

# Chapter 19: Trek Net Fishing Protocol

## 1. Introduction

Treknetting (also known as Beach-seine netting) has been practised off Cape Town's beaches for three and half centuries and forms part of our coastal heritage as well as a source of income generation and employment for permitted operators.

Fishing-rights for treknetting are administered by the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and permits are issued to right-holders based on DAFF application and evaluation criteria. Treknet right-holders with a permit have a legal right to treknet.

The City of Cape Town has no role to play in the determination or allocation on treknet rights.

## 2. Problem Identification

Treknetting takes place on recreational beaches of the City, including Fish Hoek, Muizenberg Corner, Strandfontein, Mackerel Bay and Big Bay beaches. At times this permitted and legal activity creates conflict with recreational users as well as poses some safety risks to water users. As a result, the City in discussions with DAFF and the treknet rights holders developed a Treknetting Protocol for high intensity recreational beach areas to:

- Remove conflict between the treknetters and beach users
- Ensure safety of the public during a trek
- Optimise the success and efficacy of the trek

## 3. Treknet Protocol for High-intensity Recreational Beaches

Prior to launching vessels or nets the treknet rights holder must, in addition to informing DAFF Fishery Control Officers as per their permits:

- Inform the on-duty Shark Spotter at Muizenberg Corner
- Inform the on-duty Shark Spotter at Fish Hoek Beach
- Inform the lifesaving club or beach management at Big Bay Beach

### 3.1. Muizenberg Corner and Big Bay Protocols

1. On being notified by the treknetters that they are about to undertake a trek, the Shark Spotting Programme at Muizenberg Corner is to sound the siren and close the beach and actively clear the water of all water users. At Big Bay Beach the lifesaving club or beach management is to close the beach and clear the water of all water users.
2. Once the beach has been cleared of water users, the trek may commence. Where necessary City Law Enforcement may be called to assist in keeping the beach closed to the public through the duration of the trek.
3. Once the net is landed on the beach, the beach may be reopened to the general water users at the discretion of the on-duty Shark Spotters or Beach Manager once all safety aspects have been assessed

### **3.2. Fish Hoek Beach Protocol**

1. Fish Hoek Beach is not a recognised surfing beach and as such the safety protocols vary due to the fact that the majority of water users are close to the shore line.
2. On being notified by the treknetters that they are about to launch their boat, the on-duty Shark Spotters will:
  - a. Inform the lifesaving club that the treknetters have launched and may deploy their net
  - b. Sound the siren and close the beach only once the net has been deployed from trek netting boat if there are water-users in the bay
  - c. If no water users are in the bay at the time of the trek, the red caution shark flag will be raised but no siren sounded
  - d. The lifesaving club and law enforcement will assist the Shark Spotters in clearing the beach of water-users
  - e. Once the net is landed on the beach, the beach may be reopened to the general water users at the discretion of the on-duty Shark Spotters or Beach Manager once all safety aspects have been assessed
  - f. During the Shark Exclusion Net Trial, if the net is deployed and in the water, the net will remain in-place throughout the trek as part of the trial period evaluation to assess its impact on treknetting success

### **4. General**

1. Use of vehicles on the beach by permitted rights holders is regulated under the Off-road Vehicle Regulations. However, no vehicle associated with the treknet operation may travel at speeds higher than 15km/h while on a City beach. DAFF Beach-seine permit conditions require that the netfish registration N number is displayed on the designated vehicles. A maximum of two vehicles per right-holder is allowed on the beach.
2. This protocol is not prescribed for trekking along the Strandfontein coastline outside of the Strandfontein Pavilion Coastal Node, at Macassar Beach or Mackerel Beach as these are not considered high intensity recreation nodes.
3. At no time may a treknet operator at any point along the entire City's coastline:
  - a. Deploy their net in such a way that it encircles any water users
  - b. Deploy their net at a high intensity recreation beach prior to the beach being closed
  - c. Deploy their net or equipment without notifying parties as described in this protocol
  - d. Provide (including sell, barter or donate) any fish caught in the trek to any City officials
4. At no time and under no circumstances may a member of the public approach, interfere with or hinder a permitted trek net operator, their equipment, net or targeted school of fish