



Netting Code of Practice

To avoid the bycatch of diving seabirds, the points listed below should be followed by any person carrying out fixed netting activities for sea fisheries resources within the District of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA):

- If seabirds are seen gathering or are known to gather 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 high 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 find that you cannot a net before daylight, ask for assistance from other fishermen who may be in a position to help. If nets cannot be hauled before daylight, contact Southern IFCA (01202 721373) to report the situation and Southern IFCA may be able to assist with or co-ordinate the recovery of the nets;
- If you do accidentally catch birds in your nets, ensure that other net fishermen in the area and officers of Southern IFCA 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 should then be used in the affected area during daylight until sea birds have moved away;
- If seabirds are seen to be fledging from a breeding colony, avoid using nets in the area until the sea birds have moved away.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Code of Practice (CoP) aims to protect diving seabirds including Razorbills, Guillemots, Puffins and Gannets from becoming entangled and dying in static fishing nets.

This Code of Practice was developed as a first alternative to a byelaw because the conflict between netting and feeding birds can potentially be addressed through small changes in fishing practice. Should the CoP prove ineffective, Southern IFCA will consider the introduction of regulatory measures to address the issue of seabird mortality.

Interactions between sea birds and nets within the Southern IFCA District have historically been low. However, incidents in December 2012 whereby Auks were caught and killed by nets have prompted the need for a code of practice.