



Agenda Item C1

Shore Report - Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period ending September 2015

Overview

The beginning of September brought a new size limit for bass, a rise from 36-42cm and new quota restrictions on bass for all of the fleet. The netting fleet targeting bass have reported that they have had to stop using certain nets as the discard rate was too high. This has left the commercial fisherman feeling unsure about their future. Quotas are a constant topic of conversation at each port, the bass quota being upmost in fishermen's minds. The fishermen have continued to have concerns about the no discard ban, on how it is going to be implemented and what type of enforcement controls are going to be in place. The cockle season reopened on the 5th July, after a brief closure, that allowed the meat yield to improve. There has been movement of vessels around the district as quotas and lack of steady fishing promoting the change of location.

Queenborough

The commercial fishing vessels have had to vary their fishing grounds to remain viable and catch their quotas. Gill netting has been used to target finfish with pots being set for lobsters.

The two cockle harvesting vessels reported steady fishing throughout the quarter.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

Faversham

The vessels from this port have had to use a variety of methods to stay viable, sometimes having to travel further afield to find fish than is normal for this time of year. With at least one vessel selling through its own shop, they have had slightly better prices than normal.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 3

Whitstable

Targeting shellfish with pots has continued throughout this quarter, with varying degrees of success, with lobster and crab fishing reporting steady returns, but whelks tailing off due to the warm water.

Fishing for cockles has continued from this port with three vessels taking part. Fishermen have had to change the method of fishing regularly to remain viable with vessels trawling for soles, potting for lobsters or whelks and drift netting for bass often in one trip.

Oysters continue to be targeted by vessels using dredges.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 15

Herne Bay

Targeting shellfish with pots has been the main activity from this port with both Professional and part time fisherman taking part. Anglers with trailer boats continue to use this port; these have report good fishing,

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2

Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

At the beginning of September, the proposed size limit for bass come into force with the new quotas for bass also coming into force which has restricted the commercial fleet further. Fisherman targeting bass with gill nets found that they had to use bigger size nets to catch the new size of bass. Seals continue to take fish from gill nets.

Potting for whelks has become necessary for some fisherman as the small bass quota has pushed them to consider other means of making a profit. Catches of whelks has varied from vessel to vessel as the competition for ground remains high.

Fishing has been sporadic with both trawler and fisherman using gill nets having to move grounds on a frequent basis.

Potting for lobsters and crabs continued around the Thanet coast, fishing was reported to be slow.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 24

Deal and Walmer

Steady fishing for lobster and crabs have been reported at the beginning of the quarter, the fisherman started to bring their pots ashore at the end of the quarter with some starting to gear up for drift netting for sprats and herrings.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 5

Dover

Fishing effort from this port has remained low key, with gill nets and pots being used. Dover piers and angling boats have been busy with anglers fishing for the summer species

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 3

Folkestone and Hythe

The effort from these ports has remained constant, but fishermen have had to use more than one method to be able to catch fish. Lobsters, crabs and whelks have been targeted using pots. Towards the end of the quarter, the fishermen were starting to bring in the whelk pots. Trawls and gill nets have been used to catch finfish,

The fisherman here have voiced their concerns over lack of quota and the no discard ban.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 13

Dungeness

Being able to fish in both ICES areas and selling their catch locally has allowed the Dungeness fishermen to obtain slightly better prices. The fishing has been constant through the quarter.

Quotas and the no discard ban have been subject for discussions.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

David Deverson,
Kent Shore Officer