



## **Agenda Item C6**

### **Enforcement Update**

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

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

### **Introduction**

In undertaking its regulatory responsibilities, KEIFCA starts from the position that the vast majority of the community of people, organisations and industries using the marine area are compliant with the regulation and control that affects them. KEIFCA works to try to ensure that all parties understand both what rules apply to their particular industry and the rationale for the regulation being necessary.

Full compliance with EU, UK and in particular local fisheries and environmental legislation is the overall aim of the Authority. This aim is best achieved through the adoption of an adaptive co-management approach to fisheries management.

### **Enforcement Activity**

Between September and November, 43 patrols both at sea and ashore have been carried out. The number of patrols does fluctuate throughout the year and whether they occur on shore or at sea, which is affected by a number of factors including the specific risks being targeted, staff resources, weather, other duties and the objectives of the patrols.

The objectives of many of the patrols during this period were to ensure that both commercial and recreational fishermen were compliant with the bass regulations, conduct landing inspections right through to the end of the cockle season, and gear inspections at sea. There were 38 landing inspections completed with 38 anglers also inspected on shore patrols.

#### *Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery*

For the second year the vessels which are licensed to operate in the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 1994 were fitted with VMS+ (Vessel Monitoring System). This enables officers to identify where vessels are at any point during their fishing trip. Each vessel transmits a 'ping' every 10 minutes when they are inside the TECFO and every 1 minute when operating within the main fishing areas. This has enabled officers to operate much more efficiently in targeting

their patrols and inspections as well as helping to identify the best way to inspect a vessel, whether that be at sea or ashore.

#### *Whelk Fishery*

The whelk fishery started up towards the end of the quarter, which primarily takes place off the Kent coastline. Inspections both at sea and on land will be completed at the end of this quarter into the next, especially as Nerissa comes into operational service complete with her gear hauling equipment and large deck area for storing any seized gear.

#### *Bass Fishery*

The bass fishery has continued to be a priority enforcement action due to the very tight regulations currently in force and ahead of the tightening of the EU regulations proposed for next year. Due to the high profile nature of this issue, KEIFCA officers have been working closely with Marine Management Organisation officers to carry out checks and inspections of both commercial and recreational vessels across the District.

### **Offence Reports**

#### *Bass*

Two bass offences were reported by officers during this period, the first was a significant quantity of undersized bass retained on Southend Pier. KEIFCA officers have worked with Southend Pier and Foreshore officers to collect the evidence, and have since worked with the Marine Management Organisation to further investigate the offence and process it, this has not yet been completed. The second offence occurred in Kent where a private vessel returned with more than the permitted number of one fish per person. Evidence was collected and passed to the Marine Management Organisation and on this occasion a written warning was issued to the offenders.

#### *Officer Obstruction*

During the summer, whilst undertaking joint enforcement sea patrols with the Marine Management Organisation, a vessel skipper refused to facilitate a boarding of his vessel to carry out an inspection. This offence is currently being prosecuted.

#### *Contravention of netting byelaw*

One offence was reported by officers who, during a sea patrol, boarded a vessel found setting fixed nets in an area of the District where this is prohibited. The skipper was later interviewed under caution and a written warning issued.

#### *Whelk Fishery Offences*

During the summer period, officers reported a number of offences found on one set of whelk pots. These offences included; lack of permit tags, insufficient and small escape holes and marking requirement failures. The skipper was interviewed under caution and, after due process, a Financial Administrative Penalty was issued during this quarter for a total of £250.

### *Other Offences*

A number of other low level offences were detected during this period which were primarily addressed by education and verbal warnings by the inspecting officer.

D Bailey

Assistant Chief Fishery Officer