



Agenda Item C1

Shore Report - Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly report for the period December 2016 to January 2017

Overview

Whelk fishing has slowed since the last quarter, due partly to the increase in spawning. However, it is still an important source of income for many fishermen in the district. Fishermen are setting whelk pots both inside and outside the KEIFCA district, along with visiting boats from Sussex joining the fleet to fish outside.

Netting, potting and trawling were the main fishing methods carried out in the district, with individual vessels using different methods in order to try to maximise their income based on the season.

Anglers have been catching bass as late as December, but sizable cod have not come close enough inshore yet and have therefore only been caught by only a few anglers. However, offshore on charter trips, cod and bass are more abundant.

Queenborough

The two cockle vessels in Queenborough are moored over winter whilst the cockle fishery is closed. Trawling and potting continues in the port, with fishing methods changing to catch seasonal target species.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

Faversham

The two boats fishing out of Faversham have targeted mainly oysters this period, with netting and trawling used as alternative methods. Catches are sold directly from a shop locally.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

Whitstable vessels are using a combination of methods including oyster dredging on public grounds, trawling and netting, with some boats setting lobster pots along the north Kent coast. The wider variety of fish species available close to Whitstable has meant boats have not had to travel far to fish.

The whelk fishery is the main source of income for Whitstable boats, with all boats in the harbour targeting them inside the KEIFCA District. Although the cold temperatures have encouraged more fishing activity, heavy spawning in the inshore stocks has resulted in poorer quality whelks. This has slowed fishing activity in this period.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 16

Herne Bay

Whelking continues out of Herne Bay, with fishermen reporting that there are a lot of small whelks in pots. Recreational private fishing boats have been recorded using the slipway to launch their vessels and anglers have been catching thornback ray, whiting, dogfish among other species.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2

Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

Thanet vessels have continued to use a wide range of fishing methods, adapting to the seasonal changes. Methods include trawling, fixed and drift netting, and potting. In Ramsgate, boats are landing a mixture of flatfish such as sole and dab, as well as thornback rays and dogfish. Fishermen have said the quota was good for the sole but there was not enough caught to meet it. The cod fishery has been late this year, so have been caught intermittently, with only one or two large individuals being landed. On the other hand, whilst bass stocks have moved further offshore, large individuals have still been caught.

The mussel fishery was opened in area 17/5a in late October and has remained open through to present after an extension in early December.

The whelk vessels have been setting pots both inside and outside the KEFICA District. Whelk fishing slowed over November and December with reports of a heavy spawning event. The fishermen are reporting smaller whelks inshore, whilst weather has been stable enough to allow for regular trips throughout the period. For the majority of this period, three visiting boats from Sussex ports have berthed in Ramsgate, targeting whelks outside the KEIFCA District in the Thames Estuary.

Low levels of netting and potting have continued out of Margate and Broadstairs, with catches being sold locally.

Charter boats have been catching large numbers of thornback ray over this period. The cod did not show up until mid-December, but whiting, dabs and plaice were a regular catch on trips. Anglers were still allowed to catch one bass per day, which was sustained further into winter with the odd rare individual being caught. Other species reported were smooth-hounds and pouting.

There have been reports from the public of shore nets used regularly along the Thanet coast, as well as individuals been observed hand collecting shellfish in the intertidal zone. Hand collection was predominantly for winkles, but there are low levels of collection of crabs and bivalves.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 32

Deal and Walmer

Vessels from Deal and Walmer have continued to set pots along the east Kent coast, with netting increasing to target herring which are sold on the beach locally. Fishermen have commented that custom has sustained into the winter after a peak in sales with summer tourism, with local residents still buying fish from them in this period.

Deal pier and neighbouring beaches remain a popular spot for anglers, with the majority of casts bringing in whiting or thornback ray. Larger numbers of dabs have been reported this time of year which prompted an angling match for the species. Other fishes caught include dogfish, flounder and pouting. Strong winds damaged Deal Pier resulting in it being closed temporarily for repairs, whilst strong onshore winds have hampered fishing throughout this period.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 7

Dover

Lobster and crab potting has been the main source of income for Dover vessels, but effort has remained reasonably low through this period.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 4

Folkestone and Hythe

Folkestone vessels are using a wide range of fishing methods, including trawling, netting and potting, with catches being sold locally within the cooperative. Since the last period, scallop dredging has occurred out of Folkestone Harbour

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.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 15

Dungeness

Dungeness vessels continue to use netting and potting as the main methods. During this period, cod have not come inshore in the numbers expected, but are still being caught further offshore.

Cod have been appearing since late October but only sparsely, with large individuals being landed. Bass were still being caught in November and remained even until late December. Other species caught in this area were flatfish, mackerel and thornback rays.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

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