

Agenda Item C3

Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket. Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report for the period April – August 2016

Vessel priorities:

- Bass Enforcement
- Cockle survey – Grab sampling
- Harrowing survey – Sidescan sonar and day grabs
- Cockle Damage Rates
- Whelk enforcement
- Candidate interviews

Fisheries Enforcement

Bass management measures were a dominant feature in the early part of this period and KEIFCA in association with the MMO conducted a two-week operation targeting commercial and recreational vessels off the Essex coast. Nine dedicated Bass patrols were conducted covering 384 nautical miles, during which officers boarded 12 vessels (including commercial, recreational, and charter vessels) and conducted a further 16 non boarding inspections. Priority changed to the cockle fleet for the latter part of the period, in particular taking samples of retained and discharged cockles to assess the damage rate. In addition, routine patrols were carried on the River Roach, Blackwater, and in the Wallet. The rigid inflatable Blue Jacket was the principle enforcement vessel used during these operations and has proved to be a very useful and flexible enforcement platform. Tamesis has been used in conjunction with Blue Jacket but also spent time in Kent, patrolling in particular the area from Dover to Rye focusing on whelk enforcement.

Conservation/Survey Work

Cockle Survey

Tamesis was engaged for most of April conducting the annual cockle stock assessment survey. This was conducted using the day grab to collect samples from Marsh End, Scrapsgate, The Dengie, The Ray, The Buxey, The East Barrows, and Leysdown in Essex and Pegwell Bay, Minnis Bay and Leysdown in Kent

Sidescan Sonar Survey

A sidescan sonar and day grab survey was conducted during June on 6 sites in the Blackwater and 6 sites in the Ray Sand Channel to assess the long term impact of harrowing on oyster grounds. A follow up sidescan and grab survey was conducted in August.

Marine Mammal observations

Patrols have led to one off sightings of marine mammals on 13 occasions with most seal sightings in the vicinity of the Buxey and Foulness sands. Other sightings occurred in the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Middleway. Porpoises were recorded in Swire Hole and Bench Head

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on Tamesis, and the annual service was carried out on the engines which have now run almost 2400 hours. Minor repairs were also carried out including repairs to the exhaust on the starboard engine and a replacement deckwash pump was fitted. Blue Jacket's engine was serviced by Brightlingsea Park and Ride, the local Suzuki dealer and had a replacement VHF radio fitted.

Other Information

Statistics

During this period, Tamesis has put to sea on 36 occasions, used 3176 litres of fuel and travelled 1460 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea 18 times using 1505 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 881 miles.

Training and Procedures

Candidates for the post of First Mate in Essex were taken to sea and assessed on both vessels while candidates for the Fishery Officer post in Essex were taken to sea on a cockle survey. Operations were conducted in accordance with standard operating procedures; the procedures outline safe working practices for employees and other agencies whilst working on the boat.

Invitation to Authority Members and P.R

An open invitation is extended to Authority Members to join the crew on an enforcement patrol or survey aboard the vessel.

Colm O'Laoui & Ben Hermitage
Skipper & IFC Officer