



Agenda item C5
Sea Angling Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period ending 31 March 2014

Summary : To report on the Recreational Sea Angling Sector activity in the KEIFCA District

KEIFCA Progress

With the new Kent and Essex IFCA website came the arrival of new angling specific pages with information tailored to sea anglers. It is hoped that the new angling pages will provide sea anglers with useful information which they can use to learn more about the species they are targeting. In addition to this general tips on gear set up and bait, information on minimum sizes and where to go angling in the district are also featured. Development of the pages is ongoing and more content will be added in the coming months. Feedback on pages from anglers is welcomed and encouraged so that the content is relevant, useful and informative.

Essex Angling Summary

Good catches of codling were reported from areas such as Walton, Clacton and down as far as the River Crouch up until late April but were not seen further south in the Thames estuary where catches were limited. However, thornback rays showed in good numbers throughout the period for boat anglers and peaked in mid-June where there were reports of catches further up river along the shore of the Crouch and Roach.

Smouthhounds were slow to show this year, with mostly small males being caught at the start of this period, but by late June good numbers of larger females were also being reported from boat anglers with daily catches of up to 60 fish per boats not uncommon for both charter and private boat anglers. Also seen in very good numbers by boats anglers this year were Mackerel which from late May to early June appeared in the outer Thames in large shoals. However, these shoals did not seem to move further into the Estuary with catches being

reported as sporadic on Southend Pier and along the inner Thames marks. This may be due to the large quantity of weed seen inshore during this period resulting in many anglers saying that it made fishing difficult at times.

Anglers targeting sole from the shore at traditional marks in Tilbury and Gravesend expressed concern during this period with a lack of sizable fish being caught mirroring reports from the commercial sector in this area. However, better numbers of flounder and small eels were seen by many in the Thames.

Bass between 2lb - 3lb were caught in moderate numbers during May and early June but were reported as becoming poor later in the period, when they would traditionally be increasing in during this time of year. It has also been noticed that low numbers of small bass under 2lbs have been seen in this period by anglers when they have been in very large numbers in recent years.

The annual Try Pier Fishing Event held at Southend Pier and organised by local dedicated volunteer anglers went ahead again this year at the start of June. Twenty nine first time pier fishing participants, of which 17 were juniors, enjoyed great weather and a reasonable return of fish including mackerel, garfish, sand eel and flounder. KEIFCA's angling officer and the Authority's MMO appointed Member, Mr M Sharp were both in attendance at the event again. Participants were able to learn basic angling techniques as well as how to identify the species they caught and the relevant minimum sizes. Once again, great feedback was received about the event by those taking part in this well organised and fun day.

Kent Angling Summary

Fishing along the North Kent coast has seen many of the same as the Essex coast in the Thames with thornback rays and smouthound being caught in good numbers throughout the period and large shoals of mackerel enjoyed by boat anglers. However, large quantities of weed did prove to be an issue for many boats with reports of charter and private trips being cancelled in the outer Medway due to excess weed affecting catches.

Fishing around the Kentish Knock for tope has also proved to be successful during the latter end of the period with fish up to 53lb being caught and released. Within the Medway there have been reports of fair to good numbers of eels and bass caught during this period as was the case to the south of the district around Dungeness for anglers willing to put in the hours along the shore.

Much like the Thames and north of the district, anglers fishing from the southern beaches in the KEIFCA district have seen average catches of fish during the start of this period. An increase in temperature and good weather resulted in catches increasing by late May when good catches of sole were reported for the rest of the period.

However, catches of Mackerel throughout May and early June were spread out and below average from Folkestone and Dover off the piers but picked up later in the period once shoals moved inshore. This increase in reports and the good weather this year has meant that the usual large numbers of holiday anglers were once again seen fishing from the piers to make the most of the mackerel in this area of the district.

Alex Senechal

Essex Shore IFC Officer