



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Sea Mammal
Research
Unit

UK UPDATES:

BYCATCH MITIGATION PROJECTS

3D TRACKING

- PROJECT DEVELOPED TO INVESTIGATE HOW ANIMALS BEHAVE AROUND GILLNETS.
- BUILDING ON WORK AT THE SMRU, DEFRA PROVIDED FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACOUSTIC LOCALISING DEVICE (SOUNDTRAP) TO VISUALISE ANIMAL LOCATIONS UNDERWATER.
- A FIRST GENERATION PROTOTYPE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AND TESTED AT SEA WITH POSITIVE RESULTS

NEXT STEPS:

- ADDRESS VULNERABILITY OF THE DEPTH SENSOR
- DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT SENSORS
- FIELD DEPLOYMENT OF SINGLE AND PAIRED DEVICES

LOOKING FORWARD

- REFINEMENT OF THE TRACKING SOFTWARE AND EXTENDED FIELD TRIALS



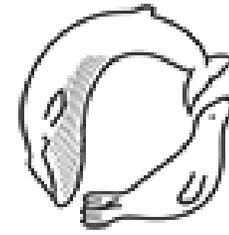
Dr Alice Doyle, Marine Species Team, JNCC

©Mark Tasker

UK UPDATES: BYCATCH MITIGATION PROJECTS



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Sea Mammal
Research
Unit

TWINE TRIALS

- PREVIOUS WORK CONDUCTED AT THE **SMRU**, FOUND A CORRELATION BETWEEN MESH SIZE AND BYCATCH RATE, THEORISING THAT BYCATCH IS LOWER IN SMALLER MESH NETS BECAUSE THE TWINE IS THINNER AND EASIER TO BREAK.
- TO TEST THIS THEORY, **SMRU**, IN COOPERATION WITH TWO CORNISH FISHING VESSELS USING TANGLE NETS, DEVELOPED AND DEPLOYED NETS WITH PANELS OF DIFFERING TWINE THICKNESS.
- **(LIMITED) TRIALS HAVE BEEN ONGOING OVER 8 YEARS**
- INITIAL RESULTS SHOW THAT BYCATCH RATES ARE LOWER IN THE THINNER TWINE PANELS, BUT SAMPLE SIZE IS TOO SMALL TO DETERMINE THE SCALE OF THE EFFECT.

NEXT STEPS:

- INCREASE EFFORT TO SUPPORT STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
- INVESTIGATE IMPACTS TO CATCH AND FISHING COSTS