

**Agenda Item C5
Recreational Angling Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly
report for the period September 2021 to November 2021**

Overview

Autumn in the Kent and Essex district hasn't just been whiting, whiting, whiting. Although the longer nights are sure sign that we are entering winter, there has been a real mix of both winter and summer species in our waters to provide anglers with good sport. Bass are still showing up in decent numbers and sizes, which is making up for the lack of cod and when there's not a whiting at the end of the line, other species such as pollack, thornback rays, dabs, and flounders have been rewarded to persistent anglers.

Following on from last quarter, an agreement was made between Dover Sea Angling Association (DSAA) and Dover Harbour Board (DHB) to host a carefully conducted trail day for angling on the Admiralty Pier. On the 16th October a new set of security procedures agreed by the Port and DSAA to enable safe and secure fishing were tested at the site by 70 anglers, moving discussions to re-open the pier a positive step forward.

KEIFCA Progress

KEIFCA officers have continued to patrol and inspect anglers along the KEIFCA shorelines and piers, handing out the minimum size ruler sticker when required. Disappointingly, officers have carried out inspections on recreational anglers with undersized fish in their catch this quarter. By way of education, information has been passed on to anglers and tackle shops on the ICES differentiation in mackerel minimum size and the latest bass restrictions. With so many new people fishing, KEIFCA officers have made a point to continue putting up minimum size fish posters at fishing hotspots in the district.

Kent Angling Summary

South Kent beaches have fished well, with whiting starting to dominate catches. Other catches include dogfish, wrasse, pouting, thornback rays and dabs, with bass of all sizes making for interesting fishing. Mackerel was fished well throughout September, with a few shoals hanging around later in the season. This made for good fishing on the south Kent beaches and piers. A few small mackerel have remained in local waters to date but are sporadic.

Early evening and night fishing for squid on piers and south Kent beaches has been good this autumn, with reports of plenty of mullet around the harbours too.

Now the weed has started to die back, the North Kent catches are improving. Anglers on North Kent piers have managed to land whiting, dogfish and bass, with the occasional dover sole and dabs featuring in catches.

Essex Angling Summary

The Essex coastline is producing a lot of small whiting, with few sizeable fish being taken home. There may not be any cod to speak of, but fishing has still been productive inshore. The slightly deeper waters have seen thornback ray feeding fairly close to the beaches. As in Kent, bass are still around to be caught; but with fewer bigger fish being landed. Other catches being reported have included lesser spotted dogfish, skate, dabs and smoothhound.

The Essex piers are reported to be fishing well, with whiting of all sizes being landed. Lesser spotted dogfish and thornback rays are still plentiful, with the very occasional codling being caught by lucky anglers on blustery days.

Inner Thames and River Medway

Fishing in both rivers have been steady this quarter, with bass still being caught in good numbers. Whiting have started come up in large numbers and other fish have included the odd eel with a few flounders.

Boat Fishing

The charter boats in the south of the district have been reporting good sport with plenty of different species of fish coming to the boats – mackerel, bass, pollack, thornback and blonde rays and a tope weighing way into double figures. Despite being further offshore, anglers have not been able to avoid catching whiting and lesser spotted dogfish.

The charter vessels that are fishing in the Thames Estuary are also experiencing good catches, with thornback rays, lesser spotted dogfish and whiting making up the majority of the catches. Plenty of bass of all sizes are still being caught, with the odd smoothhound being caught well into October.

Ellie Wyatt,
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer.