



**Agenda Item C5
Recreational Angling Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly
report for the period November 2022 to January 2023**

Overview

Just before Christmas, the new bass regulations were agreed, and the 2022 seabass regulations were rolled over to the 2023 season with a number of adjustments to be introduced as soon as practicable. For the recreational anglers, seabass will be catch and release until 28th February 2023, and from 1st March 2023 they will be permitted to land 2 bass per person per day by hook and line. The good news for recreational anglers is that the take season will be extended to 10 months from December 2023, which will bring the recreational season in line with the commercial season from 2024.

This year will see the first draft of the fisheries management plan for bass drawn up by Defra and the Welsh government. This will go out to public consultation, giving all stakeholders another chance to comment ahead of the final publication at the end of 2023.

KEIFCA Progress

There have been strong winds for most of this period which has limited the days in which anglers can get to sea by boat. A couple of cold weather spells have slowly brought the sea temperatures down which were unusually high up until late November. As a result, summer and autumn fish species have stayed around for longer.

KEIFCA officers have been patrolling angling hotspots throughout the district checking for minimum sizes and other regulations. Minimum size stickers and business cards have continued to be distributed to anglers.

Kent Angling Summary

Autumn fish species have stayed around for longer than usual due to the warmer waters. Whiting are still being caught in good numbers well into January. Anglers have had a good bass season and there are plenty of seabass still in January. There have been good numbers of codlings seen by both the recreational and commercial fishermen too. Squid fishing has been good in evenings off Dover.

The water around North Kent has had consistently poor clarity but anglers are still seeing abundant catches of whiting. Dabs and rays have started to show off Ramsgate, with daylight catches of flatfish also making an appearance.

Admiralty pier has been fishing really well recently after a successful re-opening in 2022. Recently there have been reports of conger eels, skate, dogfish, pouting and whiting being caught. Mackerel was still being caught off the pier up until mid-November. On Samphire Hoe there have been reports of pollack and wrasse being caught.

Off Hythe beach, thornback ray, dogfish, whiting and dabs have been caught. A number of angling competitions occurred over the Christmas period and a recent angling competition at Littlestone had some sizable codling landed. There was also a whiting festival off Dungeness over this period.

Essex Angling Summary

Fish caught on Southend beaches has included bass, whittings and a good number of flounders as well.

Inner Thames and River Medway

The occasional cod have been landed in the Thames. Bass have been caught in the rivers, although poor clarity has made it difficult.

Boat fishing

The Charter boats are counting down the days to 1st March 2023 when their customers can retain bass once again. Most of the boats are taking the opportunity to carry out maintenance before spring and heading to sea when the weather allows. Smoothound have started to make an early appearance for the charter boats and recent catches of rays, whiting, and bass have been steady.

Rob Watson,
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer.