



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

**Overview**

A British summer is anything but predictable. Changes in the weather and wind can make a huge difference to the colour of water around the coast. In August, reports of a large shoal of mackerel and windows of good weather days brought anglers to south Kent. North Kent saw an increase in abundance of Japanese Wire Weed stay throughout the summer months, making for challenging conditions for anglers. Despite this, anglers that have put in the effort have found fish throughout the district. The most sought after catch this quarter is seabass, with anglers able to keep two seabass per day from the 1<sup>st</sup> March to the 30<sup>th</sup> November. Schooling bass has been plentiful, among these a few sizable bass caught.

Following on from last quarter, Dover Sea Angling Association (DSAA) and The Angling Trust are still in communication with Dover Harbour Board regarding proposals to re-open Admiralty Pier. Admiralty Pier has been fished for over 100 years and is one of the best known angling communities in the country. The loss of this venue has been felt in the angling community, bringing loss of morale and forcing anglers to move to other fishing spots.

**KEIFCA Progress**

KEIFCA officers have continued to patrol and inspect anglers along the KEIFCA shorelines, handing out the minimum size ruler sticker when required. Having received some reports of undersize fish being targeted, caught and retained on piers within the Kent and Essex district, minimum size ruler posters have started to be put up on piers around the district.

*An evening with the Kent & Essex IFCA - A Virtual Sea Angling Forum*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June the Angling Trust held an open web based forum and invited the Chief Officer to help introduce anglers to the role and key activities of KEIFCA. The event took the form of a 40-minute presentation, covering issues of interest to local anglers, followed by a question-and-answer session. The event was one of a series of monthly events, where each IFCA in turn (working up from Cornwall) has taken part.

A wide range of issues were covered at the meeting, with some of the most pertinent relating to the relationship, representation, and involvement of the angling sector with KEIFCA. Since Mike Sharp and Leon Roskilly left the Authority, have been lacking an MMO appointed member from this sector. With a second MMO membership recruitment round in progress a key message from the Chief Officer was to encourage anglers to apply to be a member.

Following the meeting, further conversations have been held with the Angling Trust regarding how both organisations could work together and better engage KEIFCA anglers and their needs. An invitation was extended to the Angling Trust to attend the November Authority meeting and explore potential future options.

## **Kent Angling Summary**

### **South Kent**

Folkestone Harbour Arm has been fishing really well, with a fair number of juvenile bass showing up in catches. Larger bass have been plentiful too, with pollack and whiting also making an appearance off the pier. Recently, decent numbers of mackerel have started to show, which has been a well awaited target this summer. Samphire Hoe has also been fishing well, with anglers chasing mackerel and bass. A variety of beautifully coloured wrasse have also been caught, along with dogfish and pouting.

The South Kent beaches have made for good fishing this quarter, with reports of plaice, dabs, bass, flounder, whiting, pouting, dogfish and a few dover sole being caught. Evening fishing off the beaches have seen thornback rays, with smooth-hounds also featuring in some catches. Dungeness Estate reopened to the public on May 27<sup>th</sup> after being closed to non-residents in response to the COVID-19 lockdown. Bass, whiting, dover sole and dogfish have been caught off the beaches of Dungeness, with the most popular chase again being bass. Small shoals of mackerel started to turn up late July and a number of soles and plaice have featured in catches at Hythe beaches through to Dengemarsh.

Deal Pier is open and fishing well. There have been reports of lots of fish being caught - including thornback rays, whiting, wrasse, bass, pouting, dogfish, and even conger eels.

### **North Kent**

Anglers fishing the beaches in North Kent have been catching a variety of species, when able to avoid the summer weed. North east winds pushing the bass inshore made for somewhat productive fishing at times, with plenty of school bass showing up in casts along the coast. Thornback rays and smooth-hounds have also shown up in good numbers.

Ramsgate East Pier has seen catches of plaice, flounder, bass, dogfish and recently a few eels have been featured in catches off North Kent Piers. The weed has made it difficult to fish the pier at times with Hampton Pier – normally a good all-round mark to fish for school bass – also made very difficult by the

inundation of weed. To the anglers that have persisted, good sized bass and smooth-hounds have been rewarded

### **Essex Angling Summary**

On the Essex beaches plenty of small schooling bass are being caught and amongst these, bigger bass are also making an appearance. Silver eels, thornback rays and soles are among some of the fish featured in catches along the Essex coast, with sizeable fish being taken from traditional marks in Tilbury and Gravesend. Small whiting, dabs and flounders have also been seen in anglers' catches.

Walton Pier re-opened in May and has seen catches of thornback rays, mullet, pouting and whiting this summer. Plenty of bass and wrasse are being caught too, with feeding smooth-hound arriving in force mid-June. This summer fish arrived and fed well throughout the quarter, making for good fishing on the pier. Sting Rays have also been targeted, with some success. Clacton Pier has seen a few dover soles, bass, dogfish and thornback rays. The end of August also brought an abundance of juvenile pouting and fishing Southend Pier has returned a lot of small bass in the past few months. Anglers have also been seeing mackerel and garfish start to turn up.

### **Inner Thames and River Medway**

A few bass and soles are being caught from the River Medway and from the inner Thames. The usual flounder and silver eel have also been reported.

### **Boat fishing**

Boat fishing has been popular this summer, with a lot of reports of recreational boats targeting bass around the KEIFCA district. Smoothhounds have also continued to provide a popular sport this summer, with some boats catching large numbers. Charter boats throughout the district are catching mackerel, smoothhounds, thornback rays, dogfish and bass. Some of the charter boats have been doing two-trips a day since COVID-19 restrictions started easing, and have been some of the busiest boats in the KEIFCA district.

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