

Recommendation paper

Title: Loligo fishery – SED deployment

Date: 26th February 2022 and 3rd March 2022

Report of: Licensing Officer

1. Background:

1.1 The dates for the Loligo season varies a little each year but follows a rough pattern of 24th February – 28th April for the first season. This year, the season started on 23rd February at 0001 hours.

1.2 During the second season of 2017 there were a number of seal mortalities in the Loligo fishery. Various measures were undertaken to try and minimise seal mortalities and since the first season of 2018, a Seal Exclusion Device (SED) has had to be available to be deployed if interactions with seals resulted in 2 seal mortalities.

1.3 Licence conditions reflect this requirement.

1.4 On 26th February following the notification from the Scientific Officer for Seabirds and Marine Mammals that there had been 2 seal mortalities in the northern area of the Loligo box, vessels were instructed to deploy their SED's when they next shoot the net.

2. Presentation and Consultation:

2.1 The Scientific Officer for Seabirds and Marine Mammals advised on 26th February that there had been 2 seal mortalities within the fleet.

2.2 Following a quick email consultation with Director of Natural Resources and the Acting Senior Fisheries Scientist, it was agreed to email industry to instruct their vessels to deploy their SED'S.

2.3 Below is an extract of applicable licence conditions agreed with industry prior to the start of the season:-

a) Marine Mammal Observers and use of SEDs

- i. Following the mortality of 2 marine mammals across all vessels in the loligo fleet with an MMO on board, SEDs are to be immediately deployed and must continue to be used for the remainder of the season.
- ii. If there are at least 2 seal mortalities on any individual vessel, the Master must immediately deploy an SED, without waiting for formal confirmation from the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department. The Master of the vessel should immediately notify the Fisheries Department of the occurrence through their local fishing company representatives and confirm the immediate deployment of an SED.
- iii. In the event of SEDs becoming mandatory across the fleet, the Director of Natural Resources will send a formal notification to all vessels at this time, in accordance with the agreed protocol.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The LO circulated a email to industry indicating that 2 seal mortalities had occurred and that they should advise their vessels to deploy their SED's when they next shoot the net.
- 3.2 Once the vessels are authorised to fish south of 52° 30's we will re-evaluate the use of SED's and will circulate then (see item 4 below).
- 3.3 As usual, industry were asked to acknowledge receipt of the email instruction and within a few hours, we received confirmation that the instruction had been forwarded to all vessels in the loligo fishery.

4. Reviewed on 3rd March

- 4.1 On 2nd March vessels were authorised to fish in the Loligo box – south of 52°30's following previously agreed closure due to the small size of Loligo. (See Decision Log: Loligo Fishery – Closure of Southern Area dated 23rd February along with various review dates).
- 4.2 Just after 2100 hours on 3rd March the Scientific Officer for Seabirds and Marine Mammals advised that 2 seal mortalities had occurred in the southern area of the Loligo box.
- 4.3 At 2111 hours the LO circulated a email to industry indicating that 2 seal mortalities had occurred in the southern area of the Loligo box and that vessels should deploy their SED when they next shoot their net.
- 4.4 As the email instruction was after 2100 hours and some fishing companies hadn't acknowledged the information by 2145 hours, the LO made direct contact through phone calls or texting to try and ensure that all vessels were aware of the instruction.
- 4.5 All fishing companies acknowledged the instruction by 2200.
- 4.6 The use of SED's is now compulsory within the whole of the Loligo box.



Sheena Ross

Licensing Officer