



News Release

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For immediate release



Netting fishermen's knowledge on seals

A new project is underway to help improve advice on ways to prevent seals from taking fish catches.

Seals eat catches from fishing gear in areas throughout English waters, particularly in the south west, north east and east. This is costly to the industry both in terms of loss of catch but also in damaged gear.

ABPmer, a marine consultancy based on the south coast, is working with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) to gain an up-to-date understanding of the issue, and to identify and trial possible seal deterrents with the fishing industry.

Suzannah Walmsley, project manager, said; "Current government advice is that other deterrents must be tried before shooting. However when you're on a fishing vessel in open water, alternative viable options are limited."

"We would like as many fishermen as possible to complete our online survey about their experiences of interactions with seals, whether they experience an issue or not.

We want to know about the extent of the problem, the impact on the fishing industry, and any experiences with or ideas about possible seal deterrent options. There is even the chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher for completing the survey!"

Following the data gathering exercise, ABPmer will review non-lethal measures, gear modifications and fishing tactics currently available to reduce seal interactions. Field tests of the most promising non-lethal deterrent

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options will then be undertaken within one or more of the fisheries where seal interactions are a significant issue.

The project is being implemented by ABPmer and NFFO for Defra and the Marine Management Organisation.

To get involved please take our online survey:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/fishingandseals

Or to register your interest, email or call Suzannah Walmsley on swalmsley@abpmer.co.uk or 02380 711 858.

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