

### **Agenda Item - C3**

#### **Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'FPV Vigilant' Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report for the period November 2023 – January 2024**

#### **Vessel priorities:**

- BCRC Native Oyster survey
- Boat interviews
- Relocate Tamesis to Ramsgate
- Record data of all vessel sightings
- Record data of all static fishing gears (fixed nets and pots)
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS)

#### **Fisheries Enforcement**

This quarter is traditionally quiet with regards to vessel activity in Essex due to a combination of reduced fishing effort over the Christmas period and regular adverse weather conditions. This year has been no different in this regard, but additional factors have hampered operations.

FPV Vigilant was sent to Yeovil to have the self-righting kit serviced and did not return until early January, so did not put to sea in this period. With the combined factors of Nerissa being sent to the Isle of Wight for maintenance, and the departure of the First Mate in Essex, it was decided that the best use of resources would see Tamesis relocate to Ramsgate for the winter months. Consequently, Essex did not have an active patrol vessel for most of this quarter.

Prior to Tamesis' departure from Brightlingsea, officers conducted 2 sea patrols during which potential candidates for cockle officer and first mate were interviewed. Very poor fishing in the initial period of this quarter meant that no fishing vessels were observed on these patrols, however another ghost net was hauled and seized near Clacton.

Over the course of period, officers logged three commercial vessels fishing and conducted a non-boarding inspection on a recreational netter in the river Crouch. Officers also observed and recorded some static gear whilst the vessel was on passage to Ramsgate.

A new first mate is due to take up the position shortly and Tamesis is due to return from Ramsgate. This will be followed by a period of intense training and familiarisation on both vessels before the busy spring season.

### **Conservation/Survey Work**

Survey work is rarely planned or scheduled for this period due to among other factors, the unpredictability of weather at this time of year. This year however the BCRC native oyster survey was interrupted this year as Tamesis was sent to Queenborough to conduct a survey of the Swale Estuary for ZSL. On her return a combination of crew availability and weather led to the BCRC oyster survey running into this period, and it was completed in November.

### **Maintenance**

Routine maintenance and monthly checks were conducted on Tamesis as required. The vessel is scheduled to be checked and prepared for the annual vessel coding survey by a MECAL surveyor. Once the survey is complete and signed off, the vessel will be equipped and readied for the spring oyster and cockle surveys.

FPV Vigilant is now back in Brightlingsea and will soon be returned to the floating pontoon.

### **Other Information**

Over the course of this period (while Tamesis was operating from Brightlingsea) it undertook seven trips covering a distance of 142 nautical miles and took 643 litres of fuel.

As previously mentioned, a new first mate is due to take up post shortly and hopefully with recruitment of a cockle officer in Essex, the vessels should be fully crewed and trained in time to commence the spring cockle and oyster surveys, and to resume enforcement duties, particularly in advance of resumption of the bass fishery.

#### *Invitation to Authority Members and P.R*

An open invitation is extended to Authority Members to join the crew on an enforcement patrol or survey aboard the vessel.

Colm O'Laoi  
*Skipper FPV Tamesis & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer*