

North Berwick RNLi out on two shouts into the haar this weekend

Volunteers from North Berwick RNLi launched the charity's relief D-class lifeboat *Robleen* on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon as the haar enveloped the coastline.

The first page came at 9.45pm on Friday 17 May when members of the public spotted an object in the water off Gullane bay, three nautical miles to the west of the station. North Berwick Coastguard Rescue Team (CRT) arrived on scene as the lifeboat was making way to Gullane, but due to the rapidly fading light and incoming haar were unable to determine what the object was.

The lifeboat made good speed to the scene and were guided onto the object by members of North Berwick CRT. The object turned out to be a marker buoy attached to a creel.

Helm, Hamish Barbour said "The first informant did exactly the right thing by calling the Coastguard, the visibility on scene wasn't great and fishing buoys can very easily look like a persons head bobbing in the water. If in doubt, call 999 for the Coastguard."

The second call out came at 1.56pm on Saturday 18 May after members of the public reported concerns for a group of stand up paddleboarders who had been seen by Craigleith Island, approximately one nautical mile offshore, when the haar once

again blanketed the area.

With visibility dropping below 100m at times the lifeboat launched and started a systematic search of the area between Craigleith Island and the shore, before starting a shoreline search as new information became available.

After two hours with nothing found the lifeboat was stood down as investigations on shore had identified the paddleboarders involved and established that they had made it safely ashore.

Helm Callum MacLeod said: "This was a search based on minimal information in tricky conditions. Thankfully the paddleboarders were safe and well. We thank the members of the public and other water users for the information they gave us."

"At this time of year the Firth of Forth is prone to sea fog, or haar as it is called on the east coast of Scotland, when relatively warm winds blow over the cold sea. If you're headed out on the water always check the weather forecast, wear an appropriate buoyancy aid or lifejacket and carry a waterproofed means of calling for help".

