

Marinas ask government for regulations to deal with issue of abandoned boats

A Danish businessman has held the concession to manage the marina since 1976

Dredging was stopped last year as the port did not have its paperwork in order

“We must not forget that a harbour should be a shelter, a place that boats can go to if they have a problem while they are sailing. And we cannot guarantee that here,” he says.

He explains that for years it has been the port management that has carried out the dredging with the port's own resources. However this was stopped some months ago by the Guardia Civil as the paperwork was not in order.

“We are calling for permanent dredging which is what a port like this needs, like they have in El Candedo, in Malaga, where they have a similar problem and dredging is continual,” says Adolfo Álvarez.

The initiative launched by the boat owners has encouraged the concession-holder to apply for the renovation of the dredging permits.

“Since last October we have been working with the concession-holder to obtain these permits. We have the licence from the Coasts Authority and the Andalusian Ports Agency and now we are only waiting to hand all the documents into the main harbour master's office,” he explains. Once the dredging gets under way, the sand could be removed in around three months.

The owners and residents hope that a solution is found as soon as possible. The aim now is for the marina to be in tip top condition before the tourists flood in at Easter.

Private marinas on the western Costa del Sol and in Malaga have 35 abandoned vessels which threaten navigation and the environment

by M. PÉREZ

MARBELLA. The economic crisis has created yet more victims on the Spanish coast. These are abandoned boats, left to their fate by their owners - mostly foreign - who find themselves unable, for one reason or another, of meeting the considerable costs involved.

The Asociación Nacional de Empresas Náuticas (ANEN or national association of nautical businesses) has revealed that there are an estimated 10,000 abandoned boats in Spanish marinas, a situation that has led the ports that are privately owned to ask the government for regulations to help deal with the problem.

The alliance of marinas on the western Costa del Sol and in Malaga have estimated that currently they have 35 abandoned boats in their port areas.

According to information from the ‘Marinas de Andalucía’ Asociación de Puertos Deportivos y Turísticos de Andalucía, which represents 90 per cent of the private marinas in Andalucía and over 60 per cent of the total berths available, Cabopino is the marina with the biggest problem.

It has 11 abandoned boats, all of them motor launches with 27 horsepower, belonging in large part to foreign owners. “They have accumulated debts of up to 44,000 euros in mooring fees which is more than the value of their vessels,” states the association.

Estepona marina has eight abandoned boats, both Fuengirola and



The Puerto Deportivo Virgen del Carmen in Marbella has just one abandoned boat. by JOSELE-LANZA

La Duquesa have seven (in the case of La Duquesa six are foreign-owned and one belongs to a Spaniard) and El Candedo in Malaga city has two.

Reasons why

The reasons why this situation occurs vary from the failure to pay fees and the subsequent abandoning of the boat, to the death of its owner, a change of ownership or

an administrative or judicial embargo on the vessel.

The expenses involved in owning a boat and keeping it in a marina are notoriously high and have led to the common failure to find funds. Additionally the economic crisis has stalled the market in second-hand boats which used to be a way out of financial difficulties.

The sector has complained of a situation which is hard to deal with and has no legal recourse.

“At the moment the only thing we can do is to undertake a civil action to embargo the relevant vessel. The main problem lies in the fact that the majority of these boats are in the name of foreigners and the legislation obliges us to track them down in their current place of residence. In many cases it is practically impossible to locate

them. The process goes on and on and brings with it financial losses,” pointed out Juan Carlos Martín, president of Marinas de Andalucía who also said that the period between the abandonment of a boat and its removal can be six or seven years or even longer.

“What we need is a law that helps us to action an embargo as quickly as possible so that we do not lose out financially,” said Martín, whose members have asked for a modification of the existing Ley de Puertos del Estado y Marina Mercante so that it would apply to privately-owned marinas as well as ports owned by the state.

Last summer the Junta de Andalucía auctioned off thirty boats abandoned in publicly-owned ports, a process that Martín referred to as “highly efficient and very fast”.

The marina at Cabopino currently has 11 boats that have been abandoned by their owners

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