



Agenda item C2

Essex Report

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly report for the period ending 31 December 2015

GENERAL SITUATION

Water temperatures remained relatively warm throughout much of the period resulting in soles being seen in catches for some ports while catches of cod were less reliable. Shoals of large herring were reported along the Essex coast however, market prices continued to be poor reducing the amount of effort on the fishery for another consecutive year.

HARWICH & WALTON

Catches of crab and lobster were poor during this period with vessels reporting less effort on the fishery during this period. Changes in bass regulations and limited quota availability of skates and rays along with poor weather conditions meant that some vessels did not fish as much during this period. Catches of cod were fair at the start of the period but dwindled rapidly as fish moved further offshore.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 12

BRIGHTLINGSEA, WIVENHOE AND CLACTON

Fishing activity remained at low levels with resident vessels targeting the first of the cod showing in the Wallet area and the last of the bass. Large herring were also seen in good numbers during this period but seldom wanted due to low market value and cost of transport resulting in small quantities being taken for local sale. Potting effort was reduced during this period compared to previous years but gear was worked throughout the period to meet market stall demand for lobsters.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 10

WEST MERSEA

Netters continued for the first half of the period targeting bass and the first of the codling however, catches soon reduced by early November. Trawlers continued to have a slow year only improved by increased landings of sole to fair levels in November which carried on for the remainder of the period. Public shellfish beds remained closed for native oysters during this period. However, Gigas oysters continued to be harvested with fair to good stock levels and marketing opportunities being reported.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 10

MALDON & BRADWELL

Cultivation of pacific oysters remained at previously reported levels with most effort being around private fisheries from these ports.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 2

HULLBRIDGE, NORTH FAMBRIDGE, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH & BARLING

Netting effort by vessels from these ports was very low during this period with most commercial vessels fishing for clams or working on private grounds. Clam dredging and collection of Gigas oysters remained at similar levels to that reported in previous reports. A small amount of shrimp trawling was also noted in the rivers in in early to mid-December however, effort and catches were limited.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 6

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA & LEIGH-ON-SEA

After a fair to poor summer period, trawlers from Leigh and Southend targeted herring to meet demand, intermittent sprat shoals and codling before they moved offshore. Catches of Soles were relatively poor in the Thames compared to other parts of the Essex coast with some local boats deciding to fish along the south coast to target more valuable species.

The cockle fishery inside the Regulating Order continued until 16th October landing 6622 tonnes for the season before most vessels were tied up for the winter. A small number of vessel switched gear types to work whelk pots while others targeted soles for a couple of weeks.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 26

HOLEHAVEN & THURROCK

Low activity in this part of the river persisted during the period with only few vessels fishing part-time.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3

*Alex Senechal
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