

Agenda Item – C4

Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa' and daughter RIB 'Nereus' and Vigilant.

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report for the period May to August 2026 (14-8-26)

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 recreational fishers.
- Patrol, monitor and inspect cockle fishing areas and activity.
- Logging fishing vessels, gear and activity.
- Sightings and intel logged and reported.
- Attend to cockle survey on inside and outside areas as required.
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database.
- Preparation for cockle Permit fishery

Fisheries Enforcement

The priority has been looking at cockle boats both pre-season check ashore and once at sea observing activity and boarding for damage rates.

Thirty registered fishing vessels were sighted, eleven charter fishing vessels and seventeen recreational anglers. There have been ten non-boarding inspection, mostly with smaller recreational vessel and one commercial fisher when weather only allowed to go near enough to talk but not board. Three boardings were achieved on cockle suction dredgers where damage rates were taken.

Fishing gear logs were made fifty-eight times noting two hundred fifteen individual surface markers of pots traps or fishing nets. Eight markers were hauled for inspection of crab/lobster pots and whelk pots and checked for compliance with no offences found. Three markers were inspected just on the surface too. Six offence notices were attached where small issues were found but the seizure of the gear was not deemed proportional, with plans to revisit to check compliance.

Patrol logs have been entered into the required databases as soon as possible and any additional information has been forwarded to the relevant agencies and enforcement bodies in their required formats.

Conservation/Survey work

Monthly samples for cockle classification were gathered for April, safely brought ashore, and collected to be sent off for processing. Survey pots containing a temperature logger have been reset with date collected monthly.

Additional cockle samples across the Kent side of the district have been completed as required with additional points added to explore and extend sites of interest.

Thirty-four seal sightings were logged on the Kent side of the district, one was found dead at sea and reported to the local council as it may well wash up on a beach later in the day.

Maintenance

The crew and I are continuing to use the SeaFlux vessel management system to continue safety checks, repairs and maintenance as well as arranging new berth options for FPV Vigilant and her floating dock and getting ourselves familiar with the vessel.

Other Information

Boarder force and MMO officers have met on board to discuss activity and observations across the district.

Nerissa has continued to be run at reduced revs and speed whilst attending to surveying works to reduce fuel burn. FPV Vigilant has also moved to Ramsgate for more cost effective enforcement works on the Kent coast.

The Rib based on the back of Nerissa, Nereus, has recently been coded at workboat 3 with some limitation due to being a smaller vessel; this will be issued on the completion of the last documents and passing a test for its inflatable tubes.

Statistics:

Nerissa has travelled 666miles and been at sea for 88 hours. Nerissa has taken 4546ltrs of fuel.

FPV Vigilant has travelled 209miles and been at sea for 17.5hrs taking 300ltrs of fuel.

Ben Hermitage

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