

## News story: Fishing boat skipper gets suspended sentence for running his vessel aground off Plymouth

Michael Kinnaird, had earlier pleaded guilty to the charges at Plymouth magistrates court on 6 December, which related to an incident on October. It was shortly after 8.45pm on 7 October 2017, that Mr Kinnaird's vessel, a 21metre trawler FV Algrie left its moorings at Sutton Harbour. It then continued out of the harbour entrance but did not alter course into the shipping channel.

Instead, the FV Algrie kept a steady course at seven knots before running aground at Mountbatten Breakwater. None of the five crew on board was injured and there was no reported pollution as a result. Minor damage was caused to the vessel and it was recovered back to its moorings on the next high tide. When interviewed by MCA Enforcement Officers, Mr Kinnaird said he had navigated into and out of the harbour hundreds of times, but on this occasion, became confused when he saw lights from anglers who were fishing from the breakwater. He was asked why he didn't reduce his speed or reverse, use his navigation aids or even his spot light but he could give no answer.

Mr. Kinnaird was sentenced to a total of four months imprisonment which has been suspended for two years. He was also ordered to pay costs of £5000 and £115 victim surcharge. In passing sentence, District Judge Taylor said that alcohol did affect Mr Kinnaird's actions that night and he didn't accept his explanation about being confused by the lights on the breakwater. Ian Blair, technical manager from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency's marine office at Plymouth said, 'Preparing a comprehensive passage plan and maintaining a safe and proper navigational watch at all times, by use of all available means, is of paramount importance in order to prevent incidents such as this from occurring.'