

Agenda Item C3
Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket'
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Report for the period November – December 2016

Vessel priorities:

- Enforcement
- Candidate interviews
- Whelk Survey

Fisheries Enforcement

This is a shorter period than normal with fishing activity reduced due to adverse weather conditions and markets closed for the Christmas break. Tamesis and Blue Jacket were both deployed on enforcement duties this period. Enforcement priorities were for gear inspections and patrols on rivers.

Blue Jacket spent some time operating out of Burnham and was tasked to patrol the river Roach and Crouch. During these patrols the vessels logged 33 sightings (including commercial, recreational, and charter vessels) six of which were boarded for inspections with one verbal warning issued. Non boarding inspections were conducted on a further eight vessels. The patrol vessels also inspected four sets of gear and issued one offence notice for gear not marked correctly.

Conservation/Survey Work

Whelk Survey

This period included the final stage of the Whelk survey. The aim of this survey was to quantify changes to the weight and size structure of whelks caught and retained using larger escape gaps in whelk pots and therefore estimate the economic impact to fishermen of an increase in whelk escape gap and riddle size. This involved setting multiple strings of whelk pots across the district. Each string carried five pots with 22mm escape gaps and five pots with 25mm escape gaps. Once recovered the haul from each pot is riddled through a 25mm riddle and the rejected whelks are riddled through a 22mm riddle. Weights and sizes of whelks were recorded at the different stages.

Marine Mammal observations

Patrols have led to numerous sightings of marine mammals with many individual seal sightings in the Roach and Crouch and groups of seals observed at low tide on the Buxey and Foulness sands

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. Neither vessel required any major work although two LED navigation lights were required for Tamesis, which were supplied under warranty by the manufacturer. An out of date battery on the Search and Rescue Transponder was also replaced. Arrangements have been made for the Safe Working Load tests to be conducted on Tamesis in January. It was also decided to change the surveying organisation from the Society of Consulting Marine Engineers and Ship Surveyors to MECAL to bring it into line with the other vessels which are MECAL certified.

Other Information

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on four occasions and took 570 litres of fuel and travelled 115 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea six times using 251 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 216 miles.

Other trips

Candidates for the post of science officer were taken to sea and assessed on Tamesis in mid-November. 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'Laoi
Skipper & IFC Officer