

Appendix 2 to Agenda item B7
SEA BASS

The Chairman and Committee of the Kent and Essex IFCA

Dear all I have only just heard about the meeting to work out a draft policy on sea bass. The meeting was held on the 6th of March I learnt of this meeting on the 30th of March. Why was this meeting not more widely circulated?

In my opinion the information and proposals are flawed it highlights the lack of practical knowledge of this relatively new stock to the area.

A short summary on Sea Bass, they has not all ways been in the Thames, 40 years ago they were just a summer visitor.

30 years ago the numbers grew and were seen more often but still not huge.

26 years ago there was an explosion in juveniles through out the area, vast shoals of very small fish were seen around the mouth of the River Swale and Maplin Sands. On many occasions we saw shoals that if it had been winter time we would have though were sprats.

Extra fishing effort is now targeting bass because of high prices and shortage of quota in other stocks making bass a more attractive alterative.

The areas selected for conservation areas or no take zones are again uninformed. Two areas stand out by their absence, Southend Pier and the area known as Hadleigh Ray. I am at a loss as to why these have not been mentioned or put forward; some of the other areas highlighted are a near desert by comparison. The reports of undersize bass being caught from Southend pier must be on record, officers have been informed many times of anglers taking large numbers of undersized bass.

The rivers Crouch and Roach are there for the right reasons but they need some better understanding, the close proximity of many hundreds of harbour seals makes this a near impossible area to put forward. Has the impact of seals on local stocks been taken into the debate? There is no doubt that that they are harvesting fish from nets trawls and lines more than ever

How are these areas to be policed? The MMO and IFCA have failed spectacularly for years to halt the landing and retaining of fish from Southend Pier.

The demand for sea bass will rise and they will be targeted by unscrupulous anglers and unlicensed boats. Again the MMO and IFCA have failed dismally to keep the later under control so what is to change?

I am not against what is being proposed, many of the areas were put forward when we were working on the Balanced seas project. The success of the Essex and Kent rivers becoming MCZ 's I can take pride in as I was the one that got those started.