

## **Agenda Item C2**

### **Shore Report - Essex**

#### **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

#### **Quarterly report for the period November 2021 to January 2022**

### **Overview**

A relatively quiet period for the local industry with many boats out the water for annual maintenance. Some efforts for herring and sprats with the Thames and Blackwater Herring Licences being issued late November. Whelking activity within Essex increased with boats from Kings Lynn working the area, with reports of 1 to 1 ½ ton a trip, and prices remaining low at £1 per Kilo. Staple catches of skate, flounder, rockling, whiting and the odd bass and turbot, with some codling being reported.

Post Christmas and New Year has been a quiet period for the charter boats, with most conducting annual maintenance to their vessels. Leading up to the holidays saw several local angling matches around the piers and beaches, seeing catches of dab, flounder, whiting, thornbacks, rockling a few small bass and pouting. Bass regulations from 1 December 2021, changed to catch and release for recreational fishermen.

### **Harwich & Walton**

Fishing effort has slowed during this quarter and catches have been poor. Lobster potting has now finished for the season with most gear being stowed away until lobsters start crawling again in spring. There are abundant herring and some sprat in the area however very few trawlers and netters have turned their attention to the species due to its poor market value. Many boats have been out the water over Christmas and new year for maintenance.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

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

Fishing activities have been slow throughout this quarter, with only a couple of boats known to have been fishing during this period. Catches have been poor, with local fish stalls buying in fish from Billingsgate to supply demand for their regular customers. Some efforts for herring and sprats have been reported. Whelk boats from Kings Lynn have seen steady catches and continue to work in the Essex area.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 15

### **West Mersea & Tollesbury**

Tollesbury marina remains quiet with commercial boats typically operating out of West Mersea instead. Fishing activities have been slow in West Mersea with reports of fair catches of skate, and some boats turning their attentions to sprats. Herring are plentiful however the market value has meant they are only targeted by a handful of netters. Boats with already established fish stalls saw a steady trade during the festive period and continue to operate delivery services. Some trawlers have ventured south towards Rye area to obtain a variety of fish for the stalls, with good catches of smooth hounds, gurnards, whiting, skate, and soles.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

### **Maldon & Bradwell**

Fishing efforts from Maldon and Bradwell remains low, but with consistent catches of skate and some sprats, boats have been able to continue supply to local customers through their Facebook presence.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

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

Extremely low activity within the rivers over this period, with some recreational herring and sprat netting efforts. Oyster boats continue to work private grounds.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

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

After the close of the TEFCO the cockle fleet have been focusing on maintenance to their boats, with some skippers turning their attentions to whelks, sprats and herring, but in general activity has been low. Poor weather over the festive period put a halt to whelking. Local fish stalls saw good trade over this period, with huge support from the public for locally sourced 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

Martin Ward

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer, Essex