

Mark W Milburn
Trelawney
Antron Mabe
Penryn
Cornwall
TR10 9HX

Dear Dr Unsworth

re: Operating commercial boats around seagrass beds

I have worked around seagrass beds, above and below the water for many years. I worked as a commercial scallop diver in and around the Helford River, for nearly 10 years. I also dived for scallops in the Percuil and Fal rivers. I dived from a few commercial fishing boats. One of the fishing boat owner's father in law, dived for Scallops in the Helford for 25 years before I started. We never had an issues, of any kind, whilst working around the seagrass beds, as divers or boat users.

For the last 12 years, I have operated a commercially coded catamaran dive RIB. We regularly dive in and around seagrass beds in the Helford and the Fal rivers. Sometimes we have to collect divers from shallow water, we are concious that seagrass is fragile and lives in a fragile environment. We are not concerned about any floating seagrass blocking our outboard water intakes, it is too fragile to cause any issues. We have had issues with sea weed but never with seagrass.

In recent years, we have started operating a 10m hard boat with divers. Diving the same sites as our RIB, our hard boat has it's water intake at the bottom of the hull. Seagrass has never caused us any concerns.

In fact, I do not know anyone that has had any issues with their boats, within our area, whilst working or recreationally using their vessels around seagrass beds.

I hope this answers you query.

Mark Milburn - Atlantic Scuba/Stingray Charters.