



Agenda Item C1

Shore report, Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period September 2023 to November 2023

Overview

Fishing in this period has been sporadic with both weather and sea conditions making it hard for the fishermen to be able to catch consistently.

The cockle permit fishery got underway in September with the vessels taking part being able to catch their allocated quota.

The TECFO cockle fishery finished strong with cockles being discovered in an area previously not having enough cockles to work on.

The whelk fishing on the North Kent Flats and out of Ramsgate has just started with limited success, but as sea temperatures fall this should help the catches.

Fishing vessels have been having longer than usual refits this year.

Queenborough

The two TECFO cockle vessels managed to get their catches for this fishery in fairly good times and they also participated in the cockle permit fishery joined by their third vessel. The rest of the fishing vessels have struggled from this port, with two of the trawlers getting ready for catching oysters, and the third trawler working out of Whitstable. As well as targeting soles, limited gill netting and potting has been taking place.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough:8

Faversham

The main fishing family has one of their trawlers in Brixham, and the other is being refitted in Faversham Creek, with the goal to have both trawlers in Brixham. Their small open boat is being used on a part time basis.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham:3

Whitstable

Two vessels are currently in refit with a third now temporarily based in Brixham. The four cockle boats are now starting to refit after finishing the cockle season.

Fishing for oysters has started with good catches being landed, one vessel has started to catch whelks with a limited success.

Two vessels are gill netting for bottom fish and using hook and line for bass catches.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 11

Herne Bay

Two trailer launched commercial boats are using this port targeting crab and lobsters with pots and bass with hook and lines.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2

Thanet Ports

Ramsgate: Number of vessels fishing from Ramsgate: 13 (plus 9 Charter boats)

The Ramsgate fleet has, when able to due to weather, been working outside the 6-mile limit for sole, bass and thornbacks. Potting and netting have been occurring within the district; the fisherman have been saying that it has been taking days for the fishing grounds to recover and visiting the same spot twice in the same week has produced limited results.

Two vessels are starting to again target whelks with fair to good catches happening.

Broadstairs: Number of vessels fishing from Broadstairs: 1

There has been no fishing activity observed at this port.

Margate: Number of vessels fishing from Margate: 3

Of the three vessels in this port, only one is seen regularly fishing, using both pots and nets, catching a mixture of thornbacks, bass and smoothhounds and also small amounts of crabs and lobsters.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 17

Deal and Walmer

Limited fishing activity is happening from here, with the boats using gill nets and pots to target their catch, The first herrings of the year have been landed this week.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 3

Dover

The small potter vessel is out of the water having a refit in Dover marina, and the second vessel is targeting bass using hook and line with limited success.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 2

Folkestone and Hythe

The vessel that targets scallops out of this port has resumed fishing after a refit, small amounts of finfish have been landed, from trawls and gill nets. The lobsters and crabs have been difficult to catch with catches still lower than normal. One of the vessels from here steamed to Ramsgate to have a refit.

Hythe fisherman are using gill nets to target fish, with nets being both set just off the beach and outside the district as they struggle to find good catches.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 10

Dungeness

Whelks have made up the bulk of the catches here, with finfish, crabs and lobsters being targeted. The fishermen here are having to buy in fish from Scotland for their shop due to the lack of regular finfish catches.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

David Deverson, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer