



Cuttlefish Traps Code of Practice

To ensure that cuttlefish eggs are able to develop and hatch, the points listed below should be followed by any person carrying out cuttlefish trapping activities within the District of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA):

- If cuttlefish eggs are found attached to cuttlefish traps take care to minimise damage caused to these eggs when hauling and shooting gear;
- Avoid cleaning or washing traps when cuttlefish eggs are found attached;
- Once traps have finished fishing for the season fishermen should not remove their traps from the sea until the cuttlefish eggs attached have hatched, typically during late August or September;
- When leaving traps in the sea, users should seek to avoid conflict with other users of the sea and avoid damaging features of Marine Protected Areas.
- When leaving traps in the sea, users should regularly attend their traps to remove captured creatures, or remove entrance panels to avoid ghost fishing.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Code of Practice (CoP) aims to protect cuttlefish eggs which have been laid on and attached to cuttlefish traps. By following the advice provided in this code of practice, fishermen will minimise the damage caused through fishing to cuttlefish eggs, enabling the eggs to develop and hatch, thus potentially re-populating the cuttlefish fishery. Cuttlefish breed once, and die soon after laying their eggs, it is therefore important that the number of eggs that reach maturity is maximised. Providing adult cuttlefish have the opportunity to spawn before capture, the trap fishery should not dramatically influence subsequent recruitment¹.

This Code of Practice was developed with the industry as a first alternative to a byelaw because the damage caused to cuttlefish eggs through fishing can potentially be addressed through small changes in fishing practice. These best practice measures were developed by the District's cuttlefish fishermen, many of whom already follow this code of practice.

¹Royer, J., Pierce, G. J., Foucher, E. and Robin, J. P. The English Channel stock of *Sepia officinalis*: Modelling variability in abundance and impact of the fishery. Fisheries Research 78 (2006) 96–106.