



**SALCOMBE HARBOUR AUTHORITY
SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Salcombe Harbour Office, Whitestrand,
Salcombe, Devon. TQ8 8BU
Telephone: 01548 843791
E-mail: salcombe.harbour@swdevon.gov.uk



D&S IFCA,
Brixham Laboratory,
Freshwater Quarry,
Brixham,
TQ5 8BA

RE: IFCA Consultation response: Opening of a fixed net fishery in the Salcombe Estuary

Dear Devon and Severn IFCA

18th January 2024

As requested, please consider our formal response and information requested.

- A) Organisation: Salcombe Harbour Authority (South Hams District Council).
- B) Interest: Statutory Harbour Authority for the Salcombe Harbour-Kingsbridge Estuary, management of safe and efficient port operations, navigation and conservancy.
- C) Communication: Various associated and third party correspondence forwarded this consultation by email but Salcombe Harbour was NOT contacted directly by IFCA in relation to a specific topic proposal within the associated harbour area.

In response to the consultation Salcombe Harbour Authority does NOT support the opening of a fixed net fishery in the Salcombe Estuary.

1. There appears to be little to no consideration of safety to navigation. Inland of the closing line is virtually anywhere within the harbour limits, where all main channels need to remain accessible at all times. One 200m net, let alone 2, would have the ability to close off most creeks, all of which require access, certainly via the marked channels. Even in the winter there are numerous events, leisure users and commercial operations that require clear water in all parts of the harbour and this would include the fishing fleet and the lifeboat being able to proceed directly to sea, and the latter also being able to safely respond to inshore emergencies.

2. Historically illegal netting has been a problem in the harbour with a considerable knock-on effect to local crime and abandoned fishing gear.
3. The proposed changes represent a dilution of what is and is not allowed and will therefore confuse, leading to further problems with illegal fishing and making it harder to determine whether activities are legitimate or illegal in terms of enforcement.
4. Our Estuaries Officer Nigel Mortimer will be replying separately to the consultation detailing particular environmental concerns but considering the SSSI and LNR designation of the harbour, not to mention it being a bass nursery area, surely this proposal is not only detrimental to all of the above but directly contradicts the establishment of them and the reasoning behind the ban on netting imposed in the first place.
5. Secondary detrimental impacts, beyond being a major and unacceptable threat to safe navigation, would include other by-catch such as birds and mammals and the physical effects of the net and anchors to the delicate fundus. There is a good example of this in September 2023 where an illegal abandoned net was left in Bowcombe Creek with a significantly detrimental effect to the environment reported and publicised by IFCA.

Having spoken to Officers of IFCA we are surprised not to be directly included in correspondence on this topic and find it odd that an individual fisherman's proposal proceeded to formal consultation, that was not recommended or supported by IFCA officers, according to the minutes.

Regards

Cameron Sims-Stirling

Salcombe Harbour Master

Salcombe Harbour Office

Whitestrاند

Salcombe

Devon

TQ8 8BU

01548 843791

Lifejackets and kill cords save lives!

Salcombe Harbour Authority strongly encourage their use while afloat