

IMMARBE

International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize

MARKING OF FISHING GEAR

TO ALL SHIPOWNERS AND OPERATORS, DEPUTY REGISTRARS, RESIDENT AGENTS, RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS & CLASS SOCIETIES.

Issuance Date: **07 August 2008**
MSN Superseded: **N/A**

Revision No.(mm/dd/yy): **N/A**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fishing Vessel Notice is to provide all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrars and other parties with requirements and the technical specification of the markings for identification and positioning at sea purposes to be placed on the fishing gear of Belize-registered Fishing Vessels.

2. BACKGROUND

The Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries noted that for the purpose of determining ownership, no international regulations, guidelines or common practices exist for the marking of fishing gear deployed outside of national jurisdictions. Some delegations noted the problem as it related to the protection of living marine resources from entanglement in fishing nets and in the case of discarded fishing gear.

In this connection our Administration identified the need to mark fishing gear primarily as a means of establishing ownership and the nationality of the fishing gear as well as for the purpose of indicating its position at sea.

Our system for the marking fishing gear was developed on the basis of the following requirements:

- i) A simple and inexpensive system by which marks would be easily attached to fishing gear that would not interfere with the performance of the gear.
- ii) A system, the implementation of which would be at a minimal cost to vessel owners/operators and which would be in the best interest of vessels, their crew, safety at sea as well as responsible fishing and the protection of the environment.

Our Administration has decided to implement the FAO Proposed System for the Marking of Fishing Gear, the FAO Proposed Standard System of Lights and Shapes for the Identification and Location of Fishing Gear as well as the relevant Resolutions/Recommendations of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) on this topic.

3. APPLICATION

This Fishing Vessel Circular applies to **all Belize-registered Fishing Vessels** with immediate effect.

4. MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION OF FISHING GEAR TO INDICATE OWNERSHIP AND NATIONALITY

4.1. For the purpose of these markings specifications:

- a) All types of **unattended fishing gear** and fishing implements such as longlines, Fish Aggregating Devices, pots, traps, nets, etc must be marked;
- c) A Call Sign is the one assigned by our Administration to each vessel and which begins with the prefix V3 and is followed by two or three letters or a combination of numbers and letters.

4.2. All unattended fishing gear shall be marked with the vessel's Call Sign and if possible also with vessel's name, Port of Registry (BELIZE), IMO/LRF Number (if assigned with one) as well as the name and address of the beneficial owners and operators of the vessel.

4.3. The information detailed in 4.2 above, shall be the only identification mark consisting of letters and numbers marking the fishing gear.

4.4. The markings on the fishing gear must be easily read or deciphered and shall be prominently displayed at all times in highly visible colours or in dark and white contrast.

4.5. The markings must be permanent. In the case of tags they must be durable; waterproof and able to stay attached to the fishing gear in all sea conditions.

4.6. Block lettering and numbering shall be used throughout.

4.7. The fishing gear shall be marked as follows:

4.7.1. By means of tags, flags or by permanently marking or painting buoys, flags, radio beacons, shapes, signals or lights attached to the fishing gear.

4.7.2. In the case of tags, they must be at least 4 (four) inches in height and 6 (six) in width and shall be capable of containing all the information detailed in 4.2 above as printed or embossed data on both faces.

4.7.3. The tags or markings shall be placed as high as possible above the waterline on both ends of the fishing gear and shall not extend below the waterline.

4.7.4. The marks shall be:

- a) white on a dark background; or,
- b) dark on a white background.

4.7.5. Shall be so designed and placed that they do not interfere with the operation and performance of the fishing gear.

4.8. Examples of the placement of tags and marks are set out in Annex I.

5. MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION OF FISHING GEAR TO INDICATE POSITION AT SEA

Our Administration requires that:

5.1. All fishing vessels comply with the provisions of Rule 26 and Annex II of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGs).

5.2. Where practicable, all position indicators (buoys, flags, electronic devices, lights or beacons) attached to fishing gear should:

- a) be as conspicuous as possible in a clear daytime atmosphere from a distance of at least 2 nautical miles at sea level;
- b) carry radar reflectors;
- c) carry lights with characteristics which do not conflict with those of the COLREGs or other international navigational marks and which would be visible on a clear night at a distance of at least 2 nautical miles; and,
- d) be fitted with a coloured flag or flags of fluorescent material, as an aid to daytime visibility.

5.3. Lights and shapes should also indicate the direction and extent of set and drifting gear.

5.4. Electronic devices, such as transponders and radio beacons which automatically and continuously indicate their position by means of signals may be used in addition to the lights and shapes. Such devices, however, must not operate at frequencies that would conflict with other devices used for navigation and search and rescue purposes.

5.5. 3.1 An individual pot, trap, fyke net, stake net and other similar gear, should be marked with a buoy or other device at the surface to indicate its position. Gear set in series, such as a number of pots connected are on line, should be marked at each end with a buoy.

5.6. Anchored or drifting fishing gear with the upper continuous edge of the gear at a **depth of more than 2 metres below the surface** should be marked in the following manner:

5.6.1. fishing gear set below the level of the sea and extending from an anchor or parent vessel, should be marked at both extremities by a spar buoy and at intermediate positions. The distance between the intermediate marks, and between the intermediate marks closest to the extremities and the extremity markers should not exceed one kilometre. In the case of fishing gear attached to a vessel, the extremity of the gear nearest to the vessel need not carry a marker;

5.6.2. for recognition in daytime, the westernmost end spar buoy of such gear extending horizontally in the sea should be fitted with two flags one above the other or one flag

- and a radar reflector. The end spar buoy at the most easterly extremity should be fitted with one flag or a radar reflector; and,
- 5.6.3. for night time recognition, the most westerly end spar buoy should have two white lights one above the other; the most easterly end spar buoy to have one white light.
- 5.7. Fishing gear set **within the upper two metres of the water column**, and therefore a hazard to transiting vessels, should be marked in the following manner:
- 5.7.1. for day time recognition, the extremities of the gear should have spar buoys carrying top marks consisting of two spherical shapes, one above the other at no more than one metre apart; the diameter of the upper of the two spheres to be smaller but no less than one half the diameter of the lower one;
 - 5.7.2. for night time recognition, the spar buoys placed at the extremity of the gear should have two yellow lights, one above the other at no less than one metre apart and of different characteristics to lights fitted to intermediate buoys;
 - 5.7.3. gear extending more than one kilometre should have intermediate buoys placed at distances of not more than one kilometre; intermediate spar buoys should have one spherical shape for day time recognition and one yellow light for night time;
 - 5.7.4. “gates” should be provided for the free passage of surface vessels. Each side of the gate should be marked by spar buoys; the closest intermediate float should not be more than 10 meters from these spar buoys; and,
 - 5.7.5. attended gear need not be marked at the extremity attached to a fishing vessel.
- 5.8. The Dhan-buoy used with active gear, such as anchor seining, fly dragging and purse seining, should comply with the provisions as set out in paragraph. 5.1.
- 5.9. Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) should be marked in the same way as fishing gear and carry means to identify their position by day and by night. As a minimum requirement, they should comply with the provisions set out in paragraph 5.1. The requirements of paragraph 5.6 should apply to the use of electronic devices fitted to FAD’s.

6. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- 6.1. A spar buoy should meet the following specifications: Where practicable, all position indicators attached to fishing gear should:
- 6.1.1. the pole of a spar buoy extending above the floatation buoy should have a height of at least 2 metres; the height of the spar buoy may be less than 2 metres if an administration is satisfied that the fishing gear so marked would not be a hazard to navigation;
 - 6.1.2. where radar reflectors are required, they should be fitted at the top of the pole;
 - 6.1.3. the size of flags should not be less than 25 centimetres in height and 35 centimetres in width; when two flags are required, the distance between them should not be less than 10 centimetres; flags should be made of waterproof material in fluorescent colours;

- 6.1.4. lights should be attached to the pole in such a way that they will not be obscured by a flag;
 - 6.1.5. for shapes that give the appearance of being spherical when viewed from a distance, provided for in paragraph 5.9.3 above, the lower of the spherical shapes and the shape, if only one is fitted, should have a diameter of not less than 30 centimetres, the upper shape should be smaller in diameter but not less than half that of the lower shape; and when two shapes are required, they should not be less than 10 centimetres apart; and,
 - 6.1.6. intermediate floats should have a diameter of not less than 50 centimetres.
- 6.2. Radar reflectors should be:
- 6.2.1. as light as possible;
 - 6.2.2. octahedral in shape; and,
 - 6.2.3. of metal plate or wire mesh construction.
- 6.3. Lights should be visible at a distance of at least 2 nautical miles; and preferably of a type that are fitted with sensors that automatically switch the light on at dusk and off at daylight.
- 6.4. Radio Beacons may be of a type that can be attached to the pole of the spar buoy or FAD, if they are of the free floating type, they should be linked to the spar buoy.

7. LOST OR DISCARDED GEAR

In the event of loss or abandonment of fishing gear, the Master, owners or operators are required to report the fact to our Administration immediately.

Every effort should be made by the crew, owners or operators to retrieve lost or abandoned gear, particularly if the gear:

- a) presents a hazard to the navigation of surface and sub-surface vessels;
- b) fouls reefs;
- c) fouls spawning beds;
- d) becomes an impediment to fishing; or,
- e) would continue to ghost fish.

Where gear lost or abandoned, may be or become a danger to navigation, the Master, owners or operators of the vessel concerned should immediately warn other vessels in the vicinity and inform our Administration as well as the competent local authority if fishing in a Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), giving details of the gear as well as its last known position so as to enable the competent authority to use the most effective local means to give a general warning to mariners.

The details of the lost gear as well as its last known position must be entered in the vessel's Official Logbook.

8. VIOLATIONS

The following will be considered violations:

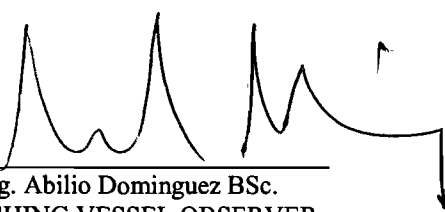
- f) Failure to implement or comply with these regulations
- g) deploying fishing gear without displaying the mark so required as a condition of an authorization to fish;
- h) deliberate removal of a marking of the fishing gear;
- i) use of a mark allocated to another vessel or to other gear;
- j) deliberate discard or abandonment of fishing gear;
- k) providing false information on the use, loss, abandonment or disposal of fishing gear

9. IMPLEMENTATION


The above-detailed measures should be implemented forthwith; therefore, owners and operators of Belize-registered Fishing Vessels are required to send to our Administration a completed copy of the ANNEX II for each of your vessels. We will then inform the Secretariats of the relevant RFMOs of your vessel's compliance.

10. INSPECTIONS

All Belize registered fishing vessels may be inspected by any of our Flag State Inspectors or Fishing Vessel Observers with or without prior notice. Also, the Resolutions/Recommendations of the RFMOs permit the boarding and inspection of fishing vessels by authorized inspectors of other member States of the RFMO.



Eng. Abilio Dominguez BSc.
FISHING VESSEL OBSERVER
PROGRAM



Valerie Lanza
FISHING VESSEL
MANAGER

For any questions about the above, please contact:

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

Tel. (501) 223-5026 / 5031 / 5047

Fax. (501) 223-5048 / 5070

e-mail. immarbe@btl.net



INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

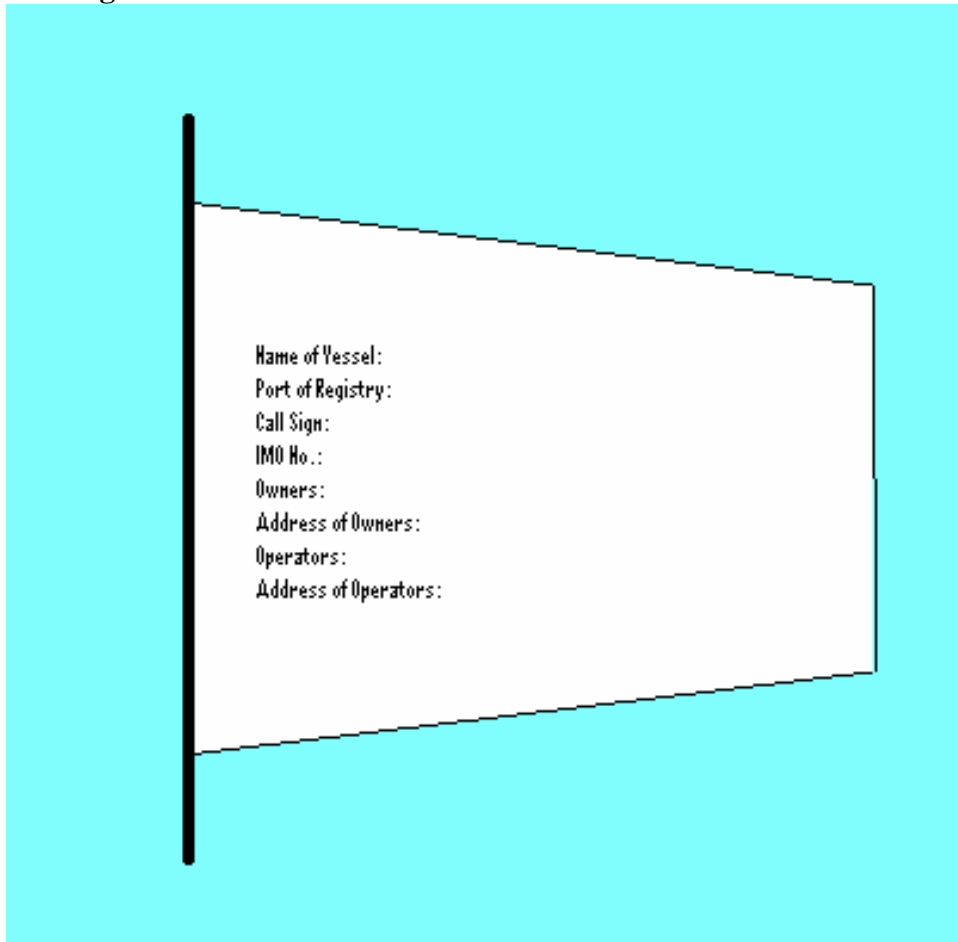
ANNEX I

I- Examples of Marking of Fishing Gear

1. Tags

Name of Vessel:	XXXXXXXXXXXX
Port of Registry:	BELIZE
Call Sign:	V3-- -- --
IMO No.:	XXXXXXX (or N/A)
Owners:	Company AAAAA
Address of Owners:	XXXXXX
Operators:	Company BBBB
Address of Operators:	XXXXXX

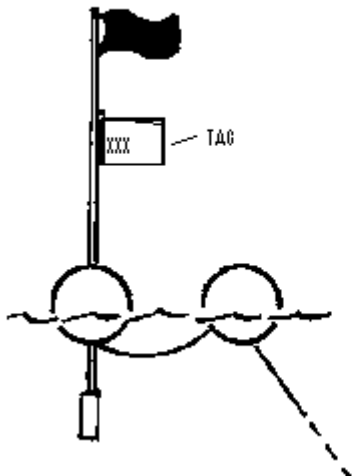
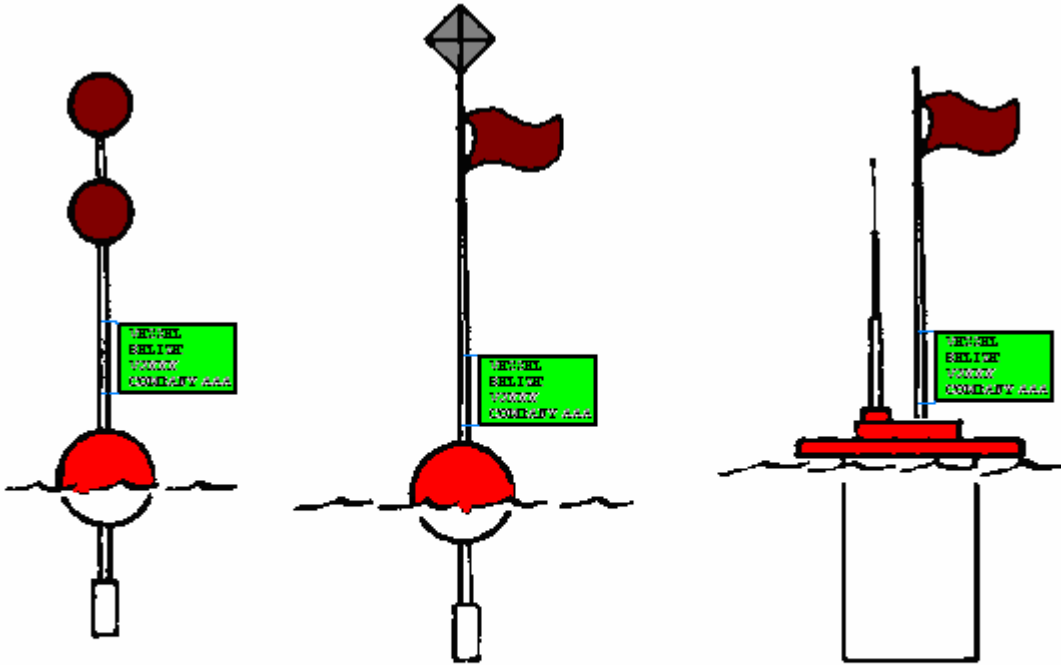
2. Flags





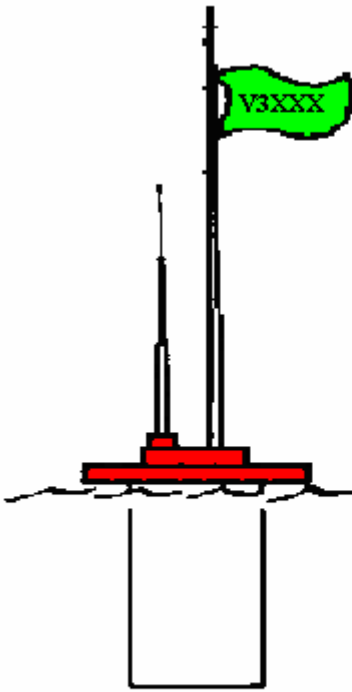
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

3. Placement of identification Markings, Tags and Flags on buoys and beacons.

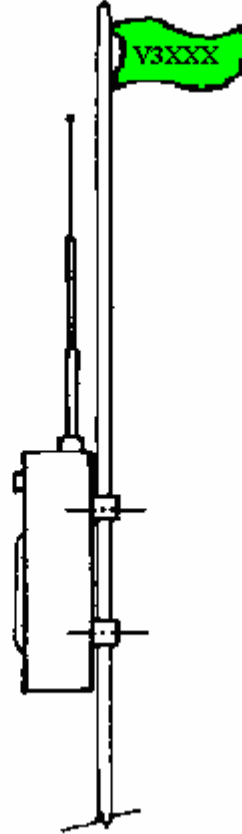




INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

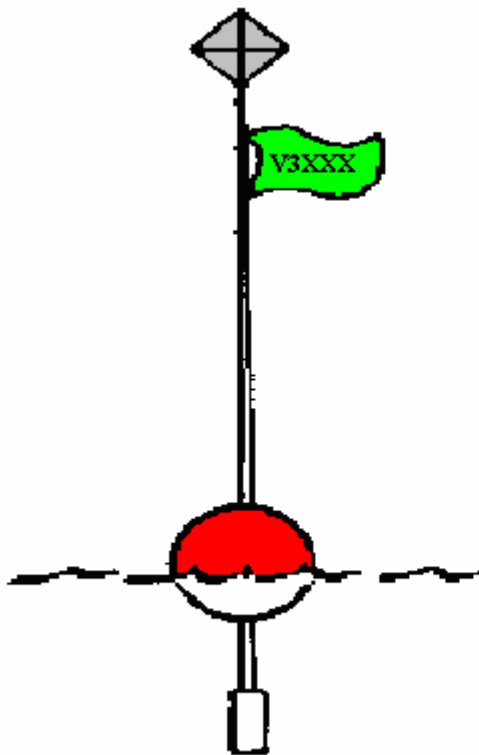
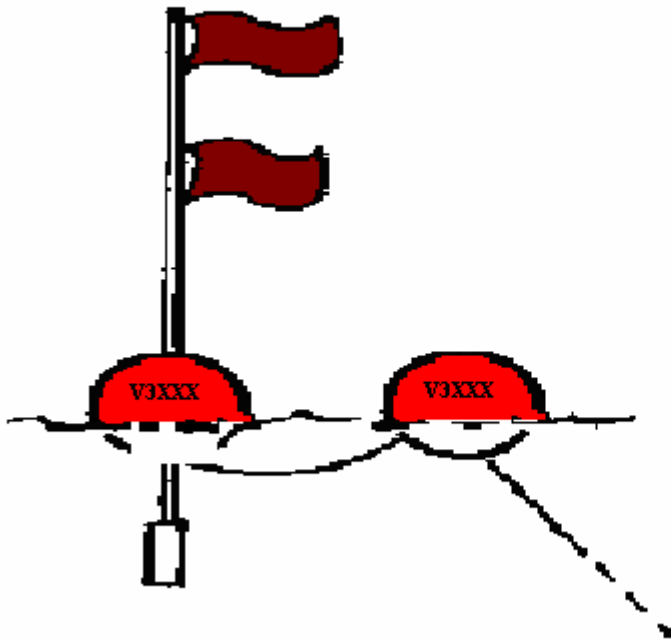


Floating





INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"



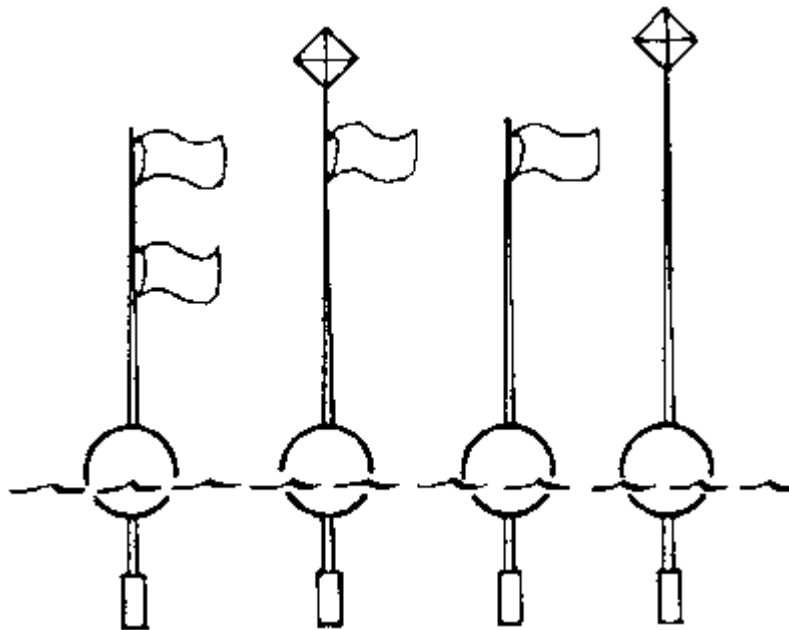


INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

II- Examples of the Standard System of Lights, Beacons and Shapes for the identification and location of Fishing Gear at sea

1. Use of flags for fishing gear that drifts and is set below the upper 2 meters in the water column.

Spar Buoys



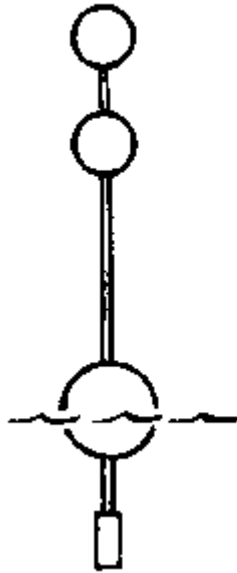


INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

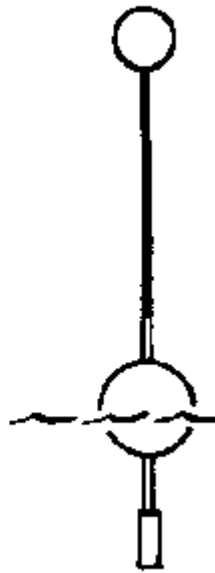
2. Use of spherical shapes when drifting gear is set in the upper 2m of the water column.

Spar Buoys

End Buoy



Intermediate Buoy

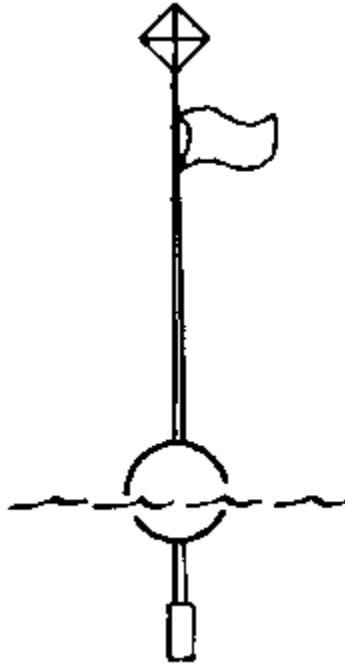




INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

3. The Dhan buoy as used with active gear such as anchor seining, dragging and purse seining.

Dhan Buoy

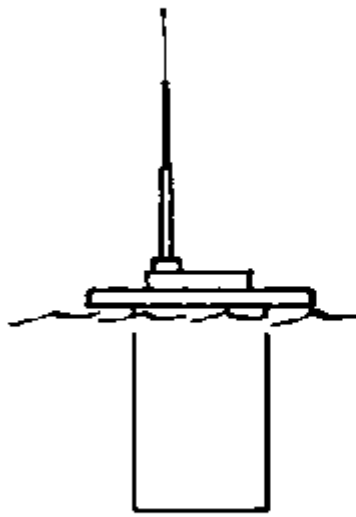




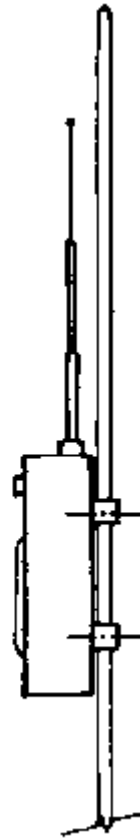
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

4. Use of Radio Beacons

Float free radio beacons and beacons tied to the Spar buoy



Floating



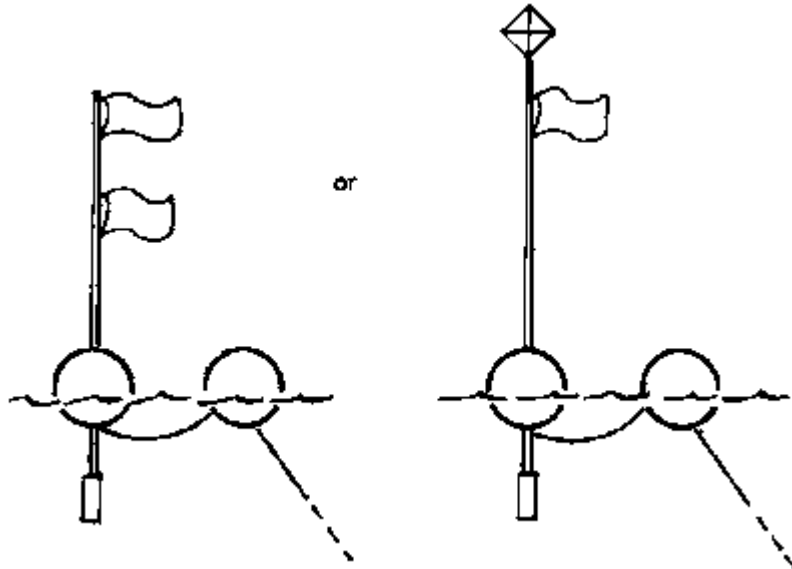
Fixed to spar buoy



INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

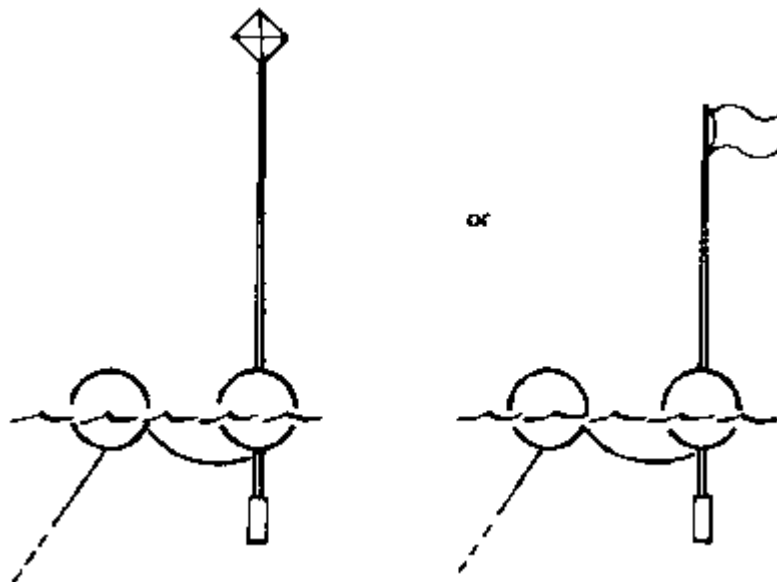
5. Spar buoy indicating fishing gear lying to the East of the buoy.

Fishing Gear set below the upper 2 meters in the water column



6. Spar buoy indicating fishing gear lying to the West of the buoy

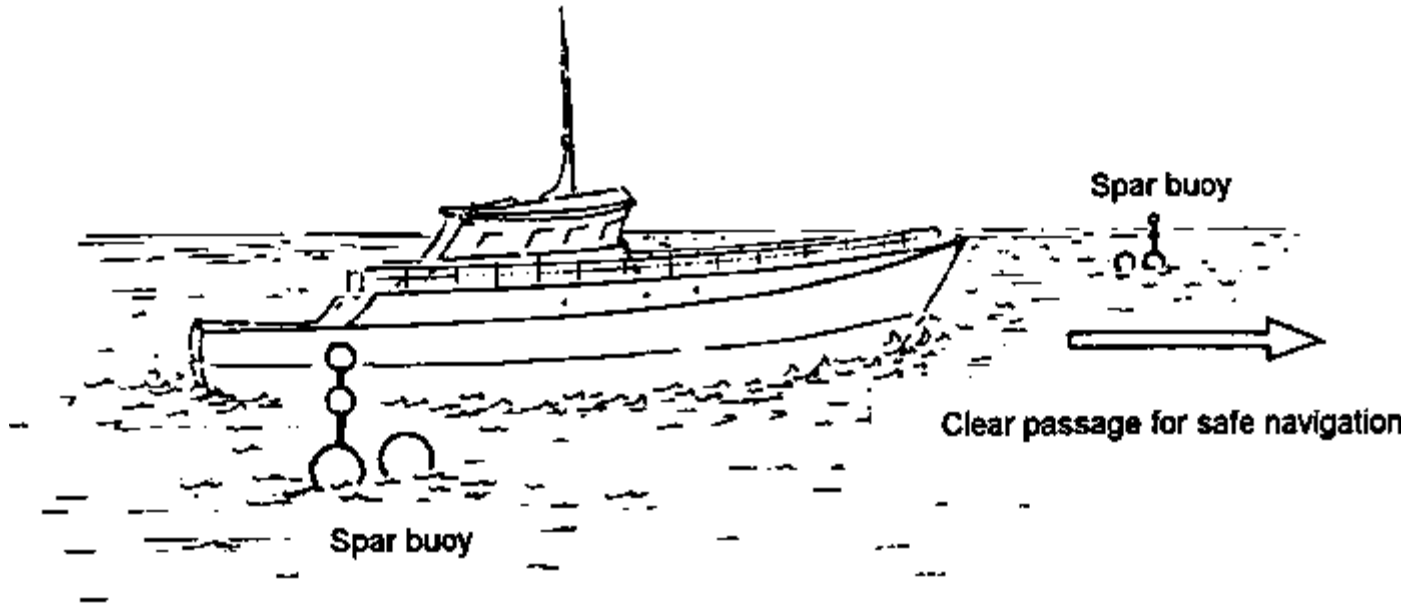
Fishing Gear set below the upper 2 meters in the water column



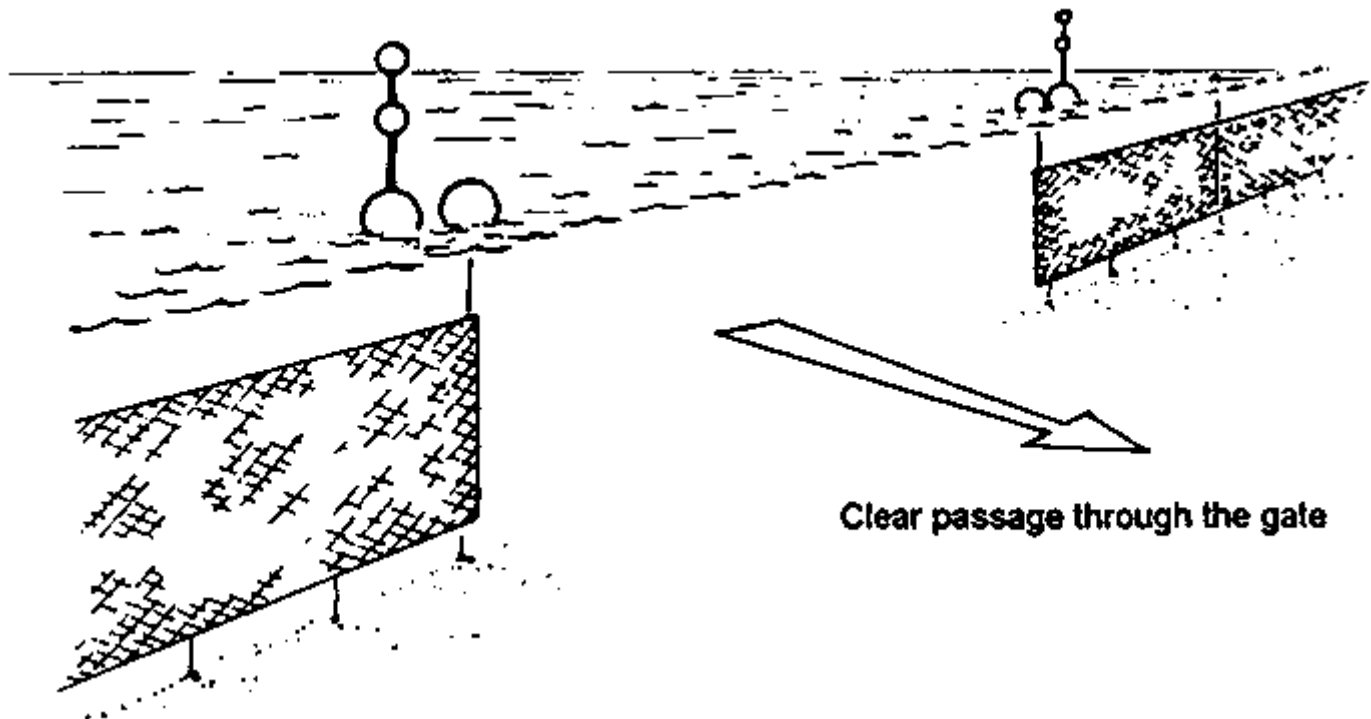


INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

7. Gate in Fishing Gear in Upper 2m of the Water Column



8. Gate in Fishing Gear Set in the Upper 2m of the Water Column





INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE
"IMMARBE"

9. Radar Reflectors

Aluminum plate or wire mesh is suitable. To provide a good radar target, the reflector should be of a reasonable size; however if it is too large, the windage effect could cause the buoy to heel excessively

