

THERE has been mounting alarm in the fishing industry in recent months over incidents involving submarines and fishing vessels. *Laurel* collided with a US submarine in April this year west of the Isle of Man, and in June *Huntress* had her gear fouled by a UK submarine in the Clyde, off the Isle of Arran. These incidents are two of seven acknowledged by the navy since the beginning of 1987, and many in the fishing industry believe that several more unexplained vessel losses and gear foulings can be blamed on submarines.

The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations recently met the navy to discuss the problem and what measures could be taken to avoid such incidents. *Fishing News* editor TIM OLIVER talked to Commodore Paul Hoddinott at the NATO centre at Northwood, Middlesex, to get the navy's point of view on this issue. Commodore Hoddinott is a former submarine commander, and was in command of the destroyer *HMS Endurance* during the Falklands war.

# We don't cover up sub encounters'

**CLEAR submarine activity is inevitably secretive and surrounded by security procedures. With two bases on the Clyde — the US one at Holy Loch and the UK one at Faslane — nuclear submarines operate in an area of intense fishing activity.**

There have been eight documented incidents involving fishing vessels and submarines since 1984 (see page 12 opposite), and, because of the secretive nature of submarine activity, many fishermen believe that there have been many more, but that the submarines supposedly involved have slipped quietly away to avoid knowledge of their positions being public.

Commodore Paul Hoddinott categorically denies that submarine commanders and the navy engage in any kind of 'cover-operation'. He told *Fishing News* that the navy treats all incidents involving submarines and fishing vessels with the utmost seriousness, and that "safety of life is paramount" in the event of a collision or gear entanglement incident.

## Assurances

"I can give fishermen a cast-iron assurance that if they are involved in an incident with a fishing vessel, we will admit it," said Commodore Hoddinott.

"We do share the concern of fishermen at these incidents, and we understand how frightening such encounters are for them, and how dangerous. We also fully appreciate the problems and frustration and expense incurred by gear being damaged and lost, and we are doing very hard to reduce such incidents.



Commodore Paul Hoddinott.

"They are all a matter for regret, and I hope that we can get them down to nil."

Attention to the problem was also being given by the US navy "at the highest level", and training procedures for submarine commanders and crews "laid heavy emphasis on fishing vessel avoidance," said the Commodore.

"The onus to avoid collisions is 100 per cent on submarines, and if a submarine commander shows inadequacy in just this one area of fishing vessel avoidance, that would be sufficient to lose him command of submarines."

## Strict

Submarine commanders have strict orders that if they become entangled with a vessel's gear, or believe they have, they must surface carefully, disentangle the gear, and check with the fishing vessel that there are

no injuries. They must advise the skipper to make a claim for compensation through the normal channels.

"A formal enquiry is held into every collision or entanglement with a fishing vessel's gear. These incidents should not happen, so if they do, it means that something has gone wrong, and we want to know what it is," said the Commodore.

"We need to learn lessons from these encounters and incorporate them into our training and avoidance procedures."

No evidence of negligence had been found in any of the enquiries so far held, added Commodore Hoddinott, but if any evidence were found it would be treated "very seriously."

Commanders of US navy submarines are under the same instructions as those of the UK navy.

Submarines do not travel "blind", he stressed. They have 'passive' sonar on board, which is highly sensi-

**— navy chief gives 'cast-iron assurance'**

tive and designed to detect the presence of enemy submarines. ('Active' sonar of the type which emits a 'ping' sound cannot be used, because this would give away the presence of the submarine).

## Detect

Passive sonar can easily detect the noise from a fishing vessel, including its engine noise, and in particular the signals from its sonar and sounders. From these it is possible to identify the range and bearing of the vessel, and thus keep away. Submarine commanders have orders to stay at least 1500 yards clear of a vessel and its gear, and preferably a mile.

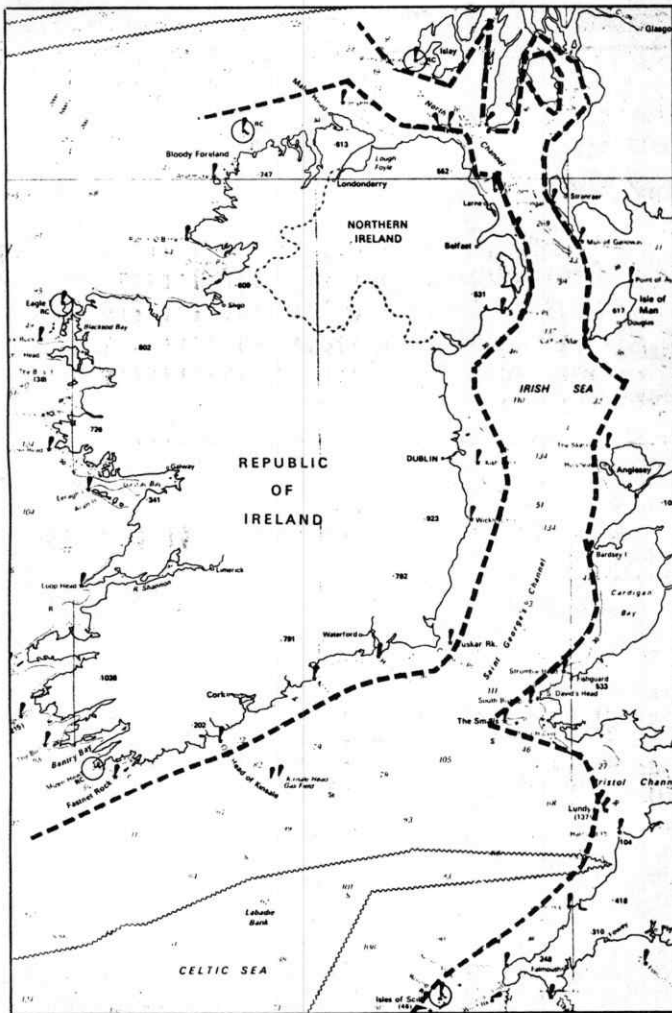
Detection range of a fish-

## SUB EXERCISES

COMMODORE Hoddinott explained why submarines have to operate in the shallow and crowded waters of the Clyde area, near to their bases at Holy Loch and Faslane.

They need to check out gear after refits near to base, so that any further work can be carried out if

required. Calibration tests must be done, and some must be carried out within sight of shore



Boundaries marking the 40 fathom line limits within which submarines do not operate.

ing vessel by passive sonar can vary from 100 miles down to three miles, according to the sea conditions said Commodore Hoddinott. As with fish detection gear, skill is needed on the part of the submarine commander to interpret the information he is receiving from his equipment.

The amount and type of noise, the type of bottom, the 'structure' of the water (eg temperature gradients, density) and other noise all determine the detection range at a given time, but the submarine commander will be aware of the conditions under which he is operating.

**Snag**

Despite all these factors however, it is still possible, though very unlikely, that a submarine could snag a vessel's gear and be unaware of

it, said Commodore Hoddinott. He outlined the procedure when a suspected submarine/fishing vessel encounter is received from the coastguards, or any other source, and the navy base has not received any report of the incidents from its submarines. (This occurred with *Summer Morn*, in 1987).

**Check**

"If we get a report of a suspected incident, we check whether we have a submarine dive in that area. We can run a check quickly — in a matter of minutes — for both UK and all allied submarines. If we do have one in that area, a message is sent informing the submarine that it is suspected of having been in an incident.

"There may be a delay, because submarines can only receive messages at certain

**Sub loss: owner gets £50m bill**

UK fishers may think that they have problems with submarines, but consider the plight of the owner of a Japanese fishing vessel who is currently facing a bill of US\$73m (about £50m) after his vessel collided with a Peruvian submarine.

**Loss**

Keiji Miki, who owns *Kyowa Maru*, was involved in an incident which caused the loss of the submarine *Pacocha*. The Peruvian navy is now claiming \$53m for the loss of the vessel plus two suits of \$3.5m and \$14.8m from the relatives of the submarine's crew.

times, and if this was so, we can send out a helicopter to drop seven depth charges in the area as a signal to the submarine to surface.

**Confident**

"We can be very confident as to whether a submarine is involved in any suspected incident, because of the speed with which we can run our checks."

Submarines do not operate submerged in waters shallower than 40 fathoms under any circumstances, and this was double reason for the navy to be certain that submarines had not been involved in certain incidents of vessel loss in unexplained circumstances in waters less than 40 fathoms deep.

"The eight incidents in the last five years in which sub-

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**MUST BE DONE INSHORE**

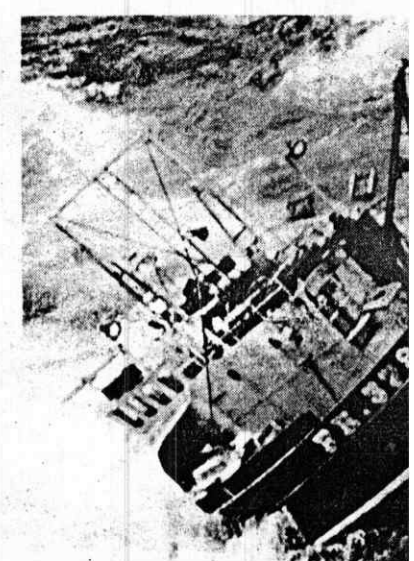
facilities. It is necessary to practise with weapons, and this must be done in shallow waters from where torpedoes can be recovered (they cost around £1/2m each!). In-

Sea and into the Atlantic, most going via the north of Ireland.

The operational areas for submarines are in the Firth of Clyde, west of the Isle of Man, the North Channel and the Sound of Jura

mans sometimes operate in the deeper waters of the North Sea.

Submarines travel very slowly when on exercise or on passage through an area where fishing vessels are known to operate — seldom



# SUBMARINES

From page 9

marines have been involved all occurred in waters more than 40 fathoms deep, which is where submarines would be operating."

Commodore Hoddinott advised skippers who believed that they had become entangled with a submarine to ensure that their vessels were making a lot of noise to attract the submarine's attention. Switching the sonar on and off would be especially helpful, as fishing vessel sonars/sounders are easily detected by submarines, and also varying the engine revs or banging a pipe in the water are helpful.

Any warships in the area should be contacted, as they could communicate with submarines underwater by acoustic telephones.

However, the commodore believes that in several instances where skippers thought their gear had been fouled by a submarine, they were experiencing the "symptoms of a submarine encounter, which were in reality from natural causes such as 'fasteners' and strong tides."

Submarines travelling at their usual slow speeds under water (six to seven knots) would be almost certain to know if they had fouled a vessel's gear, because of the scraping of wires, doors etc on the hull. but Commodore Hoddinott admitted that the faster the 5000 to 8000 tonne submarines were travelling, the greater were the chances that the crew be unaware of such an encounter.

On the possibility of encounters with enemy submarines, which would obviously not reveal their posi-

tions, Commodore Hoddinott said that the chances were very remote. "We are as near certain as it's possible to be that no enemy submarines are in these areas."

As to what further measures could be taken to improve avoidance procedures, Commodore Hoddinott said that procedures had been updated, and these would be sent to the NFFO for its comments.

The NFFO had offered to assist in providing detailed information on fishing methods and practices which could be used to give more detailed guidance to submarine commanders, and "we shall be taking up their offer," said Commodore Hoddinott.

"We are putting a lot of emphasis on training to avoid fishing vessels, and we are looking at other measures to further reduce the number of these incidents, and to improve contacts between the navy and the fishing industry and fishing communities."

Special headline transducers might be helpful, and the navy was prepared to evaluate trials. "We don't want to turn down any sensible idea, and the DTP is currently evaluating other proposals. We are prepared to provide a submarine to help with any trials of this nature," said the Commodore.

He stressed however that no matter what devices were used, the onus would always be "100 per cent on submarines to avoid fishing vessels."

Commodore Hoddinott added that complaints about the length of time taken for compensation to be paid had been "taken on board" by the MoD, and steps taken to speed up procedures.

## New director for Bonmark

BONMARK Ltd, the Wallington, Surrey-based Seafood trading company has appointed Brian Sivyer as director of international trading operations.

Mr Sivyer, until recently, was managing director of International Seafoods Ltd, having gained his early background in the sea food industry as trading director with Affish Ltd responsible for that company's import and export activities.

John Carrol, managing director of Bonmark welcomed Mr Sivyer's appointment saying that his knowledge and experience would play a big part in the development and expansion of the company.

## 'Government will ruin British fishermen'

SIR, I wish to endorse every word of Skipper Donald Patience's letter to *Fishing News* ('Fishermen are forced to break the rules' — August 25). He explains in detail the frustration we fishermen feel against the rules imposed upon British fishermen since the so called 'cod war'.

Thatcher and her industry ministers (eg John Gummer) have no idea of, or interest in, the British fishing industry. Should we enquire from the Keflavik NATO base in Iceland, or the American Senate, or the White House, as to the reason for the political decision taken by HM Government to ruin the British fishing industry?

## LETTERS

Maybe, in their wisdom, the government in this free country hopes to brush away the maltreatment of personnel involved in this industry under the carpet.

In the past I have sailed in the *Vision* with Donald Patience and fully endorse every word he states regarding the fishing industry, although he may be banging his head against a brick wall.

Donald, I wish you and your family all the best in your battle against bureaucracy gone mad.

Skipper Raymond Barkworth, 19 Hodder Avenue, Fleetwood.

## CREW RESCUED

ON Saturday, August 26, two Redcar fishing brothers, Stephen and Dean Dandy, had to abandon their 37ft gillnetter *Gangwarily* in darkness and in heavy seas as she was being driven ashore on to the rocks under Huntcliff at Saltburn.

They had put out earlier to haul in their nets because of a bad weather forecast but while hauling, the nets became entangled in the propeller and the boat started to drift on to the rocks. A mayday call was sent out and received by a small ship who relayed it to Tyne Tees coastguard. Both Redcar and Teesmouth lifeboats raced to the scene but before they arrived, Skipper, Stephen Dandy, re-

layed to the coastguard saying that they were leaving the boat."

Both men managed to swim ashore and waited for the lifeboat to rescue them.

Both lifeboats returned to port while the stricken *Gangwarily* began to breakup on the rocks. The fishermen, who were not injured, thanked the lifeboat crews for carrying out a very dangerous rescue in rough conditions.

## EVENTS DIARY

FORTHCOMING events are included in this column free of charge. If you are organising any show/exhibition/seminar etc which will be of interest to fishermen, please contact Adrian Varney-Burch, *Fishing News*, Alexander House, 81-89 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3LL. Tel: 01-405 0500.

● AMBLE Show, September 9, The Granary, Amble. Details from Barry Pringle. Tel: 0665 710096 (after 5pm).

● TORRY Research Station's Meeting of the International Institute of Refrigeration on 'Chilling and Freezing of New Fish Products', September 18-20 '89, Aberdeen. Prominence will be given to recent developments in surimi technology, fish and shellfish farming and packaging. More information from Dr I. MacKie, IIR Organising Committee, Torry Research Station, PO Box 31, 135 Abbey Road, Aberdeen AB9 8DG, Scotland.

● HARVEST of the Sea Weekend,

21-22 October, RNMSDF Centre, Union Street, Peterhead, Scotland. More information from David Saltiel. Tel: (0779) 72940.

● 1st INTERNATIONAL Conference on Fisheries and Offshore Oil Exploitation '89, Bergen, Norway, October 23-25. More information from PetroPiscis, c/o Scanews, Magnus Barfotsgt, 22, N-5015 Bergen, Norway. Tel: 47 5 23 04 94.

● BRITISH Marine Trade Exhibition, October, 24-26 Sandown Exhibition Centre, Esher. Over 300 exhibitors. More information from Pauline Parker, press officer. Tel: (0703) 737400.

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# MUST BE DONE INSHORE

facilities. It is necessary to practise with weapons, and this must be done in shallow waters from where torpedoes can be recovered (they cost around £4m each!). In-shore skills such as reconnaissance, minelaying and landing of special task forces must also be carried out close to shore.

Submarines are also in the area on passage out into the North Atlantic.

Submarines do not operate in waters under 40 fathoms, because such water is too shallow. In waters between 40 to about 50 fathoms the submarine would be so close to the surface that it must navigate using its periscope, but at greater depths than this sonar is used.

Specific sectors are allocated for submarine exercises, and if a commander found his allocated area to be full of fishing vessels he can request an alternative.

Only two to three submarines would normally be operating on any given day, and six would be the maximum, while only about four a month make a dive passage through the Irish

Sea and into the Atlantic, most going via the north of Ireland.

The operational areas for submarines are in the Firth of Clyde, west of the Isle of Man, the North Channel and the Sound of Jura.

Very few UK or US submarines operate in the North Sea, because it is mostly too shallow, but allied submarines such as Danes or Ger-

mans sometimes operate in the deeper waters of the North Sea.

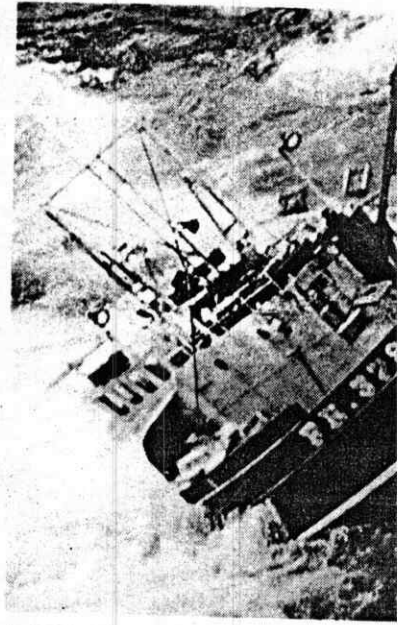
Submarines travel very slowly when on exercise or on passage through an area where fishing vessels are known to operate — seldom more than six or seven knots, although they may move quickly for a short period in the course of an exercise.

Table I: Vessels lost in unexplained circumstances and found in waters of less than 40 fathoms where submarines would not be operating, or would not be allowed in peacetime.

Vessel	Date	Area lost
South Stack	May 1984	North of Anglesey
Dawn Waters	March 1986	South and west of Isle of Man
Mhari 'L'	February 1985	
Inspire	September 1988	Cardigan Bay
Girl Fiona	March 1989	Firth of Lorne
Tijh Uilenspiegel	January 1989	North of Anglesey

Table II: Acknowledged and documented encounters between UK/US submarines and fishing vessels in the Clyde/Irish Sea area since 1984.

Vessel	Area	Time/Date	Sub
Huntress	Off Isle of Arran	June 1989	UK
(second encounter)			
Laurel	West of Isle of Man	December 1988	US
Brilliant Star	Off Isle of Arran	October 1988	UK
Prevail	North Channel	December 1987	UK
Heroine	North Channel	December 1987	UK
Summer Morn	Off Isle of Man	February 1987	US
No incidents in 1985-86			
Huntress	Off Isle of Arran	August 1984	UK



## Worse thing

Sailors mostly don't drown die accidental deaths, fall down, they may leave will be educated.

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