

Agenda Item C2

Shore Report - Essex

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period November 2022 to January 2023

Overview

This quarter has seemed even quieter than usual for this time of year. This has perhaps been due to long periods of poor weather conditions preventing fishers from getting to sea. Many vessels are out of the water for routine maintenance, with some having to undertake extra work to comply with MCA inspection requirements. The Thames and Blackwater herring licences were issued during this period, and we have seen some efforts for herring and sprats. Reports have shown good quantities of herring in the district. Whelking activity within Essex has been mainly outside the district with multiple landings in to Mersea. Catches of skate, flounder, rockling, whiting and the odd bass and turbot have been reported with good amounts of codling showing up.

As typical for the Christmas and New Year period, activity within the charter vessel fleet has been minimal, with most conducting annual maintenance to their vessels. Angling from the piers and beaches have seen limited catches, but reports of codling, whiting, flounder, and skate are typical.

Harwich & Walton

Many of the Harwich and Walton fleet have been out of the water during the festive period and despite reports of large quantities of herring, fishing effort amongst the trawlers and netters has been low. As usual for this time of year, lobster potting has now finished, with most gear being stowed away until lobsters start crawling again in spring. A release of juvenile lobsters has been a topic of controversy with some of the potting community.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, Clacton

Fishing activities have been slow throughout this quarter, however, there have been ongoing efforts by a couple of vessels, with one starting a new Facebook page to sell direct to the community. Catches of skate, sole, and lobster have been seen but catches have not been abundant, and the local fish stall is buying in fish from Billingsgate to supply demand for regular customers. Some efforts for

herring and sprats have been reported. Whelk boats from Kings Lynn have not stayed in Brightlingsea this year.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 15

West Mersea & Tollesbury

Tollesbury marina remains quiet with no commercial boats operating from the port. There have been reports of Tollesbury residents seeming interested in purchasing a fishing vessel, so it continues to be a place of interest.

Fishing activities have been slow in West Mersea with only a few netters turning their attention to herring and sprat. As always, oyster fishing on private grounds continues with hand picking occurring elsewhere. A low but steady effort from the trawlers see catches of skate, sole, and some cod.

Whelking efforts remain relatively high with two vessels operating out of Mersea. Efforts are largely focused outside the district, however both vessels hold KEIFCA whelk permits.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

Maldon & Bradwell

Fishing efforts from Maldon and Bradwell remain low. MCA requirements have halted some vessels activity whilst a change of vessel has prevented another from getting to sea. Ongoing efforts continue to supply local community with skate and a good number of codlings have been reported in the river.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

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

Oyster vessels continue to work on private grounds in the river who seem to be targeting a combination of oysters and clams. There is not any other commercial activity undertaken in these areas at present, so these ports remain quiet.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

Southend-On-Sea & Leigh-On-Sea

Southend and Leigh have been quiet after the close of TECFO with many skippers going away, and others carrying out maintenance on the vessels. Poor weather over this period has seen low efforts in general. Attention has turned to whelks, herring, and sprat as usual for this time of year with good numbers of herring being reported.

The usual support from the community occurred over the festive period with good demand for fresh fish.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 18

Holehaven & Thurrock

Fishing effort remains extremely low and in decline from Holehaven and Thurrock. Vessels operate only on a part time basis.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3

Alice Highton

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