



***MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURES AND TRANSPORT  
ITALIAN COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS***

**MESSINA VTS**

**“USER’S MANUAL”**

*EDITION March 2015*

## GLOSSARY

**AIS:** Automatic Identification System

**C.I.S.:** International Code of Signals

**COLREG ' 72:** International Regulation for Preventing Collision at Sea 1972

**ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival

**G.D.O.:** Date Time Group

**G.P.S.:** Global Positioning System

**GT:** Gross Tonnage

**HSC:** High Speed Craft

**I.I.M.:** Hydrographic Institute of the Italian Navy

**IMO:** International Maritime Organization

**ITU:** International Telecommunication Union

**MARPOL 73/78:** International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978

**MMSI:** Maritime Mobile Service Identity

**NM:** Nautical Mile

**SAR:** Search and Rescue

**VTS:** Vessel Traffic Services

**WGS 84:** World Geodetic System 1984

# LIST OF VARIATIONS

N°	MANAGER OF CENTER	DATE
1	CDR (ITCG) Matteo LO PRESTI	11.09.12
2	CDR (ITCG) Matteo LO PRESTI	23.04.13
3	CDR (ITCG) Antonino ZANGHI'	05.03.15
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## GENERAL INFORMATION

## VTS AREA

APPLICABILITY

The following vessels are required to participate in the system:

1. passenger vessels, whatever the size;
2. vessels of 300 GT and above.

The vessels other than those stated above, such as:

1. warships, auxiliary warships and any other ships either owned or operated by a Member State and used for non-commercial public services;
2. fishing vessels, traditional ships and recreational craft of less than 45 meters,

are not bound to participate.

Vessels voluntarily participating in the system are considered as "participating vessels".

In the Strait of Messina can not transit the ships designed to carry petroleum products in bulk or other harmful substances to the marine environment as defined by the International Conventions in force, limited to vessels with a gross tonnage (GT) of 50,000 and above if with such loads on board.

PORTS LYING IN MESSINA VTS AREA

Messina	(Lat. 38° 11.5' N - Long. 015° 33.7' E)
Reggio Calabria	(Lat. 38° 07.5' N - Long. 015° 39.0' E)
Villa San Giovanni	(Lat. 38° 13.3' N - Long. 015° 38.0' E)
San Francesco	(Lat. 38° 12.7' N - Long. 015° 33.7' E)
Tremestieri	(Lat. 38° 08.0' N - Long. 015° 31.5' E)

All geographic coordinates are referred to WGS 84.

**NB:** All information about the ports / landings, environmental features of the Strait of Messina and marine currents can be found in the pertinent nautical documents in force (Portolano P5 I.I. 3205 - Table of tide and tidal currents I.I. 3133 - List of lights and fog signals I.I. 3134 edited by the Hydrographic Institute of the Italian Navy).

VTS AREA BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Strait of Messina VTS area are as follows (marked as red nes in the chart):

NORTH BOUNDARY

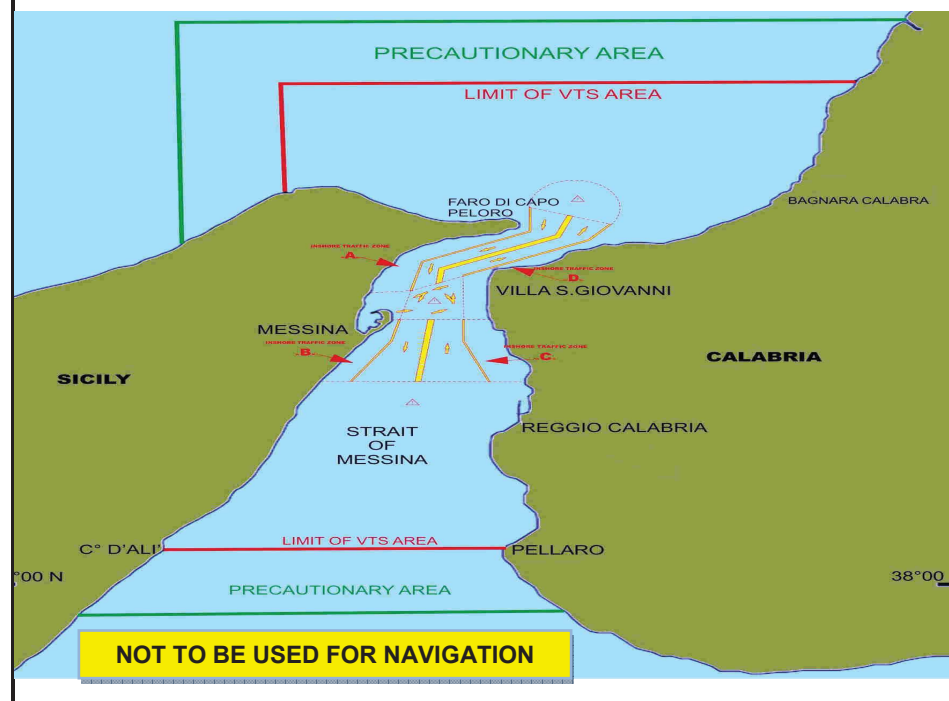
Two lines joining the point of coordinates Lat. 38° 22.3' N - Long. 015° 31.0' E Eastwards with the coast of Calabria, and Southwards with the coast of Sicily, respectively.

SOUTH BOUNDARY

Parallel 38° 01.0' N, joining Punta Pellaro (Calabria coast) and Capo d'Ali (Sicilian coast).

FIRST CONTACT / (PRECAUTIONARY) AREA

In accordance with the instructions reported on page MES 03, all participating vessels about to enter the Strait of Messina VTS Area shall, when at 3 NM of the VTS area limits (green line), make a "first contact" call to Messina VTS.



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COMMUNICATIONS	SERVICES PROVIDED
<p><b>MESSINA VTS</b></p> <p>Call sign: "MESSINA VTS" Radio VHF channels used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VHF CH 10 – primary channel for provision of VTS services;</li> <li>- VHF CH 13 - channel for ship reporting;</li> <li>- VHF CH 14 - secondary channel for ship reporting and provision of VTS services;</li> <li>- VHF CH 16 – distress traffic.</li> </ul> <p>Tel: +39 090 41711, +39 090 41923, +39 090 41989 Fax: +39 090 41923</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:vtsmessina@mit.gov.it">vtsmessina@mit.gov.it</a></p> <p><b>SECONDARY VTS CENTRE</b> (located in Reggio Calabria)</p> <p>In case of failure of VTS control centre in Messina, monitoring and traffic control in the Strait will be carried out by the Secondary VTS Centre of Reggio Calabria. In this case, <b>information service will be provided only.</b></p> <p>Appropriate communications will be given on receiving the First Contact Report, or whenever deemed necessary by Messina VTS, with the following message:</p> <p><b>ALL SHIPS ALL SHIPS ALL SHIPS THIS IS MESSINA VTS INFORMATION BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL FAILURE MESSINA VTS HAS A REDUCED OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY INFORMATION SERVICE IS ONLY AVAILABLE OUT</b></p> <p>Reggio Calabria Secondary VTS Centre may be contacted as follows:</p> <p>Tel: +39 0965 656268, +39 0965 656299 +39 0965 656296, +39 0965 650090 Fax: +39 0965 656294, +39 0965 656333</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:cpreggio@mit.gov.it">cpreggio@mit.gov.it</a></p>	<p><b>MESSINA VTS provides the following services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Information Service (INS)</b></li> </ul> <p>The Information Service is the basic service provided by the Messina VTS.</p> <p>An <b>information service</b> is provided by broadcasting information, at fixed times, intervals or when deemed necessary by Messina VTS or at the request of a vessel. The INS includes reports on the position, identity and intentions of other traffic, weather or waterway conditions, hazards and any other factors that may influence the vessel's transit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Traffic Organization Service (TOS)</b></li> </ul> <p>A <b>Traffic Organization Service</b> concerns the operational management of traffic and the forward planning of vessel movements to prevent congestion and dangerous situations, and is particularly relevant in times of high traffic density or when the movement of special transports may effect the flow of other traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Navigational Assistance Service (NAS)</b></li> </ul> <p>A <b>Navigational Assistance Service</b> is a service to assist the navigational decision-making process on board and to monitor the effects, especially in difficult navigational or meteorological circumstances or in case of defects or deficiencies. This service is normally either rendered at the request of a vessel or whenever deemed necessary by the VTS. On accepting the NAS, a vessel understands that NAS is advisory and does not relieve the Master from any of his responsibility for the safe conduct of the vessel or for collisions avoidance.</p> <p><u>N.B.</u> A "roundabout-type Traffic Separation Scheme" (described on pages MES 4 and MES 5) is in force in the VTS area.</p>

**REPORTING**

In the Strait of Messina VTS area a ship reporting system is established.  
Participating vessels shall only report to Messina VTS by radio the pieces of information which have not already been transmitted through AIS.

**FIRST CONTACT REPORT (PRECAUTIONARY AREA)**

- A.** Identification of the ship (Name, call sign or MMSI and flag);  
**B.** Date and time;  
**C. o D.** Position with geographical coordinates giving in latitude and longitude ("C") or True bearing and distance in nautical miles from a clearly identified landmark ("D");  
**E.** True course;  
**F.** Speed (knots);  
**G.** Port of departure - date-time of departure;  
**I.** Port of destination – Estimated time of arrival;  
**P.** Cargo on board and, if on board there are dangerous cargoes as well as harmful substances and gases that could endanger persons or the environment, quantity and IMO class;  
**T.** Details of name and particulars of ship's representative or owner and of the shipper for provision of information relating at the cargo;  
**U.** Ship size and type (Details of length overall, breadth, tonnage, draft);  
**W.** Total number of persons on board (passengers and crew);

**In X-ray the following information shall be reported:**

- ETA to Cape Peloro (transiting North – South) or to Punta S. Raineri (transiting South -North);
- Characteristics and estimated quantity of bunker (vessels of over 1,000 GT)
- On board telephone and e-mail;
- Navigational status and any accidents and / or damage occurred during navigation.

**ENTRY REPORT**

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Bravo.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**PILOT STATION REPORT**

Vessels subject to compulsory pilotage approaching a pilot station shall report:

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Bravo, Juliet.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**DEVIATION REPORT**

Whenever a ship significantly alters information provided in previous reports shall report:

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, X-ray (any changed Information)  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**ANCHORING REPORT**

Vessels that intend to anchor in the VTS Area must previously be authorized by Messina VTS and use the assigned anchorage area. Once anchored, these vessels shall report:

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie or Delta.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**POSITION REPORT**

Vessels without pilot on board, in case of darkness or low visibility, shall report When:

- entering in TSS
- crossing bearing 312° from Punta Pezzo(Southbound) or parallel 38°12'N (Nouthbound);
- leaving TSS

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Charlie or Delta.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10

**ENTERING OR LEAVING PORT IN VTS AREA REPORT**

TO: MESSINA HARBOUR  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Bravo, India, Papa, Tango, Whiskey.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 12

**FINAL REPORT**

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Bravo.  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**ACCIDENT AT SEA**

All vessels shall immediately report to Messina VTS:

- Any incident that may endanger safety of the ship;
- Any incident that may affect safety of navigation;
- Any situation potentially capable of causing pollution;
- Any spills and/or containers and/or packages drifting.

TO: MESSINA VTS  
 GIVING: IMO SRS ITEMS: Alpha, Charlie or Delta, X-ray (details of incident).  
 VIA: VHF Ch 10 or VHF Ch 14

**TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME**

A roundabout-type Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) is in force in the Strait of Messina, as graphically represented in the picture aside and published by 'IMO with SN. 1/Circ.279 on 12 June 2009.

It is divided into three sectors (NORTH - MIDDLE - SOUTH).

**North sector**, including:

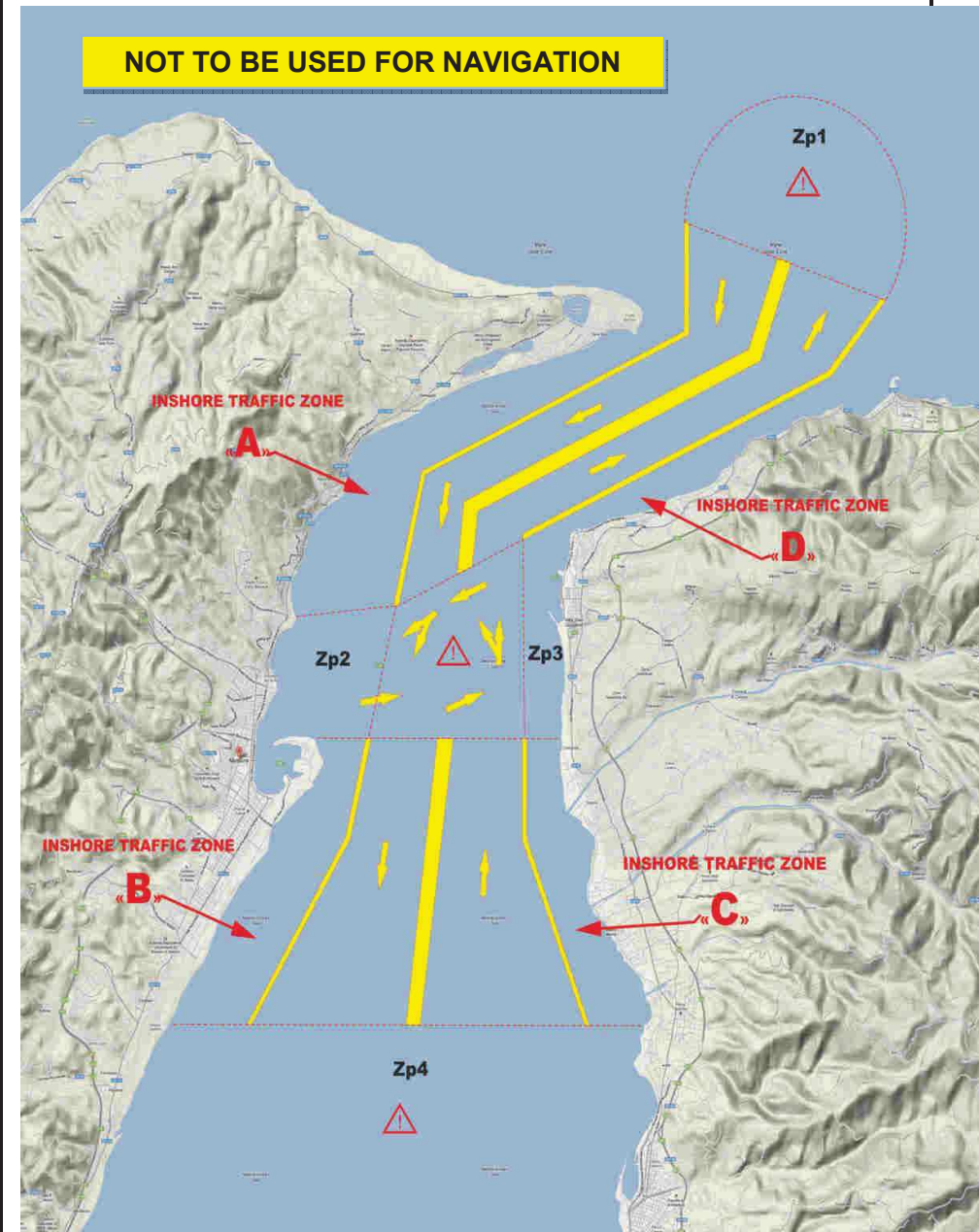
1. a precautionary zone 1 (Zp1), made up of a semi-circular area connected to the northern edge of the TSS;
2. a 300-metre-wide separation zone between traffic lanes;
3. one South-bound traffic lane, lying between the separation zone and the Sicily inshore traffic zone "A" (approximate directions 245° -200°);
4. one North-bound traffic lane, lying between the separation zone and the Calabria inshore traffic zone "D" (approximate directions 020° - 065° );

**Middle sector**, including:

1. a precautionary zone 2 (Zp2), between the North and South sectors of the TSS, and between the South-bound traffic lane and the coast of Sicily;
2. a precautionary zone 3 (Zp3), between the North and South sectors of the TSS, and between the North-bound traffic lane and the coast of Calabria;
3. a roundabout, centered in the point Lat. 38° 12.680 ' N - Long. 015° 36.400' E, 250 m radius (diameter  $\square$ 500 meters).

**South sector**, including:

1. a 300-metre-wide separation zone between traffic lanes;
2. one South-bound traffic lane, lying between the separation zone and the Sicily inshore traffic zone "B" (approximate direction 190°);
3. one North-bound traffic lane, lying between the separation zone and the Calabria inshore traffic zone "C" (approximate direction 005°);
4. a precautionary zone 4 (Zp4), located south of the Southern edge of the TSS, delimited by the opposite coasts of Sicily and Calabria and the parallels 38° 08.940' N and 38° 06.940' N.



**TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME****NAVIGATION IN THE TRAFFIC LANES**

When navigating in the "traffic lanes", vessels should keep clear of the separation zone and proceed maintaining a steady course. Sudden course alterations should be avoided whenever possible.

Vessels intending to transit through the Strait of Messina South-wards, shall navigate within the South-bound traffic lane (approximate routes: 200° - 245° - 190°).

Vessels intending to transit through the Straits of Messina North-wards, shall navigate within the North-bound traffic lane (approximate routes: 005° – 065° – 020°).

All vessels entering the roundabout shall proceed counterclockwise.

Under exceptional circumstances (e.g. bad weather and rough sea conditions which may make normal navigation difficult), special "safety routes" may singularly be authorized by Messina VTS after prior request by a vessel.

All vessels sailing either in the precautionary zones, or in the traffic lanes, or in the roundabout or in the inshore traffic zones, shall proceed with an appropriate safe speed, so as to be able to take effective action to avoid collisions. In the period between June 1 and September 30, from sunrise to sunset, vessels shall maintain a speed not exceeding 16 (sixteen) knots.

Under exceptional circumstances, Messina VTS may authorize transit with different speed limitations, after prior request by a vessel.

High speed craft (HSC) and hydrofoils are exempted from the above speed limits, being required to maintain a safe speed, to be adapted in accordance with Rule 6 of the Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG 72).

Hydrofoils, from sunset to sunrise or whenever in case of restricted visibility, when navigating within the area delimited by parallels Lat. 38° 16' N (Capo Peloro) and Lat. 38° 08' N (joining Tremestieri – Sicily and Reggio Calabria – Calabria landings) should sail in displacement hull.

**PRECAUTIONARY ZONES**

A vessel navigating in one of the four established "precautionary zones" (Zp1 "North" and Zp4 "South", Zp2 "West" and Zp3 "East") shall sail with particular caution and maintain a "safe speed" (as defined in Rule 6 of the Colreg 1972), adopting the most appropriate routes to enter and exit from the TSS.

**INSHORE TRAFFIC ZONES**

The inshore traffic zones (lying between the coasts of Sicily and Calabria and the outer limits of the traffic lanes), identified as "A" – "B" – "C" – "D" respectively, are reserved for use by local traffic (pleasure craft, small fishing boats, etc.).

**OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

All vessels navigating in the Strait of Messina shall comply, throughout their transit, with the following operational requirements:

1. keep continuous listening watch on VHF channels 16 and 10;
2. navigate with caution, i.e. vessel engines shall be maintained ready to manoeuvre (Stand- By);
3. the on-board positioning systems shall be maintained operational, in order to provide the vessel's position at any time;
4. all vessels shall constantly check their position and keep ready to exchange information with Messina VTS, whenever requested;
5. all vessels shall immediately report to Messina VTS any incidents (e.g. damages, failures, collisions, groundings, losses of cargo, etc.) occurring since the sending of the First Contact report.

Compliance with the above-mentioned requirements and procedures does not relieve shipmasters from complying, whenever the situations require so, with general obligations deriving from the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG 72), in particular Rule 10, as well as the rules dictated by experience and good seamanship, in order to avoid risks of accidents and/or collisions.



**PILOTAGE AND ANCHORING****LOCAL FISHING****MANDATORY PILOTAGE**

Pilotage is mandatory for:

1. all vessels with a gross tonnage (GT) of 15,000 and above;
2. merchant ships, in transit, designed to carry petroleum products in bulk or other harmful substances to the marine environment as defined by the International Conventions in force, with a gross tonnage (GT) of 6,000 and above if with such loads on board and merchant ships with a gross tonnage (GT) of 15,000 and above in ballast.

**PILOT STATION**

Vessels approaching from North:

- **BOARDING:** Lat. 38° 18'12"N – Long. 015° 40'36"E (Bearing 031°, 2.4 NM from Capo Peloro lighthouse);
- **DISEMBARKATION:** Lat. 38° 08'33"N – Long. 015° 35'00"E (Bearing 172°, 3.1NM from San Raineri lighthouse).

Vessels approaching from South:

- **BOARDING:** Lat. 38° 08'54"N – Long. 015° 36'36"E (Bearing 148°, 3.2 NM from S. Raineri lighthouse);
- **DISEMBARKATION:** Lat. 38° 17'02"N – Long. 015° 43'12"E (Bearing 009°, 1.7 NM from Scilla lighthouse).

**ANCHORING**

In the Strait of Messina, the anchor is only allowed in the positions listed below and to the ships not carrying oil and / or hazardous substances or dangerous goods, as defined by MARPOL 73/78, (except in cases of force majeure or for other reasons extraordinary) and it's subject to prior authorization by Messina VTS:

**ANCHORAGE POINTS:****Paradiso (all vessels)**

- A) Lat. 38° 13'43" N Long. 015° 34'44" E
- B) Lat. 38° 14'18" N Long. 015° 35'15" E
- C) Lat. 38° 14'36" N Long. 015° 35'30" E

**Giunchi (vessels less than 100 m LOA)**

- A) Lat. 38° 07'00" N Long. 015° 38'45" E

**Pentimele (vessels less than 100 m LOA)**

- A) Lat. 38° 08'07" N Long. 015° 39'09" E
- B) Lat. 38° 08'21" N Long. 015° 39'12" E

**Pentimele (vessels of 100 m LOA and over)**

- C) Lat. 38° 08'15" N Long. 015° 39'06" E

**CAPE RASOCOLMO**

It is forbidden to drop anchor in the area between the 10-metre bathymetric and the semicircle with a radius of 1.7 miles from the lighthouse "Cape Rasocolmo" (Lat. 38° 17.7'N - Long. 015° 31.2E').

**LOCAL FISHING**

The Strait of Messina is home to a busy local fishing, which is carried out in different ways, according to the period of the year.

Such fishing, though appropriately regulated, may interfere with normal transit in the Strait, therefore vessels are required to pay close attention to the fishing boats engaged.

In particular, the following types of fishing are ordinarily carried out in the Strait:

**SWORDFISH (Xiphias gladius)**

This is carried out in the period between May and August every year, by means of special boats called "walkways" or "feluche", with a long walkway that comes out from the bow and a high central shaft (antenna), at the top of which is allocated the helmsman. The swordfish is captured by harpoon.

These fishing boats move freely in pre-defined areas, where they are allowed to track and catch fish.

It may happen that these craft, during the chase to swordfish, temporarily use the traffic lanes adjacent to their own position, while making sure of giving priority to ships in both longitudinal and transverse transit.

**SAURO (SCOMBER SCOMBRUS)**

This is carried out in the Strait almost through the year by a large number of vessels, operating in groups.

**PAURO / RED SNAPPER (PAGRUS PAGRUS / DENTEX)**

This usually takes place in summer, in the area in front of Cape Peloro towards ENE at about 0.5 NM from the Sicilian coast. It is carried out by small boats operating in groups and may interfere with the incoming traffic in the Strait of Messina, both from North and South.