

RECREATIONAL

NORTHUMBERLAND INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE MARKING OF STATIC FISHING GEAR

Background

Stakeholders have raised a number of concerns relating to the way some fishers are marking the location of fishing gear within the NIFCA district.

Poorly marked fishing gear is a navigation hazard and can lead to a loss of fishing gear, a fouled propeller, damage to steering, drive gear, or worse.

What do the current regulations specify?

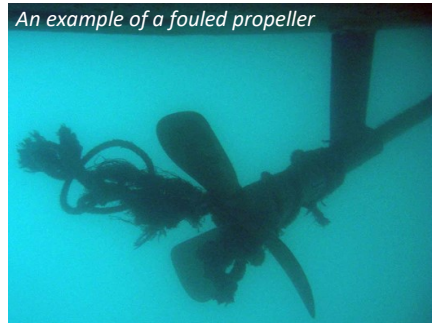
NIFCA byelaw 5 clearly states, that a person must not fish passive (also known as static) gear unless the marker buoy or dahn is **clearly visible on the surface of the water** and the gear is marked with the vessel name, port letters and numbers, or where the marker buoy or dahn is not placed from a registered fishing vessel, the owner's name and telephone number shall be affixed.

What do NIFCA recommend in this code of conduct?

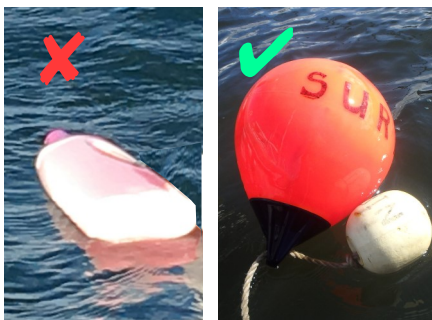
1. Responsibility

Any person setting passive fishing gear is responsible for the way in which the gear has been set and should ensure that as far as practicable it is not a hazard to navigation for other vessels.

- **IMPORTANT:** the line connecting the fishing gear to the marker buoy should NOT be floating on the surface as this is a dangerous navigation hazard. Non floating line with a lead weight fixed below the float (to sink any surplus line) is recommended.



Pictured below are examples of good and unacceptable gear marking



2. Compliance

To ensure compliance with NIFCA Byelaw 5 when marking the location of passive (a.k.a. static) gear, size really does matter.

- Passive gear should be marked with a dahn or a buoy that is **clearly visible in all conditions**.
- If using a dahn marker, NIFCA recommend the pole extends at least 1 metre from the sea with a flag attached. Flag colour is personal preference but bright colours work well. Reflective tape can be added to the pole for additional visibility at night.
- If using marker buoys, the buoy should be of a size appropriate for the location set, and constructed of an approved fishing marker design. Where static gear is set from a vessel it is recommended that the marker buoy should ideally be a minimum of 16 inches in diameter so it can be clearly seen in all conditions. Bright colours (preferably red) stand out best and allow the maximum time to be seen and avoided.
- All vessel markings of passive fishing gear shall be marked in accordance with NIFCA byelaw 5

3. Maintenance

Fishers are responsible for the maintenance of their surface markers to ensure they remain clearly visible and clearly marked with vessel identification, in particular

- Flags need to be replaced periodically before they become worn and torn
- Buoys get covered in weed which requires cleaning to maintain good visibility.
- Vessel identification wears off and must be maintained to be clearly readable at all times.
- **FINALLY,** avoid using materials which can disintegrate or cause environmental or other pollution or harm wildlife