



Agenda Item – C4

Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa' and daughter RIB 'Nereus' Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report for the period November 2023 to January 2024 (17/1/24)

Priorities of vessel for quarter

- Targeted inspection of static gear.
- Patrol District limits for any large/foreign vessel incursions.
- Patrol areas closed to bottom towed gear.
- Inspect pots and traps for compliance of byelaws.
- Inspection of commercial and recreations fishers.
- Patrol, monitor and inspect cockle fishing activity.
- Record data of all vessel and gear sightings.
- Sightings and intel logged and reported.
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS).
- Attend to cockle survey on inside and outside areas as required.
- Attending to tide height and sea temperature survey equipment.

Fisheries Enforcement

Thirteen registered fishing vessel log entries were made. One entry referenced three vessels at a distance where their PLN were not visible from our location, but AIS displayed their names on the chart plotter and confirmation of them being in the area with overheard VHF communications was noted. This was logged as an incidental sighting only. Three fishing vessels were boarded and one alongside the RIB as a no boarding inspection, with no issues found. Gear sightings of seventeen individual surface markers were entered into the log but none were hauled for further inspection.

Patrols were made to areas of interest and at certain states of tide as highlighted within biweekly enforcement.

Sea going observations have been logged and uploaded into the required databases and relevant information reports forwarded for dissemination to the required agencies and bodies.

The Kent First Mate joined Sussex IFCA for a sea patrol during this period.

Some patrols in January were made with Tamesis whilst it was based in Ramsgate.

Conservation/Survey work

Our whelk survey pots have been attended to and data recovered for November. Fishers that have assisted the IFCA with survey works previously are available to turn over the gear for us if we are unable to maintain it in January.

Design and development of a suction dredge for transect sampling is underway, working on suitable pumps for the works and speaking with possible fabricators. A tool like this will assist with shellfish gathering for water classification sampling going forward.

One hundred and twenty three seals were sighted as individuals on the surface and in groups of up to sixty hauled out on sand banks. No porpoises or other marine mammals were sighted during the course of our patrols.

Maintenance

Nerissa was taken to the Isle of Wight on 5 December to have some planned refit works attended to. Antifoul is being replaced as per its 7-year schedule, the deck is being refinished and hatches lifted and resealed. Both engines have been removed for maintenance to the more inaccessible items as well as attending to an oil leak that could not be repaired in situ. As a preventative measure oil seals and gaskets are also being changed on the other engine whilst it is out. Works for additional deck drainage are also being attended to.

These planned works were accelerated by the loss of one of the vessel propellers whilst at sea on 20 November. However, the vessel was able to safely make her way back to port and quickly lifted out to diagnose issues and refit a spare set of props held in storage.

On 18 December Tamesis was moved to Ramsgate to assist in survey works that are due to take place in the new year, the vessel is being maintained and checked whilst here and has had a compass re-swing carried out.

Other Information

A Fishery officer has completed a VHF marine radio training course this quarter.

Statistics:

Three patrols were made in November with Nerissa and one using Nereus as a standalone vessel, then a passage to the Isle of Wight for her refit works. These covered 274 miles over 25 hours. HVO fuel has been taken on when available when we have required bunkering; 1000 litres of fuel have been taken for Nerissa.

Ben Hermitage

Skipper FPV Nerissa & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer