

Fishing Gear Entanglements

The RYA has for many years been concerned by reports of boaters experiencing fouled propellers and other entanglement with sea-fishing gear.

In a bid to evaluate the extent of the situation, with a view to addressing the issue the RYA encouraged and collated reports of incidents from boat owners. The hazard also came to the attention of CHIRP (the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme) who again encouraged skippers to file reports.

Discussions with the MCA lead to them re-issuing their guidance leaflet on the marking of fishing gear and some port authorities issued notice to mariners reminding fishermen of any relevant byelaws in place, but none of these authorities regulate fishing.

That responsibility currently lies with the district sea fishery committees, but they stipulate what can be fished, not how people should fish for it.

Ultimately no single organisation is currently responsible for ensuring that fishermen mark their nets and pots appropriately however it is hoped that Article 152(7) of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill will address this, as it gives specific powers to the Marine Management Organisation.