

### **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 2021 – January 2022**

#### **Vessel priorities:**

- Monitor areas closed under Cockle Permit Byelaw
- Patrol areas closed for bottom trawling under Essex Estuaries byelaw
- Conduct joint patrol with Eastern IFCA
- 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)
- Inspect pots and traps for compliance with KEIFCA byelaws
- Vessel Maintenance

#### **Fisheries Enforcement**

This quarter is traditionally quiet with regards 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 what has differed is the absence of Tamesis as she still undergoes refit.

Over the course of this period Vigilant conducted patrols in the Thames, along the north Kent coast, along the Maplin sands and the Middle and Black Deepes. Routine patrols also took place in the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Stour. An addition this period was a joint patrol with Eastern IFCA which involved running as far North as Orford on the river Alde. Over the course of these patrols, officers recorded 33 vessels, 29 of which were commercial fishing vessels. During the past two years full boarding operations have been limited due to the Covid pandemic, however these have now resumed with social distancing and PPE being used as required. Six vessels were boarded and inspected in this period with no offences recorded. In addition, non-boarding inspections were conducted on a further seven vessels.

The patrol vessels also recorded gear sightings on 32 occasions. Three offence notices were issued for non-compliant marking, and five individual pots were seized off the north Kent coast.

## **Conservation/Survey Work**

### *Surveys*

No survey work was planned or scheduled for this period as Tamesis was unavailable.

### *Marine Mammal observations*

Marine mammals were logged on four occasions with individual seal sightings in the Wallet, and in the Blackwater and Crouch rivers. A large group of seals comprising a mix of adults and juveniles was also observed at low tide on the Buxey sands.

## **Maintenance**

Routine maintenance was conducted on FPV Vigilant as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. The 500-hour service was carried out on the engines by the local Suzuki dealer with no issues of concern raised. The AIS unit has been returned to the manufacturer for rectification of some minor issues under warranty.

Tamesis is still in Levington undergoing refit. Some osmosis was discovered on the hull on removal of the anti-fouling paint which required treatment and additional sealant prior to application of the new anti-foul. The engines are still being rebuilt and the hydraulic hoses are being replaced with the main pumps and blocks returned to Hercules for overhaul. Work on the electronic systems is continuing as scheduled. So far only minor delays have been encountered in the works due to Covid and delivery of parts. At present it is anticipated the vessel will be ready at the end of February as planned.

## **Other Information**

### *Statistics*

During this period FPV Vigilant put to sea 11 times using 1166 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 714 miles.

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

An open invitation is usually extended to Authority Members to join the crew on an enforcement patrol or survey aboard the vessel, unfortunately however under circumstances due to government guidance on social distancing requirements and the size of the vessels it will not be possible to do until further notice.

Colm O'Laoi

*Skipper FPV Tamesis & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer*