

## Agenda Item C1

### Shore Report - Kent

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

#### **Overview**

This quarter has seen the spring fisheries arrive, meaning several boats are switching to netting targeting thornback ray, bass and sole, as well as dogfish and other flatfish species.

Fishermen have raised concerns over the bass regulations and their entitlements, and this quarter included a closure for February and March. Therefore, the bass fisheries were constrained this quarter, but fishermen are optimistic for the coming months.

Ray quota has remained low at 200kg for under ten metre boats since January and all ports reported high numbers inshore. This is also reflected in the angling community.

The 2017-18 whelk fishery began in April, with the majority of boats renewing their permit and more due to renew when they begin potting. Landings have increased after a drop last quarter as calmer weather has allowed longer and more days at sea to increase catches.

Throughout this quarter there have been some north-westerly gales which have kept boats in port, but the general weather conditions have not hindered the fleet as much as previous years.

#### **Queenborough**

Although there are not many boats here, the port maintains a diverse range of fishing methods. Gillnetting, trawling and potting are the most common methods, with sole being landed at the moment. However, fishermen have said that landings are low for this time of year.

The port has seen a change in change in vessels, with two leaving and one arriving. Meaning there has been a departure of one netter from the port.

**Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 8**

## **Faversham**

The two boats fishing out of Faversham creek are still selling their fish locally through their own shops, netting a range of whitefish and are also oyster dredging.

**Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2**

## **Whitstable**

Whitstable harbour continues to be one of the most active ports in Kent, with boats using a combination of dredges, nets and pots, targeting oysters, whitefish, whelks and lobsters. With the spring fisheries beginning, some boats have taken the opportunity to switch to netting or trawling and possibly rod and lining.

All whelk boats in Whitstable have renewed their fishing permit and have been regularly landing whelks caught within the KEIFCA District. Boats often diversify with lobster pots too.

Cockle boats are mobile now in preparation for the summer cockle fishery, with modifications and upgrades on all vessels.

**Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 12**

## **Herne Bay**

Commercial fishing is still occurring with boats renewing their whelk permits to continue potting. With ray populations arriving inshore along the north Kent coast, boats are also beginning to net, but raise concerns about the lack of quota for rays.

**Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 2**

## **Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)**

Ramsgate port has seen the arrival of four visiting boats from Sussex, targeting whelks outside the KEFICA District. The Cougar catamarans have been visiting for different periods over the last quarter, regularly landing large quantities of whelks.

The majority of the local whelk fleet have continued to fish in the KEIFCA District, although some have switched to netting to take advantage of the spring fisheries, targeting thornback ray or sole, and increasingly bass.

Fishermen voiced concerns regarding the impact on earnings from the bass restrictions coupled with low ray quota for the last months.

**Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 32**

## **Deal and Walmer**

Boats out of this port use a combination of netting and potting. Netters have changed their meshes to target the spring fisheries, with increasing quantities of skate being landed, but herring and sprat have still been landed.

The pier and beaches north and south continue to be popular for anglers.

**Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 7**

## **Dover**

Fishing effort is low in Dover, with only two to three boats regularly fishing. The fleet here are using pots and nets to target a range of species. The port has sustained charter boats taking large numbers of anglers out to target cod in earlier months and increasingly bass as the waters warm.

**Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 4**

## **Folkestone and Hythe**

Folkestone has a diverse range of boats that regularly go trawling, netting and potting. Potters have begun targeting lobsters, along with continued landing of whelks. Trawlers and netters continue to land a diverse range of fish that follow the seasonal trends.

**Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 15**

## **Dungeness**

Netters have taken advantage of the different waters further down the coast and fished further offshore to catch a diverse range of fishes not seen elsewhere in the district, such as turbot, gurnard and lemon sole among the more common sole, ray and bass regularly landed.

Some boats have renewed their whelk permits for the new season and will be potting to bring in extra income on top of the netting.

**Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5**

Tom Clegg, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer, Kent