

Devon and Severn IFCA News

Recovery of ghost fishing gear

Recently identified ghost gear – several wrasse traps and lines – were jointly recovered and disposed of by Fathoms Free and D&S IFCA



Having recently received a report of broken and, what appeared to be abandoned fishing pots, from a member of the public, Officers from Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority investigated if they were identifiable and how best they could be recovered.

The pots were reported as being in an area of Plymouth Sound that is charted as 'Marra Pool'. This inlet, just south of Mount Batten Breakwater, is known for having patches of sea grass and for being habitat for a nationally rare worm.

D&S IFCA Officers contacted the registered charity **Fathoms Free**. This group of voluntary conservationist divers dedicate their free time to removing marine debris from the waters around the South West coastline.

Towards the end of April, a group of divers from Fathoms Free undertook a reconnaissance of the area at which time they were able to pinpoint the location and recover some of the abandoned fishing gear. This was then followed up on the 7th of May 2022 with several volunteers taking the two dive RHIBs – *Casper* and *Shadow* - to Marra Pool and recovering the remaining 17 wrasse traps and a considerable amount of rope.

Officers from Devon and Severn IFCA met the group at Millbay Marina who had kindly authorised access for collection. After the wrasse traps were recovered it was determined that they were in a such a deteriorated state that they could be neither repaired, or broken down for recycling, and they were disposed of.

You can find out more about Fathoms Free by visiting their website:

<https://www.fathomsfree.org/>

If you see any fishing gear that appears to be washed up, broken, or abandoned please contact Devon and Severn IFCA on 01803 854 648 (office hours) or on our out of hours duty phone number 07740 175 479