

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 January to May 2026

Maintenance

Since my previous report, works have continued on *Nerissa* at the Diverse Marine boatyard on the Isle of Wight to bring the vessel to Workboat Code 3 standard.

In early April, *Nerissa* returned to Ramsgate. Issues associated with the RIB recovery ramp were rectified with remote support from Diverse Marine's engineer. Lifting-gear inspection and load testing were completed by Lloyds British, with all items passing. All winches, the A-frame and the new combi hauler were also load-tested to 300 kg and certified accordingly, aligning with the manufacturer's rated working load of 200 kg.

All Workboat Code 3 requirements have now been completed, and *Nerissa's* out-of-water survey has been signed off by the surveyor.

Vessel priorities for the quarter

- Targeted inspection of static gear.
- Patrol of district limits for any large/foreign vessel incursions.
- Patrol of areas closed to bottom-towed gear.
- Inspection of pots and traps for compliance with byelaws.
- Inspection of commercial and recreational fishers.
- Patrol, monitoring and inspection of cockle fishing areas and activity.
- Logging of fishing vessels, gear and activity.
- Recording and reporting of sightings and intelligence.
- Attendance at cockle surveys (inside and outside areas) as required.
- Entry of key enforcement information into the National Fisheries Enforcement Database.

Fisheries enforcement

Since returning to operational service, *Nerissa's* primary tasking has been survey work. During these activities, sightings of fishing vessels, gear and associated operations have continued to be recorded. Twenty-one registered fishing vessels were sighted, and one non-boarding inspection was undertaken, as *Nerissa* was operating in survey mode without the RIB on board.

Seven charter angling vessels and one private angling vessel were also recorded.

Fishing-gear logs were completed on 22 occasions, recording 75 individual surface markers associated with pots, traps or fishing nets.

With the cockle survey work now complete, several areas have been identified for gear inspections in the coming weeks. This will include surface observations as well as the hauling of gear to verify compliance.

Patrol logs have been entered into the required databases at the earliest opportunity, and any additional information has been forwarded to the relevant agencies and enforcement bodies in the required formats.

Conservation and survey work

Monthly samples for cockle classification were collected in April, transported ashore safely and transferred for onward processing.

In addition to the routine spring cockle sampling undertaken across the Kent side of the district, additional sampling points were included to explore and extend sites of interest.

One seal was sighted by the patrol vessel; no other marine mammals were observed. This may be attributable to operations being undertaken predominantly on high-water tides, during which usual haul-out areas are submerged.

Other information

Border Force and MMO officers met on board to discuss activity and observations across the district.

In light of increased fuel costs and constraints on availability, *Nerissa* has operated at reduced engine revolutions and speed whilst undertaking survey work; this approach has proved effective.

Statistics:

Nerissa travelled 375 miles and was at sea for 40 hours during the reporting period. The vessel took on 3,462 litres of fuel during this time.

Ben Hermitage

Skipper FPV Nerissa & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer