



Agenda Item C1

Shore Report - Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period September to November 2016

Overview

Whelk fishing resumed both inside and outside the district in October following a pause in fishing over the summer as a result of the sea temperature staying high for a significant period.

Strong easterly winds during October meant the sea state and clarity was affected during this period.

The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery closed for 2016 on the 7th October and throughout the season all cockle fishing vessels were boarded at sea and landed at their home ports in order to check for compliance.

Netting, potting and trawling were the main fishing methods carried out in the district although lobsters moved off shore for a small amount of time. As expected during this period fishing vessels have been taking advantage of multiple fisheries in order to try to maximise their income.

Commercial fishermen have still struggled with quota restrictions for skates and rays but an abundance of these species is still being recorded. Many fishermen have been targeting sole, however lack of fish in the area has made it difficult for the fishermen.

Anglers have been targeting bass, amongst other species, and there have been many reports of bass being caught throughout the district. Codling were being caught by fishermen near the end of October and squid were also being caught off the beach in Hythe bay during November.

Queenborough

The two cockle fishing vessels in Queenborough have finished the 2016 cockle season in October after completing all of their allocated trips. Trawling and potting have occurred out of this harbour along with vessels white weeding and dredging for oysters. One boat was also fishing for shrimps out of Queenborough and also Whitstable.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

Faversham

Given the small number of fishing vessels working out of Faversham, fishing methods have remained constant throughout this period with oysters being the main fish species targeted. Netting and trawling have also been used as other methods to maximise income for the fishermen.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

Whitstable, as expected, has been very active this quarter and the three cockle vessels working out of this port successfully finished their allocated trips for the 2016 season. Reports from the cockle fishermen were of good cockle yields along with a couple of spat falls being apparent throughout the season.

Other fishing vessels from the port have been using a combination of fishing methods including potting for whelks, oyster dredging, trawling and netting. Quota restrictions on skates and rays for the majority of the quarter have limited catches of these species but the variety of fish species available in the area nearby to Whitstable allowed the vessels to use a variety of fishing techniques. Lobster potting continued, however there was a lull in the summer when fewer lobsters were caught as they had moved slightly off shore.

Whelking in Whitstable paused over the summer months when the sea temperatures were highest though the fishing vessels are starting to set whelk pots within the district as the sea temperatures have been dropping.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 16

Herne Bay

Potting near to Herne Bay pier towards Beltinge has continued amongst the commercial and private vessels working out of Herne Bay. Recreational private fishing boats have been recorded using the slipway to launch their vessels and anglers have been catching thornback ray, whiting, dogfish amongst other species.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2

Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

Thanet vessels have continued to be active this quarter with a variety of fishing methods being utilised in Ramsgate, in particular trawling, potting, drift netting and fixed netting. Sole, bass and thornback ray have been some of the main target species in Ramsgate and one vessel targeted cuttlefish for a short period. Mussel prospecting has occurred during this quarter near Ramsgate with two vessels fishing for seed mussels after permission was obtained. As expected the whelk fishery has begun to pick up this quarter with many Ramsgate vessels choosing to set pots both inside and outside the 6nm limit. The proposed expansion of the wind farm has meant some whelk fishermen have had to use different fishing grounds for whelks.

Margate has had minimal commercial fishing activity coming out of the port with the vessels mostly netting and also potting in the area just off Margate. Many fish caught here are being sold locally. Broadstairs' vessels have also been focussing on netting and potting in this quarter with one vessel using a variety of techniques in multiple locations in the district including lobster potting and setting drift nets.

Charter vessels have been busy and have had a good deal of catch success especially of thornback ray, due to commercial fishing quota restrictions on skates and rays up until the end of October (which has increased in November to 500kg). Smooth-hounds were caught in great number throughout this quarter and charter vessels were able to land one bass per angler per day from 1st July which helped with their business and scope for areas they would fish.

Shore nets have been reported by members of the public during this period in Thanet which were targeting many inshore fish species. These have been inspected and removed if appropriate

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 32

Deal and Walmer

Fishing vessels from Deal have been using whelk pots and crab and lobster pots especially around Deal pier. Local fishermen have set up a stall close to their boats and are selling locally caught fish to the public.

Angling on Deal pier remains constant and posters and minimum size stickers handed out by KEIFCA officers to anglers and staff on the pier came across mostly positively. Whiting and Pouting have been caught in large numbers over this period.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 7

Dover

There are small amounts of potting and netting fishing vessels out of Dover and fishing effort has remained reasonably low from this port. Recreational anglers on the piers at Dover have caught a variety of species including smooth-hound, dogfish, bass, whiting, pouting and mackerel. The charter boats have been busy from this port with bass and cod mostly targeted.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 4

Folkestone and Hythe

Folkestone has a mixed range of fishing activity out of this port including trawling, netting and potting and fishermen have mostly been selling their catches locally where possible. Whelk pots have started to be set again after the summer high sea temperatures and lobster pots are continuing to be used.

Folkestone pier has re-opened in this period for fishing. Bass and thornback rays have been caught by anglers along the coast by Hythe and in November squid were being caught from the shore at night. Shore nets were reported along this coastline and inspected where possible by KEIFCA officers.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 15

Dungeness

The commercial boats fishing off Dungeness have begun setting whelk pots again off Dungeness point after the summer and they have also been targeting turbot with drift nets or bottom set gill nets. Allocated quota for sole has been good however their abundance has been low and they have been a difficult species to catch in large quantities. Cod has been caught during the end of October and into November but not yet in significant quantities.

Dungeness proved to be a popular spot for anglers especially for bass when the conditions were right. The abundance of weed and amount of whiting in the area were apparent problems for the fishermen. Other species caught in this area were flatfish, mackerel and thornback rays.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

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