

Code of Practice

Fishing Nets used in the Falmouth Bay to St. Austell Bay Special Protection Area (SPA)

To reduce accidental capture of seabirds in fishing nets, it is recommended that the following fishing practices and relaying of information should be followed:

- Where any Slavonian grebe, black-throated diver or great northern diver or concentration of other seabirds are present in an area where you wish to shoot a net, only do so during the hours of darkness. The net should be hauled and entirely clear of the water during the same night, before sunrise.
- Avoid shooting a net at night in an area where concentrations of seabirds were gathered or feeding during the previous period of daylight, when the forecast weather conditions would likely prevent the net from being hauled before the next sunrise.
- If you have shot a net and find that you cannot haul it in time to prevent it from becoming a significant risk for seabird bycatch, ask for assistance from other fishermen who may be in a position to help. If your net cannot be hauled by you or others at an appropriate time, contact Cornwall IFCA to report the situation. (Cornwall IFCA may be able to assist with the recovery of a net).
- Should you accidentally catch any Slavonian grebe, black-throated diver or great northern diver, or any significant number of other seabirds in your net, endeavour to inform other fishermen using or expected to use nets in the same area, as soon as possible. Cornwall IFCA and any local fishing organisation you are a member of should be similarly informed to help them relay the details to relevant fishermen.
- If you have shot a net during daylight hours in an area where you are subsequently made aware of accidental capture of seabirds in other nearby nets, haul your own net soon as possible. Do not use a net in the affected area during daylight hours if any Slavonian grebe, black-throated diver or great northern diver or a concentration of other seabirds remains there.
- Where it is clear that any Slavonian grebe, black-throated diver or great northern diver or a concentration of other seabirds is present in an area where fishing with a net is desired during daylight hours, discuss the situation with other like-minded fishermen and consider voluntary measures to avoid accidental seabird bycatch in nets, including a temporary prohibition of nets used during daylight hours in the affected area. Any measure taken as a result of acting together on a voluntary basis should be assessed daily in terms of its necessity and effectiveness.

Note: This Code of Practice was developed with the aim of reducing accidental interactions between fishing nets and seabirds in the Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA, in particular for Slavonian grebe, black-throated diver and great northern diver which are protected features of the SPA.

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