

Agenda Item C2

Shore Report - Essex

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period September 2021 to November 2021

Overview

During this quarter the weather has played a big part in the minimal fishing opportunities for the commercial fleet and with the typical transition from the summer to winter fisheries has caused a slow period for the local boats. With the colder weather settling in cod has been virtually non-existent for another year, although there have been some reports of codling being caught from charter boats and anglers. Sole and skate have been the main effort for this period with plenty of dog fish and some bass still around, with large shoals of whiting hitting the coastline.

Thames and Blackwater Herring Licences at the time of reporting have not been issued yet, with some unrest for a few local boats that have a market for herring and would be an added income avenue during this period.

As temperatures have declined so have catches of crab and lobster, while whelk vessels have started to deploy their pots again. Charter boats and anglers have seen steady catches of skate, dog fish and autumn bass, with some mackerel, dabs and the occasional codling.

The beginning of this quarter also saw the seasonal close of the TECFO cockle fishery and the beginning of the 'Listening Phase' for the 'Review and Development of Future Cockerle Fishery Management in the KEIFCA district'.

Harwich & Walton

Trawlers have maintained a reasonable effort on sole and skate for the majority of the quarter, with catches only starting to tail off at the start of November. Walton pier and beaches providing good catches of thornbacks and smooth hounds, with vast shoals of whiting and a small amount of codling reported.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, Clacton

Fishing effort has remained steady in these ports, with most vessels focus on trawling, and to a lesser extent, netting. As in summer, sole and skate has remained a popular target species with steady catches.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 13

West Mersea & Tollesbury

Trawlers and netters have continued to fish for sole and skate, with occasional sizable bass also being landed alongside numerous whiting. Sizeable cod have still not shown in the area with a few fishers looking to turn their efforts to herring as temperatures dropped towards the end of the quarter but are waiting for clarification on the Thames and Blackwater Herring Licences for this year. Potting effort has started to slow, matching the overall trend for a reduction in effort for most vessels in these ports as winter draws closer.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

Maldon & Bradwell

Vessels out of Bradwell have seen a steady but consistent fishing effort this period, with most boats selling direct to the public through Facebook. Soles, bass, skate, are the staple catches.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

North Fambridge, Burnham-On-Crouch, Barling, Paglesham & Rochford

Activity has been mostly centred on private grounds for native and pacific oysters, as the native oyster fishery in public grounds remains closed. There are also very low levels of netting in the rivers, dredging for clams continues in the Crouch and Roach at low levels.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

Southend-On-Sea & Leigh-On-Sea

The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order was closed on 8th October 2021 with some vessels tied up for winter and some moved to dry docks for annual maintenance. A small number of vessels turned to trawling and whelking, but in general fishing from these ports was slow during this period.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 18

Holehaven & Thurrock

Fishing effort remains low but steady from the few boats in the area, mostly netting inside the Thames. Reports of mullet, soles and the occasional bass.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3

Martin Ward,

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer, Essex