwater fishery. This figure suggests that whilst area measures of enclosed waters do not capture the size of fished water, it is likely that on many enclosed waters, a considerable proportion of the water space is available for fishing from the bank or by boat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fishing type</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>% of total area</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of total number</th>
<th>Mean area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coarse fished</td>
<td>12 074</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game fished</td>
<td>14 312</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination fished</td>
<td>6 328</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fished of unknown type</td>
<td>3 803</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36 517</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.5.2 The data in Figure 5.1 are calculated using the GDSS and fisheries data provided by the Environment Agency. Coarse fishing occupies a third of all canals and major rivers. Unclassified, or sentinel, fishing where stocks are known of but have not been identified occupies a quarter of the total. However, the greatest length of major rivers and canals is used for game fishing. This result is similar to the result for enclosed waters, where the greatest area was used for game fishing.

Figure 5.1. Major rivers and canal fisheries in England and Wales: percentage by fishing type (total length of fisheries 13 730km)

5.5.3 The geographical distribution of major river and canal fisheries is shown in Figure 5.2, which clearly illustrates well-known patterns. Fisheries overall are concentrated in the South East, South West, and Wales. Table 5.5 contains details of game fishing by region and shows that game fishing is concentrated in Wales, the South West and the North, with very little in the East Midlands and East Anglia. Table 5.5 also indicates that Salmon Action Plans (SAPs) are a major component of game fisheries in the North, North West, South West, Yorkshire & Humberside and Wales. They are poorly developed in the South East partly because of low fish stocks and the nature of the regions rivers.
5.5.4 The spaces used for particular types of game angling also have a distinct geography. Sea trout fishing is very concentrated on particular rivers, mainly in Wales, where stock levels are higher. The Nautilus report for the Welsh Assembly (2000) identified that whilst there were 240 salmon and trout rivers in Wales, 26 rivers accounted for 99% of caught sea trout. The current level of salmon stocks has resulted in considerable river capacity in Wales but salmon waters suitable for angling are lacking in England. Thus, stakeholders suggested many English anglers have to travel to Wales for reasonably stocked salmon waters. This suggests 'space shortages' in angling are linked to declines of fish stocks and the geographical distribution of water rather than a lack of water per se.

5.5.5 Despite the problems associated with certain fish stocks there is overall clearly a significant supply of space for game and coarse angling in most areas of England and Wales. National stakeholders felt that the current supply of water provides sufficient space to satisfy current demand and some slack to meet any future growth in demand, especially for coarse fishing, that may result from promotional activities. In certain parts of the country such as around Coventry clubs are surrendering coarse fishing river space because of a lack of demand from members. Stakeholders claimed that...
crowding with other anglers is not perceived as a major problem. The Nautilus report for the National Assembly for Wales (2000) found no real evidence of crowding on game or coarse fishing waters even in busy periods. In England stakeholders noted that demand can be high for certain game fishing rivers close to centres of population, such as the Test and the Itchen. Pressures here, as on other rivers, are usually controlled by higher costs.

5.6 Aspiration spaces - Angling

5.6.1 Angling clubs responding to the questionnaire identified a number of specific aspiration spaces. Rivers cited include the Bristol Avon, Wyllye, Dart and Wye, all of which are heavily fished. They are probably cited as aspiration spaces by those clubs currently denied access to these ‘honey pot’ locations because of overuse. The Association of Welsh Anglers claimed that there was still a demand for more well-stocked enclosed waters, and the Welsh Salmon and Trout Association want to see the introduction of ‘triploid’ fish, to guarantee wild, native female spawn and enhance stock levels.

5.6.2 Stakeholders suggested that certain aspiration trends within angling were based on changes in the type of demand. A common aspiration of many anglers is traditional to the sport in that as they become more skilled they aspire to more challenging rivers for game fishing, especially wild brown trout and salmon. Lock style boat fishing that involves drifting across reservoirs is also a challenging activity and an aspiration of certain still water anglers.

5.6.3 A number of the questionnaire respondents included comments and covering letters, which indicated that a key aspiration for anglers was to maintain the quality of existing waters. This was confirmed in all of the angling stakeholder interviews. Many respondents and interviewees argued that the high quality of certain angling spaces had been built up over many years through considerable efforts in the form of cash payments to owners, time spent negotiating access agreements, close liaison with government bodies and voluntary inputs on stocking and bank maintenance. Furthermore, angling stakeholders highlighted the fact that many anglers made two payments for use in the form of licences and user charges. In the light of these efforts and payments, clubs and stakeholders stressed that anglers were not averse to sharing space with other users but not in a manner that reduced the quality of the angling experience.

5.6.4 A number of stakeholders argued, however, that certain forms of angling could not mix with other forms of water and bankside use. In particular it was argued that chalk river angling, which commands high prices in a number of locations, requires water spaces and banks free from other users since the water is very clear and movement disturbs fish, thus significantly harming the angling experience.

5.7 Current use of space - canoeing

5.7.1 Canoeing stakeholders claim that there is an extensive potential supply of suitable water space in England and Wales but the lack of formal access and navigation rights results in a perceived under-supply of accessible space. Stakeholders claimed this situation constrains use and results in a growing level of informal activity, sometimes referred to as ‘stealth’ canoeing.

5.7.2 There are 8 sub-disciplines within canoeing and these problems associated with informal activity are believed particularly to affect activities involving touring and the use of whitewater. Stakeholders for canoeing claimed that on a number of rivers where they have access to the majority of water space, their ability to tour is constrained by angling clubs and landowners who deny access to a few small stretches of water. In addition, according to the Welsh Canoe Association, many of the access agreements that have been negotiated to increase supply are only for the angling closed season (mid Oct to the start of March) when the weather and water temperature are
less suitable. Elsewhere some regional canoeing stakeholders claimed that formal access agreements are complex and not easy to work. For example, the Upper Dart is only accessible for 8 weekends a year and only 30 boats are allowed each day, which requires booking by clubs one year in advance. Given this current situation, a key aim of the data collation exercise was to identify both formally and informally canoed spaces and to take account of the needs of the different disciplines for whitewater and touring canoeing.

5.7.3 The following sources of data were central to the collation of information on the use of space for canoeing:

- BCU/WCA datasets, maps and guides
- Data held by BCU/WCA regional and local access officers
- Published canoe guides
- Internet guides
- Information from clubs responding to the questionnaire

5.7.4 Within the BCU identifying and prioritising water for formal access agreements has always been a matter for regional access officers and local access teams. Data for the GDSS were obtained from regional access officers on the location of formal access agreements, priority aspiration spaces and river stretches where informal canoeing regularly occurred on water without access agreements. The phrase informal canoeing is used here rather than illegal or 'stealth' canoeing to reflect the fact that some local access officers stressed that in a limited number of locations informal canoeing was tolerated by local landowners. The clubs involved did not advertise these locations to the BCU or other clubs for fear that increased numbers of canoeists might compromise future use.

5.7.5 Further data for the GDSS on water used for informal canoeing were obtained from published guides, especially Sladden's book Canoeing in Wales, and Internet sources, notably www.guidebook.co.uk, which contain large amounts of detailed information indicating river stretches and potential points of ingress and egress. The majority of spaces identified in these sources are not public navigations and do not have access agreements. Thus these water spaces are referred to in subsequent analysis as informal canoeing promoted in guides.

5.7.6 Interviews with access officers and also with canoeists who are not members of the BCU suggest these sources are regularly used by canoeists and they give a good indication of spaces where informal canoeing regularly occurs. In addition, the guides are designed to promote further canoeing at these locations.

5.7.7 There are many other spaces not in these guides that are used informally by canoeists but the majority of these will be on minor rivers that are not the main focus of this study and are often used only when the river is in spate. These different sources, however, have allowed a clear identification of spaces on major rivers and enclosed waters currently used both formally and informally by canoeists. There will still be some spaces on major rivers that are informally canoed that could not be identified for inclusion in the GDSS. Thus the GDSS estimates of space used will be underestimates but, as will be shown below, the estimates that can be calculated are exceedingly valuable since they constitute a first attempt to map the spatial extent of informal canoeing promoted in guides.

5.7.8 After discussion with BCU regional access officers it was decided to categorise all canals and river with public navigation rights as formally canoed space. On rivers with public navigation rights canoeing is permitted and although points of ingress and egress may be limited the whole navigation lengths can be canoed. Some stakeholders noted that on some backwaters of navigations maintenance is not a priority since canoes are the only craft present. On many canals canoeing is permitted by block licence
arrangements with BCU and on others individual licences are usually available. The total length of rivers in public navigations indicated in Table 4.1 was 2,179km. For canoeing this figure should be raised to 2,317km through the addition of the stretches with public navigation rights on the Upper Wye, Lugg and Upper Severn that are only suitable for small craft such as canoes. These three stretches are particularly valuable for canoeing since they are available for navigation, but very few craft besides canoes are ever likely to be present because of depth and width restrictions.

Box 5.2 Key facts on current use - canoeing

Formal Canoeing on 2,361km of canals and 2,317km of inland rivers with public navigation rights

Formal Access Agreements on 812km of major inland rivers that are not public navigations (5% of the total). Over two thirds of agreements are either for the angling closed season or periods of less than one month.

The lengths for canoeing on canals, rivers with public navigation rights and rivers with formal access agreement total 5,490km (27% of the major river and canal network)

Informal canoeing promoted in guides on 7,015km of major inland rivers with no public rights of navigation or access agreements (46% of total)

Use of 136 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (7% of total)

Sole use of 9 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales.

5.7.9 The 7,015km estimate of length of major rivers without public navigations where informal canoeing is promoted in guides represents 46% of the total length of such rivers. This is an important figure since it gives an indication of the extent of the network where conflict between canoeists, landowners and other users could potentially occur on a regular basis if the current situation continues unchanged.

5.7.10 Table 5.6 indicates the nature of the time restriction on many of the 812km of formal access agreements. Only 5 are open access all year and these are short stretches of whitewater. Over two thirds of formal access agreements are either for the angling closed season or a period of less than one month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than 1 month per year</th>
<th>Fishing closed season (3-5 months per year)</th>
<th>5-11 months per year</th>
<th>All year access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total number</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length (km)</strong></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total length</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.7.11 For rivers where informal canoeing is promoted in guides data were also entered where available into the GDSS on the canoeing grade of rivers. Grades range from I to VI with I being the easiest to canoe. This information was available for 40% of the informal canoeing stretches identified. 70% of these contained water of grade 3 or above depending on the season. This figure may in part reflect that some of guides highlight challenging water. It also suggests, however, that a considerable amount of informal canoeing on major rivers is aiming to use whitewater. Currently the informal canoeing on locations promoted in guides is more likely to conflict with anglers and landowners than environmental designations since the GDSS analysis suggests only 6% of the rivers with no navigation rights used for informal canoeing are covered by SSSIs.
5.8 Aspiration spaces - canoeing

5.8.1 Identifying aspiration spaces was a complex exercise for canoeing in that stakeholders associated with the sport had slightly differing views on what constituted aspiration space especially in relation to major rivers. BCU access policy requires the organisation to seek access to all waters subject to environmental and management constraints. Thus some regional access officers argued that the aspiration space for canoeing in their area was the whole river network. Other regional officers and many of the clubs surveyed took the view that aspiration spaces were those river stretches where they were currently seeking to gain formal access.

5.8.2 For the purposes of this study all canoeing stakeholders contacted through interviews or questionnaires were asked to prioritise aspiration spaces and these provided one measure of key aspiration spaces.

5.8.3 A more generalised measure of aspiration space on major rivers could be based on the spaces where informal canoeing is promoted in guides. It is reasonable to assume that these represent spaces canoeists would wish to use formally but currently only do so informally. Thus, the 7 015km of major rivers with no public rights of navigation where canoeing is promoted in guides represent one measure of aspiration space.

5.8.4 The responses from the questionnaire of clubs and regional access officers highlighted a number of key rivers canoeists aspired to use. Some wished for access to stretches currently used formally only by anglers e.g. the Northumberland Blyth, Test and Itchen. Others cited all the rivers in their region which were used informally, but were not covered by Formal Access Agreements. These included key rivers such as the Goyt, Dane, Bollin and Thames. Some clubs wished to extend stretches with Formal Access Agreements to create longer canoe touring routes. Targeted rivers included the Mole, in Surrey, and the Tees, Cumbria Derwent and Wye.

5.8.5 Clubs and stakeholders stressed the general lack of whitewater stretches covered by formal access agreements. This was reflected in the desire to formalise access to rapids, weirs or high gradient mountain streams. A number of stakeholders aspired to see weir sites redesigned to make them safe for whitewater canoeing and for artificial whitewater courses to be completed near Exeter and in the London area. These would also have the benefit of adding fish passes and could be operated as commercial whitewater rafting sites. In many locations in England and Wales weirs are claimed to be old and dangerous, with severe health and safety implications.

5.8.6 Enclosed waters rarely constituted aspiration spaces except where they could be used for training purposes and in touring. Indeed, one canoeing stakeholder argued that no more ‘dull flatwater’ was required and what canoeists needed was more access to challenging whitewater. One example of a flatwater aspiration space was Ardleigh reservoir, Colchester. The BCU’s policy is to negotiate formal access but a number of clubs and local stakeholders were concerned that this policy could lead to a diminished canoeable space, with the assumption by riparian owners that formalising access on one river stretch will bar use on others.

5.9 Current use of space - sailing and windsurfing

5.9.1 These two sail based activities are considered together since they often share facilities and spaces. The analysis highlights some important differences in terms of space used between the two sports. Within each sport there is a range of disciplines, for example dingy and keel boat sailing. Data were primarily obtained from Royal Yachting Association (RYA) sources, Internet sites and published guides. In order to identify inland water it was necessary to contact many clubs to ascertain the water used.
Sailing stakeholders claimed there is no overall sense of inland water space being in short supply or facing access problems. This partly reflects the importance of coastal and tidal estuaries for sailing and windsurfing. In general, stakeholders from sailing and wind surfing clubs said that they had enough access to enclosed waters in England and Wales to satisfy current demand. However, some stakeholders claimed that space on more lakes near urban areas would promote demand in the youth market. Key urban aspiration spaces include Hilfield reservoir in Hertfordshire, Conningbrook reservoir in Kent and Hanningfield reservoir in Essex. Sailing on rivers has diminished in recent years, in spite of a demand for access.

In a few specific cases, the unwillingness of reservoir owners or environmental bodies to grant access has prevented sailing clubs moving to more suitable space. At Hilfield reservoir owned by Three Valleys Water Company, an application to allow sailing has been declined following representations by the RSPB and the local Wildlife Trust.

In South Wales, local stakeholders were concerned that two sailing reservoirs will be lost with the closure of British Steel plants. Generally, however, stakeholders claimed inland space is not an issue in most parts of the country and, as the sport is not growing, this does not look as if it will be a future concern. Some clubs and river users experience problems over some weekends because of overcrowding but stakeholders are more concerned about maintaining existing areas.

The use situation is slightly different for windsurfing. Of the 190 lakes where windsurfing occurs, only 25 are not also used for sailing. Many windsurfers at these locations may be members of sailing clubs as well. There are only 10 or 15 clubs in England and Wales exclusively for windsurfers. Two of these are mobile and not site specific. By contrast, there are approximately 250 commercial windsurfing operators many of who operate in coastal locations. These operators along with sailing clubs are the key focus for windsurfing provision and activity on inland waters but, as with sailing, coastal activities are central to windsurfing.

With a rather 'nomadic' participant base and a sport where participation is not increasing the financial risks for the operators of inland windsurfing centres are considerable. Furthermore, as the sport has matured, skilled participants are increasingly attracted to more challenging coastal waters. However, some stakeholders speculated that with the development in technology of the shorter, lighter board which can plain in light winds and produce a similar thrill to being at sea there could be a return to inland waters by windsurfers.

Sailing and windsurfing stakeholders and clubs identified few aspiration spaces. In Wales, stakeholders claimed sailing has more than enough space and there is no demand to increase provision. National level stakeholders claim that amongst the most
advanced sailors there is a strong aspiration for better quality water and facilities to support those training to participate in international competition at the highest level.

5.10.2 One windsurfing stakeholders claim that “nationally there is probably enough inland water and sufficient access but on a local level there is not”. A number of other windsurfing stakeholders also argued that local shortages exist mainly in areas where potential commercial operators are faced by high start up costs. Consequently the key areas of local space shortage are felt to be in the South East especially areas around London where more access to reservoirs generally is considered an important aspiration for the sport. One stakeholder noted that in future the London Ring Main might reduce the need for reservoirs around London and some of these may be suitable for recreation depending on future management and maintenance responsibilities.

5.11 Current use - rowing

5.11.1 Data on rowing were collated primarily from the Amateur Rowing Association. In order to ascertain the precise location of water used the Association's regional representatives were sent a proforma to complete and a map to annotate. Many of the key rowing locations in England and Wales are in tidal estuaries and not covered by this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5.4 Key facts on current use – Rowing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of 52 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (2.6% of total).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole use of 2 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of 1,287km of major inland rivers with public navigation rights (51% of total) and 87km of canals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11.2 Rowing requires water spaces that have sufficient width and straight stretches. Stakeholders felt that spaces on river and canal navigations combined with a successful approach to accessing enclosed waters over the last twenty years means that for rowing ‘a large percent of the potential network is sewn up’. The strategy for accessing enclosed waters has concentrated on new spaces especially those arising from gravel extractions. In the last two decades close co-operation with other low intensity uses such as sailing and canoeing has been viewed as a successful approach for accessing new space. This was confirmed by regional sailing stakeholders who claim they carry out regular surveys of water spaces especially current and future gravel pits to assess their suitability for rowing, sailing and other water sports. Table 5.1 suggests, however, that despite these efforts some regions such as the West Midlands (2), Wales (2), Yorkshire and Humberside (4) and the East Midlands (4) have relatively few lakes.

5.11.3 Whilst access has been obtained to a considerable proportion of potential space for rowing there are particular inland river spaces such as the Thames around Oxford, and the Cam at Cambridge where crowding results from high levels of activity by rowers and other users.

5.12 Aspiration spaces - rowing

5.12.1 Although a large proportion of rowing occurs in estuaries or coastal areas, there is considerable inland use and a desire for more spaces in particular locations. The responses to the questionnaire of clubs indicated a wish for access in the North West region to the rivers Hindburn, Hodder, Mersey, Ribble and Lune. (The Lune has been the subject of a well known conflict between rowers and anglers.) There was also a desire to gain to access to old gravel pits near Chichester and Ringwood. There has been a long running attempt to access suitable reservoir space in West Hertfordshire on the fringe of London where local rowers claim more space is needed. Rowing clubs have sought to negotiate access to certain enclosed waters in the area since 1983 but have failed mainly because of environmental designations. Elsewhere rowing clubs
are seeking further access is being sought at Broadwater Lake near Theale in the South East and on lakes near Sheffield.

5.12.2 Along with these specific sites national and regional rowing stakeholders identified key locations where new waters are desirable. In Birmingham local demand is only partly met because the only space is Edgbaston reservoir with a stretch of only 500m which is shortened when water levels drop. In Leeds the only facility is Roundhay Park with an 800m stretch. This has a low level of activity as a number of Leeds clubs prefer to travel to better spaces in York. In these areas stakeholders believe there is a demand for more waters but they also argued that local demand is not always easy to assess. It is dependent on local traditions amongst residents and local institutions such as schools and universities. For example, in East Lancashire rowing rights were recently obtained on Pennington Flash and Rivington reservoir but use is low because of a lack of local clubs and stakeholders.

5.12.3 Rowing stakeholders claim there is a strong aspiration amongst participants for new high quality racing spaces. This is partly necessary to meet demands of those involved in international competition. Also many of participants competing regionally and nationally, especially at junior level, are now expressing a preference for multi-lane racing rather than traditional two lane regattas. This change is leading to more travel to the few sites where multi-lane racing is possible.

5.12.4 The ARA facilities strategy for 1999-2000 identified a need for four new still water training that it hoped would be developed. An earlier study by the Environment Agency (1997) also identified a need for water for training novices in southern England. This in part reflects the geographical concentration or rowing participants with 46% of ARA members based in South East England. Of the four proposed training sites, one near Caversham has been approved but the one near Bedford has been turned down for lottery funding. The ARA may still pursue its aspirations for training sites at the other two locations at Cambridge and Cleveland Lake in the Cotswold Water Park.

5.13 Current use - water-skiing

5.13.1 The main data sources for water-skiing were the British Water-skiing Federation (BWSF). The Internet and guides provided details of clubs not affiliated to the BWSF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5.5 Key facts on current use - Water-skiing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of 94 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (5% of total).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole use of 12 enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of short stretches on 5 major inland rivers (Trent, Nene, Ribble, Great Ouse and Deben).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.13.2 Until recently other motorised activities such as jet-skiing are increasingly directed by local authority regulation into coastal areas. Stakeholders for water-skiing stress this is not an option for their sport since enclosed water space is highly valued. Enclosed waters provide calm and reliable conditions that are suitable for both advanced and novice skiers. Despite many pressures on existing space water-skiing still has use of 94 enclosed waters in England and Wales. Nevertheless stakeholders highlight some significant regional deficiencies. Figure 5.3 indicates the location of enclosed waters in England and Wales currently used for water-skiing. There are only four enclosed waters used in Wales, with two in national parks perceived as under threat. There are 9 enclosed waters in the south west region but no good facilities west of the Cotswold Water Park in England, although the British Water-ski Federation is currently negotiating access to a new lake in Cornwall. There are only 3 enclosed waters in the West Midlands, which is perceived as inadequate given the relative lack of access to coastal waters. New facilities are needed in northern England to make up for the likely
loss of Windermere. There are only 10 lakes used in the North and North West regions.

5.14 Aspiration spaces - water-skiing

5.14.1 Stakeholders and clubs that responded to the questionnaires suggested that the key aspiration for water-skiing was to retain existing space that was seen as increasingly under threat. The problems for water-skiing are perceived to originate to a considerable degree from the increasing rental charges levied on suitable inland water and the generally negative attitude on the part of local planning authorities and conservation bodies. As a result, water-ski stakeholders comment that whenever they find a suitable piece of inland water, they run into problems of poor perceptions, or they are ‘outbid’ by other sports such as fishing (many reservoirs in south west England) and windsurfing (some water spaces in northern England). Furthermore, stakeholders for water-skiing and power boating claimed that water owners, especially mineral extraction companies, can charge high rents safe in the knowledge that clubs will have very few local alternatives. The future loss of water-skiing on Windermere was claimed to make matters worse.

5.14.2 The potential threats to water-skiing have been noted by other bodies. Sport England (2001a) recently argued that “despite major advances in motorboat technology resulting in reduced noise emissions, and the use of time and space zoning of water bodies, local planning authorities (including national park authorities) tend to see water-skiing as a nuisance to be controlled, or even banned entirely”.

5.14.3 Ellison’s (2000) study of water sports in National Parks noted that “very little provision is made for water-skiing in the National Parks and the majority of what exists is under threat”. The BWSF national facilities strategy for 2001 identifies an aspiration to find alternative sites for the 4 water-ski clubs on the Broads whose current spaces are believed to be under threat. A key aspiration for water-skiing stakeholders and clubs, therefore is for the development of a more positive attitude and improved dialogue with local planning authorities.

5.14.4 The British Water-Ski Federation also produced a comprehensive list of appropriately sized aspiration lakes in England and Wales. These 83 enclosed waters are mapped in Figure 5.3, which shows concentrations of aspiration spaces in the form of enclosed waters in the South West, North West and Northern regions. The Lake District is a key aspiration space, and the BWSF list all the large lakes in that region as being potential sites to replace Windermere when a 5 mph speed limit is introduced in 2005. There are no known river sites to which water-skiers aspire. The GDSS was used to examine the environmental designations relating to the aspiration lakes. 42 (50%) have part of the lake within an SSSI but 10 of these are large lakes in the Lake District that are on the list of aspiration spaces as replacements for Windermere.

5.15 Current use of space - scuba diving

5.15.1 The main sources of data on scuba diving were provided by the national governing body (British Sub Aqua Club) and websites.

| Box 5.6 - Key facts on current use - scuba diving |
| Scuba diving takes place on 51 of the enclosed waters (1 hectare or more) in England and Wales (2.5% of total). |
| River use is primarily informal |
Many of these enclosed waters, especially those identified on the Internet, are dived informally on a regular basis. Only about a third of the enclosed waters have some supporting facilities specifically for divers. Nearly two thirds of the scuba diving enclosed waters are in the South East (12), Wales (10) and the North (10). Stakeholders suggested experienced divers are mobile in the pursuit of their activity. Consequently, informal scuba diving takes place irregularly on many other lakes and some rivers. For example, some of the deeper remote lakes in Wales are dived informally on an occasional basis.
5.16 Aspiration space - scuba diving

5.16.1 Scuba diving stakeholders claimed that a combination of a lack of inland water space and inadequate facilities was constraining demand. There are no clear data to support these claims but they were reiterated in a number of sources of data. Training for diving requires calm water of varying depths with little or no tide, along with a dive centre containing certain on-land training, safety and other facilities. Stakeholders and clubs responding to the questionnaire claimed that dive centres on inland waters are becoming more numerous but some are experiencing considerable demand pressures. Stoney Cove near Leicester has long weekend queues and there is believed to be sufficient demand to support more dive centres especially in the Midlands where coastal sites are not available. In Wales Vivian Quarry near Llanberis is being leased for a dive centre but there is still felt to be sufficient demand for a further centre elsewhere in Wales. Attempts to access the Fran quarry in Wales are being resisted by the owners.

5.16.2 A number of focus group participants also felt that local interest and participation in scuba diving was constrained by a lack of space and facilities. Some of the youth participants from Merseyside were aware of a local opportunity that is subsidised, but the demand is so large and funding so vulnerable that they considered only a few people could benefit. One focus group participant noted "Our youth group runs a scuba diving course, but every time it puts it on it needs £5000 and there are always more and more people wanting to do it." (youth, Merseyside)

5.16.3 Recreationally active men in both the Birmingham and Leicestershire focus groups claimed there was increasing demand for dive sites in easy reach of large towns in the Midlands. Even participants who had not participated in scuba diving had heard of the congestion problems at the diving centre at Stoney Cove in Leicestershire.

5.17 Current use of space - cruising and canal boats

5.17.1 In theory the 2361km of canals and 2179km of rivers with public navigation rights are the current use space for small flat bottomed cruising craft and canal narrow boats. In reality, depth and width constraints restrict some boats from parts of this network of rivers and canals.

5.17.2 Larger cruising boats and some other craft, such as historic working boats, are constrained in this way. Data obtained from the Inland Waterways Association suggest that only 941km (40%) of the canal network can be used by boats over seven feet in width because of lock sizes and other historical constraints relating to the construction of the navigations 200 years ago. The regional distribution of the resource for cruising boats wider than seven feet is shown in Table 5.7. This shows that a significant amount of the canal network in some regions can be used only by narrow boats. This is particularly marked in Wales and the East and West Midlands, where the majority of canals have sections that limit use by boats more than seven feet wide.

5.17.3 Despite these width constraints, private cruise and canal boat stakeholders felt that whilst there are certain hotspots, especially in southern England, existing navigations provided sufficient water space to meet current demand. Crowding and hotspots occur on the Thames, Grand Union canal, Braunston in Northants and Bradford-on-Avon. Nevertheless, boating and cruising stakeholders and clubs felt there were actually very few crowded canals and there was general agreement that many canals and river navigations in rural areas were quiet and relatively underused especially in East Anglia and the East Midlands.

5.17.4 Cruising also takes place on 29 (1.4%) of the enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in England and Wales and over half (15) of these enclosed waters are in East Anglia, mainly on the Broads.
Table 5.7. Canals over 7 foot wide by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Length of canals (km)</th>
<th>Length of canals over 7 foot wide (km)</th>
<th>% of total length over 7 foot wide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2307</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>2361</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.18 Aspiration space - cruising and canal boats

5.18.1 There are currently 2 095km of abandoned waterway in England and Wales (DETR 2000). The key aspiration of many stakeholders was for the continuation of the waterway restoration programme, especially those stretches that connected up different parts of the network. Restoration is concerned not only with providing additional cruising but also with urban and rural regeneration, social inclusion, environmental and cultural heritage as well as the provision of land based access and recreational and sporting provision. A detailed study by the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee (1999) identified 71 restoration projects in England and 5 in Wales. Of these 19 were identified as short term priorities, 11 medium term and 46 longer term.

5.18.2 British Waterways are undertaking a waterways regeneration programme. Key priority projects for canal boat and cruising stakeholders include the Montgomery Canal, thenorthern part of the Lancaster Canal (once the Ribble is complete), Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal, North Wiltshire Canal and Cotswold Canals (the Wessex Ring). The recent reopening of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal has proved extremely popular, and forms an important route across the Pennines linking the North West and West Midlands regions’ canals with the Aire, Calder and Ouse Navigations. There is also a desire to construct some short stretches of new canal from rivers to create links within the current network. The most commonly cited are the Higher Avon Navigation, linking the River Avon Navigation and Grand Union Canal at Warwick, and the Milton Keynes to Bedford link to connect the Grand Union canal to the River Great Ouse. These schemes would link up different regions of the country and create a more extensive network.

5.18.3 The stakeholder interviews revealed differences between cruisers and canal boaters as to the key short-term priorities. Some cruising stakeholders suggested that maintenance of existing waterways should be a higher priority than restoration.

5.18.4 The 500-1000 historic working type boats that are currently on the waterways network are longer and wider than traditional narrow boats. They were built for the particular navigations that they worked. Hence it may be difficult for them to move to different navigations from those for which they were built. Nevertheless, a key aspiration for them is that their needs are recognised on future restorations.

5.18.4 On the existing network stakeholders claimed there were aspirations amongst users for improved facilities. The issue of moorings was discussed in chapter 4. Cruising stakeholders felt that congestion could be better managed on the Broads. In summer, congestion and over-crowding is perceived to be such that cruisers need to secure a berth somewhere by 4.00 p.m. or risk not being able to moor for the night. It is claimed that in many parts of the Broads there are few moorings, meaning that even when they have decided to stop people are often prevented from leaving their boats.
5.19 Current use and aspiration - Power boating and personal water craft

5.19.1 These two powered water sports are often separate for management purposes but share similar characteristics in that they are strongly regulated for safety and environmental reasons.

5.19.2 Personal water craft (jet-skiing) use takes place on 21 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more and power boating on 30 (Table 5.3). Because of concerns about safety, it is rare for the two activities to be found together and they share only 4 enclosed waters. Approximately a third of power boating and personal water craft enclosed waters are in the South East region.

5.19.3 The Central Council for Physical Recreation suggest that competitive power boat racing takes place on 20 enclosed water sites in England and Wales and that there are fewer than 1,000 licence holders for racing so that supply constraints are not a major issue.

5.19.4 Stakeholders for power boats and personal water craft shared the same aspiration as water-skiers which was to retain current spaces, a number of which were seen as under threat.

5.20 Current use and aspiration - Swimming

5.20.1 Informal swimming may take place on huge numbers of the enclosed waters and rivers of England and Wales. In some locations owners seek to formalise the process by providing demarcated areas and safety equipment but overall outdoor swimming not in swimming pools is not a well developed recreational activity compared to other countries in the European Union (see European Commission 2001).

5.20.2 From various sources it was possible to identify 12 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more in England and Wales that are formally identified as used for swimming (Tables 5.2 and 5.3). The British Long Distance Swimming Association makes occasional use of these lakes and some river stretches such as on the Ouse. The Amateur Swimming Association has an outdoor development officer who is responsible for promoting swimming in enclosed waters and rivers. Participation in this sport may expand if the campaign to make long distance swimming an Olympic event is successful.

5.21 Current use and aspiration - Dragon boating and triathlon

5.21.1 Dragon boating makes considerable use of estuaries and ex-docks as well as inland water. Data from the national governing body indicates use is also made on a regular basis of 10 inland enclosed lakes of 1 hectare or more, 5 of which are in the South East (Table 5.2). Stakeholders claimed that regularly participating teams are ‘nearly always’ able to find suitable water relatively close to their home base. In terms of aspiration spaces Dragon boat stakeholders felt their sport would benefit from any new multi-lane provision constructed for rowing.

5.21.2 Triathlon makes more use of indoor pools than outdoor water spaces, especially for training. Suitable outdoor spaces need to have a large bank area where competitors, bicycles and other supporting services can assemble. The national governing body identified 13 enclosed waters used for competitions and these are spread throughout the country. Stakeholders did not identify specific aspiration spaces but felt that if the sport grew as planned then more use would be made of existing outdoor spaces.

5.22 Shared and sole use of enclosed waters

5.22.1 The GDSS can be used to identify the degree to which enclosed waters spaces are used by one or more users. Table 5.8 indicates for England and Wales the number of enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more that are used exclusively by one activity and the numbers used by multiple activities.
5.22.2 The table shows the relationship between enclosed water size and the number of different users accommodated. Not surprisingly, there is a strong relationship between the number of recreation types and the mean enclosed water area. The data indicate that for each additional user group, the mean water size doubles. Figure 5.4 illustrates the different uses of larger and smaller enclosed waters in the Lake District and indicates how the larger lakes are used for a wide range of activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Types</th>
<th>Total Area (ha)</th>
<th>% of Total Area</th>
<th>Total Number of Enclosed Waters</th>
<th>% of Enclosed Waters</th>
<th>Mean Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>12,009</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 type</td>
<td>13,750</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 types</td>
<td>6,608</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 types</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 types</td>
<td>10,919</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more types</td>
<td>4,229</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of enclosed waters</td>
<td>52,451</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.22.3 It is noteworthy that 82% of the enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more of England and Wales have either only a single recreation use type or no recreation use. The GDSS can be used to calculate for individual sports the number of enclosed waters used where the sport is the sole recreational user. The 590 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more where angling is the sole user represent 12,695 hectares and two thirds of the 883 enclosed water used for angling. By contrast swimming, triathlon and power boating do not use any enclosed waters where they are sole user. Time zoning may mean that, in practice, these sports have sole use when activities are taking place. Sailing is the sole user on 25 enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more and water-skiing on 12 enclosed waters. For all other sports the number of sole user enclosed waters is fewer than 10.

5.23 Overused and underused spaces and hot spots

5.23.1 Well known spaces perceived as being overused and underused were identified in the stakeholder interviews. Some of these were discussed in the previous chapter. In order to generate a broader view of such spaces the clubs responding to the questionnaire were asked to give detailed information on the water spaces currently being used by their members. Data were obtained on 1,081 different spaces (86 in Wales). Clubs considered that around one third of the water spaces (34% overall, 20% Wales) are currently considered to be underused and just 8% (16% Wales) are experiencing overuse.

5.23.2 Whilst only a small proportion of water spaces experience overuse the questionnaire of clubs revealed a variety of measures in place to deal with apparent overuse of water. Many of these are designed in part to prevent overuse occurring. Placing time limits on members (16%) or restricting sites and facilities to members only (19%) are both popular methods to control usage. Around one quarter of all clubs, however, have restricted membership. This was particularly the case for clubs providing access to fly fishing waters. Overall 27% of angling clubs had a waiting list system for membership.

5.23.3 Only 4 clubs (one triathlon/angling/canoeing/rowing) had suggested increasing or had increased membership fees as a means of controlling overuse. In the case of the triathlon club, membership had subsequently decreased.
5.23.4 The vast majority of clubs covered by the survey had not experienced any overuse and many had actively been trying to increase membership, not limit it in any way.

5.24 Aspiration spaces

5.24.1 The aspiration spaces of each individual sport have already been discussed but the questionnaire of clubs and expert panel findings allow some overall analysis of aspiration spaces.

5.24.2 52% of clubs responding to the questionnaire claimed they knew of better spaces that they would like to use. 219 river/water spaces were identified to which clubs would like to gain access in the future.

5.24.3 Most often, those who expressed a desire for new waters did so because they like variety and adventure and because members want new experiences. Just over one third (35%) said that they needed extra spaces because they were experiencing conflict with other users on some of their current water spaces and 33% needed more spaces to cope with increasing club membership. Fewer said that their current water spaces were too far away (30%) or that the current spaces were overcrowded (22%). These figures must be interpreted carefully because they refer to the total number of spaces and many of the clubs recording these problems associated with current spaces may also be able to access other spaces where these difficulties do not occur.

5.25 Unused waters - suitability analysis

5.25.1 Just under half (984) of the enclosed waters of 1 hectare or more are identified in the GDSS as unused for sport and recreation (Table 5.8). The analytical capabilities of the GDSS have considerable potential for strategically assessing the suitability of these unused waters for sport and recreational use. This potential is exhibited in this section by the use of an enclosed water scoring system.
5.25.2 The analysis and scoring of unused enclosed waters required the identification of indicators of suitability for water-based recreation. The choice of indicators was guided by a variety of quantitative and qualitative criteria, including views of expert panels, questionnaire responses and analysis of existing single- and multi-use enclosed waters held within the GDSS database.

5.25.3 The measures used in the scoring system were seen to reflect the likelihood of an enclosed water space being suitable for water-based sport and recreation. Unused enclosed water spaces were assigned independent values relating to their size, applicability of management, proximity to an urban centre and designation as an environmental important site. The four criteria are described below:

- **Size of Enclosed Water (s)**. The larger the lake the higher the weighting (five categories 1-4.9ha, 5-6.9ha, 7-9.9, 10-15.9ha & 16ha or more)
- **Applicability of management (r)**. The existence of reservoir management receives a higher weighting as a management structure for recreation already exists (receives reservoir management 1 or 5)
- **Proximity to principal urban centres (u)**. Waters in urban areas and zones higher weighting (in a major conurbation of free standing city or within the15km zone for these settlements)
- **Inclusion within an environmental designation (e)**. Non-designation higher weighting (intersects with a SSSI or other nature conservation designation, 241 24% of unused waters are in this category)

5.25.4 Each enclosed water space was given a suitability value from 1 (unsuitable) to 5 (highly suitable) for each of these four indicators. These values were applied within the following algorithm to calculate the suitability score for each unused enclosed water space within England and Wales. The results are shown in Table 5.9.

\[
\text{sum } s + (5r) + (5u) + (5e) \quad \frac{\text{n}}{\text{n}}
\]

Where:
- s = size score
- r = reservoir management score
- u = urban proximity score
- e = environmental designation score
- n = number of variables

5.25.5 The results of the modelling identified that 6% (around 60) of the unused enclosed waters were calculated to be ‘highly suitable’ (score 5) for water-based recreation as a result of the variables interrogated. A further 15% (around 150 lakes) were perceived to be ‘suitable’ with a recreational score value of 4. This suggests that some 200 lakes in and around the major urban centres are of a suitable size, have the potential for adequate management, and are less likely to compromise nature conservation designation objective. Figure 5.5 illustrates the results of the scoring analysis for London’s western fringe and highlights a number of reservoirs and lakes that might have recreational potential. Figure 5.5 can be compared to Figure 4.8 which indicates some of the environmental designations in the western fringe of London that are influencing the scoring of the different water spaces.

Table 5.9. Unused enclosed waters (1ha or more) in England and Wales: suitability modelling scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suitability</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>Mean area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – unsuitable</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – remotely suitable</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – marginally suitable</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – moderately suitable</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – suitable</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – highly suitable</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

5.25.6 Only 166 (17%) of the lakes were deemed to be ‘unsuitable’ or ‘remotely suitable’ based upon the criteria assessed and 207 (21%) were rated to be ‘suitable’ or ‘highly suitable’.
5.25.7 Clearly different weightings and variables could be used. In an attempt to test the strength of the relationship between recreational data and unused water space data, and thus assist in the formulation of the correct HSM algorithm, a process of 'sensitivity analysis' was run on the data. The model was run repeatedly, with added significance placed upon each different indicator measure. Using 'parameter-weighted' algorithms, increased significance was placed upon reservoir management, urban proximity and environmental designation in turn. This analysis showed that the suitability model was sensitive with respect to each parameter included, and had the ability to identify particular unused water spaces based upon their management potential, proximity to urban centres and/or environmental designation.

5.25.8 Such a scoring analysis is a powerful tool. The modelling run and analysis provided within this report provides a baseline guide for the suitability of existing unused enclosed water spaces. The model has been developed in a way that facilitates the selection of primary variables (i.e. added significance can be placed upon any indicator measure, and the analysis re-run) and/or the addition of other suitability measures (and the analysis re-run). For all unused enclosed waters there are likely to be constraints to use for sport or recreation. A scoring system allows a strategic overview of constraints and the identification of unused waters in particular localities where the constraints are less relative to other unused waters in the surrounding area. Such a mechanism can be used to prioritise unused spaces for future use in areas where local shortages have been identified.

5.26 Summary

5.26.1 There was a consensus among the expert panel members that there was little need for any wholesale development of new facilities because there was no clear evidence of any growth in demand that could be used to justify new provision. The data in this chapter suggest some local areas will require new facilities to meet local and regional shortages in particular sports. Expert group members felt that other issues such as social inclusion and sustainable transport might also justify the development of facilities in
particular locations. Stakeholders concerned with sports for disabled people felt that the availability of water was far less of a problem compared to the inadequate bankside spaces and facilities. Nevertheless, East Anglia is perceived as lacking space for use by sporting disabled people. A need for more space for disabled water-skiers is claimed to exist in Cornwall, Devon, and Wales, along with better access to space currently used in Yorkshire. One stakeholder also claimed that pressure on the inland water spaces used by disabled people sometimes came from other organisations in the same sport seeking to use the space.

5.26.2 For most activities, apart from angling and canoeing, human made facilities, particularly gravel pits, offer the greatest scope for new provision. These can be designed for particular uses. The system of small lakes that are commonly provided by mineral workings allows zoning for a wide range of uses. This kind of development could be used to respond to local areas of supply-demand imbalance and commonly can be market driven. Man-made developments can act as ‘nursery’ areas from which people can progress to more ‘natural’ environments. A similar view emerged in the focus groups where members of the public claimed it would be useful to have more water spaces closer to home to allow novices to test out or train in water sports. Once basic skills have been acquired focus group participants suggested people would then be willing to travel to more distant water spaces with specific features and facilities.

5.26.3 Evidence from the questionnaire of clubs suggests, however, that new water spaces may not alter the travel patterns of certain current participants. 52% of clubs that responded to the questionnaire indicated that the increased availability of local facilities would not affect their members' use of water spaces beyond their local area. Often this is because members prefer to have a variety and range of locations in which they are able to operate. This requires travel beyond the local area. These responses were reflected in some of the stakeholder interviews, in which respondents suggested that the dedicated and experienced participants will travel either to compete or to access facilities that are distinctive. This limits the potential to alter travel patterns through the introduction of new spaces and suggests many national and regional 'honeypots' will remain in high demand whilst they continue to be spaces with distinctive features.

5.26.4 The differences in levels of access to inland water spaces between sports need to be interpreted cautiously. Angling seems well endowed with spaces, especially enclosed waters. This in part reflects the much higher levels of participation in angling on inland water compared to other sports. Table 3.1 suggests angling may have over 2 million regular participants compared to 600 000 windsurfers and 100 000 canoeists. If participation data were more accurate it would be possible to undertake an analysis of the enclosed waters, major rivers and canals used for each sport per numbers of participants. Such an analysis would probably make angling seem less favoured in space terms and might even make some sports with few participants seem well endowed with water space relative to other activities.

5.26.5 Many stakeholders and expert panel members representing particular sports did not perceive their activity as lacking inland water space. Overall, the different sources of data used in this study to some degree confirm what has been found in other studies, i.e. that for many water-based sports and activities inland water space is sufficient to meet demand. Water spaces may not always be suitably located and shortages tend to be local and regional stemming from overcrowding and/or certain constraints or a lack of access.

5.26.6 Nevertheless, the differing forms of data used in this study suggest that in a few sports access to space is problematic. Canoeing appears to have such a problem. Stakeholders claim that more formally accessible water space would ease constraints on demand. The evidence suggests, however, that some of the difficulties facing canoeists may not affect all participants and may be linked to the limited availability of whitewater. Evidence for water-skiing highlights regional deficiencies of space in parts of the country and water-skiing stakeholders, along with those for certain other powered sports, feel that existing spaces in some areas are under threat. Other sports, such as
Windsurfing and rowing, have identified a number of local deficiencies. Scuba diving stakeholders suggest that there is a need for more training facilities. It should be noted that the situation for some sports, such as sailing, maybe different in coastal and estuarine environments.

5.26.7 For a number of sports, there are examples of new spaces having been obtained that have not been fully used because of a lack of demand. Also within individual sports and recreational activities there are certain pursuits that are constrained to a degree by a shortage of space of the right quality. These include multi-lane rowing, sailing racing, game angling near centres of population, dive training, whitewater canoeing and canoe touring.
Section C - The Issues

6 Access arrangements and agreements

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The different methods used to prepare this report were designed to analyse the key factual information, outlined in the previous section, and to examine the following three key issues associated with water sport and recreation. They are:

- Access arrangements
- The effect of environmental designations
- Relations between users of inland water

6.1.2 These issues are the focus of the three chapters in this section. More generally, these issues encapsulate some of the key processes that determine the nature of water sport and recreation in that all three are important influences on the interaction between the supply and demand. Access and environmental designations strongly influence the nature of space that is available whilst relations between users will be a key factor determining experiences and choices.

6.1.3 These are complex issues, however, and a full examination requires an assessment of the variety of individuals and organisations whose actions continually shape the nature of access, environmental designation and relations between users. Thus this section examines the differing views and attitudes on these issues of all the different stakeholders including users, providers, owners, government bodies and the unaffiliated public. The section utilises the GDSS but also draws extensively on the findings of the stakeholder interviews, expert panels, focus groups and related previous studies.

6.2 The nature of access arrangements and agreements

6.2.1 A number of the data sources generated quantitative measures of the nature of current access arrangements, which provide an important context to the discussion of the views of stakeholders. Table 6.1 is based on the data collected on the 1 081 main water spaces used by the members of the 252 clubs responding to the questionnaire. The results indicate that the proportion of angling waters where clubs owned their own access (20%) was considerably higher than the proportion for all clubs (10%) and for canoe clubs (4%). The same was true for those waters where clubs leased or paid for access. Around two thirds of angling waters (65%) fell into this category, while the proportion for all clubs was 44% and canoeing was 31%. Compared to other clubs canoeists made a greater use of both statutory unpaid access (11%) and informal unpaid access (23%).

Table 6.1 Current access arrangements for main water spaces used by club members: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Own access</th>
<th>Lease/pay access</th>
<th>Statutory unpaid access</th>
<th>Formal unpaid access</th>
<th>Informal unpaid access</th>
<th>Total number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing clubs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling clubs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other clubs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All clubs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1 081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns do not sum to 100% because of missing responses, don’t knows and unclear responses

6.2.2 The questionnaire of clubs also obtained details relating to 451 formal and informal agreements involving clubs. Table 6.2 summarises some of the key features of these
agreements. Formal agreements (297) outnumber informal ones (154) by almost two to one and are the majority for canoeing, angling and other users. The details of agreements provided by clubs indicate that just over half of formal agreements are with landowners, 20% with local authorities, 11% with water/utility companies and 17% are with the Environment Agency or other statutory bodies. Informal agreements were almost exclusively with landowners; only 9 were with water companies and statutory bodies.

Table 6.2 Characteristics of current access agreements: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of agreements</th>
<th>Mean length of agreements</th>
<th>Mean duration of agreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>28 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.3 The average length of formal agreements is 28 years and informal arrangements is 13 years, but there was a wide range of lengths from 0.5 years to 162 years (angling). The duration of individual agreements is normally around 6 years, but a range of 0.5 years (canoeing) to 30 years (water-skiing) was quoted.

6.2.4 Angling clubs have nearly three times as many formal agreements as canoeing clubs (172:66) and significantly more than all other types of clubs together (176:125). These agreements had, in the main, been in place for a longer period: a mean of 40 years for angling clubs compared to 12 years for canoeing and 19 years for other types of user.

6.2.5 Overall, over half (56%) of the respondents who expressed an opinion about how willing landowners have been to renew access agreements in the past three years felt that they had been very willing to renew formal (65%) and informal (48%) agreements. This was primarily because there had been no reported problems and good relationships existed with the landowners. Some also thought that it was because adequate payments were being made for access.

6.2.6 In 17% of cases landowners had been reluctant to renew access agreements. This applied mainly to canoeing clubs and depended very much on individual landowner wishes. Overall, the data from the questionnaire of clubs highlight the different scale and nature of access agreements between angling and other activities. This is a reflection of the long history of angling and the high number of angling clubs, which has allowed successful agreements to be developed over many years. The questionnaire data also show the importance of landowner choices in the development and operation of access agreements.

6.2.7 The ownership of those inland rivers that do not have public navigation rights is predominantly in private hands, mainly water companies, farmers, rural estate owners and some fishing clubs. A study was undertaken in 1998 of permissive access on land and water owned by just over 700 members of the Country Landowners’ Association in England and Wales (CLA 1998). From this study, just over a third of all holdings claimed to offer some form of permissive access. This had grown in extent by just over 20% between 1990 and 1998. Of this third of holdings, those offering access for water use of some sort are set out in Table 6.3.

6.2.8 Around 13% of all landholders offering permissive access allowed walks along waterside linear routes and a similar proportion allowed angling to take place on river banks. Nearly 10% allowed areas of land contiguous with water areas to be made available for access. Taking all linear permissive access relating to water together, this was found on 30% of all holdings offering permissive access of any sort (compared with 19% of holdings offering access to woodland, 12% to unenclosed land and 39% to enclosed land). Permissive access to water was found on 16% of holdings offering
permisive area access (CLA 1998). The findings indicate that there is a significant amount of permisive access to water, often in the form of fishing leases. The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (2000) estimate that access is gained in this way to approximately 2% of the main rivers and enclosed waters in England and Wales. The next section illustrates, however, varying degrees of satisfaction with current arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holdings with linear access</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>% of all responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permitted paths for walkers alongside a river/lake</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permitted paths for walkers along coastal cliff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River bank for angling</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River bank for mooring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of holdings</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holdings with area access</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>% of all responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waterside land (e.g. river/lake) for walking</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal cliff for walking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watersports</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of holdings</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


6.3 Access arrangements - Satisfaction and dissatisfaction

6.3.1 Data from the questionnaire of clubs suggested that existing formal and informal arrangements appear to work well for most clubs. Table 6.4 gives details of the number and % of respondents who felt they were able to assess the overall effectiveness of access arrangements, rather than the effectiveness of individual agreements. 90% of respondents felt that their existing arrangements were either mostly (35%) or very (55%) effective with 9% neutral and only 1% recording a degree of ineffectiveness. There were some differences between user types. Angling clubs had the highest proportion of formal arrangements that were considered to be very effective (68%), while canoeing respondents registered only 47% in this category and other users 55%. Similar differences occurred with informal arrangements. Only two clubs expressed the opinion that their arrangements were very ineffective: a canoe club which could not arrange a formal lease, could not afford the ‘exorbitant’ cost being requested, and felt that ‘anglers always came first’; one Federation of Anglers organisation in Northern England which had major leakage problems at their reservoir which the landlord (a local authority) could not afford to repair.

6.3.2 These data suggest a reasonable degree of satisfaction with current access arrangements. A further question, however, sought to ascertain satisfaction amongst clubs with the general level of access. This question revealed much higher levels of dissatisfaction. Table 6.5 indicates that amongst clubs responding to the questionnaire the general level of access is considered by the majority of respondents to be either reasonable (30% respondents), good (27% respondents) or very good (18% respondents) 29% of respondents felt access was poor or very poor. There is considerable dissatisfaction with access among canoe clubs. This user group had the highest number of respondents claiming that access was either very poor or poor. One third of canoe clubs expressed the feeling that access was poor and a further one fifth that it was very poor. In contrast, angling clubs appear to be more satisfied with their general level of access, with 44% of angling respondents claiming that access was either good or very good and a further 48%, that it was reasonable.
Table 6.4 Overall effectiveness of access arrangements: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clubs’ assessment of effectiveness</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Mostly effective</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Mostly ineffective</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Total number of agreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal agreements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% All formal arrangements</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal agreements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% All informal arrangements</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excludes 73 responses, comprising no answer, don’t knows and unable to assess overall effectiveness.

Table 6.5 General level of access questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clubs’ assessment of level of access</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Reasonable</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Total respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excludes 10 respondents who ticked more than one box or on lines dividing boxes.

6.3.3 Similar levels of dissatisfaction with access arrangements have been found in other studies. The national Youth Water Sport Audit study which included providers from voluntary, public and commercial sectors took place in 1996 (Anderson et al. 1996). Access was not central to the study but was explored through a postal questionnaire. The 258 water sports activity centres in the UK identified in the study used a range of water. 12% reported access problems. The main reasons given (in rank order) were water controlled by someone else, limited physical access, limited water available and competition from others. A similar question was asked of 750 water sports clubs (sailing, rowing, canoeing, windsurfing and water-skiing), of whom between 20% and 35% reported access problems. The most frequently mentioned access issue across all water sports was limited physical access to water. Competition from other sporting users was mentioned, particularly by rowers and canoeists; sailors were concerned by the limited availability of water.

6.3.4 Other studies suggest there is clear support from the general public for a greater level of access to inland water, particularly for non-powered craft. Just over half of the respondents to the survey of public demand for access to other open countryside (MVA Ltd 1999) felt that access rights to inland water should be extended for at least some types of non-powered craft. Some of the respondents to the survey wished an extension of access to be limited to canoeing, rowing and windsurfing. By contrast, approximately one-fifth of the respondents thought that there should not be any extension of statutory rights. The survey, however, did not differentiate between types of inland water, such as enclosed waters, rivers or canals.
6.3.5 Data from the focus groups conducted for this study revealed a complex range of views on what form of improved access might be beneficial. The participants in the Norfolk focus groups who were active in water sports felt that access to water could be improved especially through improved public slipways. Other focus group participants wanted more access to disused lakes and quarries. Young people, for example, enjoy swimming and ‘hanging out’ in such places, although this is almost always without permission of the owner. Young mothers in the Broads claimed they would welcome inland swimming lakes both to avoid having to travel to the coast and to get away from the dangers of sea swimming. Older people in the Broads were similarly keen on outdoor swimming on inland water, pointing out how popular and well organised this is in a number of other European countries.

6.4 Changes to access agreements - Attitudes and perceptions

6.4.1 Whilst there is evidence of a limited level of dissatisfaction with current access levels and arrangements amongst some users there are well known contrasting views on the value of changing existing procedures relating to access. Angling stakeholders claim that because they usually paid for riparian rights and they paid for licences, anglers should be allowed access to water space that, whilst not necessarily exclusive, is at least unhindered by other activities. They claimed that major extensions of access especially to canoeists would significantly increase interference with fishing and lead to claims for compensation from landowners and angling organisations. Canoeing stakeholders claim that their participation and activity levels are constrained by a lack of access and navigation rights to the majority of canoeable water. As shown in chapter 5 even formal access agreements bring only limited benefits. Over two thirds of agreements are either for the angling closed season or periods of less than one month.

6.4.2 Canoeing stakeholders claim that this type of situation stems in part from the difficulties of developing and maintaining access agreements since they involve many individual landowners along a river route. Actions by one landowner can undermine a collective agreement involving many others. They claim that a change to the current access situation is needed to accommodate increased participation and to allow expansion in the levels of activity of existing participants. While the BCU campaigns for legislation to gain access to all waters within management and environmental constraints, some canoeing stakeholders were prepared to consider an alternative approach that would provide conflict-free access to an appropriate amount of water.

6.4.3 Stakeholders from other sports and activities did not see access and extending navigation rights as a priority issue. For example, private cruising and canal boating stakeholders felt that extending access and navigation would do little to ease the problems stemming from planning and safety regulations or to increase participation (which is constrained by cost). As already noted in chapter 5 rowing and sailing stakeholders claim that overall there is sufficient inland water space for their activities. A significant proportion of clubs, however, would at least like to see more development of existing access arrangements to allow access to new waters.

6.4.4 Table 6.6 contains details of the responses to the questionnaire of clubs on the need for additional access. Over half expressed a desire for formal agreements. The greatest desire was for formal agreements for access to more rivers (49 respondents), followed by increased access to enclosed waters (22 respondents) and spaces for whitewater canoeing (25 respondents). The responses differed between canoeists and other users. The vast majority of canoe clubs felt additional agreements were required compared to 38% of angling clubs and 44% of other users.

6.4.5 Despite an obvious desire for a range of additional access, Table 6.7 indicates that 96 respondents (60%) recognised that the scope for obtaining new formal access in their local area was either poor or very poor. Good or very good opportunities for obtaining both formal and informal additional arrangements existed for only around 20% of respondents overall.
Table 6.6 Aspirations for additional access agreements: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club’s assessment of requirement for additional access respondents</th>
<th>Additional access required</th>
<th>Additional access not required</th>
<th>N number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7 Scope for new formal access arrangements: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clubs’ assessment of scope for new formal access arrangements</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>N number of respondents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other users</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excludes 6 responses where scope was not known

6.4.6 These responses reflect a desire for more space amongst a significant proportion of clubs and especially amongst those involved with canoeing. The comments accompanying these responses suggest that new access was primarily required to give a greater variety of local spaces and to avoid conflicts and interference on multi-user sites. Rarely did clubs indicate that more space was needed to accommodate increased membership or growth in demand.

6.5 Summary – Access as a constraint on supply participation

6.5.1 As mentioned in chapter 2 concern has been expressed in other studies that restricted access to inland water may limit the growth of water sports participation (BMIF 1997, Anderson et al. 1996). Land based sports and recreation activities have recently sought to develop payment based systems for improving access. Where there is an absence of legal routes and trails over land, some landowners have traditionally allowed access onto their land for horse riding by permit by permit (Ravenscroft and Long 1994). In such cases, the permit holders pay an annual fee for the right of access. Formal toll ride schemes have also become popular with horse riders, with UK Chasers Ltd contracting farmers to provide, in return for an annual fee, cross country courses on their land. Similarly, the 15 mile Pluckey Toll Ride was developed in Kent in the early 1990s, using permissive routes belonging to 11 different land owners. The management of the route was handled by South Eastern Toll Rides, who paid each of the 11 owners an annual fee for the use of their land (Anon, 1992). It would be possible to replicate these types of arrangements on water, with the ‘toll navigation’ being a potential way of developing longer routes for canoeing.

6.5.2 However, the divergent views in the focus groups illustrated the difficulty of actually identifying the effect of access on participation. In Leicestershire unemployed focus group participants felt they had little access to water and believed that there is very little local supply, while employed men felt lucky to have such a choice of water resources within easy reach of Leicester. The key difference between the groups is not access to water but access to private transport, education, information and the level of disposable income available to purchase equipment and club memberships. Evidence in previous chapters has shown the complex ways in which social exclusion affects participation in water-based sports and sport in general.

--- 74 ---
6.5.3 Other evidence presented in this chapter does not suggest that access can be neatly identified as a clear cut constraint on participation. The dissatisfaction with access arrangements indicates local problems faced by some clubs and perhaps a more general problem facing canoeing. The previous chapter also suggested that water skiing and windsurfing clubs may experience regional and local problems. Overall, however, access to water is generally considered to be reasonable or good and many clubs were fairly satisfied with both the existing formal and informal arrangements for access. It appears from the questionnaire of clubs that, in the main, agreements for access are working reasonably well for most types of user and there are few reported problems with landlords. Many angling clubs, in particular, have long term agreements. Canoeists, however, tend to have fewer formal agreements and their dissatisfaction with the current situation was clearly revealed. The difficulties over access facing canoeists highlighted by stakeholders were confirmed in the questionnaire of clubs.
7 The environment and water-based sport and recreation

7.1 Inland water spaces and environmental designations - current use

Water sports and recreation have implications for sustainability and environmental protection. Many water spaces have environmental designations and are important sites for wildlife and biodiversity, including the protection of rare species. Stakeholders representing sporting and recreational activities were particularly concerned about the effect of changing environmental legislation and designations. One stakeholder saw nature conservation as a ‘huge constraint’ while another saw environmental designations as the:

“most crucial issue facing our sport over the next 10 years. This is far more important than the whole access debate and all our other campaigns on access could be rendered ineffective.”

Some sport and recreational stakeholders, however, were keen to stress that they had a role to play in environmental management and that their activity did not conflict with the physical environment. Angling stakeholders claimed they could act as ‘watchdogs for the environment’ and recently improved relations with English Nature were partly linked to the increased willingness of clubs to address local environmental issues. Canoeing stakeholder organisations claimed their activity was generally compatible with conservation providing that points of ingress and egress were correctly managed and shallow waters were avoided. Canoeing stakeholders also pointed to their role working with conservation bodies in monitoring rare species in coastal waters.

7.1.3 The questionnaire of clubs obtained information on the effect of existing environmental designations on current use. Table 7.1 indicates that respondents felt environmental designations affected around 29% of sites with formal arrangements and 18% of those with informal arrangements. The perceived effects of designations did not differ significantly between users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal arrangements</th>
<th>Informal arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>No impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other users</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents=203

7.1.4 Table 7.2 shows the findings from the analysis of data in the GDSS on the relationship between current use and SSSI designations. As explained in Chapter 4 section 6 the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) data layer used in the GDSS contains information on a number of relevant nature conservation designations within England and Wales, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsars. Also in chapter 4 table 4.9 indicated that 8% of the major iver network and 3% of the canal network was covered by an SSSI. Table 4.11 showed that over 25% of all enclosed waters used for recreation are partly covered by an SSSI and Table 7.2 below indicates how this figure varies by sport. Almost 40% of the enclosed waters currently used for power boating are partly covered by SSSI status compared to 29% for angling and 25% for water-skiing. These data suggest that enclosed waters with conservation designations can accommodate a range of water based recreation. For most sports, the mean area of enclosed waters used that partly overlap an SSSI is much larger than those used with no conservation designation (Table 7.3). This suggests that larger enclosed waters where part of the area is in an SSSI can better accommodate water sports without an environmental impact.
### Table 7.2. SSSI designation and current use of enclosed waters (1ha or more) for selected sport and recreation types in England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total enclosed waters (1ha or more) used</th>
<th>Of which in SSSI</th>
<th>Total number of enclosed waters with part of area in SSSI</th>
<th>Number of which are within an SSSI</th>
<th>% of which are within an SSSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-aqua</td>
<td>8,635</td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>18,148</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>21,221</td>
<td>12,281</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>4,616</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>36,517</td>
<td>19,573</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>17,709</td>
<td>10,968</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power boating</td>
<td>6,263</td>
<td>3,678</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-skiing</td>
<td>5,677</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7.3. SSSI designation and current use: mean area of enclosed waters (1ha or more) for selected sport and recreation types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mean area (ha)</th>
<th>Mean area within an SSSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-aqua</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power boating</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-skiing</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GDSS

#### 7.2 Water spaces and environmental designation - aspiration spaces

##### 7.2.1

A number of stakeholders stressed the environmental problems of extending access to new water spaces. Stakeholders responsible for environmental management highlight the potential difficulties with the example of the 62 current proposals to restore canal navigation which would affect 17 SSSIs located on derelict former canals that have developed a biodiversity of aquatic life. Some stakeholders claimed that certain proposals would result in the reason for SSSI designation being lost if the canal were opened up to large scale boating. Equally, canal boating stakeholders stress that restoration projects seek to ensure they are in keeping with the principles of sustainable development. Good practice examples, such as on the Rochdale canal illustrate how restorers can work closely with English Nature to maintain bio-diversity and rare species.

##### 7.2.2

Stakeholders for a number of water-based sport and recreation activities provided case study examples of where environmental designation is constraining activity by preventing access to new space of threatening existing spaces. The concerns of waterskiers have been discussed in Chapter 5 as was the specific example of rowing in West Hertfordshire. Generally stakeholders for powered craft activities felt that some of their current spaces were threatened by potential or existing environmental designations. The Disabled Water-ski Federation currently feel that SSSI designation threatens their use of a lake in southern England that is one of their five main sites in England and Wales.

##### 7.2.3

Overall, evidence of the tensions between environmental designations and water-based sport is based on examples specific to particular sports or locations. More general evidence would be useful. Stakeholder interviewees noted that currently 40 out of the 70 disputes in England over SSSIs involve water but it is unclear to what degree sport or recreation is an issue.

##### 7.2.4

Sport and recreation stakeholders speculated that environmental designations may make future extensions of access and navigation to individual water spaces a more complex and costly process if improved sensitivity analysis is required. These same
interviewees also claimed that the role of sport and recreation bodies in decision-making over the development of aspiration spaces was compromised by the lack of access to scientific information and knowledge compared to that available for government conservation organisations. English Nature, in particular, was felt to have the resources and personnel to generate knowledge and to present cases for designations in a manner that no sport or recreation organisation could match.

7.2.5 The questionnaire of clubs also asked about the impact of future environmental designations on access arrangements. The results are shown Table 7.4. 38% of clubs who responded felt that environmental designations could make access for sports and recreation worse in the future on water spaces with formal arrangements. 30% felt this was the case where informal arrangements existed. Pre-conceptions and unfavourable attitudes towards certain recreational users (particularly water-skiing and canoeing) were cited as the main disadvantage of future environmental designations. Some clubs felt future environmental designation could be beneficial. Two angling clubs felt such designations could improve opportunities for angling because they would define specific areas for use.

Table 7.4. Impact of future environmental designations on access arrangements: questionnaire of clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal better</th>
<th>same</th>
<th>worse</th>
<th>Informal better</th>
<th>same</th>
<th>worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Water quality and the supply of water spaces

7.3.1 The quality of water was a significant environmental concern amongst stakeholders and the focus group participants. The British Long Distance Swimming Association has experienced events on inland water being disrupted because of poor water quality mainly linked to sewage. Some of the focus group members suggested that water quality was a key issue affecting use of water for sport and recreation. Their main concern was pollution. This arose in all focus groups and across all age ranges. People in many groups were able to recount incidents of pollution or recalled newspaper articles about the dangers to health of swimming in river and lake water. Bristol young people noted that the River Avon has a high tidal range and is very muddy looking which gave rise to concerns about pollution. This perception was believed to be stimulated by media stories about people being ill after falling in or taking part in events which in turn was believed to fuel parental concern about participation in water sports. Some participants also emphasised that media reports on blue-green algae and Weil's disease added to their concerns about water quality. Similar views were expressed in other parts of the country:

"If you put your hand in the water round here, you're likely to lose your fingers." (youth, Merseyside)

"There isn't a clean lake locally. The nearest clean lake is 50-60 minutes car drive away." (male jet-skier, 40+ Bristol)

7.3.2 In none of the groups were there people who believed that inland water is clean enough to swim in. Indeed, while expressing a desire for a swimming lake in the Broads, focus group participants made the point that the water would have to be cleaner than it is currently. Elsewhere the sentiments were clear:

"I wouldn't let my kids swim round here, it's not clean." (female 30+ Merseyside)
"I wouldn’t scuba dive in this country because the water’s too dirty." (female, 30+ Bristol)

7.3.3 However, a number of those living in Birmingham were quick to point out that the canals in the area are a lot less polluted now than in the past and have now been dredged properly, meaning that there is less chance of there being rubbish under the surface. Notwithstanding the improvements that have been made in water quality, however, it seems that pollution is a reason for some people not taking up watersports:

"My main reason for not taking up canoeing is worries about water pollution." (female, 35+ Bristol)

7.3.4 For others, the comparison is between their perception of the clean warm water they encountered on holiday and the cold polluted water in England and Wales. Even if this perception is false, and inland water in England and Wales is not dangerously polluted, there are clearly issues for public bodies to address.

7.4 The relations between environmental bodies and water sports and recreation - attitudes and perceptions

7.4.1 Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of nature conservation and some stressed that participants in many activities were very supportive of conservation. For example, stakeholders claimed many boaters consider themselves to be keen conservationists with the environment adding to the pleasure of being active on the waterways. A number of stakeholders argued that whilst current management plans are reasonable there are fears over change to designations arising from the European habitats directive. Water sport and recreation stakeholders would like to see confirmation that existing activities are preserved. However, there is a view amongst a number of stakeholders that in some designated areas, especially National Parks, there is a growing predisposition against most water-based activities in favour of quiet enjoyment. As noted in chapter 2, DETR Circular 12/96 on National Parks suggests that such a predisposition should not be the norm. The circular notes in paragraph 14 that "the Government does not accept that particular activities should be excluded from throughout the Parks as a matter of principle. They contain a variety of landscapes capable of accepting and absorbing many different types of leisure activity."

7.4.2 It is necessary not to conceptualise the relationship between the environment and water-based sports and recreation simply as one of conflict. Organisations concerned with environmental and wildlife protection may view an increase in water use for sport and recreation in some sensitive locations as a threat. Nevertheless, well-managed and sustainable improvements in access to water spaces for sport and recreation can play a beneficial role in nature conservation and environmental protection and enhancement. Examples from other countries suggest that sport and recreation stakeholders can organise themselves to play a role in sustainability initiatives by monitoring and managing sensitive locations (Fox and Madsen 1997). Both canoeing and angling stakeholders wished to move towards a situation where their potential positive role in conservation would be further developed in collaboration with other bodies.

7.4.3 The stakeholder interviews and expert panels revealed strongly differing views on the suitability of current approaches to sport and recreation of government bodies responsible for conservation and the environment. English Nature's (2001) recent publication on Freshwater Fisheries and Nature Conservation was acknowledged by many stakeholders as being a useful recognition of the role of sporting bodies in the conservation process. Nevertheless, some stakeholders were disappointed that the study focused on angling and did not acknowledge the potential role played in nature conservation by participants in other forms of water-based sport and recreation. Stakeholders representing sports other than angling also claimed that the Environment Agency and English Nature favoured angling over other sport and recreation activities
and argued that the Agency's recreation budget was insufficient to allow more support for other types of water sport.

7.4.4 Private water companies also have developed conservation initiatives as set out in their annual Conservation, Access and Recreation (CARs) reports. Stakeholders both from both inside and outside the water industry felt that these reports tended to focus on species and bio-diversity rather than recreation. CARs also highlighted major set piece recreational initiatives rather than recreation as a whole.

7.5 The evidence on the environmental impacts of water based-sport and recreation

7.5.1 The debates regarding the relationship between environmental designation and the use of inland water space for sport and recreation will to some degree be influenced by the scientific evidence on the effects of recreational activity on species and habitats.

7.5.2 Riverside areas have been the subject of considerable academic research with regard to recreational disturbance. Two kinds of ecological effects have been found: the deterioration and destruction of the habitat and the disturbance to wildlife (Green 1996). Pollution is the most serious threat to the destruction of water vegetation, however this is not significantly generated by people on foot/walkers. Nevertheless, angling and walking can adversely disturb birds that nest near the water's edge (Sidaway 1990). In addition, angling can cause an increase in bacterial loading of water bodies and pollution by solid wastes (English Nature 1998). Swimming too, can disturb the bottom sediments of water bodies resulting in increased turbidity and a potential release of nutrients, toxicants and pathogens. However more active water based pursuits cause far more significant disturbance. Disturbance to wildlife is related to the type of activity (Yalden 1992, Sidaway 1990). The RSPB (1994) suggests, with respect to birds, that there is very little conclusive evidence available about disturbance, and that many studies have analysed the wrong variables. For example, studies of the impact of access on birds have tended to concentrate on population counts rather than the ability of a bird population to sustain itself. The RSPB thus urges caution in the use of conflict and impact studies.

7.5.3 The evidence regarding the impacts of canoeing and fishing on the environment has been much disputed since the Environment Agency (2000) report on this issue suggested canoeing had minimal impact. More recently evidence from Germany (Wolter 2000) suggest that even non-powered craft in river can significantly disturb rarer fish species, particularly those with a lower tolerance of disturbance and requiring distinctive ecological niches. The evidence from the GDSS suggests that in England and Wales there is substantial overlap between water-based sport and recreation on rivers and fishing stretches supporting freshwater and salmonid species. 22% of the major river and canal network is covered by a Salmon Action Plan but there is no general evidence, apart from anecdote and specific local examples, on the impact of sport and recreation on fish stocks in SAP areas. Clearly, the debates over the scientific evidence on this issue will continue. Currently, stakeholders for water sport and recreation are concerned over possible changes to the process of environmental designation and are seeking guidance from government bodies on likely future procedures.
8 Water spaces, relations between users and governance

8.1 Water spaces and conflict

8.1.1 A number of stakeholders stressed that whilst conflict affected participants in certain water sports there was little evidence on the degree or level of conflict. Data on conflict were collected from questionnaire of clubs, interviews with stakeholders and also from the focus groups. Conflicts occur between a range of people and involve water space users, people using the banks and water space owners. The data collation on conflict also revealed a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with the governance of water sport and recreation.

8.1.2 The questionnaire of clubs obtained information on 1,081 used water spaces. Conflict between different users was reported by clubs as occurring on 25% of these water spaces in England and 11% in Wales. The figure for canoeing club water spaces was slightly higher at 27% (20% Wales). The figure for angling clubs was 15% (4% Wales). This may be accounted for by the fact that the proportion of angling waters where clubs owned their own access (20%) was higher than the proportion for all clubs (10%) and for canoe clubs (4%). These figures suggest a substantial majority of club based activity takes place with little conflict.

8.2 Water spaces and conflicts - canoeing

8.2.1 Canoeing clubs responding to the questionnaire seemed to experience the highest levels of conflict. The interviews with BCU regional and local access officers provided an opportunity to ascertain the nature, frequency and location of conflicts. Table 8.1 summarises the key conflict sites for canoeing. These are divided into two groups. The first group are those sites that are classified as well known and were cited by canoeists, stakeholders and clubs not associated with canoeing. The less well known conflicts were mainly cited by canoeists but were mentioned by a smaller number of other stakeholders and clubs.

Table 8.1 Examples of well known and less well known sites of conflict between canoeists and other water-based users, England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well known</th>
<th>Less well known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thames - Hurley and Hambledon weirs</td>
<td>Bassenthwaite Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Calder - Padham weir</td>
<td>River Cherwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Barle - Tar Steps</td>
<td>River Dane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Ouse - Bedford section</td>
<td>Fossdyke Navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Lugg</td>
<td>Kennet and Avon Canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Lune - Halton Rapids</td>
<td>River Weaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Tees - Abbey Rapids</td>
<td>River Wey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tywi - Llandovery to Llansteffin</td>
<td>River Derwent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Rother (West Sussex)</td>
<td>River Esk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2.2 Weirs and rapids also often attract conflicts because they are keenly sought by both canoeists who use them as play sites, and anglers who find the aerated water particularly good for fishing. The problem is particularly marked on some weirs on the Thames because there is so little whitewater in the South East region. It is noteworthy that conflicts with other users occur on the River Barle, which is covered by a BCU Formal Access Agreement, and on navigations such as the Kennet and Avon Canal. Conflicts were also reported at the whitewater centres at Holme Pierrepont, Northampton and at the Tees Barrage suggesting overuse by canoeists. Canoeing stakeholders also acknowledged there were many water spaces where their activities were relatively unhindered. For example, canoeists on some parts of the Thames are relatively satisfied with their current situation since clubs have access to good facilities and nearby weirs. Some canoeing stakeholders argued, however, that rowers in some locations on the Thames present a collision threat to canoeists and they felt that the Environment Agency could be more sensitive to canoeing interest when redeveloping Thames weirs.
8.3 Water spaces and conflicts - angling

8.3.1 Angling occurs on the greatest proportion of inland waters in England and Wales but proportionally few conflicts occur. Stakeholders suggested that conflict levels were probably highest on the canal network where other bankside users, including cyclists, dog owners and walkers, clash with anglers. Some angling stakeholders acknowledged that many anglers avoid conflict either because riparian rights and legal restrictions limit the presence of other users on rivers or because many anglers join still water clubs whose waters are used only for angling. It was also claimed that anglers using rivers with navigations experienced low levels of conflicts with other water users since boat owners were usually considerate in these situations and “angling adjusts and anglers know what to expect”. Competitions on navigations were usually successful since they were well planned and other users responded accordingly.

8.3.2 Angling stakeholders and clubs were particularly concerned about conflict on waters where other users especially canoeists were illegally present and infringing on riparian rights. Both angling and canoeing stakeholders acknowledged, however, that overall conflicts between these two users were relatively few, and those that occurred were most often caused by rogue elements, especially younger unregulated groups in both sports. Stakeholders from both parties acknowledged that conflict was geographically uneven and tended to occur in locations often linked to whitewater. For example, conflicts occur notably in the salmon and trout fisheries of Wales and Northern England. The BCU and WCA encourage their members to avoid certain stretches in these regions. Nevertheless, one angling stakeholder still described parts of the region as a ‘boiling cauldron of conflict’.

8.3.3 The case of North Wales confirms the point made in section 5.5 that the desire for whitewater amongst canoeists is a particularly significant source of canoeing related conflicts. In other locations with a history of good relations between local angling and canoeing clubs, stakeholders stressed conflicts were often managed effectively through local discussion and arrangements.

8.4 Water spaces and conflicts - other sports

8.4.1 The majority of inland sailing and windsurfing occurs on enclosed waters. Stakeholders suggested that conflicts are generally rare. Conflicts were reported between the two activities on Edgbaston and Hollowell reservoirs and also on some of the large lakes in Cumbria but these are likely to be a result of overuse on busy days. These are typical of many conflicts between inland water users and stem from close contact and periods of overcrowding.

8.4.2 Similarly, reported rowing conflicts tended to be on well-used rowing stretches such as the Thames at Henley and Oxford, Eton Rowing Lake, the Wear at Durham and Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. This suggests conflicts are with other rowers, which is supported by stakeholder views mentioned in chapter 5 which noted overuse at these locations. Rowers also experience conflicts with pleasure boat operators and cruisers during summer months on the Thames, Dee and Broads. Both sailing and rowing stakeholders claimed to experience little overlap or problems with canoeing, despite canoeing stakeholders claims that rowers were a problem on the Thames.

8.4.3 For safety reasons, water-skiing tends to occur either on dedicated or zoned lakes. Conflicts with other users are, therefore, rare. However, stakeholders and clubs reported problems at Bryn Bach Lake in Newport and Grendon Lakes near Bedford because of conflicts with other powered craft users. Not surprisingly, conflicts were also reported on Lake Windermere, which probably reflects the high levels of use and the recent history underlying planned introduction of a speed limit in 2005.

8.4.4 Canal and cruise boat stakeholders reported occasional conflicts with other users on a number of routes. Interviewees said conflict with anglers was generally avoided by
keeping to the middle of the channel. Some suggested, however, that conflicts with other boat users did occur. These tended to be near to hire craft centres, and typically on Sunday afternoons when new users were familiarising themselves with their craft. Only one stakeholder noted that some canal boaters experience occasional conflicts with freight. Freight traffic on British Waterways canals and rivers fell from 4 million tonnes per annum towards to end of the 1980s to 3.3 million tonnes per annum in the mid 1990s but rose back to 3.8 tonnes for 2000/1.

8.4.5 Many stakeholders for boat based sports claimed that there are perpetual disputes with anglers on rivers and canals rather than on enclosed water spaces but that these are usually localised and resolved locally. The conflicts manifest themselves by boaters feeling that anglers' carbon rods stretched across the water are an obstruction as is equipment that takes up space on moorings. On enclosed waters most participants have come to agreements regarding ‘no-go’ areas, which appear to work and not create any long term problems.

8.4.6 Other sports reported low levels of conflict. The British Triathlon Association suggested water-based conflicts were very rare because of high marshalling levels and good organisation. There are occasional conflicts with bankside walkers but most conflicts experienced by triathletes are with cars on the land-based parts of the events. A number of stakeholders noted there were conflicts with personal water craft but these were usually in estuary areas. Dragon boat races tend to use wide stretches of tidal rivers and be well organised to ensure no other water users are in the way. However, conflicts do occasionally occur, and were reported by stakeholders on the Severn at Worcester. Scuba diving usually occurs only formally on enclosed waters and is well managed for safety reasons. Conflicts were reported on some lakes exclusively used for diving suggesting overuse and conflict with other divers. Overall, the evidence of conflict between users suggests that it particularly affects certain activities, especially canoeists, and certain locations. Many participants, however, appear to experience very little conflict with other users either because water space is well managed or because other users are rarely present. As noted in chapter 5, 62% of the enclosed waters in England and Wales that are used for recreation and sport have only one user formally identified.

8.5 Conflict between water and bankside users

8.5.1 Canoeing, angling and boating stakeholders all identified problematic conflicts with bankside users, mainly with anecdotal evidence of the growth in incidents involving violence, vandalism and abuse. Cruising and canal boating organisations claimed that fast-moving cyclists created the most significant current conflict facing participants. This is also a problem for anglers. Cyclists have used towpaths for many years but stakeholders claimed the growth of mountain biking had led to an increase in fast cycling on towpaths.

8.5.2 On some canals angling stakeholders claimed the problems of cyclists have lessened in recent years because of the falling numbers of anglers, such as on the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. Anglers also claimed to experience conflicts with walkers but these are considered to be a lesser problem. Some interviewees claimed that problematic interactions with cyclists and walkers were best tackled through education and communication. Examples of best practice included signs warning cyclists that other users were present.

8.5.3 Despite the differing conflicts, the questionnaire of clubs revealed that many local clubs have made efforts to improve relations with other users. 93 out of 252 clubs had been involved in such initiatives in the last three years. These have often taken the form of meetings with other groups and education programmes for other users. Anglers had undertaken 28 such initiatives and canoeists 43. Other events had been initiated by canal boat users, dragon boaters, rowers, sail and motor boaters, sub aqua divers, triathletes and water-skiers. There has been a mixed reaction to these initiatives, with some claiming that relations with other users have definitely shown
improvement and some saying that nothing has changed. Most agree, however, that communication and education are vital if users are to avoid conflict in the future.

8.6 Water conflict and water sport and recreation governance

8.6.1 Many stakeholders stressed that conflicts between water users were often resolved through local discussion. Cruising and boating stakeholders felt local river user groups were valuable vehicles for dealing with problems. The Wye forum was also viewed positively by involved stakeholders. Good codes of practice and education programmes were also often effective at the local level. Rowing and sailing organisations claimed that difficulties with anglers are regularly resolved by local discussion. Some stakeholders, however, were concerned that local access fora set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 might not be very effective for water sport and recreation users since they would be a minor voice among many land-based user.

8.6.2 The discussion of conflict resolution in expert groups revealed a certain frustration with the governance of water sport and recreation. This was reflected in stakeholder interviews. Some angling stakeholders claimed that other governing bodies are not prepared to step in and regulate their sport in the way angling clubs do. Stakeholders for other sports argued that heavy-handed regulation by national bodies or clubs was no longer possible given changing social trends. Younger people would simply leave clubs and organisations that acted in such a way. Some regional stakeholders could provide examples of club members who had been reprimanded or disciplined who simply joined other clubs or participated informally.

8.6.3 Many of the sport and recreation stakeholders highlighted the well known concerns over the status of water sport and recreation in national government bodies. The Moran Committee, an informal collection of angling and fishing organisations, in evidence to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review (MAFF 2000), asserted that the Environment Agency was not even handed in its approach in respect of its recreational duties seeming, for example, to promote canoeing even where this is in conflict with angling. The Review (MAFF 2000) did not find any evidence to support this assertion but it did note that there has been increased competition for water space between users, although no evidence (apart from the claims of interest groups) for this is offered.

8.6.4 In Wales stakeholders felt that the co-ordination between different government bodies concerned with water-based sport and recreation had improved in the last two years now that the national assembly had been operating for a prolonged period. In England angling stakeholders were frustrated about the treatment of recreational angling in central government. The emphasis in DEFRA is perceived to be more on sport fishing and less on wider recreational fishing, excellence and young people, which is the DCMS agenda. Equally, anglers are frustrated that Sport England does not promote angling as an international sport that would, as a result, receive elite funding. Angling was not included in the recent Sport England Planning Bulletin (2001) Planning for Water Sports.

8.6.5 In England national level stakeholders responsible for water sports were very concerned by the lack of clear ministerial and departmental responsibilities for their activities. A number argued that resources for water sport and recreation were fragmented and made it difficult for most sports, apart from angling, to have an acceptable profile in central government. Furthermore, stakeholders perceived that responsibilities for water-based sport and recreation were unclear between DEFRA, DCMS, Sport England, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency. Stakeholders welcomed the memorandum of understanding between the Countryside Agency, Environment Agency and Sport England but said that any benefits were yet to be apparent. Stakeholders were disappointed by the lack of discussion of water-based sport and recreation in the draft Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17) on sport and recreation in England. The National Boating Alliance may alter the profile in
government of some water sport and recreation activities but governing bodies and other organisations will still be faced with responsibilities split between DEFRA and DCMS.

8.6.6 Many stakeholders also expressed frustration with local and regional government structures. This was also reflected in a number of the comments local clubs submitted on their questionnaires. Stakeholders for water-skiing, rowing and sailing all pointed to examples where they felt the planning process prevented local clubs from operating on particular spaces for what they felt were highly debatable reasons. A number of stakeholders, however, argued that the task of managing all the different dimensions of planning for water use and development on the bankside was too great for sport and recreational structures that are dependent on voluntary activity at the local level. One stakeholder noted:

"It is cheap to participate in policy discussions but when it comes to managing rivers, banks and the public the task is so huge that we tend to retreat to our traditional constituencies."

8.6.7 This quote reflects a more general acceptance by some stakeholders that local clubs for water sport and recreation have yet to develop proactive strategies towards local authorities and planning systems. Most clubs simply have to respond reactively to local authority polices and initiatives. Often clubs acted only when their activity was threatened and they rarely co-operated with other recreational water users. A few stakeholders were optimistic that local authority cultural strategies might provide an opportunity to create more effective local authority attitudes and initiatives towards water sport and recreation. Other stakeholders felt, however, that the potential of cultural strategies was severely limited by the lack of local authority resources and pointed out that the growth of many water sports in the last two decades, such as windsurfing, has relied on commercial operators. Also stakeholders claimed that very few local authorities were willing to designate new areas for water sport and recreation. It is noteworthy, therefore, that whilst a number of water sports and recreational organisations have managed to adjust to central government agendas such as social inclusion and disability, they have been less effective in strategically addressing the land use planning system. The successful campaign by stakeholders on the rateable value for sports clubs, which also involved the Central Council for Physical Recreation, indicates that collective action to address local issues can be effective. In addition, previous studies have identified examples of good practice for the planning and management of watersports (Sports Council and Countryside Commission 1995). Best practice examples provide some cause for optimism.

8.6.8 There was considerable discussion in the expert groups of how existing and new governance arrangements might overcome some of the frustrations with the existing structures. There was much debate over the role of regional tiers. Some group participants highlighted the benefit of a regional approach as used for sport in the 1980s whilst others felt that regional bodies could become either talking shops or the focus for conflicts that might be more easily solved locally. Nevertheless, a majority of expert group participants and a number of stakeholders, including land manager organisations, felt that a regional tier of activity was important for strategically identifying water spaces with potential for new sport and recreation use and also for co-ordinating the collective activity that would be needed to improve access.

8.6.9 Clearly the frustration expressed by some stakeholders with governance structures at the local and national level is not new. The next chapter examines a number of scenarios for future action. Any policy development will have to address not only conflicts but also the wide range of issues highlighted in this chapter. This chapter, however, suggests conflict is present in water-based sport and recreation, mainly in overcrowded areas and in some locations where informal canoeing occurs, but its scale should not be exaggerated as often it is localised and in some cases clubs have found local solutions.
9 Synthesis: Issues, Implications and Possible Solutions

9.1 The major issues

9.1.1 This chapter synthesises the information gathered throughout the research to identify the major issues that have arisen, their implications and possible solutions. Facts have been separated from perceptions, both of which emerged from the research. This chapter starts by discussing the key facts and perceptions relating to the following major issues:

- Participation in and latent demand for water-based sport and recreation activities
- Imbalances in the supply of resources for water-based recreation
- Local and regional planning and strategy issues
- The impact of conservation designations
- Conflict and conflict resolution
- Rights and responsibilities
- Administration and regulation of access to inland water
- Barriers to participation

9.1.2 The chapter then identifies the implications that arise from these facts and perceptions and seeks to assess the scale and nature of the problem facing policy agencies. This is followed by a discussion of some possible scenarios that might act as solutions to these problems.

9.2 Participation in and latent demand for water-based sport and recreation activities

**Facts**

- There is little current growth in participation in most activities. Generally, participation in some activities, such as coarse angling and windsurfing, is declining, while there are signs that it is increasing in others, particularly rowing and canoeing. Participation by disabled people is increasing, but from a very low base. In Wales, overall participation in water-based sport and recreation is steady.
- Best estimates suggest 3-4% of the adult population regularly participate in water-based sport and recreation.
- Participants in watercraft activities and diving are predominantly middle class white males under the age of 60. There is a broader profile of participants in coarse fishing. There is little evidence of racial or gender diversity in many water-based activities. Participation rates for women in all water-based sports and recreation activities tend to be considerably lower for women compared to men.
- Income, social background and gender are the strongest determinants of who participates in water-based recreational activity.
- There is a shift away from club membership towards a more informal approach to many water-based recreation activities, exemplified by the growth of commercial day ticket fisheries.
- Travel to facilities is an integral part of most people's water-based recreation experience; this limits involvement by those with little or no access to private transport.
- Few people have more than modest experience of water-based recreation, and few are being taught the skills at school or at home.
- For water-based recreation activities as a whole, there is little evidence of a general latent demand constrained by a lack of resources.
- There is latent demand constrained by a lack of suitable water resources generally for white water and long distance canoeing, and in particular locations for water skiing, windsurfing and rowing.
- Many people have aspirations related to expensive motorised activities but these are not...
translated into real or latent demand because of barriers that are largely economic rather than resource-related.

**Perceptions**

- It is probable that the age profile of participants is changing, with a shift towards older people. Following broader trend data, it is likely that this is a result of older people remaining active, and younger people being less inclined to participate. This suggests that activity rates could begin to fall faster in the future, as older people stop participating but are not replaced in sufficient numbers by younger people.
- Many people in the focus groups suggested that the activity itself is now less important than the potential it offers for socialising with friends.
- The Sports Council for Wales believes that there is some unmet demand for resources in Wales.
- There is a feeling among some people that many water-based activities are elitist and exclusionary. This is particularly the case for ethnic groups, women, disabled people and young people.
- There is a perceived lack of information about the availability of facilities. It is thought that attention to overcoming this knowledge gap could stimulate some new consumption.
- The demand for water-based activities seems, at least in part, to be supply-driven, meaning that there may be scope to generate new consumption through the strategic provision of new facilities and improvement of existing facilities, especially for activities such as canoeing, water skiing, rowing and scuba diving. Aggressive marketing will be needed to achieve this.

**9.3 Imbalances in the supply of resources for water-based recreation**

**Facts**

- The potential carrying capacity of the available resource exceeds current consumption. This is particularly the case for enclosed waters (lakes, gravel pits and reservoirs), where approximately half of the available resource in England and Wales is not currently accessible for sport or recreation activity except by the owners and their personal guests.
- There are regional imbalances - with the south east of England in particular experiencing crowding and competition for resources (despite its relative wealth of water resources) - and localised experience of crowding particularly around access points such as slipways, marinas and club launching facilities.
- There are also imbalances within Wales, which are exacerbated by the local topography.
- Imbalances in the supply of resources are exacerbated by many clubs (especially angling and sailing) signing long leases with riparian owners, thus excluding other users, even if the nature and structure of demand changes over time and where activities are inherently compatible.
- There is a lack of supply of specific resources such as different types of water for canoeing (white water in the south east of England, for example), better spaces for competitions (especially rowing), additional larger bodies of enclosed water for water skiing and windsurfing, and additional facilities - or access - for casual and low income users.
- There is a limited supply of salmon angling rivers in parts of England and these shortages result in anglers travelling to Wales and other locations with suitable salmon angling opportunities.

**Perceptions**

- Few stakeholder organisations claim that there is a major shortfall in the supply of water resources. The exception to this is canoeing, where access to additional waters, particularly for longer-distance journeys and to white water, is seen as a priority. There are also additional resource requirements in specific locations identified by water skiing and rowing.
- The Sports Council for Wales believes that there is a shortage of facilities in some parts of Wales.
- Stakeholder organisations disagree about the extent and location of the imbalances between supply and demand as well as the required remedial action. This occurs between sports (angling and canoeing for example) and also within specific activities such as cruising where there are differences of opinion about the demand for and location of new moorings, marinas and additional lengths of canal.
Since demand is supply-influenced, additional water resources need to be associated with a comprehensive management and promotional infrastructure to afford access to different target groups especially where casual, low income and special needs are involved. For example, certainty and security in use are viewed by women as important attributes of new facilities.

9.4 Local and regional planning and strategy issues

Facts
- Current planning policy guidance in England and Wales is weak with respect to water-based sport and recreation.
- Water-based recreation development because of its wider amenity value can bring environmental, social and economic benefits in urban and rural areas but this is not fully reflected in planning guidance. Few local planning authorities are keen to designate areas for water-based recreation development even where existing areas have been lost to other forms of development.
- Empirically, this weakness has not hindered leisure-related schemes from gaining planning permission.
- Few water-based sport and recreation stakeholder organisations input much to the statutory planning process.
- There is little evidence of any co-operation between stakeholder organisations in considering how to capitalise on planning obligations associated with other types of development. This reflects varying approaches to local liaison on the part of different stakeholder organisations based on the respective resources at their disposal.
- Some stakeholder organisations have become more adept at linking their interests to significant policy areas such as health, economic regeneration, education and environmental improvement.
- Local authority cultural strategies offer a chance to bring water-based sport and recreation more firmly into the public arena.
- New small-scale development opportunities for water-based recreation may exist in flood plains.

Perceptions
- There is a common feeling expressed by user representative groups that good recreation developments often fail to gain planning consent on largely spurious grounds (for example traffic, noise and nuisance) reflecting local biases against certain forms of development, especially in the countryside.
- It is claimed that, with the exception of angling, few watersports enjoy much political visibility or support.
- In urban areas it is also felt - by some user groups and individuals - that water-based recreation development loses out to the more lucrative developments associated with offices and residential accommodation where a location near water is seen as particularly attractive. In some locations waterfront redevelopment has brought benefits for water-based sport and recreation.
- It is felt that the new Boating Alliance might address the current lack of co-operation between user groups and local government with respect to boating although it will not necessarily take on any broader perspective.
- Some stakeholder organisations recognise the potential benefits of adopting a strategic regional approach to provision. However, few saw any benefit from the regional strategies developed in the 1980s and there is little faith that a new approach would yield different results.
- There are concerns that the new local access forums may deflect attention away from access issues associated with inland water.
- For many stakeholder organisations, the key to unlocking potential lies not with strategies but with direct contact with landowners and other riparian rights owners (especially water companies). This approach has traditionally been successful for angling and sailing clubs although other groups point out that local liaison is not always effective.
- There are concerns about which organisations might assume the management of any new facilities. It is widely asserted that local authorities, although appropriate, are unlikely to have the resources while most water companies have a poor reputation in the eyes of user groups for both provision and management.
Water company conservation, access and recreation strategies tend to concentrate on environmental issues and major set piece recreational development rather than the broader role for recreation.

9.5 The impact of conservation designations

**Facts**
- The evidence about the impact of conservation designations on water-based recreation activity is fragmented and often based on local examples.
- There is some, mainly case study, evidence of water-based sport and recreation activities being severely constrained or banned when an area is designated.
- There is case study evidence of conservation bodies resisting attempts by water sport and recreation clubs to make new use of water spaces for non-powered craft even when conservation designations are limited or absent on the grounds that recreation use will be unsustainable in environmental terms.
- SSSI designations cover 8% of the water area on the major river network and 3% of the canal network in England and Wales.
- SSSI designations cover part of the water area in 24% of enclosed waters in England and Wales.
- 40 of the 70 current disputes about SSSIs involve those associated with water.

**Perceptions**
- There are reports that indicate that recreation activities impact negatively on wildlife. None of these reports has been accepted uncritically even by those whose positions the reports favour.
- It is widely perceived that conservation tends to take precedence over recreation because there are no alternative (or complementary) recreation or access designations. Thus ‘competition’ is increasingly keenly felt by many stakeholder organisations, because of the growing emphasis on conservation in the use of sensitive or fragile sites.
- In England, it is widely perceived that English Nature is a more effective and influential organisation than its recreational equivalents, especially Sport England, which is attributed to its established network of local conservation officers.
- The situation in Wales is perceived to be more balanced, with CCW generally thought to be discharging its dual function of recreation and conservation effectively. The Sports Council for Wales claims to work constructively with CCW in attempting to achieve ‘access for all, but not access to everywhere’.
- Conservation is often viewed more positively than recreation by landowners particularly if it leads to greater exclusivity and control over their land, or to financial reward.
- Many water sports organisations feel that the impact of conservation designations is one of the most significant issues that they face, with some fearing that SAC designation could lead to the loss of access for water craft to many recreationally significant water resources.
- Many water sports stakeholders believe that environmental designations will in future lead to more spatial and temporal zoning and the closure of some recreation facilities.

9.6 Conflict and conflict resolution

**Facts**
- There has been conflict between anglers and canoeists for many years over the extent to which the actions of one group damage the enjoyment of the other.
- Most conflict occurs on major rivers where there is no public right of navigation (and hence differential rights of access for different users).
- There are fewer recorded problems of conflicts on canals and rivers with public navigation rights where anglers, boaters and (usually) canoeists co-exist.
- Conflicts on enclosed waters between users are limited either because one sport has sole use of the water or because of spatial and temporal zoning.
- Anglers and water craft users are also sometimes in conflict with bank users such as cyclists and walkers.
- There is no definitive guide to the impacts of different users. Data are particularly lacking concerning the extent to which canoeing affects fishing. In addition, it is not yet fully understood what impact different recreational activities have on nature and the environment or whether different activities have different impacts.
Some people (mainly experienced users) avoid conflict by using only areas where access for others is limited. They argue that other users should do likewise.

In Wales, the Sports Council for Wales (SCW) and Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) have written a ‘model approach to resolving conflict’ and SCW has acted as an ‘honest broker’ between parties in conflict.

Local river and canal user groups can be a useful mechanism for developing the understanding of and compliance with user rights.

Perceptions

- There are claims that conflict on some rivers is intensifying, involving violence, vandalism and abuse. The situation on some rivers is described as a ‘boiling cauldron of conflict’ and seems to involve most users. Most conflict of this magnitude occurs on water where there is no public right of navigation.
- The relative lack of conflict on navigations is thought to be because the rights of each user are established in law and because there is usually more space available than on smaller rivers.
- Anglers and water craft users claim that conflict with cyclists have increased in the last decade.
- Boat users claim that conflict with bankside users is more significant that conflict between water users.
- Anglers and canoeists claim that hire boats on rivers and canals available for navigation can be a problem and that more education should be required before people are allowed to hire a boat.
- It is widely argued by user groups that the resolution of conflict lies in establishing and policing the rights and responsibilities of all those using the resource. This implies action at the national level to determine rights claims and at the local level through codes of practice, education programmes and enforcement.
- For some of those with the dominant rights – often the anglers – conflict resolution lies in canoeists using rivers only when anglers are not, e.g. during the close season.
- For canoeists, resolution lies in establishing more access to rivers thus allowing a greater dispersion of recreation pressure and evening out the distribution of power between themselves and anglers.

9.7 Rights and responsibilities

Facts

- Water craft users have a right to pass and repass on rivers with public navigation rights and canals made available for navigation subject to restrictions in the relevant statute, bye-laws and possession of relevant licences.
- Public navigations are limited to tidal waters and approximately 4,600km of inland waterway mainly owned by British Waterways and the Environment Agency (by whom licence fees are levied).
- Anglers must buy an annual rod licence, which gives them the right to fish.
- Use of public navigations is usually subject to user fees, often termed licences. There are some reciprocal arrangements between navigation authorities to allow licence holders to use the waters of those authorities which are party to the arrangement. Other than public navigations, potential users must negotiate with landowners for the right to access and use inland water. These contractual rights are usually achieved through access agreements made voluntarily between landowners and users.
- There are no known access agreements under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 that involve predominantly access to water.
- Access agreements are usually negotiated by clubs or representative organisations for the benefit of their members rather than on behalf of all potential users.
- Use of some rivers and enclosed water bodies is tolerated by landowners although there is no right or formal agreement enabling users to do so. For example, as much as 46% of the major river network on which there is no public rights of navigation or access agreements may be subject to regular canoeing. Much of this is attributed to local people “knowing where to go” to get free access and is often associated with younger people.
- While the negotiation of access agreements works well for spatially static or contained activities such as angling and sailing, those wishing to navigate considerable lengths of river are faced with the task of negotiating with many landowners.
- Access to lengths of river in different ownerships is not immediately suited to day ticket or ‘pay and go’ schemes in the way that they work for fishing or for water craft access to
Perceptions

- The distribution of rights of access and use are widely felt to be a core issue for inland water-based sport and recreation.
- Some users want and, through the purchase of appropriate rights, can obtain exclusive use of the water resource. Angling organisations claim government support for this position. It is claimed by others that many anglers feel and act towards them in a superior manner because of their ownership of such rights.
- Many users want sufficient rights to be able to enjoy conflict-free activity but accept shared-use of the resource. For such users the water is effectively seen as a free resource that should be capable of being used by all; the issue for them is how to protect everyone's enjoyment of the resource.
- Many land and riparian owners want sufficient flexibility to exploit the commercial potential of their assets and the ability to manage their use safely and harmoniously.
- Many angling and land owning interests maintain that where there are no public navigation rights access agreements are appropriate, based on a licensing approach rather than the full transfer of property rights.
- Without effective policing, it is felt that access agreements are subject to the free rider problem, where it is hard to exclude non-members.
- Bandit users (those using water without the right to do so) may fail to adhere to agreed codes of conduct so undermining the good conduct of the club members covered by codes.
- Some landowners indicate that the problems incurred through poor conduct (notably damage, obstruction and trespass) may lead to voluntary agreements being withdrawn.
- Some organisations have identified local river user groups or local access forums as potential mechanisms for negotiating access with a group of landowners. However, payment of a fee would be problematic unless a suitable licensing arrangement could be established or unless grants were made available to obviate the need for individual users to make payments.
- While launch and user fees can work well in some circumstances there are claims that some owners (notably gravel pit owners and water companies) charge large fees on the basis that users have few immediate alternatives other than to cease their activity.

9.8 Administration and regulation of access to inland water

Facts

- The law of navigation is complex and uncertain, meaning that few people know fully what their rights are when using inland water for sport and recreation activities.
- The issues surrounding navigation law are compounded by the existence of many, small navigation authorities.
- The Environment Agency's brief to support fishing is based in part on the licence fees paid by anglers.
- There are similar types of subsidy operating for other users with, for example, British Waterways investing much more in the management and operation of its waterways than it receives through direct licence fees and dues.
- Government departments with an interest in water-based sport and recreation include Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions; and the National Assembly for Wales.
- Many users of water pay user charges (e.g. a boat license fee or a day fishing ticket). All anglers must also buy an annual rod licence. Some boat owners may also pay mooring fees.

Perceptions

- There is some concern about Ministerial and Departmental responsibility for inland water recreation following recent machinery of government changes. In particular, it is widely
felt that DEFRA’s interests are related primarily to sport fishing rather than to all 
activities, because it is the sponsoring department for the Environment Agency. It is 
also claimed that Sport England is not sufficiently interested in water sports or in 
promoting competitive fishing (particularly at an international level).

Anglers claim that there is currently an inequity in the regulation of fishing since it is the 
only inland water sport or recreation activity for which participants are required to pay an 
annual licence fee. This is in addition to user charges incurred through club membership 
or the purchase of day tickets. Thus, while angling is claimed to be more socially inclusive 
than certain other water recreation activities, its participants feel that they are uniquely 
taxed.

There is support for addressing this inequity either by recognising that anglers have a 
stronger claim to inland water resources than other users who do not pay the licence fee or 
by extending the licensing arrangement to other users.

It is widely argued that proposals to end the fishing close season on running waters reflects 
a primary interest in fishing rather than in all water-based sport and recreation.

There are concerns that current safety regulations may be inadequate to deal with casual 
water sports participants. The regulations are largely based on the premise that most water-
based activities are overseen by clubs, which are responsible for safety issues. While safety 
guidelines can be issued to casual users it is not clear where responsibility should lie or 
how breaches should be policed.

There are concerns that water companies would ban activities if they believed that they 
contribute to pollution on reservoirs.

9.9 Barriers to participation

**Facts**

- There is a wide range of barriers facing young disabled people who wish to participate in 
sport and many of these apply to water-based sport and recreation.
- The barriers facing people from ethnic groups who wish to take part in sports in which 
they do not currently participate vary by ethnic group and gender.
- Cost: there is no evidence that cost is a particular issue for those who are already active. 
The cost of participation in most water-based activities is no greater than for some non-
water activities, such as golf.
- Time: most water-based activities require substantial blocks of time including time for 
preparing equipment and travelling to and from the water resource.
- Transport: for those without private transport there are few opportunities to participate in 
activities other than angling (and even then the amount of equipment that many anglers 
require means that private transport is often necessary).
- Requirement for skills and training: there are training courses available through clubs, 
schools and colleges that are suitable for a broad range of people.
- Danger: many people, especially older people, have never learned to swim.
- Pollution: most inland waters are sufficiently free of pollution for water sports to take 
place. However, some enclosed waters and parts of some rivers and canals are polluted.

**Perceptions**

- Cost: it is widely perceived that most water-based sport and recreation activities are, with 
the possible exception of angling, expensive. Cost is felt to be a barrier for those wishing 
to start, especially if they are not sure about whether they will enjoy or be able to 
undertake the activity.
- Time: The widespread perception is that most water-based activities are limited to 
weekends and some summer evenings which inevitably means that they compete for time 
with other family-based activities including leisure, entertainments, shopping and DIY. At 
a time when people are increasingly reluctant to commit themselves on a regular basis, the 
time blocks required for most water-based activities are a barrier to participation for some 
people.
- Elitism, snobbery and exclusion: the perception that some water-based recreation activities 
are elitist, snobbish and exclusive acts as a powerful barrier for some people. This is the 
case for much of the population including women, racial and ethnic minorities and 
disabled people. This is exacerbated by issues of social group and education.
- Lack of skills and training: there are real concerns that those with a lack of basic skills in a 
particular activity will show themselves up in front of existing club members and friends. 
Even where training is offered many people are wary about taking up an activity.
### 9.10 Key Implications Arising from the Issues

9.10.1 From the issues identified, it is possible to draw out three areas of concern:

1. Some recreational users cannot gain access to the full range of resources or facilities that they desire. This inability to gain access may be in spatial or temporal terms and can comprise physical and perceptual exclusion.
2. Some non-users are excluded from participating in water-based recreational activities through physical and perceptual lack of access to resources.
3. Some water environments may be supporting recreational uses that are not sustainable in conservation terms while other suitable waters are underused or not used at all.

9.10.2 The sections below explore these concerns in more detail and aim to identify the ‘problem’ facing policy, recreation and sporting organisations.

### 9.11 Current Users of Inland Water

9.11.1 The key areas of concern for current users of inland water are:

- a shortage of access to certain types of inland water resources in some locations (such as white water for canoeing, enclosed waters for water-skiing, windsurfing and rowing),
- time and space-limited access to certain inland waters (such as non-navigation rivers in the fishing close season),
- poor bankside facilities in some locations (e.g. ingress and egress points).

9.11.2 The problem of access is exacerbated by changes in the type of use required by many people with a shift away from club-based activity towards day ticket access necessitating new institutional forms to facilitate access, particularly to non-navigation waters. Thus, while the overall finding that there is little overall latent demand for any water-based activity may suggest that there is not a major problem for current users, the issues lie in the extent, location and type of use currently available. Thus regional imbalances between supply and demand are highly significant particularly when related to the extent and distribution of different types of water.

9.11.3 The shift from club to individual use also puts a premium on the development of better information systems to ensure that the known-about resource is expanded. It is also apparent that in some places that are suitable for a number of activities, access is denied because landowners are unwilling to grant access or have already granted leases to other clubs (usually fishing) that preclude additional uses.

9.11.4 Although these are generic problems related to insufficient and unsuitable access, it is clear that there are distinct types of access that are required. In some cases, such as water skiing and rowing, the demand is for relatively large areas of flat water, which could be enclosed or running water, in particular locations. Space for water-skiing is
lacking in the West Midlands, National Parks and parts of the West Country. Good quality space for rowing and windsurfing is lacking in certain areas on the fringe of London and for rowing in some other major cities, including Birmingham. The demand for training and novice waters for water-skiers and rowers is similarly for flat water, although preferably enclosed rather than running. For canoeing, the need for white water is highly location specific as it is linked to suitable river stretches, unless an artificial facility is developed.

9.11.5 In all these cases the resource requirement is location specific meaning that the required resources can be identified and the owners approached. Considerably more problematic is meeting the demand for long distance canoeing routes where some lengths may well be on non-navigation waters. In these cases many owners will need to be identified and approached. The refusal of any one of them to negotiate access agreements, or the presence of other, exclusive, rights undermines the scheme.

9.11.6 Additional problems faced by current users include limits on the times at which they can participate. The most extreme examples occur with canoeing where some voluntary agreements with angling clubs limit canoeists to the winter months of the fishing close season. Indeed, 55% of formal access agreements for canoeing on rivers with no rights of navigation are only for the close season and a further 16% are for periods of 1 month or less. Some of these spaces could be lost if the close season were removed on running waters.

9.11.7 Elsewhere, overcrowding at some popular facilities means that time zoning is operated so that some minority users (scuba divers, for example) are forced to use the waters at inconvenient and unsocial times (such as early weekend mornings). All cases of time zoning or rationing are the result of competition for insufficient ‘known-about’ and accessible resources.

9.11.8 Cruising and boat-based activities also experience the effects of overcrowding on particular parts of the canal and river network, mainly in the south east of England. In some places this is linked to a shortage of suitable moorings, especially in the busy summer months.

9.11.9 Physical accessibility to the waterside can further exacerbate these problems. With the exception of swimming and possibly fishing, most water-based sport and recreation activities require significant amounts of equipment. For most people, this necessitates the provision of adequate car parking close to the water and suitable launch facilities for getting into and out of the water. In some cases, landowners complain that recreational users damage their land and property in attempting to gain access to water where no provision for access has been made. In many cases where ingress and egress are not available or are limited so, some users (particularly those with mobility problems) are excluded from participation.

9.12 Current Non-Users of Inland Water

9.12.1 A small minority of the population is active in inland water-based sport and recreation. Non-participants tend to fall into three categories:

- those who have never participated;
- those who have participated only when at school or on holiday;
- those who restrict their water recreation activities to coastal waters. (Some may chose the coast to avoid crowding and conflict on inland waters)

9.12.2 Many non-participants have enjoyed water-based recreation particularly at school and on holiday and many are active swimmers (in swimming pools rather than inland waters, however). Some of those who have had no experience of water-based recreation are attracted by it but, nevertheless, are not sufficiently motivated to take
part. However, the majority of non-participants state that they have no interest in participating or have a fear of doing so for safety and health reasons.

9.12.3 Even for those non-participants who have expressed a desire to take up a water-based recreation activity, aspirations are generally modest. They are often constrained by significant barriers to participation which are, in many cases, closely associated with the perceived cost of access and equipment and the need for training. Apart from some desire (mainly on the part of young people) to try high-octane sports such as jet-skiing, most aspirations are for angling, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and rowing. Although the aspirants are drawn from a wide cross-section of society, they are predominantly mothers seeking family activities to share with their children and young people who feel – and often are – excluded from many physical recreation activities. There also appears to be some latent demand among disabled people. Sport England (2000) identified ‘frustrated demand’ amongst some ethnic groups for swimming but the study did not produce detailed results for outdoor water-based sports.

9.12.4 Although this unmet aspiration is relatively insignificant given the numbers involved it is important to recognise that many of those currently aspiring to participate represent target groups for the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit. For many of these excluded people, the principal barriers reflect a mix of economic and social factors. Although perception of cost is often identified as the main barrier, evidence suggests that it is not so much cost per se as it is access to a number of resources including transport, training, facilities and equipment. This is undoubtedly underpinned by widespread perceptions of water sports as socially exclusive activities. Experience – even second-hand – of conflict and competition for resources can also be a negative influence.

9.12.5 Thus the provision of new facilities or transport in isolation is unlikely to unlock much latent demand. Rather, a comprehensive and integrated approach is required to address this issue. At one level, this is about facilities, promotion and support services. However it is also about increasing the certainty with which people can gain access to and use of water resources. This certainty exists for public parks and leisure centres. It is also about increasing people’s understanding of and sense of belonging in the countryside so that excluded people (including ethnic groups) have more confidence in using water resources.

9.13 Water Recreation and Nature Conservation

9.13.1 There are claims – largely based on case study rather than comprehensive evidence – that new conservation designations could lead to restrictions in the use of water resources that are currently or potentially significant in recreational terms. While there is no evidence that the designation of SSSIs or other forms of protection have led to the cessation of existing recreation activity there are claims that, once designated, the number of or intensity of recreational uses declines. However, there is no readily identifiable record of the extent to which any recreational activities have been included in lists of potentially damaging operations for any SSSIs.

9.13.2 Notwithstanding the lack of evidence, there are perceptions amongst stakeholders that the shift by English Nature from ideas of balancing recreation and conservation to concepts of environmental sustainability could be very problematic in future for sport and recreation. Stakeholders believe Sport England, its recreational counterpart, is not well placed to deal with the challenges that may arise from this change in environmental thinking by English Nature. The situation in Wales is perceived to be more balanced, reflecting the dual remit of CCW and the good working relationship that it has established with the Sports Council for Wales.

9.13.3 The issue is a difficult one for there is very little evidence that there are many conflicts between recreation and conservation. However, it is recognised that aquatic environments are highly important in conservation terms and that the escalation of recreation activity, particularly by powered craft, could force English Nature or other competent authorities to take action. The implications of this depend largely on the
type of water and its location. Where enclosed waters are concerned, the evidence from this research is that other resources are often close by and, depending upon individual circumstances, could take up some or all of the displaced activity.

9.13.4 The situation is a little different where running waters are concerned, particularly if the water is available for navigation. In the past it has often been possible to accommodate recreational activity on part or all of the water. It remains a concern of recreational users that this could change in the future.

9.14 Options for addressing the Issues

9.14.1 The issues identified in this research are complex. There are no simple solutions. Better information and education about access opportunities and awareness of the possibilities open to people of all abilities and backgrounds would help to create a climate where people’s potential to enjoy active water sports and recreation could be realised. The government, agencies, local authorities and stakeholder organisations could do more to increase awareness and tap unmet demand and unused resources.

9.14.2 The possible actions - ‘scenarios for change’ - identified below have emerged from the research. They are not mutually exclusive nor are they definitive and they are not in any order of preference or likelihood. They are presented as indications of the ways in which the issues could be addressed. They differ in key respects such as their timeframe, cost and requirement for primary legislation. In some cases, the scenarios could be used sequentially with shorter-term measures used as a precursor to possible longer-term actions. There are also many hybrids of these scenarios.

9.15 Possible Scenarios for Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor development of current planning policy and strategies</td>
<td>Reduce bureaucracy, increase strategic planning and address current licensing arrangements. Key actions here would be to provide planning policy guidance (regional and local) on access to inland water for sport and recreation, to identify and develop new recreational resources on inland water and linkages between existing navigations. Encouragement would also be given to developing national educational initiatives, codes and guidance on introducing children to water-based sport and recreational activities. Government agencies, local authorities and stakeholder organisations would also be encouraged to develop coherent information-giving and marketing strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targetted purchase of services and revised funding arrangements</td>
<td>Introduce new or re-targeted programmes of financial support for riparian owners in targetted locations to allow public access to their waterspace. Scheme would require a strategic plan to define the opportunities to which a funding programme would be linked. This might include grants for wardens and bailiffs and for other management services. Access conditions would also be put on other forms of funding. Such a programme would be introduced only when specific agreement had been reached about the mapping of and publicity given to the additional routes and resources released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targetted acquisition of land and water rights</td>
<td>The selective purchase, by the government, agencies, local authorities or other organisations of land and water rights in targetted locations. Purchase would be limited to the minimum and leases and licences would be involved as well as land rights. Funding could come from the Lottery, the Landfill tax credit scheme and the sale of licences for all forms of water-based sport and recreational activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary agreements</td>
<td>This is an extension of existing arrangements between landowners and clubs. Funding could come from the Lottery, the Landfill tax credit scheme and through sale of licences. Funding would be provided for additional services including managing access and extending access to other users not covered by current agreements. Access would last for the duration of the agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voluntary agreements with dedication

Similar to above, but with riparian owners dedicating in perpetuity their land and water for access. Money would be provided for additional services including managing access and extending access to other users not covered by current agreements.

Compulsory access orders

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 makes provision for local authorities to make access orders to land and water. These would be used to secure access to targetted water resources possibly as a fall-back if voluntary approaches fail.

Selective increase in statutory rights of navigation

Legislation would be used to give the public navigation rights to targetted water resources but would be unlikely to apply to all types of water users and would be subject to control mechanisms e.g. byelaws.

Statutory rights of navigation to all major rivers, canals and enclosed water

Legislation would be used to grant permanent public navigation rights to all major water resources but would be unlikely to apply to all types of water users and would be subject to control mechanisms e.g. byelaws.

9.16 Assessing the Scenarios

9.16.1 Although the scenarios are descriptive of the types of actions by which more access could be secured, it is necessary to construct an evaluative frame in order that their relative merits can be identified. The evaluative frame used below is based on the tests developed by the Government for assessing different means for securing its commitment to give people access on foot to the open countryside (DETR 1999). The tests have been adapted to suit the context of inland water-based sport and recreation and are a useful means of exploring the different impacts and implications of each scenario.

9.16.1 The tests do not include an environmental test. Clearly the scenarios have different environmental implications. The targetted scenarios might be lesser in terms of environmental impacts but the effects would depend on the local features of targetted inland waters. For all the scenarios suitable institutional structures would be crucial for ensuring implementation and any monitoring or enforcement.

9.17 Evaluation Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of access</td>
<td>The area and location of additional access or navigation rights, compared to population, demand and other available resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of access</td>
<td>The degree of freedom and utility offered to participants and the terms under which they are allowed access to the resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanency</td>
<td>The longevity of access and navigation rights, and the degree to which they are proofed against further change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and certainty</td>
<td>The degree to which the structure and processes involved in using inland water for sport and recreation are comprehensive, clear and certain. The extent to which stakeholder organisations can produce accurate information on the availability and location of access and navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>The resource implications for all parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to implementation</td>
<td>This is an estimate of when the scenario might be implemented and begin to take effect. A two-part categorisation is used: short term and longer term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.18 Minor development of current planning policy and strategies

- **Extent of access**: Better planning policy guidance on the need for strategies and better provision should lead to improved provision in some areas. But there may still be regional imbalances and a lack of resource for some activities. Improvements in administration, education and information should lead to an
increase in the known-about resource. Use would be likely to increase in areas where ‘known about’ resource was increased.

- **Quality of access**: some change from the present, with differential levels of use according to the status of the water body and the rights possessed by the user. Action by landowners and land managers who are willing to let navigation rights separately from fishing rights would increase the available resource in some locations. Some stakeholders’ goals will continue not to be achieved, and there will continue to be instances of conflict between different users wishing, or attempting, to use the same spaces at the same times. Better information leading to an increase in the known-about resource may ameliorate the situation.

- **Permanency**: no change from the present; rights on public navigations are permanent, access to British Waterways and Environment Agency waters is long term, while other forms of access are limited to the length and terms of individual contracts.

- **Clarity and certainty**: clarity and certainty would improve with improved administration, education and information on navigation rights and the rights attached to fishing and other leases. It is also widely recognised that the administrative structure governing access and navigation is cumbersome. More attention to planning policy guidance, education and information programmes could improve the certainty with which people are able to use inland water.

- **Costs**: relatively low-cost, although local authorities and stakeholder organisations would incur costs in initiating information and education programmes.

- **Time to implementation**: some aspects could commence immediately. However, there will be some time delay until new planning policy guidance and education and information programmes are devised and implemented. Their impacts will be gradual.

9.19 Targetted purchase of services and revised funding arrangements

- **Extent of access**: potential for extending access and navigation rights at targeted locations, although dependent on take-up by landowners. This could require project officers to promote new schemes. Existing rights holders may seek to preserve their established positions.

- **Quality of access**: potential for additional opportunities, but people’s rights are likely to be limited to those acceptable to individual landowners and in keeping with their existing obligations. Additional opportunities in areas where known shortages could significantly improve the local situation. Only limited impacts on conflict and conflict involving ‘free-riders’ maybe displaced to other locations because of enforcement on new spaces.

- **Permanency**: access would usually last as long as the funding or agreement. In most agri-environment schemes this has been 10 years with the option of renewal. This might be a considerable improvement on some current access agreements for activities like canoeing.

- **Clarity and certainty**: little change from the present without publicity and information schemes so that people are aware of the new opportunities but publicity would be part of the contract. Some stakeholder organisations have resisted attempts to have voluntary and paid land-based access schemes marked on maps on the basis that they are short term agreements that may terminate before maps are replaced. As a result, access to inland water could become more complex as could the processes involved in ascertaining what opportunities are available where. This might be resolved using more readily updated information sources such as the Internet.

- **Costs**: there could be appreciable costs for this scenario to work well. The benchmark would probably be the current level of fishing rents, particularly if landowners were to replace these in going into a more general scheme. In addition to the basic rental level, there could also be a premium for navigation rights as well as payment for warden or bailiff services. In addition, it is likely to be necessary to employ project officers to help initiate new schemes.
Water-based sport and recreation: the facts

9.20 The Targetted Acquisition of Land and Water Rights

- **Time to implementation**: the new schemes and service agreements could be implemented quickly, particularly where project officers are available.

- **Extent of access**: Potential to increase access and navigation at strategic locations, using different mixes of rights according to local needs. Examples might be full public rights of navigation in one location and a limited right for canoeing at another. There are two mechanisms for acquiring the rights: compulsory acquisition (which would be unpopular with landowners) or market-based voluntary transfers.

- **Quality of access**: There would be considerable potential to match access and navigation rights to local demands. However, the ability to achieve this potential would depend upon the necessary powers to acquire land and the level of financial resources available. The overall and known about resource should noticeably increase thus reducing conflict.

- **Permanency**: Purchase by government, whether centrally or locally, should ensure that the rights exist permanently.

- **Clarity and certainty**: This would improve, although the extent of this improvement would depend on the ability of government bodies to acquire rights to suit its strategic agenda (thus ensuring, for example, that new resources and rights complement those already in existence).

- **Costs**: The cost of this scenario would be very high. Both compulsory purchase and market transfers would incur high costs. This cost could be met through lottery or landfill tax credit scheme funding but substantial money would be lost to other good causes. There would also be operating costs falling on those responsible for managing the resources.

- **Time to implementation**: This depends on the acquisition mechanism selected. If acquisition is through the market, it could be implemented as soon as funding is available. This could depend upon the ability of lottery and landfill tax credit scheme administrators to agree to fund such schemes. Compulsory acquisition could take some time to produce benefits, even if the necessary legislation to give local authorities the powers to acquire land for this purpose were put in place and local authorities were convinced that this was an appropriate use of their resources.

9.21 Voluntary Agreements

- **Extent of access**: Potential to increase access and navigation at targeted locations using different mixes of rights and opportunities according to local needs. Examples might be full public rights of navigation in one location, and a limited right for rowing at another. However, experience suggests that few agreements encourage or allow multiple use, instead they usually operate under temporal zoning arrangements between different sets of users. Funds could be offered for agreements that meet certain criteria, such as allowing access and navigation rights that correspond with those associated with public navigations.

- **Quality of access**: Potential for some additional opportunities but people's rights are likely to be limited to those acceptable to individual landowners and in keeping with their existing obligations. Current evidence suggests that voluntary arrangements for navigation on rivers for limited club use take time to negotiate often with a number of landowners, meaning that such opportunities are unlikely to be more widely or inclusively available. However, toll horse riding schemes show that linear access can be negotiated on land. The success of this scenario may well depend on the willingness of government organisations to be involved in developing and enforcing imaginative schemes. In Wales the Tir Gofal schemes pay for permissive access to farms and could potentially be used in its present from to pay for access to watersides.

- **Permanency**: The additional access would last as long as the agreement. There may be option of renewal.
**Clarity and certainty**: some change from the present, with different agreements granting different rights to different groups of users for different periods of time and increasing the 'known about' resource. Enforcement would be important if agreements were time limited and information would be needed to ensure clarity. It may be possible to address this by operating a local register of agreements but there is no evidence of the effectiveness of such registers. However, registration may reduce the willingness of some landowners to participate in voluntary schemes.

**Costs**: the cost of this scenario will depend upon the type and number of agreements reached. As at present, much of the cost will fall on individual clubs, although grants could be made available if access were extended to non-club members (and this would be a condition of lottery funding). Funding could also be made available to encourage neighbouring landowners to work together to offer access to greater lengths of water. In general, this will be a relatively low-cost scenario.

**Time to implementation**: voluntary agreements are already being negotiated, so this is an immediate scheme. However, negotiation can be time-consuming and not always result in new access opportunities being created.

### 9.22 Voluntary Agreements with Dedication

- **Extent of access**: as for voluntary agreements above, landowners will need to be persuaded to take part, especially those who currently receive fishing rents.
- **Quality of access**: as for voluntary agreements above (under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, dedication can be associated with different specified activities, meaning that quality of access will be highly place and person specific). Enforcement would be needed to maintain the quality of access by ensuring all users are clear about their rights and the rights of others.
- **Permanency**: dedication offers permanency, even where the land is sold or bequeathed to another person.
- **Clarity and certainty**: given the permanency of dedication, it would be possible to enter such agreements on maps and guides. However, there would still be a need to communicate the terms of the dedication.
- **Costs**: as for voluntary agreements above.
- **Time to implementation**: regulations are being prepared on dedication under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. A consultation period will be required after the regulations are published, meaning that the first dedication schemes probably cannot be implemented until the latter part of 2002, at the earliest. Persuading landowners to participate might also take time and require the proactive involvement of government bodies.

### 9.23 Compulsory Access Orders

- **Extent of access**: Potential to increase access and navigation at targeted locations, using different mixes of rights according to demand (examples might be full public rights of navigation in one location, and a limited right for canoeing at another). Access orders have been available to local authorities for many years under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Although typically thought of in relation to land, they are equally applicable to inland water. However, there is no record of an access order being used for water (there are very few in connection with land). Local authorities have been wary about using them because they are costly and unpopular with landowners. Thus potential opposition from landowners is unknown.
- **Quality of access**: there is considerable potential to match access and navigation rights to local demands. However, the ability to achieve this potential would depend upon the political will of local authorities to make access orders and, quite possibly, the failure of other mechanisms to secure a suitable extent and quality of access. The result could be partial and fragmented.
- **Permanency**: Access orders would be permanent.
- **Clarity and certainty**: This ought to improve, as water covered by access orders is publicised. Access orders have the structural advantage of fitting into an existing legal and administrative framework, while the process of users gaining access should be little different to that applying to public navigations.

- **Costs**: The cost of access orders would depend upon the level of payment made to the landowner as well as costs of managing the access thereafter. While payments associated with access agreements to land under the 1949 Act have generally been relatively small, many landowners and farmers are used to the more sizeable payments available under agri-environment schemes. If a similar level of payment were adopted for access orders, they be a relatively low-cost option but the actual level of costs is unclear.

- **Time to implementation**: The legislation is already available, so access orders could be implemented immediately.

### 9.24 A Selective Increase in Statutory Rights of Navigation

- **Extent of access**: Potential to increase access and navigation at targeted locations. The level of planning and implementation could be greater than under the previous scenarios but this approach would allow new navigation rights to be targeted at locations currently lacking access or to make links between navigations.

- **Quality of access**: An increase in navigation rights should allow users greater freedom to use inland water to suit their demands and requirements. However, navigation rights are restricted to passing and repassing. Provision would have to be made for ingress and egress. This may be suitable for canoeists and rowers but it would not meet the requirements of other users, particularly sailing, swimming, water skiing, static training operations and diving. It would be necessary to negotiate additional rights or access for these activities. However, since the overall available resource should increase, conflict should be reduced, particularly if the additional rights are targeted at existing areas of conflict or where resources are lacking.

- **Permanency**: Navigation rights would be permanent.

- **Clarity and certainty**: The addition of navigation rights, particularly to address current anomalies and missing linkages, ought to improve significantly the clarity of the rights available and the certainty with which people can use them. However, this would be dependent on the structure and processes used to determine where the new rights should be located. Also the limitations imposed by navigation rights only allowing passing and repassing may create some uncertainty.

- **Costs**: Although the cost of legislating to give a statutory right of navigation would be low, the process of identifying and implementing the waters to be covered by new rights could be very expensive. Once in place, there is also likely to be a requirement for management and policing to ensure that the new rights are capable of - and are - being used in an appropriate manner. Finally, some stakeholder organisations, including landowners, may well seek compensation if navigation rights are attached to waters where they currently have exclusive use.

- **Time to implementation**: Implementation is likely to be slow. Primary legislation would be required. Negotiating new rights would then need to be addressed. The controversy likely to surround the introduction of additional navigation rights, and hence the time taken to implement any legislation, should not be underestimated. In adopting this approach it should be recognised that this would be a lengthy process with little initial improvement seen in access to inland water.

### 9.25 Statutory Rights of Navigation to all Major Rivers, Canals and Water Bodies

- **Extent of access**: All major rivers, canals and water bodies would be available for navigation. The extent to which this could translate into use would depend on the suitability of the water for navigation and the availability of access to the water.
This latter may be provided by existing access points (bridges, towpaths, etc), new provision by landowners, or new rights negotiated by local authorities.

- **Quality of access**: in common with the selective increase in navigation rights scenario above, a statutory right to navigate all major rivers, canals and water bodies should allow some users greater freedom to use inland water to suit their demands and requirements. However, navigation rights are restricted to passing and repassing. This may be suitable for canoeists and rowers but it would not meet the requirements of other users, particularly sailing, swimming, water skiing, static training operations and diving. It would be necessary to negotiate additional rights or access for these activities. Conflict should be reduced but may still occur because of competition for the best resources, especially where these coincide with valuable fishing rights.

- **Permanency**: Navigation rights would be permanent.

- **Clarity and certainty**: This approach to navigation rights would improve significantly the clarity of the rights available to some users and the certainty with which they could use them. It could, however, create uncertainty for those who have current access agreements to waters that would then be available for navigation.

- **Costs**: although the cost of legislating to give a statutory right of navigation would be low, the process of identifying and implementing the waters to be covered by new rights could be very expensive. However, there could be high political and environmental costs associated with the new rights. As with access to open countryside, the environmental costs could be addressed through selective withdrawal of navigation rights, either seasonally or permanently. The political costs are more difficult to quantify. However, it is clear that stakeholder organisations which had previously acquired riparian rights would seek compensation. Once in place, there is also likely to be a requirement for management and policing to ensure that the new rights are capable of - and are - being used in an appropriate manner. Given the magnitude of the water network, the additional costs of management and enforcement could be very high, while there would need to be consideration of issues such as user safety and third party liability.

- **Time to implementation**: as for the selective scenario above although implementation may be quicker as the designation is to apply universally.

#### 9.26 Meeting the needs of existing and potential users - Existing Users

9.26.1 Many of the problems facing existing recreational users are related to imperfections in the operation of the current resource allocation system. An example of this is the general lack of knowledge of the available resources. Better information systems could have the effect of increasing provision. An additional factor is the inability of single or small groups of some types of recreationists to negotiate (and, in some cases, their unwillingness to pay for) additional access or navigation rights. For these users, lessons can be drawn from the success of certain groups in negotiating a substantial amount of access for their members.

9.26.2 There is more that government - national, local or the agencies could do to improve the current allocation mechanisms. Central government could act through planning policy guidance, particularly at the regional level, about provision for water-based sport and recreation; by ensuring mechanisms are in place to improve information flows; and by encouraging its agencies to support initiatives aimed at securing access to water resources.

9.26.3 Those agencies, which already work towards recreation provision for water users, could look again at their advice and guidance and see whether more could be done. Local authorities could address the needs of water-based sport and recreation through, for example, their local access forums or other groups set up to look at provision for particular types of people.
9.26.4 These types of approaches are consistent with the scenario minor development of current planning policy and strategies where the emphasis is on short-term improvements that can make longer term differences. In some cases additional funding and more involvement by government bodies may be required to effect the changes, including the purchase of services and, possibly, some rights over water.

9.26.5 In some cases it may be necessary to go further, particularly in order to establish long distance routes or, if necessary, to open up new resources to replace those no longer considered suitable for recreational use for environmental or other reasons. Particular difficulties occur in seeking to secure sufficient access along rivers for touring canoeists and multi-lane routes for rowers. Voluntary agreements are probably most suitable here, although with a revised administrative and incentive structure to ensure that negotiations are handled effectively and that sufficient resources are available as incentives for owners to participate. If voluntary approaches are not successful, access orders are available under the 1949 legislation. In both cases, comprehensive data on land ownership would be required, together with more innovative actions by existing institutions responsible for overseeing the new rights. Ultimately, new rights of navigation could be used to secure the desired additional access for certain types of user. However, this is both a long term and expensive option to achieve some limited and precise goals.

9.27 Potential Users

9.27.1 Latent demand - as described in this report - is a function of market failure, requiring different solutions to those for existing users. The solutions lie in developing people's capacity to participate and in breaking down the actual and perceived barriers to access. In terms of capacity development, emphasis should be on training programmes developed in conjunction with a support package including social facilities, equipment loans and transport to appropriate facilities. Many governing bodies for water-based sport and recreation have already established successful youth programmes and similar initiatives targeted at other social groups may need to be developed.

9.27.2 New users also need different types of facilities. Potential new recruits to most activities need a package of facilities, including transport from home, equipment, tuition and supervised access to the water. This and the need to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to welcome the entire community to try activities implies public sector provision and management. One way of approaching this might be to establish local management groups comprising council officers and local people. Following the approach adopted by many local authorities, a trust or co-operative could be established to manage the facility. Thus, as with existing users, the principal solution appears to be revision to the status quo, particularly in targeting education and grant initiatives to new facilities and associated support for new entrants.

9.28 Recreation and Conservation

9.28.1 To some extent, the problem in this case is a lack of knowledge about the potential impacts of conservation designations. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency, not only to establish guidance on the types of impacts, but also on what forms of recreational activity are currently listed as potentially damaging operations in the designation of SSSIs. Apart from better information, it is clear that better planning policy guidance at local and regional levels would help many of those seeking to develop or extend water-based recreation facilities. Revisions to PPG17 in England and TAN16 in Wales covering the planning requirements for water-based sport and recreation would help generate better informed development plans and development control decisions. Equally, new codes of practice on operating recreational activities in SSSIs could help to alleviate some problems. Finally, consideration should be given to generating a new sequential test for recreation development proposals in designated areas. In common with its existing counterpart in PPG6, this test could set out the criteria for recreation development including requirements about the sequence in which suitable development sites should be considered.
9.29 Conclusions

9.29.1 There are no straightforward solutions to the issues and problems identified in this research relating to inland water-based sport and recreation. More positively, evidence indicates that most of the problems faced currently are limited to relatively small numbers of the population and a relatively few flash points, although this is not to under-estimate the wider sentiments about the need for improvements to the accessibility and navigability of inland waters. Some inland water users believe that the imposition of navigation rights might be easier to achieve than a partial targeted approach. However, it is clear that additional public navigation rights are only a partial solution to the issues and any approach relying on changes to the statutory right of navigation may take years to come to fruition, even with Ministerial support. In addition, not all of the demand for additional space nor the needs of potential users would be met through such a right. At the other end of the spectrum, users believe that the current system has served them well and that others are free to make similar moves to secure the access they desire.

9.29.2 Many of the other scenarios identified in this chapter could be implemented relatively quickly and targeted at particular locations and people. Indeed, it is through addressing imperfections in the current regime of resource allocation that many of the problems identified could be overcome. This is particularly the case for information flows, administrative arrangements and planning policy guidance. In addition, it is also tempting to believe that voluntary measures and public land purchase could address the current lack of access to some types and locations of water. However, there is little empirical evidence that many of these types of approaches would be successful in achieving the desires of all stakeholder organisations. The way forward may therefore lie in a hybrid approach in which achievable gains, such as improving information about opportunities, developing better planning policy guidance and purchasing key sites, could be pursued in tandem with longer term approaches that may eventually yield the strategic inland water network envisaged by some stakeholder organisations. Of course, if the shorter term scenarios achieve the required advances in securing access for more users to more inland waters the longer term options may become redundant. Whichever approach is adopted it is also apparent that better co-ordination and communication amongst government bodies is required, especially at the national level, to ensure users receive the guidance and information they need to access satisfactorily inland waters.
10 Conclusion

10.1 Research findings

10.1.1 It is clear that there is dissatisfaction among some users and stakeholders with the current availability of access to inland water for sport and recreation. There are claims about escalating conflict between different user groups over the use of the water and the watersides. While being a response to a complex social environment, this conflict is primarily a result of perceived and actual inequalities in the power of different groups to influence the use of (and exclusion from) inland waters. Given the complexity of the laws relating to public rights of navigation, these powers are largely exercised through the medium of property rights, and thus tend to favour those seeking specific areas of land and water rather than those seeking rights of passage. As a result, as much as half of the canal and major river resource accessed by canoeists, for example, is used without statutory or contractual right.

10.1.2 While these conflicts can be serious, they probably involve no more than a small minority of water users, who themselves are only a small minority of the population of England and Wales. Indeed, it is clear that the majority of the population have at best limited experience of water-based sport and recreation activity and limited interest in participating in it in the future. Apart from those living close to navigations, most of this experience has been gained at school, on holidays or through particular forms of employment such as the armed services. Even for those with some experience, there are significant barriers to participation in water-based recreation. These are associated with low skill levels, poor information about opportunities and concerns about costs, time, safety and pollution. As a result, most people's aspirations are modest, and there is very little current evidence of latent demand for most water-based sport and recreation activities. However, because of people's general lack of exposure to water-based recreation, it is apparent that demand is influenced by supply. Thus the availability of a new facility will often encourage some people to take up a water-based activity even if they displayed no previous disposition to do so.

10.1.3 There is undoubtedly spare physical capacity for recreational activities on inland waterways and water bodies, despite the existence of conflict and overcrowding in some locations. Although it is difficult to establish precise figures, as many as half the enclosed in England and Wales do not appear currently to support recreational activity. The canal system available for navigation is well used but overcrowding and heavy us only occur on quite limited parts of the canal network, mainly in South East England. Other estimates suggest that only 12% of the physically navigable major river network is legally available for use by craft. However, this overall relationship between resource availability and use hides significant variations at the local level. Firstly, it is clear that few people have comprehensive information about the resources and opportunities available, even locally to their homes. It is probable, therefore, that the 'known about' resource is more limited than that actually available. In addition, variations in population and resource density mean that there are local and regional imbalances in supply and demand. Whereas many areas of England and Wales have much over-capacity, the South East of England, in particular, experiences crowding on and competition for water resources. This is even more keenly felt with respect to different types of water, whether white water for canoeing, wide flat water for competitions, or circular routes for touring canoes. Nearly all sports and recreational activities identify water spaces in the South East region to which they would like access.

10.1.4 This imbalance between demand and supply is exacerbated by a lack of strategic focus at the regional level. Indeed, it is apparent that neither representative stakeholders nor local government have a strong overview of the resource requirements of water-based activity, nor the ways in which different activities or requirements can be combined on individual stretches or bodies of water. Rather, it is seemingly left to clubs or to commercial entrepreneurs to make these links. Where this is successful, whether as a
voluntary agreement between anglers and canoeists, or as a commercial multi-activity watersports centre, it is evident that much can be achieved. Yet the lack of strategic overview has undoubtedly limited the more general application of this type of development and co-operation.

10.1.5 Given the localised and highly specific nature of the imbalances, there is no overwhelming social or economic case for any wholesale changes of legislation. Yet, if the conflict and illegal use are not tackled objectively, it is apparent that the problems and resentments will continue to fester. Thus, it is apparently more a question of identifying the particular issues and the ways in which these can be addressed. Yet this is complex in itself, given that alternative arrangements, such as voluntary agreements, have failed to provide adequate access in the past, despite the work of the Environment Agency in promoting good and constructive practice.

10.1.6 For many, including landowner representatives, a possible approach lies in the regional identification of strategically important water systems and the use of grant aid to bring all the relevant stakeholders to the table to work out a suitable allocation of the various land and riparian rights. While offering potential, the success of this approach, as with other voluntary approaches, lies in the extent to which all stakeholders will agree. This depends on balancing powers with outcomes: rights owners being able to trade exclusivity for income, for example. Yet in cases where rights have already been purchased to secure exclusivity, as is often the case with angling clubs, the incentive to ‘trade down’ is weak, at best. Equally, it remains unclear quite who all the stakeholders are, particularly as usage shifts from a club to a casual basis. Not only does this have implications for negotiating and policing agreements, but it also calls into question how information is distributed about the extent of the agreement, in physical and legal terms.

10.2 Policy structures and mechanisms for supplying access to inland water

10.2.1 All these issues have been faced previously with respect to access to open countryside, eventually leading to the access provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is clear, however, that there is a significant gap in planning for access to inland water for sport and recreation. At the national level, few stakeholders have the overview or the resources to engage in the level of detail necessary to identify all the issues associated with imbalances between demand and supply. These organisations are very much member driven and have a lobbying rather than planning function. They are thus suited to discussing the issues facing their members and the ways in which these issues might be overcome. However, few have the ability to go further into planning and strategic decision making. This level of engagement seems to have made little impression on planning at the national level. For England, draft PPG17 makes very little detailed comment about the requirements of water-based recreation, while DEFRA, Sport England, the Environment Agency, and DCMS are all variously accused of failing to provide adequately for water sport and recreation activities. In Wales Technical Advice Note 16 (Welsh Office 1998) makes little reference to water-based sport and recreation. However, the situation is rather different in that the Sports Council for Wales (2001) has sought to relate sports development in rural areas with the National Assembly’s (2000) strategy ‘www.betterwales.com’ which seeks to address the specific needs of rural Wales. Also the Countryside Council for Wales has a balance between its environmental and recreational remit which stakeholders suggest is reasonably satisfactory.

10.2.2 Equally, at the local level, few member organisations have sufficient personnel to participate effectively in the planning process. There is little evidence of local stakeholders individually or jointly making representations to local plan inquiries. Most seem dismissive of the local planning process with widespread accusations that local planning authorities are generally unwilling to allocate waterside sites for recreational development, whether in rural or urban areas. This unwillingness is exacerbated in urban areas, according to many stakeholders, by a willingness on the part of local planning authorities to allow waterside developments that may preclude water-based
recreation. The link is rarely made between the apparent inability of the stakeholders to engage in the development plan process and their subsequent feelings of exclusion from the resulting policy community.

10.2.3 This highlights the need to consider again the potential for a return to strategic regional planning for water-based outdoor sport and recreation. Those who have been involved in previous attempts to co-ordinate planning at a regional level have little faith in this tier of administration. Yet it is apparent that neither the national nor the local tiers are appropriate for a resource such as water. This is largely because, with the exception of new gravel pits, reservoirs and artificial lakes, the location of supply is fixed and is generally of regional rather than local scale and significance. While local authorities may produce their own cultural strategies plans there is, therefore, a need for broader integration and co-operation across administrative boundaries. This is particularly the case when local authorities are dealing with large landowners such as water authorities or large navigation authorities such as British Waterways. A regional approach to provision could also facilitate the development of better planning guidance for local authorities and the development of best practice guidance for those seeking to develop combined and multiple use provision.

10.2.4 In addition, many sport and recreation stakeholders feel a change of approach is needed in relation to the guidance and communication concerning environmental designations. The potential changes stemming European Habitats Directive are creating a climate of uncertainty amongst stakeholders who perceive that new environmental designation procedures may threaten their use of inland water space. Better communication and information exchange between English Nature and organisations representing water-based sport and recreation could lead to a better understanding of the designation process and also of the measures available for minimising the environmental impacts of water-based sport and recreation.

10.3 Data requirements for achieving more effective decision-making

10.3.1 One of the reasons for the lack of progress on strategic provision for water-based sport and recreation has been the disparate and partial nature of the data available. In terms of consumption and demand, there are few comprehensive data, with the principal one, the UKDVS, having significant shortcomings with respect to the ways in which the data are collected as far as analysing water-based sport and recreation is concerned. Not all other data relating to demand and consumption have been published (e.g. the MVA work in 1999 for the Countryside Agency). Others are part of market research information that generally only becomes available when they no longer have significant market value. In Wales the Sports Council for Wales is involved in an Omnibus Survey which is generating improved data on participation levels in water-based sport and recreation.

10.3.2 On the supply side there are many data sources, some of which, the Ordnance Survey in particular, are comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Most government departments have data relating to water spaces although they not always available centrally or digitally. No attempts have been made to develop major programmes of data evaluation and maintenance in relation to the water resource. Most of the larger stakeholders collect data, although these can sometimes be limited to trend data on membership, for example. For data such as physical access to sites it was often necessary to go to local clubs or to use local and regional guides. This indicates just how difficult it can be to gain detailed information about the opportunities for water-based sport and recreation.

10.3.3 As this research has demonstrated, better data kept in a consistent and accessible format are of fundamental importance to improving access to inland water. Without these data, researchers and policy makers are unable to progress beyond simple indications of locations and trends. Nor can the nature of shortages and the potential of unused spaces be fully assessed. With good spatial data, policy makers would be able to compare provision with social and economic indicators, including those relating to
deprivation and socio-economic grouping. This level of data would be a key element in ensuring regional strategies for water-based sport and recreation can progress beyond lobbying and stakeholder representation.

10.4 The potential application of the GDSS

10.4.1 This is the first time that data on access to inland water have been collected and manipulated in a comprehensive way. Many of the problems encountered emerged because no one had previously attempted to collate all types of physical and user data onto a single geographic decision support system. Checking and rechecking data, cross-referencing it with other data sources and entering it into the system was a major exercise.

10.4.2 The result is an extremely powerful tool for analysing the extent of access and its geographic location as well. The reception to the GDSS of the expert panels has been highly favourable. It has many potential applications, particularly in the area of regional strategic planning. However, at present it is very much in its pilot stage. At the outset, the research team did not know how far it would be possible to collate this level of information, nor how far this information would facilitate a deeper and more informed analysis of the issues and their potential solution. In both cases the GDSS has proved useful.

10.4.3 It has been an expensive exercise, particularly in terms of tracking down and inputting basic material. However, now that the ground work has been done, the system is relatively sustainable, as long as the core data continue to be available. Further work is required by stakeholders and government agencies to ensure that the system is working to its potential, updating arrangements are in place, and that those providing information are better informed about how and when to provide it.
Appendix 1: Research Methodology

Introduction

A1 In designing the methodology the team sought to ensure that the methods employed were valid and reliable, and the findings generated were sufficiently robust to withstand analysis and scrutiny from all interested parties. A primary requirement of the work was thus a critical assessment of the availability of appropriate data and the degree of certainty that could be gained in the secondary analysis of these data. Indeed, it was apparent that the validity of the findings would be underpinned by an acute recognition of the reliability of the base data, allied to the use of appropriate analytical techniques.

A2 As a result, the following task-based structure was proposed as a means of ensuring that all the work was undertaken within a rational, best value framework:

Task I: assessment of the current and potential supply of inland waters and current levels of participation in water-based sport and recreation;

Task II: assessment of the potential for additional future consumption of water-based sport and recreation opportunities;

Task III: assessment of the effectiveness of current arrangements and the ways in which this can be improved in the future;

Task I: assessment of the current and potential supply of inland waters and current levels of participation in water-based sport and recreation;

A3 Aim: To collate and integrate into an electronic geographically referenced database all sources of supply and current participation data, and other relevant social and environmental data; to advise on the value and maintenance of the database; and to calculate measures and scores of the supply, access arrangements and constraints for water-based sports and recreation.

A4 Methodology: The collation of existing electronic data sets and a combination of face-to-face interviews and postal questionnaires with stakeholders and sports/recreation clubs to obtain new data.

Integrating the facts: A GDSS for water-based sports and recreation

A5 This task analysed in detail the physical availability of water space suitable for sport and recreation. The supply of water space is strongly determined by access arrangements and other constraints, such as environmental designations. Thus a central element of Task I was an analysis of access and constraints on supply. The supply of water space was assessed using a Geographical Information System Decision Support System (GDSS) based at the University of Brighton. This was a comprehensive and reliable geographically referenced database containing digital information on:

- the availability of water space (canals, rivers, lakes and reservoirs)
- navigation rights and access arrangements
- environmental designations and management relating to water spaces
- measures of water quality
- major water-based sports and recreation facilities
- transport networks and urban areas
- population characteristics at ward level
The GDSS was the platform for a detailed inventory of the supply of water space for sport and recreation and was used to analyse and calculate measures of provision, demand, access and conflict. It also provides the client with an output in the form of a database designed to be easily interrogated and forms the basis of a decision support system for planning water-based sports and recreation at the regional and national level. The GDSS contains a comprehensive Geographical Information System (GIS) but is designed to be a tool to support creative thinking for water-based sport and recreation, and assist decision-makers in considering future action by the Government. Thus an important element of the existing project has been to identify the collation, management, sharing and use of existing databases concerned with water-based sports and recreation in order to identify potential improvements in this process. The outputs of the GDSS have been utilised for all tasks on the project and will be supplied in electronic format subject to licensing agreements.

The GDSS Structure

The GDSS used the Ordnance Survey STRATEGY® data as the central data layer for the project. This vector link and node regional database is ideal for applications requiring a comprehensive overview of England and Wales. The information is stored at a scale of 1:250,000 and is comprised of 100km x 100km tiles stored in an NTF v.2.0 format (BS7567).

The GDSS developed to date uses a cadastral approach and consists of the three main hierarchical layers (Figure A1). This hierarchical approach is set within the theoretical and methodological foundation of the system, and views information at one scale as being a component of a larger system present at another scale. For example, the baseline data layer provides a backdrop for analysis and consists of national, regional and county boundary information.

This data layer is then subdivided at the secondary digital data layer, which describes the rivers, canals and lakes within each region and county. Here, because of the finer resolution, important attribute information can be calculated, providing core material such as the present supply of water space, the current extent of navigation rights and the relevance of nature conservation designation to water spaces within England and Wales. This data layer also includes information on conservation designations, socio-economic characteristics, the transport network, water quality and urban area boundaries.

The final layer (primary user data) then augments the previous data layer by providing fine scale information relevant to our chosen stakeholder groups (canoeing, fishing, sailing, water-skiing, etc.). Here the analysis provides information where it could be obtained on points of ingress and egress, underuse and overuse, areas of known conflict, aspiration spaces, and location of facilities.

Initially, two principal GIS platforms were selected: ArcView 3.2 (ESRI 1999) and MapInfo 5.0 (MapInfo Corporation 1998). Many existing GIS platforms provide a flexible and interchangeable medium where spatially consistent data from a variety of different sources can be integrated. However, both ArcView and MapInfo are standard GIS platforms widely used by National Government Agencies and regional / local water-related organisations. The decision, nevertheless, to use both platforms principally resulted from their mutually exclusive abilities to perform different functions. This ‘tandem’ approach allows the obstacles created by integrating data in different formats to be easily overcome. This has been particularly valuable for integrating the different forms of river and environmental data.

MapInfo was chosen for specialist vector data manipulation, whilst ArcView was seen to provide the core GIS unit for database management and a more effective platform.

† England: 113 megabytes, 87 tiles @ 1.3 megabytes
Wales: 27 megabytes, 21 tiles @ 1.3 megabytes
for raster data handling. Data exchange/interchange between the two platforms was achieved through the file/data transfer programme Universal Translator™. Universal Translator™ provided a means by which data could be transferred between packages following double precision methods.

A13 The GDSS was constructed primarily to answer questions raised by the aims of the research project. The GDSS was presented to the expert group meeting and along with a highly positive general response, group members also put forward suggestions as to future uses of the GDSS and types of data not currently in the GDSS that could be usefully added.

A14 Some expert group members felt data on land use and ownership adjoining water spaces would be valuable. The research team examined the potential of the current computerised national land use dataset prepared by the Natural Environment Research Council. This dataset, however, only provides land use for 1km grid squares which would not be accurate for analysing land adjoining water spaces. Identifying land ownership would be a huge task and attempts to do this were abandoned by the former National Rivers Authority. It might be possible to identify and incorporate into the GDSS broad categories of ownership, such as public, private and water company but this was outside the scope of the project.

A15 Expert groups and stakeholder interviews also suggested data on the following items could be added to the GDSS in future:

- Planned gravel pits
- Canals under restoration
- Local nature reserves
- Country Parks
- Larger flood relief channels separately identified
- Walking and cycling routes on banksides
- Spaces used for recreational boating, model boating and wildfowling.
Some of these might be available in electronic form but some (e.g. local nature reserves) would require substantial resources for data collation and entry. Some stakeholders noted that existing GIS systems might contribute further data such as those developed by the RSPB, National Park Authorities and the Cotswold Water Park.

The expert groups also identified a number of valuable roles the GDSS could play in relation to:

- monitoring changing use on existing water spaces,
- identifying potential new water spaces,
- developing grant applications
- facilitating the development of governing body national strategies
- demand analysis (through identifying competing/complimentary resources)

All expert groups were unanimous, however, in arguing that for the full potential of the GDSS to be harnessed it was essential that some of the data were made available to a range of stakeholders and resources were found to ensure the continued maintenance of the database.

The questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey of local clubs, associations and organisations was undertaken to obtain specific information about current participation in water-based sport and recreation and future requirements for water space and other related facilities. In particular the survey sought to obtain data on; club membership levels and trends; where club members go and how they reach their places of activity; current access arrangements, both formal and informal; and future aspirations. In addition, data was sought about relations and conflicts between different users of water spaces and about data exchange and collection.

The questionnaire, which was available in Welsh language and electronic formats upon request, comprised two distinct sections. Part I was designed to elicit information about the club’s membership and activities and Part II was a request for general information about studies/reports/publications concerned with water-based sport and recreation in the respondent’s local area. Respondents were asked to enclose copies of these publications wherever possible, or to state from where they might be available to the research team. They were also requested to send leaflets/pamphlets or other printed material giving details of the club’s activities or sites. This has generated a considerable amount of information that is valuable for the development of the GDSS and the review and assessment of secondary material.

A database of clubs and associations (referred to as the stakeholders) using inland waters for sport and recreation in England and Wales was drawn up using information from a variety of sources, including:

- The national associations for a range of sports and recreational activities
- Business directories (local clubs/associations/societies)
- Previous research studies.

The total number of stakeholders identified in this way was 1,250. Representatives from each sport/recreation were identified, as far as possible, for each region. The sports and recreational activities covered in this survey are listed in table A1. 400 of the 1,250 questionnaires were distributed with covering letters by the National Federation of Anglers (NFA) to member angling clubs in England, on behalf of the research team. The full NFA list contains over 1,000 clubs but to keep costs down and to avoid bias, only 400 were used. The remaining 850 questionnaires were sent to named individuals or to club secretaries, with a request to complete and return the
questionnaire as soon as possible. There was just one request for a Welsh language version of the questionnaire and covering letter.

A23 The total number of responses received was 284, which gave an overall response rate for the survey of 23%. This represents a satisfactory response rate for a postal questionnaire circulated by a research organisation as opposed to a governing body or other organisation with which clubs and associations have regular contact. This resulted in 252 completed questionnaires and a further 32 replies giving reasons why it was not possible to complete the document. In addition, five questionnaires were returned by the Post Office as undeliverable. Clubs returning completed questionnaires represented all types of angling, canal boating, canoeing, motor boats/cruising, dragon boating, outdoor centres, rowing, sailing, sub aqua, triathlon and water-skiing. Enclosures were received from 14 stakeholders giving information about club activities and fishing waters. 197 stakeholders completed Part II, identifying a total of 32 studies, 22 surveys, 17 reports and 27 other publications. The distribution of responses by region and type of stakeholder is shown in Table 12. Canoeing and angling clubs provided the largest groups of respondents with 92 and 82 completed responses each but these can be very usefully contrasted with each other and with the responses from the 78 other users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>WM</th>
<th>EM</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>SW</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>not known</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% replies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>Birds/shooting</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

**Stakeholder interviews**

A24 The face-to-face stakeholder interviews had two main aims. The first was to verify and expand data already held by the research team on the current and potential supply of inland waters and current participation in water-based sport and recreation. Data obtained in this way included guides, listings, maps and details on supply, use, facilities and access. Some of this information was incorporated into the GDSS. The second aim of the interviews was to obtain stakeholder views on key issues such as, constraints on the use of current space, access arrangements, and the nature of conflict. By undertaking these interviews early in the project it was intended to develop an involving research process that is sensitive to stakeholder concerns over data and the research project more generally. The process of checking data used in the GDSS also involved stakeholders. The 58 stakeholder organisations interviewed face-to-face are shown in Appendix 2.
Task II: Assessment of the potential for additional future consumption of water-based sport and recreation opportunities

A25 Aim: To undertake primary data collection on the potential demand for new access, resources or facilities in the future.

A26 Methodology: Group Interviews to Establish Future Demand

There is very little evidence of any major shift in the consumption of outdoor recreation over the last 20 years (Curry and Ravenscroft 2001). Research into potential or latent demand has been similarly consistent, with the MVA Ltd (1999) study indicating that despite widespread support for increased access to the countryside, little additional consumption would result. This confirmed earlier work by CLA (1998) that major increases in the supply of access resources (through schemes such as Countryside Stewardship) have not brought about any corresponding increases in consumption. Similarly, in testing the validity of national data at the local level, Curry and Ravenscroft (2000) concluded from a telephone survey of 2000 households in Surrey that the demand for outdoor recreation is not constrained, per se, by a lack of access to appropriate facilities.

Potential, or latent, demand is thus most likely to be comprised of already active people choosing to change what they do, or the frequency with which they do it. When seeking supply and consumption data from the stakeholders (Task I), the team tried to ascertain to what extent current consumption is frustrated by a lack of facilities or restricted availability of access to inland water. We also considered the extent to which making inland water available to the public “as of right” would be likely to impact on established patterns of use (for example, by taking use away from managed sites that are available only on a payment basis to freely available but unmanaged sites). The following issues were also examined:

- The potential for increased inter-user or other conflicts over access to, or the use of, limited natural resources.
- The potential impact on the environment of changes in access regulation.
- The potential impacts on the financial and personal welfare of landowners, farmers and others affected by any change in regulations.

Potential Demand

While data are available on current participation, there is currently insufficient information about the potential demand for access to inland water, notwithstanding the information provided by the organisations and interest groups. While there were no data indicating the existence of any such large-scale demand, we questioned the degree to which conventional surveys are able to uncover this type of information. This is mainly because such surveys tend to make erroneous assumptions about the nature of the constraints to participating in outdoor recreation. This is particularly in assuming that each respondent has the ability, when addressing questions of aspiration, to clear away (metaphorically) the structural barriers that they face, when in reality these barriers are the reasons that they do not currently aspire to consume. For example, the social and cultural barriers surrounding a disaffected inner city youth may be so great that the offer of the opportunity to sail or canoe may simply not register, regardless of the availability of the resource. If asked such a question, the response is much more likely to be couched in terms of a lack of interest, than as a frustrated potential participant.

As a result, rather than repeating the questionnaire-based data collection of most aspirational studies, we used group interviews, or focus groups, in line with our recent work for the Countryside Agency and Kent County Council on the demand for outdoor recreation in Kent. The use of focus groups allowed us to identify in depth: the determinants of demand; triggers to current consumption; and evidence about...
latent demand and the extent to which it can be addressed through innovative approaches to the provision of new access opportunities to inland water.

A30 Focus groups have become increasingly common as a relatively low-cost means of gaining detailed information from a relatively large number of people in a limited period of time. However, without painstaking preparation and an appropriate experienced convenor, focus groups can rapidly become ‘unfocused’ and subject to a number of biases, making them unreliable as the basis from which to generate policy or provision. In accordance with established good practice, therefore, the team prepared for the focus groups as they would any other survey technique. This involved: stratifying the target population according to pre-agreed criteria; engaging a professional recruitment agency to generate the sample participants; developing a structured discussion schedule or guide; and using experienced convenors who are part of the core team.

Preparation for Focus Groups

Project manager - Neil Ravenscroft
Recruitment - Sue Markwell and Drummond Madell Fieldworks
Facilitators - Neil Ravenscroft, Andrew Church, Denise Hill, Paul Fish

Focus Group Process

A31 The University of Brighton undertook the focus group process and management within both case study areas. The common procedures for the focus group sessions involved the taping of discussion via a remote MiniDisk player, which formed the basis for writing up the individual focus group sessions. The focus group sessions were structured as follows:

(a) Coffee and pre-meeting questionnaire – a brief questionnaire was completed by each group member, identifying their activities and leisure habits (20 minutes)
(b) Introduction – stating aims and objectives of study, and providing individuals opportunity to introduce themselves (15 minutes)
(c) Discussion – a semi-structured focus group session to highlight the issues of demand and participation in water-based sport and recreation (75 minutes).
(d) Conclusion and thanks (5 minutes)

Selection Criteria

A32 We ran 16 focus groups in four regions of England and Wales, as a means of gauging the latent and potential demand for water-based sport and recreation. The 16 groups comprised two each of the following eight categories:

1. Recreationally-active teenagers (16-18)
2. Disaffected youth (16-18)
3. Young recreationally-active adults (m & f, 18-35)
4. Older recreationally-active adults (m & f, 60+)
5. Disabled recreationally-active adults (m & f, 18+)
6. Women (18+)
7. Men (18+)
8. Unemployed people (m & f, 18+)

A33 The selection criteria for the four regions suggested in the proposal was based on relative levels of supply and participation. While this remains a valid approach, few of the data available at this stage of the work were of a fine enough grain to facilitate precise selection on this basis. As a result, we used evidence from various sources – particularly the stakeholder interviews – to select ‘pairs’ of locations, comprising ‘generator’ and ‘destination’ areas, at which to run focus groups. The locations were also chosen to reflect differences in supply and demand. The pairings are as follows:
1. Merseyside and North Wales (good participation and supply)
2. Cambridge and East Anglia (supply greater than demand)
3. Bristol and Gloucestershire (demand exceeds supply)
4. Birmingham and Leicestershire (below average demand and supply)

A34 The allocation of focus groups was as follows:

5. Merseyside and North Wales: groups 2 and 6
6. Cambridge and East Anglia: groups 3 and 4
7. Bristol and Gloucestershire: groups 1 and 5
8. Birmingham and Leicestershire: groups 7 and 8

Recruitment of Focus Group Participants

A35 From previous experience, some participants are most efficiently recruited by a specialist consultant, while others are best done internally, by the research team. In the proposal, we proposed that Drummond Madell Fieldworks recruit eight focus groups. Following discussion within the research team, we raised this to 12 groups, comprising two of each of the following:

- Groups 3 & 4 (young and older recreationally active people);
- Groups 6 & 7 (men and women of all ages and levels of recreational activity)
- Group 5 (disabled people)
- Group 8 (unemployed people)

A36 The remaining groups, comprising young people, were recruited directly by the team, through approaches to a school and a youth centre.

Focus Group Schedule

Brief outline of recreational pursuits

- What water-based recreational pursuits do you currently undertake?
- What other outdoor recreational activities do you participate in?
- How has this changed in recent years?
- What water-based recreational clubs and societies do you belong to?
- Have you considered joining other such clubs? If so, why did you not join?
- How often do you undertake any form of water-based recreation?
- Do you feel that your current level of activity is restricted in any way?
- If so, what do you feel restricts you to this level of activity?
- Do you currently receive training/coaching in water-based activity and does this affect your choice of activity?
- What do you think would make it easier to participate more often in water-based activity?

Provision and accessibility of water-based recreation

- Are your water-based recreational needs and requirements met close to home?
- What is the quality (e.g. in terms of range/scale/experience etc) of this local provision?
- Are your water-based activities linked to other recreational activities (e.g. as part of Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, Outdoor Pursuits Centre activities etc)?
- In terms of an overall experience, how does your water-based recreational activity compare with other types of recreational activity?
- If your recreational needs are not met close to home, how far do you have to travel?
Do you consider that the water-based recreational activities that you are involved in are easily accessible to you?

Do you encounter any difficulties or opposition when gaining access to, or participating in, water-based recreation? If so, what?

How do difficulties with access and participation for water-based activities compare with those for other types of recreational activity?

How do you normally travel to the places for your water-based recreation?

How long do you normally travel (max. and min.)?

Does the cost of water-based recreation affect what you do?

Do you think that safety is a particular issue for water based sports and/or other sports?

Does the proximity of support services and facilities (i.e., local equipment suppliers/chandlery/repairers) affect where you undertake your activity?

How do time commitments affect your behaviour with respect to water-based recreation?

Aspirations and expectations for water-based recreation

What additional water-based recreational activities would you like to undertake?

What prevents you from doing so?

Would you participate more if there were better, cheaper or more easily accessible facilities?

Task III: assessment of the effectiveness of current arrangements and the ways in which this can be improved in the future.

Aim: To aid evidence-based decision making by presenting acknowledged experts with the information and decision support tools developed in Tasks I and II, to allow them to determine the current effectiveness of provision and how this might be improved in the future.

Methodology: Application of a modified Delphi Technique, using experts to undertake an assessment of the implications of the findings from Tasks I and II.

Task III is very much at the core of the research, in linking the data to the wider policy arena and, in the process, shifting provision from a supply to a demand or evidence-based orientation. In order to achieve this, we prepared data from Tasks I and II in a form that was suitable for evaluating:

- the effectiveness of the current arrangements, in terms of the volume, type and distribution of provision;
- how this effectiveness can be improved, in terms of the volume, type and distribution of the resource, and also in terms of the types of access arrangements that are used to facilitate access.

For the evaluation itself, we applied a modified form of Delphi Technique. This type of technique is based on the Hegelian principle of achieving consensus through a formalised three-stage process: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. The theory assumes that, through working with opposites, one view put forward to be countered by an opposing argument, the experts will eventually reach a new position, or thesis (the synthesis), from whence the process can start again, in an iterative fashion. The Delphi Technique is particularly good for approaching problems that cannot easily be solved by conventional techniques, or in cases such as access to inland waters, where the amount of objective empirical data is limited. In such circumstances the Delphi Technique is appropriate since it is both systematic and easy to document, it recognises the limits of the data, it forces individual experts to consider group opinions and it offers an opportunity to capture consensual knowledge.
Applying the Methodology

A41 Conventionally, Delphi methods are run by facilitators contacting the experts individually, to ensure that the experts do not meet and remain individually and collectively anonymous. This is to ensure that there is no individual influence over group decisions. However, this assumes that the facilitators are able to reduce the decision-making to a series of questions or assertions that the experts are able to address objectively. For the current exercise, where the demand and supply factors may offer a range of options, it was decided to bring the experts together, to work collectively on solutions, with no more than guidance from the facilitator.

A42 This involved setting up 6 expert panels, each comprising approximately 10 members, at strategic locations (in inland water terms) around England and Wales, each charged with evaluating the data for their area. The GDSS analysis from Task I informed the selection of the locations, using criteria similar to those used for the group interviews in Task II. The evaluations themselves were informed by the GDSS analysis, through the application of the decision support tool to the identified key measures. Data on measures and mapped outputs were presented to the panels, and each panel was given a brief presentation of the nature of the GDSS. In this way, the expert panels commenced their deliberations on the basis of evidence and objectivity.

A43 Once the analysis of current effectiveness had been completed, the panels considered where the shortfalls are, and for what types of demand. Again using the GDSS, the panels were in a position to identify appropriate inland waters and resources that are potentially suitable to meet this demand. They were then asked to address the mechanisms through which such additional access could be achieved, including the scope for negotiating new access by agreement with landowners.

A44 Each panel met for one half-day session. The panel members received a full briefing and information pack prior to the meeting and were offered the opportunity to comment in writing after the meeting had been held.
Appendix 2: Stakeholder Interviews Completed

**Government departments/agencies/QUANGOS**
- Defence Estates
- Department of Culture Media & Sport
- English Nature
- English Tourism Council
- Forest Enterprise
- Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee
- Sports Council for Wales

**Landowners, Managers, and Planners**
- Country Land & Business Association
- National Farmers’ Union
- National Trust
- National Trust for Wales
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Wildlife Trusts

**Representative Bodies & Interest Groups**
- Association of Inland Navigation Authorities
- Association of National Park Authorities
- Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs
- Black Environment Network
- British Hire Cruiser Federation
- British Marine Industry Federation
- Central Council for Physical Recreation
- Commercial Boat Owners Association
- Commercial Coarse Fisheries Association
- Disability Wales
- English Federation of Disability Sport
- Inland Waterways Association
- Institute of Leisure & Amenity Management
- Local Government Association
- Water UK
- Welsh Association of National Parks Authorities
- Yacht Harbours Association

**Governing Bodies, Associations and Clubs**
- Amateur Rowing Association
- Amateur Swimming Association
- Association of Still Water Game Managers
- Association of Welsh Anglers
- British Canoe Union
- British Disabled Water-ski Association
- British Long Distance Swimming Association
- British Sub Aqua Club
- British Triathlon Association
- British Water-ski Federation
- Dragon Boat Association
- Dutch Barge Association
- Historic Narrow Boat Owners’ Club
- National Angling Alliance
- National Association of Boat Owners
- National Association of Fisheries and Angling Consultative Committee
- National Federation of Anglers
- Peterborough Model Boat Club
- Residential Boat Owners’ Association
- Royal Yacht Association
- Royal Yacht Association Wales
- Royal Yacht Association (wind-surfing manager)
- Salmon and Trout Association
- Welsh Canoe Association
- Welsh Salmon & Trout Association
- Welsh Yachting Association

Total = 58
Appendix 3: Data-sources used to compile the GDSS


National River Authority & Sports Council (1995). Space to live, space to place; A recreational strategy for the River Thames [and appendices in separately bound volume]

National Trust (2001) Enjoy fishing with the National Trust.

National Trust (2001) Fishing and boating in the Lake District.


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