

# Devon and Severn IFCA News

## Enforcement Patrols in Plymouth and Gear Seizure

Sea and shore patrols in the Plymouth area are used to focus on enforcing the Potting Permit Conditions



In recent weeks, Enforcement Officers from Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA) have increased the number of patrols and inspections in and around the Plymouth area. The patrols also provided an opportunity for engagement with commercial and recreational fishers and to help fishers better understand their legal responsibilities.

The correct marking of pots and the construction of potting gear have been identified as an on-going concern. A string of pots near to Fort Bovisand were seized by officers. The gear was not marked correctly, and the pots did not contain the required escape gaps.

### What are the Restrictions?

Anyone who wishes to use pots for commercial or recreational use within the District must have a Potting Permit. Two different categories of Potting Permits are issued, and they both contain a series of restrictions. Gear marking and the use of escape gaps are both requirements of the [Potting Permit Conditions](#).

Each individual pot or string of pots needs to be clearly marked by at least one floating marker (buoy or dahn). Port letters and numbers (PLN) or the permit number must be clearly visible on the floating marker.

Escape gaps are a rectangular shaped opening that is designed to allow small shellfish to escape from the pots. Escape gaps must be fitted to pots intended for fishing for crab, lobster or spiny lobster where the entrance to the pot or the internal chamber is made from netting. This is more commonly referred to as a “soft eye” entrance. The soft eye is very effective at preventing escape, whereas a hard eye entrance offers more chance of escape if the pot is left for too long. The space in the pot or any chamber immediately following a soft eye entrance must have an escape gap.

The escape gap must be located in the exterior wall of the pot with the longest part parallel to the base of the pot in the lowest part of the chamber as possible, other than the bottom. The size of the gap must be large enough so that a box shaped gauge measuring 84mm wide, 46mm high and 100mm long can be pass through the gap. The fitting of escape gaps is not required in January, February and March each year.

### **Different types of Potting Permits**

D&S IFCA issue two types of Potting Permits.

- Category One Potting Permits are for commercial fishers
- Category Two Potting Permits are for recreational fishers

Many of the restrictions are the same; however, some specific restrictions apply to recreational potters.

A Category Two (recreational) Permit Holder is only authorised to haul pots within the District that are identified by tags issued to the Permit Holder by the Authority and must not use more than 5 pots in any day within the District. These can be of any combination of pot, e.g. prawn pot or crab/lobster pot.

Catch restrictions are also different for commercial and recreational fishers using pots. A recreational potter can remove a maximum of two lobsters and three crabs per calendar day from a fishery within the District.

There are other differences and the Potting Permit Conditions, which also include charts (Annexes) can be viewed here in full [here](#).

### **Questions and how to get a Potting Permit?**

Application forms can be requested by [contacting D&S IFCA](#). We also have an [on-line permit application facility](#).

If you have any questions about how to mark your gear or any of the conditions, then please contact D&S IFCA on 01803 854648.

### **Suspicious Fishing Activity**

Our enforcement work is intelligence led. If you are concerned about any suspected illegal fishing activity, then please report it to us. You can contact the office as above or use our out of hours telephone number:

07740 175479.