

Agenda Item C5

Recreational Angling Report

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Report for the Period November 2025 – January 2025

Overview

As expected, this period has been quiet for fishing. Kent had a cold snap in January and as a result there are only a few species showing in the catch reports – mainly dab and whiting. Storm Goretti brought strong south-westerly winds to Kent and the beaches down South were heavily affected, this reduced fishing efforts from anglers and halted charter vessels from taking trips. During this slow period, anglers are taking time to maintain fishing gear and prepare for the arrival of spring.

KEIFCA Progress

Officers have been monitoring beaches and piers inspecting angler's catches and enforcing byelaws and national legislation. Angling offences have been found by IFCOs however most anglers know the rules and abide by them. On occasions where fish has been seized, they have been disposed of through donation to a local wildlife trust. Officers have continued to educate fishers using minimum size stickers and directing them to our website for more information.

Kent Angling Summary

Towards the end of 2025, bass were still showing up on piers and beaches, as well as good-sized thornback rays and some plaice. As water temperatures continue to drop, dab and whiting are being caught throughout Kent, although the fish tend to be small. The squid have now departed, but not before many anglers took advantage and filled their bait freezers. Since the January cold snap, bass have all but disappeared from beaches and piers, though rays and smoothhound are still being caught.

Essex Angling Summary

There has still been a fair amount of fishing activity on piers, charter vessels and beaches given the time of year. There have been large quantities of whiting reported along with flounder, dab, dogfish, some bass and manila clams from Essex shores. Despite a reduction in activity, local charter vessels have had success catching large bass, smoothhound, thornback ray, conger eel, and cod in December.

Inner Thames and River Medway

Further along the estuary and into the river stretches, the situation is much the same. Whiting and dab are the most frequent catches from piers and shore marks, though some flounder are also turning up.

Boat fishing

Poor weather has made it difficult for angling boats to make it out, however when the weather has been calmer. Boat anglers in North Kent have been fishing wrecks and catching large conger eels, whiting, and pouting. Down South, days at sea have been even less due to strong south-westerly winds, when they have made it out the harbour anglers have landed whiting, the occasional bass, and pollock.

Adam Ayles, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer