

## Devon and Severn IFCA News

### Illegal Gill Net Recovered From Salcombe – Kingsbridge Estuary

**D&S IFCA's Enforcement Officers recover illegal net from Bowcombe Creek.**

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, a report was received by D&S IFCA regarding a net that had been set in Bowcombe Creek, Kingsbridge. Officers made a site visit and established that the net spanned across the creek (east to west) above New Bridge. The net was seen to be secured to tree roots on the East bank of the creek and extended two thirds of the way across the creek.



Nets (as defined) can only be used in the District in accordance with a permit.

The use of fixed and drift nets within the Salcombe – Kingsbridge Estuary is illegal.

The Netting Permit Conditions (Annex 2) set out closing lines for the estuaries within the District.

Within the closing lines there is no access for the use of nets other than a seine net in accordance with paragraph 3.2 of the Netting Permit Conditions.



#### Recovery of the Net

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September Officers had sufficient equipment available to recover the illegal net which measured approximately 150 metres in length.

There were no identifying features on the net, however based on the size and type of the net, and the fact it was also anchored to a scallop tooth bar, it is thought that the net was set by a commercial fisherman.

Those engaged in illegal netting are known to travel across the Southwest to fish and based on Officers' experience it is highly likely that the net had been deployed by fishers that were not local to the Salcombe area.





The net contained a large amount of flotsam as well as dead fish.

Officers removed 47 grey mullet and 17 bass from the net.

Most of the bass that were removed from the net were below 42 cm in length (the Minimum Conservation Reference Size).

### **Investigations & Enforcement Action**

Given the location of the net being set in a quite prominent location, easily visible from the road/walkway in an area of relatively heavy footfall, it is believed that the net was most likely set on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September. High water that evening was at 22.21hrs. Officers conducted an extensive investigation, including trying to obtain CCTV footage of value. On this occasion the person who set the net was not identified and the net and dead fish have now been disposed of. Patrols of the Salcombe – Kingsbridge Estuary will continue as part of an intelligence led and risk-based approach to enforcement.

If you see any suspicious fishing activity, please report it to us on the duty telephone number: **07740 175479**. You can also email: [intel@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](mailto:intel@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk)

Officers have produced a flyer that also gives details about reporting suspicious fishing activity. The flyer can be downloaded by clicking [here](#). Any personal data that you provide will be held securely and not shared.

Any person found breaching D&S IFCA's fisheries legislation 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 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.