



FISHING NETS USED IN & ADJACENT TO ST. IVES BAY

CODE OF PRACTICE

To avoid significant numbers of sea bird deaths through their accidental capture in fishing nets, the points listed below should be followed by any fisherman using nets in and adjacent to St. Ives Bay:

- If seabirds are seen gathering to prey on fish in any area where you want to use nets, only shoot and haul them in the dark when birds are not diving below the surface of the sea;
- If there is a significant chance that weather conditions may prevent retrieval of nets before daylight in an area where birds are feeding, do not shoot nets there;
- If you shoot a net in the dark to avoid sea birds and find that you cannot haul it before daylight, ask for assistance from other fishermen who may be in a position to help. If nets cannot be hauled before daylight, contact the Cornwall IFCA (01736 336842) to report the situation. Cornwall IFCA may be able to assist with net recovery.
- If you do accidentally catch birds in your nets, ensure that other net fishermen in the area, officers of the Cornwall IFCA and harbour masters at St Ives and Hayle are informed as soon as possible;
- If you are informed of an area where accidental capture of sea birds in nets has just occurred, any nets you may have there during daylight must be hauled as soon as possible. No nets are to be used in the affected area during daylight until sea birds have moved away;
- If sea birds are feeding in an area where net fishing is required during daylight hours, net fishermen are to discuss with each other and consider a voluntary ban on netting during the day in the affected area. Any decision to act together on a voluntary basis will be assessed daily to ensure that it is or remains effective.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Code of Practice (CoP) was developed with St Ives and Hayle fishermen. It supplements the aim of the Cornwall Sea Fisheries District St Ives Bay Gill Net Fishery Byelaw which is to reduce the accidental capture of sea birds in nets set at the eastern end of St Ives Bay.

Interactions between sea birds and nets in the relevant area have historically been low. However, incidents in January 2012 whereby a pre-determined number of sea bird deaths was exceeded, did lead to a temporary closure of the fishery using nets, as prescribed by the byelaw. In pursuit of earning a living, fishermen then used their nets legally in other parts of St Ives Bay and along the adjacent coast where some of these nets also caused a problem for a significant number of sea birds.

The CoP is to be applied by fishermen wishing to use nets both in the area covered by the byelaw and in adjacent areas which are not. Barring exceptional circumstances, the chances of sea birds being accidentally caught in nets should be greatly reduced if the CoP is followed. Fishermen understand and appreciate the need to avoid sea birds in their nets and that the Cornwall IFCA will take further action, which may mean greater netting restrictions, if such problems persist.