

Agenda item C5
Sea Angling Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period ending 31 March 2016

Summary: To report on the Recreational Sea Angling Sector in KEIFCA District

KEIFCA Progress

In January, new bass restrictions come into force which included, a complete ban on retaining bass for recreational anglers from 1 January 2016 to the end of June 2016. Officers have conducted patrols and inspections of anglers throughout the district, informing them of the new legislation. Most anglers said that it was unfair that they had such a restriction, when the commercial fleet was still allowed to catch bass. Whilst most anglers said that they preferred to practise catch and release, they felt it was unjust they could not take a bass for the table if they desired.

Charter boat skippers have expressed their concerns over the new restrictions, reporting lost business because of the ban and requiring advice on their legal position should an angler retained a bass on their vessel. As a result of these enquiries KEIFCA developed its Charter vessel packs sent out to charter vessels throughout the district and received with positive comments.

To be able to reach more anglers about the restrictions, posters have been distributed to tackle shops and a new tackle box sticker developed showing the ban on retaining bass. On 1st of July it will be replaced with one showing that the anglers can only keep one bass. The ever popular minimum size ruler tackle box sticker has continued to be handed out; officers are seeing these in use when on patrol and are seeing them in use on social media photos. Another order of 1,000 have arrived in the office at the time of this report for distribution

The expected cold weather after the New Year did not materialise and for much of the quarter it was possible to have good fishing. Seagull Tackle in Kent reported that the Dungeness area had had some of the best sport he could remember for this time of the year.

Essex Angling Summary

With a slow start to the quarter, fishing steadily improved as the quarter progressed with thornback rays, whiting and spotted dogs coming to the rods.

Flounders and the odd bass being caught later in the quarter, has allowed interesting sport.

Further up the Thames plenty of small fish have been reportedly caught with small school bass being caught regularly with flounders and whiting's being landed

Kent Angling Summary

Herne Bay has been the thornback ray hotspot for the North Kent Coast, with good catches continuing throughout the quarter. Towards the end of March, the first of the shore crabs started to moult. With this fishing improved and most of the North Kent coast was capable of producing fish.

In calm conditions Hythe, Dungeness and Dengemarsh were hotspots for plaice, dabs and flounders.

Whitings and spotted dogs continue to come to the rods from both the North and South coasts of Kent

Boat Fishing

Thornback rays have been caught throughout the district with some charter vessels reporting large number of rays being caught in a single trip. A few cod were reported as being caught and with the start of the summer species arriving, plaice, bass and smooth hounds are being caught.

D Deverson

First Mate/Angling Officer