

# Threat to sub warning system

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By Gary Duncan

THE FUTURE of the submarine warning system set up to protect Clyde fishermen was thrown into doubt last night when it emerged that Britain's chief coastguard has strongly objected to existing arrangements.

The Ministry of Defence last night confirmed it had held discussions with Commander Derek Ancona about the future operation of the Subfast warning system, designed to give trawler skippers several hours' advance

notice of submarine movements in the Clyde.

The system was set up after the 1990 incident in which the crew of the Carradale trawler Antares died after its nets were snagged by a nuclear sub. Cmdr Ancona is understood to believe that broadcasting of the warnings by the coastguard service jeopardises safety at sea by tying up radio frequencies.

The chief coastguard's objections also cast doubt over the implementation of a planned expansion of the Subfast scheme, due to come into

operation on 4 January, which would have extended the warnings net to Lewis, Skye and the Hebrides.

A MoD spokesman said last night: "We have been in discussion with the coastguard about this, trying to reach agreement on broadcasts."

Patrick Stewart, secretary of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, said last night that the fishing industry could not countenance failure to extend the scheme to include the Minches in January, or — more importantly — the scheme being discontinued