

Agenda Item C1

Shore Report - Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period ending March 2016

Overview

The 2016 bass regulations came into place in January at the start of this quarter. There is now a catch and release policy in place for recreational fishermen up until 30 June 2016. For the commercial fishermen, the bass fishery was limited during this quarter, with a complete ban on the catch and retention of bass through February and March.

On 1 January the demersal landing obligation requirements started to be phased in. There has been much concern regarding the impact this landing obligation will have and is already having on the commercial fishing fleet's income.

Many fishing vessels have been taking advantage of multiple fisheries within the district in order to try and maximise income, especially with the bass regulations and demersal landing obligations in place.

Although there has been an abundance in particular fisheries such as cod and thornback ray, commercial fishermen have still struggled through the quota restrictions.

With regards to the weather conditions, although wind has been predominantly South West, the conditions haven't seemed to hinder the commercial fishing fleet as much as it would have been expected to.

Queenborough

Fishing methods conducted by the commercial fishing vessels out of Queenborough are varied with gill netting and potting being the most prevalent methods and white weeding occurring occasionally.

There continues to be concerns amongst the commercial fishermen regarding lack of quotas and demersal landing obligations.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

Faversham

Dredging for oysters and gill netting are the favoured fishing methods out of Faversham. Sales of fish through the fishermen's own shops and stalls enables them to receive slightly higher prices for their catch than if they were sold elsewhere.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

Whitstable remains one of the most active ports in the district, with a variety of fishing methods being utilised, from potting, drifting, trawling and dredging. By being versatile with their fishing methods, Whitstable fishermen are able to remain viable and maintain income.

There are a few vessels dredging for oysters and one of the larger vessels from the harbour has been rigged up for scalloping.

Whelks have been targeted by many commercial vessels from this harbour during the last quarter. Quantities of sole and thornback ray have been landed in Whitstable, but due to lack of quota a significant amount of thornback rays have been returned.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 16

Herne Bay

Commercial fishing out of Herne Bay remains low, with just two vessels working commercially. Recreational angling however appears to be proving plentiful, with catches of thornback rays from shore and sea. Hampton Pier is a favoured choice location for bait diggers and anglers at this time.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2

Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

The fishing fleet working out of Ramsgate harbour reported that large quantities of thornback ray were caught in nets, along with bass. However, with limited quota for another successive year and with the bass ban in place during February and March, what was caught had to be returned.

Trawls, gill nets and pots are the most utilised fishing methods in Ramsgate. The whelk fishery has seen a drop in larger sized whelks this quarter, but the fishery still remains viable.

Broadstairs and Margate have had fairly minimal commercial activity this quarter. Potting for crabs and lobsters is the favoured activity out of Broadstairs, with gill netting occurring out of Margate.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 32

Deal and Walmer

Herring and sprats have been fished with fishermen making preparations in the latter end of this quarter for potting for lobsters and crabs when the sea temperatures increase.

Both Deal pier and the shore are popular sites for recreational anglers.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 7

Dover

Fishing effort is fairly low from this port with only a small number of vessels working on a commercial level and mainly on a part time basis.

Prince of Wales pier is closed with the Western Docks revival project. With access no longer available here, the Port of Dover are improving facilities on the Admiralty pier to ensure recreational fishers can continue to fish the area. On completion of the development, anglers will have access to the new Marina pier.

There has been a lot of effort with regards to angling from the charter fishing vessels this quarter.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 4

Folkestone and Hythe

Netting and potting occurs from vessels based in these ports, with occasional scalloping in Folkestone. Cod has been targeted, together with plaice, by the trawlers. The subject of the new bass regulations has been a topic of concern amongst commercial fishers, with additional concern shown amongst anglers fishing off Hythe beach.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 15

Dungeness

Dungeness beach remains a popular spot for anglers with reports of cod and thornback ray being caught. Anglers have voiced their disapproval of the new bass regulations restricting them to catch and release only.

The commercial fishing fleet in Dungeness has the unique advantage of being able to work in two ICES areas. With the bass regulations in place denying catches of

bass during February and March, cod and sole have been the target for these vessels in both ICES areas.

Quota, or rather lack of quota, and demersal landing obligations have been a topic frequently discussed.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

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