

## Keep safe

### Bar crossing

Crossing a bar is one of the most dangerous parts of a fishing trip. Some key things to remember are:

#### If in doubt, do not go out

Make sure you have the right skills to cross the bar and are confident that the conditions are suitable to cross safely. Before you head out, build your knowledge of the bar you are crossing; study the weather, tides and the state of the bar. Tell someone when you are going out and when you expect to be back. Having the right skills and knowledge will help you to safely assess the conditions before you launch. If at any stage you doubt the safety of the passage, do not go out. No catch is worth your life, or the lives of your mates.

#### Commercial vessels can cross bars in a wider range of conditions

They have more power and speed, with highly trained specialised crew and skippers. They can cross bars and operate generally, in a wider range of conditions.

In some cases, recreational skippers may be influenced by witnessing a larger commercial vessel cross a bar and decide to follow, even when the conditions are not suitable for smaller vessels. Do not make the decision to cross the bar based on commercial activity – remember, **if in doubt, do not go out.**

### VHF radio use

VHF radio is a safety communications network at sea. VHF channel 16 (156.8 MHz) is the international distress and calling channel for marine VHF radio. It is used for emergency (Mayday), urgency (Pan Pan), and safety (Securite) calls, as well as hailing other vessels before switching to a different working channel. It should always be monitored, and prioritised for emergencies or key communications.

You can listen to channel 16 to understand what a commercial fishing trawler is doing, but not for general “chit chat”. Clogging and overusing channel 16 risks interrupting important information being shared by commercial vessels, including an emergency on-board.

It is important to understand and be familiar with how to use your VHF **before** going out on your vessel. There are various factors to consider with VHF radio use:

**Know your VHF radio's limits** – VHF radio works from vessel to vessel and vessel to shore, when in range of another vessel or repeater station. Coverage can depend on the power of your VHF radio, whether it is fixed or handheld and the height of the aerial. Make sure you understand the coverage you have and the channels available and use the dual watch function if you have it to monitor channel 16 at all times.

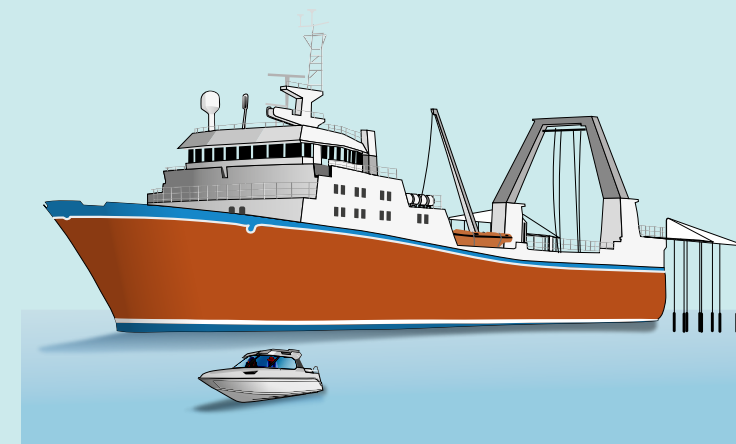
**Know procedures and protocols** – The VHF radio network relies on agreed procedures and protocols to keep people safe. You need to have completed a *VHF Radio Operator* course to use a VHF radio in anything other than an emergency.

#### Use of secondary channels – monitored vs. unmonitored channels

Channel 16 is always the best distress and calling station and once you have made initial contact with a vessel, move to a secondary channel for further communications. Channel 6 is the best secondary channel with the 25 nautical mile limit, and channel 10 for vessels beyond it.

# Going tuna fishing recreationally?

## Take the catch home, don't be it!



## General safety information

Before you head out on the water, make sure you cover the basics of safety:



**WEAR YOUR LIFEJACKET**



**CHECK THE MARINE WEATHER FORECAST**



**TAKE TWO WATERPROOF WAYS TO CALL FOR HELP**



**AVOID ALCOHOL**

**It is important to know the key risks when fishing near commercial fishing trawlers and how to keep yourself, your passengers and vessels safe.**

This information is for recreational tuna fishers on the West Coast of New Zealand, in areas where larger commercial vessels, specifically trawlers, may be fishing for Hoki or other species. It will also be useful for recreational fishers hunting other species, in areas where commercial fishing vessels are operating.

We all want everyone to get home safe to enjoy their catch with family and friends.



Scan the QR code for more information

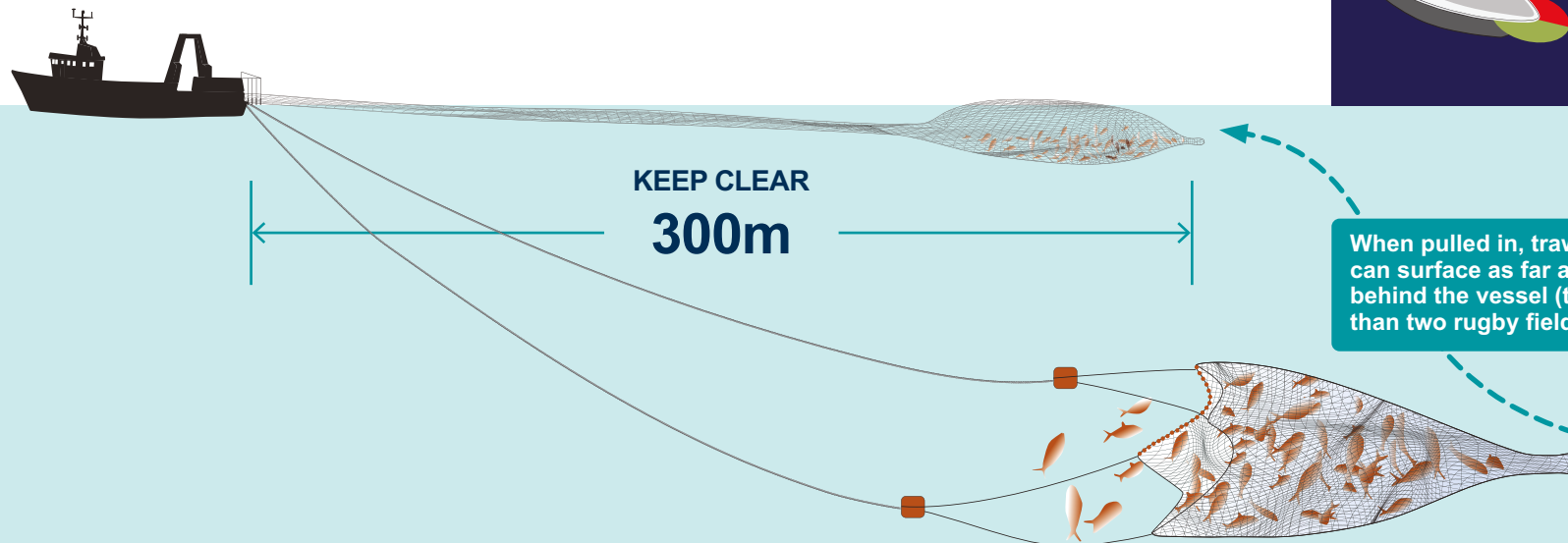
## Keep clear

Follow the 'give way rules' of the water – Maritime collision prevention regulations apply to all vessels (recreational and commercial) on New Zealand waters regardless of their size. It is important you understand what these regulations mean and follow them at all times.

Commercial fishing trawlers can range from 40m to over 100m in length. You may also see smaller commercial fishing vessels when you're out on the water. Trawling is when fishing nets are pulled through the water behind a vessel. Trawlers operate at all times of the day and night with different types of nets and gear on board, undertaking a range of operational activities and maneuvers – all of which can create hazards if other vessels get too close and are unfamiliar with trawling operations.

Commercial fishing trawlers use different types of nets. Trawl nets are released, set and hauled back in from the trawler's stern (the back end). This is the area where other vessels need to take extreme care.

Trawl nets are made of rope but are towed by very heavy steel cables (called warps), which work under extreme tension when the vessel is trawling (up to 30 tonne). When trawling nets are being pulled in, they surface behind the vessel as far away as 200m – 300m (that is more than two rugby fields' end-to-end).



You should never be in the direct line of the trawler stern during this process unless you are more than 300m behind it.

Trawlers also use other gear that can create a risk of entanglement or collision. This gear can include; large trawl doors that surface behind the trawler and booms.

A key rule to remember is that recreational vessels must stay well clear of commercial vessels that are fishing. Where smaller recreational vessels are interacting with larger commercial vessels, 'give way rules' are crucial for preventing collisions, especially as commercial fishing vessels cannot stop, turn or avoid collision quickly when trawling. Like trucks, these vessels also have blind spots if smaller vessels get too close. Staying well clear of commercial vessels makes sure you are keeping your crew and the crew of commercial vessels, safe.

If you need to, talk to the skipper on a commercial vessel to understand what they are doing. Contact the commercial vessel using VHF channel 16 and then agree which working channel to switch to (for example, VHF channel 10).

## Keep watch

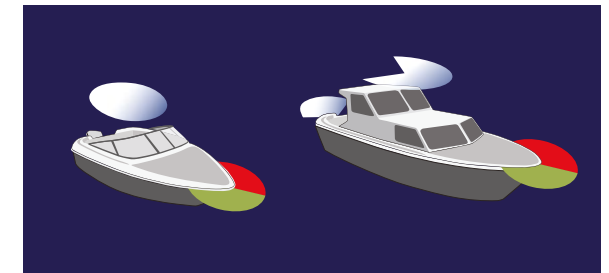
Keep a look-out at all times, and an eye on what commercial fishing trawlers are doing.

Keep a look-out at all times on your vessel is crucial to prevent collisions. Poor or no look-out is a significant cause of maritime incidents and can result in the loss of life, injuries, or damage to the environment and property.

It is important you keep a proper look-out during your trip, particularly at night.

From sunset to sunrise and at times of poor visibility, you must display the correct navigational safety lights. For power driven craft under 12 metres in length that can travel faster than 7 knots this means:

- a green starboard light
- a red port light
- a white stern light
- a masthead light (that may be combined into an all-round white light).



When pulled in, trawling nets can surface as far as 200-300m behind the vessel (that is more than two rugby fields end-to-end).