

## **Agenda Item C2**

### **Shore Report - Essex**

#### **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

#### **Quarterly report for the period September to November 2016**

### **GENERAL SITUATION**

With a quiet summer now over, attention has turned to Autumn and Winter species. These catches, however, have been late to show with most fishermen reporting a slow quarter. A warm end to the summer and generally calm weather have led to warmer and clearer waters which is keeping many late season species offshore in deeper, colder seas. Some large whiting and bass have been reported but numbers remain low. Smooth hound remains relatively abundant in the warmer conditions.

Despite the summer's poor catches, sole was showing in good numbers unusually late in the season. Most report that the cod has still not arrived in the district, unlike the same quarter in 2015 where cod was high. As a result, many boats are now pursuing the remaining sole, smooth hound and thornback but most report poor fishing for this quarter.

### **HARWICH & WALTON**

Fishing effort has continued at the same intensity as last quarter, however catches have been poor. Sole numbers have improved and continue to meet quota for most boats but, despite sustained effort, no good cod catches have been reported yet. Potting effort for lobsters continues to be fair from these ports, however many fishermen are now stowing gear for the winter.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20*

### **BRIGHTLINGSEA, WIVENHOE, CLACTON**

Late sole and continuing numbers of thornbacks have made up the majority of quota catches in these three ports. A few boats have reported some small codlings and most have experienced poor fishing this quarter. Even some oyster work has slowed recently due to local events taking boats away from their primary activities.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 12*

## **WEST MERSEA & TOLLESBURY**

Tollesbury Marina has been particularly quiet this quarter, with only a few boats operating out of this port and activity continuing to decrease. Earlier in the year both West Mersea and Tollesbury boats had a fair show of codling but this has not matured into large size cod catches, as is the case with the rest of the district. Boats in Mersea continue to target sole, whiting and thornbacks with some red gurnard and flounder making up catches. Some large bass are being caught but not in regular numbers. Lobster potting remains a steady catch for these ports, especially when the now prevailing easterly winds have prevented fishing in recent weeks. Hand gathering of wild pacific rock oysters continues at low tide and the native oyster fishery remains closed.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 23*

## **MALDON & BRADWELL**

Fishing effort from Maldon and Bradwell remains low with only a small number of boats operating from these ports. Most activity is drift netting targeting cod and whiting but reported catches of these fish have been very low. Wild pacific oyster harvesting still continues.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4*

## **NORTH FAMBRIDGE, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH, BARLING, PAGLESHAM & ROCHFORD**

Activity here is mostly centred around private grounds for native and pacific oysters. Dredging for clams continues in the Crouch and Roach at low levels and there is a reasonable level of bait potting in the area.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3*

## **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA & LEIGH-ON-SEA**

The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order was closed on 7<sup>th</sup> of October this year, with the final week allowing two landings per boat per week. Area 2b was extensively fished this year with most boats of the TECFO fleet concentrating their efforts there. The cockle fishermen reported significant declines in size and quantity towards the end of the season which resulted in longer trips to fill their quota.

Few other fishing vessels have regularly put to sea this quarter. Sole remained poor in the Southend area for this quarter, with most fishermen reporting poor catches despite efforts to fish further afield in the estuary.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 31*

## **HOLEHAVEN & THURROCK**

Fishing effort remains low and in decline from Holehaven and Thurrock. Both vessels operate only on a part time basis with trips out working now very infrequent as winter weather closes in for the end of the year.

*Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 2*

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