

## **Agenda Item C2**

### **Shore Report - Essex**

#### **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority** **Quarterly report for the period May 2021 to September 2021**

### **Overview**

During this spring/summer period sole were slow to appear but have picked up recently, with good prices at market on average around £22 per kilo, which has seen a rise in trawling activity around the district. Bass regulations were still in effect, with reports of considerable numbers of small school bass inshore, with steady sizeable bass being landed by the commercial fleet.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June saw the start of the TECFO fishery with each vessel receiving authorisation for 40 trips until Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October. As a result of the yield test at the start of the season, area 8 was closed as requested by the Thames Estuary Fishermen's Association.

Whelking within the district has slowed up during this period, with the few whelking vessels working outside the district 6nm mark. Lobster fishermen are seeing very poor returns for their efforts with some fishermen pulling in their pots early.

Hand gathering for shellfish has seen another increase around the Essex coast during this period, with KEIFCA, Environmental Health, Local Police, Marine Police units and GLAA combining forces to execute multi-agency operations to disrupt illegal shellfish harvesting.

### **Harwich & Walton**

This has been a reasonably quiet period for the Harwich and Walton fleet, but with soles making an appearance at the end of this period trawling activity increased. Lobster and crab catches have been poor during this period. Netting activity was consistent with large catches of smoothhounds mid-June/July.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

### **Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, Clacton**

Fishing activities have been slow throughout this quarter but have picked up in the last month or so with soles making an appearance.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 13

### **West Mersea & Tollesbury**

Tollesbury Marina remains quiet with commercial boats typically operating out of West Mersea instead. Fishing activities have been consistent during this period seeing the fleet supplying already established markets and stalls on Mersea. As COVID-19 restrictions eased local fish stalls have started again on the sea front, and continued providing delivery services to customers on Mersea, Colchester and surrounding areas. A small amount of oyster harvesting activity on the beaches was reported by locals, which saw IFCOs conducting joint operations with GLAA, Police and EHO's at low water. No real large-scale activities were discovered: IFCOs and partnering agencies will conduct ongoing monitoring of the situation. Bass catches were good at the start of this period, but with good prices at market and demand from local restaurants, soles were targeted by the majority of the fleet.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

### **Maldon & Bradwell**

Fishing effort from Maldon and Bradwell remains low with only four vessels operating from these ports. Boats from here have turned to selling catch locally through Facebook and providing delivery services. This appears to have given the boats a consistent income during this period. Skate, sole and bass have been stable catches for these boats.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

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

The Essex Estuary byelaw continues to prohibit trawling in these areas. This has meant the main efforts have focused on oyster and mussel dredging on private grounds in the Crouch and Roach, while the native oyster fishery in public grounds remains closed.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

### **Southend-On-Sea & Leigh-On-Sea**

The Thames Estuary Cackle Fishery Order (TECFO) was opened on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The TECFO vessels were allocated a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 6160 tonnes for the season, which relates to 40 trips per vessel. Area 8 which has proved a popular fishing area in previous years was requested by the Thames Estuary Fishermen's Association to be closed due to the poor yields recorded at the start of the season. The TECFO area is due to close this year on 8<sup>th</sup> October in accordance with the Authority's management.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 18

## **Holehaven & Thurrock**

Fishing effort was low from these ports, with only a small number of vessels working on a mostly part time basis. Activity from these ports continues to decline.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3

Martin Ward,

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