



SOUTH COAST ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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**Management Measure: Guidelines for best practice gear management measures in the South Coast Rock Lobster Fishing Industrial Association (SCRLIA) & Industry.**

This document outlines best practice measures to be implemented by the South Coast Rock Lobster (SCRL) fishing industry. Best practice measures are developed with the purpose of reducing the occurrence of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), to mitigate the effect of ALDFG on the ecosystem, to reduce the occurrence of marine mammal entanglement and mortality in gears and to describe a suitable protocol for operators when entangled marine mammals are observed at sea.

Below follows a list of the best practice guidelines for the SCRL fishing industry:

**Marking of gear**

1. The ends of lines and gear anchored to the seabed shall be fitted with reflector buoys, sufficient to indicate their position and extent. Such reflector buoys should be visible at a distance of at least two nautical miles in good visibility.
2. Marker buoys and similar objects floating on the surface, and where possible the gear itself, shall be clearly marked with the vessels name and International Radio Call Sign.
3. All SCRL traps and rope (lines) shall be marked to identify the owner / vessel operator via the SCRL colour coding system.

**Reporting and retrieval of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear**

4. Vessels must have suitable equipment on board to retrieve abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and instructions available for crew to facilitate the recovery of ALDFG;
5. Vessels that have lost gear shall not abandon it without making every reasonable attempt to retrieve it as soon as possible;

Members

AFD Fishing CC, Oceana Lobster Ltd, Phambili Fisheries (Pty) Ltd, Premier Fishing SA (Pty) Ltd, Risar Fishing CC, Ruwekus Fishing (Pty) Ltd, South Coast Sea Products (Pty) Ltd.

6. No vessels shall deliberately abandon fishing gear, except for safety reasons, notably vessels in distress and/or life in danger;
7. Operators shall ensure that adequate space is kept on board vessels for the storage of redundant and damaged gear.
8. If gear cannot be retrieved, the vessel shall record and promptly notify its shoreside management of the following information:
  - a. The name and call sign of the vessel;
  - b. the type of lost gear;
  - c. the quantity of gear lost;
  - d. the time when the gear was lost;
  - e. the position (longitude/latitude) where the gear was lost;
  - f. measures taken by the vessel to retrieve lost gear; and
  - g. report, if known, the circumstances that led to the gear being lost, or abandoned for safety reasons;
9. Following retrieval of any ALDFG, a vessel shall record and notify its shoreside management of the following:
  - a. the name and call sign of the vessel that has retrieved the gear;
  - b. the name and call sign of the vessel that lost the gear (if known);
  - c. the type of gear retrieved;
  - d. the quantity of gear retrieved;
  - e. the time when the gear was retrieved;
  - f. the position (longitude/latitude) where the gear was retrieved; and
  - g. if possible, photographs of the gear retrieved.

#### **Gear disposal on shore**

10. Gears shall only be disposed of while the vessel is docked, and at zones designated by the port authority, or Ship's management.
11. Every effort shall be made to recycle gear where and if possible.

#### **Measures for the prevention of gear loss and marine mammal entanglements**

12. All SCRL vessels shall subscribe to receive up to date sea current information / reports to prevent the vessel from shooting gear in heavy current conditions and reduce the potential of gear loss.
13. The SCRL operating vessels shall continue to cooperate in sharing information of areas of high risk for ALDFG.
14. Longline lengths shall be limited to 2200m (length) with no more than 150 weighted traps attached.
15. All surface buoy lines shall be tethered up to prevent excess line / free line from drifting on the surface.

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16. Anchor lines from the buoys to the seabed shall be fitted with weights to sufficiently sink the line in a vertical position and maintain tension on the line.
17. All traps shall be weighted to prevent drifting and dragging in the current.
18. The SCRL operating vessels shall only fish with traps as specified in the fishing permit or otherwise traps which have been approved by the department for use under an exploratory fishing permit.
19. The SCRL operating vessels shall sufficiently space the fishing gear and not overcrowd areas to help reduce the number of lines in a specific area.
20. Recognising the current efforts being made to test methods for preventing the occurrence of marine mammal entanglement in gears, industry members shall participate in the trialling of gear and other means to assist with the further development of best practice measures.
21. Through the South Coast Rock Lobster Industry Association, all operators in the sector shall engage with the of South African Whale Disentanglement Network (SAWDN) with the aim of reducing the interaction of gear and mammals and keeping abreast with the latest developments and research.

#### **Procedures when entangled marine mammals are observed**

22. Upon sighting an entangled marine mammal, vessel operators shall notify the South African Whale Disentanglement Network (SAWDN), firstly, or else the nearest NSRI station with the following information at hand:
  - a. the name and contact number of the person reporting;
  - b. the time and position of the sighting;
  - c. the species name of the entangled mammal (or a picture);
  - d. whether the animal is locked to the bottom or if it is free swimming (if the latter, what course and speed is it swimming at);
  - e. what gear the animal is entangled in and the colour of the buoys or registration number on the gear.
23. Vessels crew shall not cut the ropes from the animal unless they have been trained and the vessel shall maintain a safe distance to keep the animal calm.

#### **Important contact numbers for reporting of an entangled marine mammal**

- Craig Lambinon (NSRI) 082 3803 800
- Mike Meyer (SAWDN) 082 578 7617
- Steven Mc Cue (DEFF) 083 4625 345

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