

Devon and Severn IFCA News

Abandoned Gill Nets Recovered from South Devon Beaches

D&S IFCA's Enforcement Officers react to reported abandoned gill nets.

During Tuesday evening, 12th of October, information was provided to D&S IFCA from concerned members of the public relating to two separate abandoned gill nets.

The first net was reported by divers to be at Mothecombe Beach in the South Hams. The net was initially reported to be tangled up on the rocks at Battisborough Island with no marker buoys displaying a vessel number or tags to allow identification of the owner. The net was brought ashore by the divers and hauled up to the high tide line.

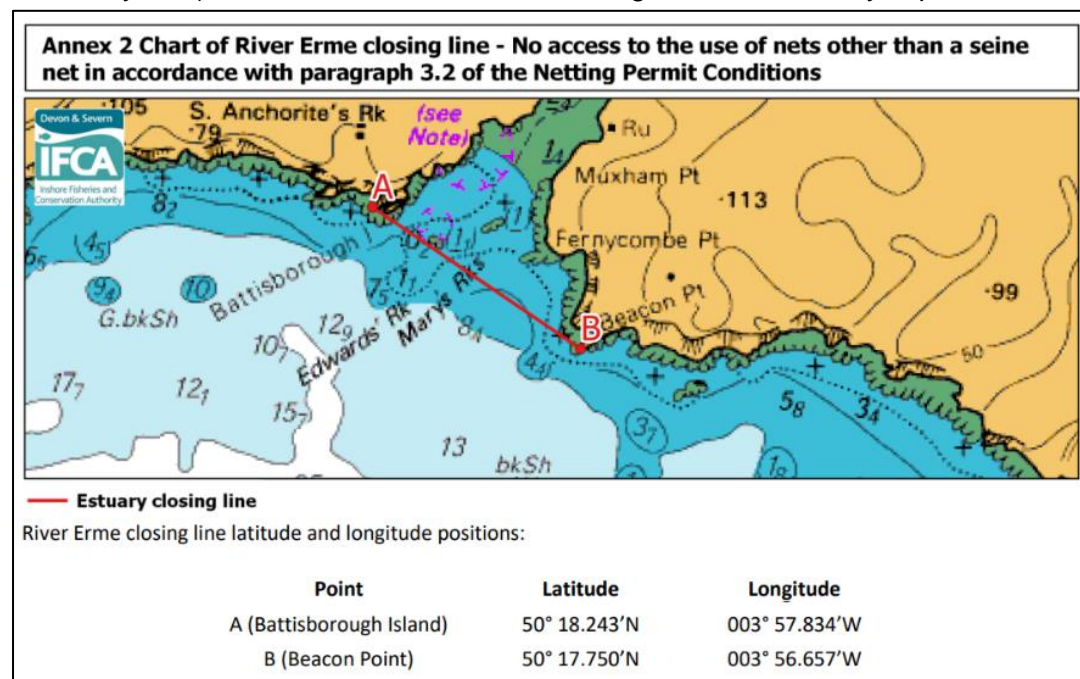


The second net was accidentally found by a swimmer in shallow water in front of Torre Abby Meadows, Torquay, also with no marker buoys or tags to allow identification of the owner. The swimmer attached his own marker buoy to the net to aid location for the recovery.

On the 13th of October, D&S IFCA Officers arrived at Mothecombe Beach in the early morning and located the net. The net was in poor condition, very tangled up and contained a large number of decomposing dead fish. It was instantly apparent to the officers that the net had been ghost fishing for a long period of time. The dead catch was removed, then the entire net was recovered to the D&S IFCA compound where it was measured and found to be 150 meters long.

Estuary Closing Lines

The first net reported was found to be within the closing line of the River Erme. Netting within the D&S IFCA's District is regulated via the [Netting Permit Byelaw](#) and the associated [Netting Permit Conditions](#) (and [Annexes](#)). Other than the use of seine nets for the capture of sand eel, netting (as defined in the Netting Permit Byelaw) within defined estuaries including the Erme Estuary is prohibited.



After returning to the D&S IFCA compound, the Fisheries Protection Vessel "David Rowe" was readied for sea to locate and collect the second ghost net of the day, reported to be in shallow water in front of Torre Abby Meadows. This net was not only posing a danger to marine life, but also to swimmers in the area due to its proximity to the shore.



The net was quickly located using the buoy that the swimmer had attached, hauled, and safely brought aboard the patrol vessel. The net had no weights holding it in place and would've been free to drift with the tide. Several dead fish were removed; however, a very large Greater Spotted Catshark was found to be alive but entirely tangled up. The shark was carefully cut free from the net and returned to the sea unharmed.

Because of concise and accurate information supplied by members of the public, D&S IFCA are pleased to report that these two ghost nets, one being 150 meters long and the other 50 meters long, have been removed from the sea and can no longer pose a danger to marine life. The nets will be sent to a local company who recycle the monofilament net and rope into sunglasses and other plastic products.

Enforcement Action

D&S IFCA's enforcement work is intelligence led. If you see any suspicious fishing activity, please report it to us on the duty telephone number: [07740175479](tel:07740175479).

Any person found breaching the legislation outlined above may be subject to enforcement action that can include receiving a Financial Administrative Penalty (FAP) or potential prosecution leading to court proceedings.

Please ensure you follow all the regulations detailed here and if you have any questions, please contact us on 01803 854648 or visit our '[Contact Us](#)' page on the website to get details on how to contact and talk to one of our Enforcement Officers.

Other Information

Additional information relating to Enforcement and Legislation can be found by visiting our [Enforcement & Legislation](#) website pages.