

D&S IFCA - Notice to Permit Holders

Escape Gaps and Marking of Gear Notice

Dear Potting Permit Holder

D&S IFCA wishes to bring to your attention two of your potting permit conditions. You may already be fully compliant with the requirements, if that is the case there is nothing for you to do.

Escape Gaps

Between 1st April and 31st December (inclusive), a permit holder or named representative is not authorised to use, for the purpose of fishing for crab, lobster or spiny lobster, within the District any pot where the entrance or entrances to the pot or internal chamber of the pot are constructed from netting and are designed to prevent shellfish exiting unless;

- a) the pot is fitted with an escape gap or;
- b) where a chamber is present, the chamber is fitted with an escape gap.

Any escape gap must;

- a) be located in the exterior wall of the pot or in the case of a multiple chambered pot each individual chamber must have an unobstructed escape gap located in its exterior wall;
- b) be of sufficient size that there may be passed through the gap a rigid, box shaped gauge, 84 millimetres wide by 46 millimetres high and 100 millimetres long; and
- c) be fitted in such a way that the longest side of the gap is parallel to the base of the pot and is located in the lowest part of the chamber as is practically possible, other than in the bottom.

D&S IFCA is aware that there continues to be some discussion about the requirement to fit an escape gap where entrances to the pot are made from netting. D&S IFCA can confirm that regardless of what modifications are made to the entrance, for example tying the top panel/flap of the net open, the ability for shellfish to return through a net constructed entrance is much reduced. In order to allow undersize shellfish a significantly better chance of leaving the pot, pots with net constructed entrances must have an escape gap fitted as low as possible as set out above. The position of the escape gap is designed so that the shellfish does not need to climb the side of the pot to locate the exit. Officers have seized many pots where the gaps have not complied with this requirement.

Marking of Gear

A permit holder or named representative is not authorised under a Permit to use any pots, for the purpose of fishing, within the District unless all individual pots or each string or shank of pots is clearly marked by at least one floating marker (buoy or dahn). Each of these buoys or dahns shall be clearly marked with either the relevant fishing vessel's registration (port, letters and numbers) of the vessel named on the Permit or the Permit number.

6th July 2021

D&S IFCA has received numerous calls from potting permit holders about the lack of adherence to this permit requirement. D&S IFCA has seized gear that has not been compliant with this permit requirement and given the concerns raised by fishers, Officers will look to undertake further patrols within the District with the intention of seizing, unmarked or poorly marked gear. This management measure is important as it allows Officers to better monitor the potting effort taking place within the District and is relatively simple for fishers to comply with.

If you wish to discuss any matter raised in this email or have other permit related questions that you would wish to raise with D&S IFCA, please contact D&S IFCA, preferably by email, office@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk or by phone 01803 854648. If you wish to report any suspicious or illegal fishing activity please call the Duty Phone on 07740 175479.

End.