

Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket'
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period January - May 2017

Vessel priorities:

- Enforcement
- Harrow Survey
- Oyster Dredge Survey
- Cockle survey
- Annual Maintenance

Fisheries Enforcement:

Patrol activity is generally relatively low during the winter period as adverse weather conditions reduces activity in the fleet and annual vessel maintenance takes place. As spring breaks the focus then shifts onto survey duties. Nonetheless, Tamesis and Blue Jacket were both deployed on enforcement duties this period and spent time patrolling the Roach, Crouch, Blackwater and the Wallet. Enforcement priorities were for gear inspections and patrols on rivers. In the course of these patrols the officers logged 29 commercial vessel sightings. Non-boarding inspections were conducted on 9 of these vessels, and 3 vessels were boarded. No offences were reported as a result of these boardings. A further 10 charter vessel sightings were recorded and also 9 recreational vessels. Non boarding inspections were conducted on 6 recreational vessels. The patrol vessels also issued 3 offence notices for incorrectly marked gear and seized 3 sets of gear, 2 of which have been claimed and the owner been issued with a written warning.

Conservation/Survey Work:

Harrow Survey

The harrow survey was resumed at the end of February on sites in the Blackwater and in the Ray Sand Channel. As before the sidescan sonar was deployed from Tamesis and towed across the 12 boxes (6 harrowed and 6 control). Three grab samples were also taken from each box which were then photographed before sediment cores were extracted and retained.

Oyster Survey

The Spring oyster dredge survey was carried out at the beginning of March. This survey, which is being conducted in association with Essex University PhD

student, Alice Lown, involves the analysis of dredge contents of a single tow over 100 sites within the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne MCZ.

Cockle Survey

This period also saw work commence on the annual cockle stock assessment. This is conducted over high water using a 0.1 m² day grab. Areas completed so far include the Buxey, Ray, Dengie, and Marsh End.

Marine Mammal observations

Marine mammals were sighted on 20 occasions with many individual seal sightings in the rivers Roach, Crouch and Colne and large groups of seals observed at low tide on the Buxey and Foulness sands. A single porpoise was observed at Shoebury.

Maintenance:

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. The Safe Working Load was conducted on Tamesis in January and all items certified for a further year. 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. A surveyor attended the vessel and noted only a few minor defects which were quickly rectified and the MECAL certificate was issued.

A major overhaul of the hydraulic system was undertaken to replace many of the original hoses and connections which were beginning to show signs of wear and corrosion. An auxiliary electric hydraulic pump was fitted to provide resilience within the system and to allow the recovery of any deployed equipment in the event of an engine failure. Repairs were carried out on the navigation system when a failed GPS unit within the Satellite Compass array was replaced. Both drive-shafts are exhibiting signs of wear and as the seals have hardened this was an issue with ingress of water. Remedial work was carried out on starboard shaft and the port shaft and seal were replaced with a previously used spare shaft, however 2 new shafts will be required next year.

Other Information:

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on 23 occasions, took 2566 litres of fuel and travelled 746 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea twice using 158 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 93 miles.

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