



Agenda Item C1

Shore report, Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period May 2023 to September 2023

Overview

The fishing within the Thames has been poor this summer with most forms of fishing having to steam miles and put in longer hours than usual to make a living.

The cockle fishing has been steady with good yields, catches have been coming from different parts of the TECFO

The whelk fishing was hit and miss with many boats giving up fishing for them earlier than usual.

Smoothhounds have been the dominant species, with bass bycatch being easily caught.

Queenborough

The two cockle boats that work out of this port have been landing their catch at Whitstable, they have been able to get their 12 bags in a reasonable time.

One new trawler has turned up in the port but with fish scarce has already been thinking of working outside the district.

The remaining vessels are trying different parts of the Thames in hope of finding fish.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 6

Faversham

The main trawler from here was making plans to go back to Brixham, Devon due to the lack of fish, the other small vessel belongs to the same family and is being used on a part time basis.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

The cockle boats can get their 3 loads in a timely fashion and have been able to get it done in the first couple of days of the week, the vessels fishing for lobster

have reported a steady return for the effort. Trawling from this port remains at a low with disappointing catches being made. Both gill netting and the use of hook and line have accounted for bass catches with smoothhounds making up the bulk of the catches.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 14

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)

Three vessels are targeting whelks, on or outside the 6-mile limit with various results, netters are targeting soles and smoothhounds with bass also appearing in the catches, limited lobster and crab potting is happening.

Broadstairs: Number of vessels fishing from Broadstairs: 1

There has been no fishing activity in Broadstairs

Margate: Number of vessels fishing from Margate: 3

Only one vessel has been seen working regularly, targeting soles, thornback rays and smoothhounds by setting gillnets, they also setting a few pots for crab and lobster.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 17

Deal and Walmer

The vessel here has continued to sell their catch via their stall next to the boats with thornback rays being targeted. Lobster pots have been set with small success.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 3

Dover

In Dover one small vessel has been potting for crab and lobster.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 2

Folkestone and Hythe

Folkestone boats have been using different methods to catch both shellfish and finfish, the lobster and crab season has reported to be steady but with lower than usual catch. Scalloping finished with this vessel having an out of the water refit at Dover. Finfish has been caught using both gill nets and trawls.

Hythe vessels after a short break to avoid the majority of the spider crabs have just started to fish again with mixed results.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 14

Dungeness

Fishing for whelks has been the mainstay of this port, with regular catches being made, catches of lobster and crabs and small amounts of finfish have made up the rest of the catches

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

David Deverson, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer