

Agenda Item – C5

Recreational Angling Report – January 2025 to June 2025

Overview

During February and March, dab and whiting catches dropped off, and were replaced by thornback rays and smoothhounds in catch reports. Since the bass restrictions were lifted, bass catches have surged, with reports from both shore and boat. Spring's arrival brought more species to the coast such as bream and mackerel.

Anglers fishing from beaches and piers are landing bass, mackerel, turbot, sole, conger, and even rarer catches like tub gurnard and squid. The rivers and estuaries are producing bass, flounder, and the occasional stingray. Boat anglers are now targeting bass, along with pollock, black bream, and mackerel.

KEIFCA Progress

Officers have continued to regularly patrol beaches, piers, slipways, and harbours in the district to carry out inspections and issue the KEIFCA minimum sizes ruler stickers and business cards to anglers and tackle shops.

The bass closed season was from 1st February – 31st March and officers were out and about checking for compliance, since the reopening of the bass fishery, bass catches have been dominating social media posts with great fish being caught from shore and boats.

Kent Angling Summary

During February and March, dab and whiting catches dropped off, and thornback rays and smoothhounds of all sizes dominated catch reports, the largest over 15lbs. Since then, spring has sprung, and the arrival of sunnier days and higher temperatures have brought with them a variety of species to Kent's coastline. Bass are showing in good numbers and catches have been consistent, mackerel have started to show down South, and a few bream have been caught.

Thanet and North Kent has been fishing well from the piers and beaches with catches including bass, turbot, sole, smoothhound, thornback rays and dogfish. With the odd plaice and flounder in between. Bass fishing from the rocks proved

successful earlier in the year but the arrival of weed has made lure fishing hard work; peeler crabs and lugworm are the favoured bait at the moment.

Fishing from beaches and piers to the South has resulted in bass, congers, dogfish, mackerel and pouting. As well as the usual suspects, Admiralty Pier and Samphire Hoe have produced catches of some rarer species such as tub gurnard, black bream, and squid.

Inner Thames and River Medway

The rivers and estuaries are also producing fish at the moment, although the fishing effort compared to other areas remains low. Nevertheless, bass, thornback rays and flounder have been caught, and common stingray have been a nice surprise for anglers too.

Boat fishing

During February and March, most angling boats were successfully targeting smoothhounds and rays, with help of the dogfish keeping them from blanking. However, since the bass restrictions have lifted, bass are now the main target. Additionally, in the southern area of the district, large pollock have been caught in the deeper waters as well as black bream, congers and mackerel.