

Agenda Item No C5.
Report on the patrol vessel 'Tamesis'
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period ending March 2013

Vessel priorities:

- Monitor Vessels fishing within the Thames and Blackwater Herring Fishery
- Red Throated Diver sightings and static observations with Natural England
- EIFCA Dredge Survey in River Stour for Shellfish with Eastern IFCA
- MMO Charter for unlicensed marine construction work
- Enforcement of Emergency Whelk byelaw
- Enforcement of Closure of shellfish beds (native oysters)
- Monitor restricted movement of pacific oysters in the River Blackwater
- Trail oyster day grab survey
- Monitor Authorities Several Order shellfish beds in the River Roach
- Monitor Fishing vessels for compliance and enforce Kent and Essex Byelaws, EU Legislation and Regulations
- Input enforcement information into UK fisheries Monitoring, Control Surveillance System database (MCSS)

Risk based fisheries enforcement

Risk based Enforcement has been introduced during this quarter, this allows senior officers to determine species at risk within the district throughout the whole year. Bi weekly Tactical meetings between senior officers allows informed decisions to be made on how to enforce and regulate, using information reports and data collected by officers on shore and vessel patrols.

Enforcement patrols have been conducted covering the Thames Estuary and coastal areas. Forty eight vessels were sighted and recorded and twenty six non boarding inspections were carried out to check for compliance with Byelaws and EU regulations. Fifteen private vessels have been sighted and recorded with guidance given to individuals on drift nets, pots and traps and minimum size of species.

Vessels engaged in the Thames and Blackwater Herring fishery were inspected. The fishery was subsequently extended by CEFAS and the MMO with the closure at the end of March 2013, no offences were recorded.

Kent based and Essex based officers planned to carry out joint working on enforcing the Emergency Whelk pot Byelaw, unfortunately this had to be cancelled due to a hydraulic valve seizing whilst at sea. Repair records have been stored in both hard copy and electronic format.

Vessels were monitored due to restrictions on movements of pacific oyster in and out of the designated `Contaminant Areas` in the Blackwater as movement of oysters between zones was not permitted by land or sea as recommended by Cefas. These restrictions were imposed by Cefas to prevent or limit the spread of Oyster Herpesvirus.

The Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw - Prohibition on taking native oysters within the proposed Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne MCZ has been implemented by the Authority. This has been monitored with no breaches found. A restriction on fishing for native oysters within these areas has now been put in place and vessels engaged in this have been boarded with Catch rates monitored and method of measurement observed. No offences have been recorded.

A patrol of the Authority's Several Order shellfish beds in the River Roach, and within areas of the Roach and River Crouch, has been completed from Tamesis during this quarter. Two private vessels was sighted targeting sprats. No Offences have been recorded.

Patrols within the district have resulted in inspections of trawling vessels, drift/fixed nets and pots/traps. Nineteen static gear sightings were recorded which resulted seven offence Notices being attached for non-compliance of byelaws and three collection notices issued for gear that was unable to be returned safely to the sea.

Conservation/Survey Work

Red Throated Diver Survey

Observation duties have continued and boarding of netting vessels within the district have been carried out to collect bird entanglement data. Two Natural England representatives were invited on a survey. During this survey they completed two static (anchored) and three driving surveys allowing flight path and behaviour patterns of birds to be recorded. No entangled seabirds have been observed within this period.

Eastern IFCA

Survey work has continued with Eastern IFCA. Tamesis was chartered from the 11th to 12th February carrying out survey dredging of shellfish beds in the River Stour at Holbrook Bay.

Trail Surveys

Two Authority members were involved in a Day grab Oyster survey to access capability and methodology in comparison to Standard Dredging methods.

Marine Management Organisation

Tamesis was chartered by the MMO to survey the inland rivers for unlicensed marine construction works using the R.I.B to facilitate close observations.

Maintenance

Regular maintenance has been carried out for the vessel's engines and equipment, records have been stored in both hard copy and electronic format.

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has undertaken thirteen patrols, used 2389.46 litres of fuel and travelled 612 sea miles. The engines have run a total of 100 hours.

Other Information

Seal observations

Patrols have led to one off sightings of seals in various areas including:

- 1 seal has been sighted near to the wallet no 2 feeding on the surface.
- 1 seal has been sighted in the River Stour.
- 5 seals have been sighted on intertidal sand banks near to the Whitaker beacon
- 70-80 seals have been sighted on intertidal sand banks on the south side of the Buxey sands, close to Ray sand channel.

Training and Procedures

Standard operating procedures are being finalised for survey methods and equipment on board Tamesis, the procedures will outline safe working practices for employees and other agencies whilst working on the boat.

Invitation to Authority Members

Authority members are welcome to contact the office or myself regarding 'A day of Patrols/Surveys' out on Tamesis.

Mark Davey
Skipper/IFC Officer