

Sea Angling

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period ending May 2017

Overview

KEIFCA Progress

The new Bass restrictions (no bass to be retained until 30 June) have proved unpopular with recreational anglers, with some of the anglers being outspoken about the fact that they cannot retain bass but the commercial fleet can. KEIFCA officers, who have been out patrolling the foreshore, have continued to remind anglers that these restrictions do apply to them. Where this report mentions the catching of bass, these have not been retained.

The minimum size ruler sticker still proves to be popular with 2,000 stickers being ordered through the last quarter.

During this quarter, a few fish worthy of reporting have been caught; 65lb stingray off the beach at Herne Bay, a blonde ray of 20lb from the East Bay Hythe, 19lb bass and a 17lb thornback caught off one charter vessel from Ramsgate. Also, two 15lb smooth-hounds; one off a charter boat the other off the Admiralty Pier in Dover.

Kent Angling Summary

A poor start to the quarter meant that anglers were having to try hard to catch some fish. Small whittings, dabs and rocklings made up the bulk of the catches during January around the Kent coast.

A mild start to February brought the first showing of the spring run of fish. Plaice and flounders started to be caught regularly along the beaches of Hythe and Dengemarsh with the occasional thornback ray.

Thornback rays became the target species on the North Kent from March onwards with catches peaking during April as the peeler crabs started to moult. As April ended, smooth-hounds started to show on the fore-shore.

Spotted dogfish have returned and the occasional bass have added variety to catches.

Essex Angling Summary

Thornback rays have been caught regularly from both the beaches and piers throughout the quarter, with catches increasing as the weather warmed up. The Essex piers have consistently provided sport for anglers during this period with thornback rays being the main target.

Small whittings, dabs and flounders have also been caught with spotted dogfish and the occasional bass adding to the variety.

Inner Thames and River Medway Angling Summary

Sport was slow with fishing proving to be hard; flounders and bass started to show in numbers during March and sport has slowly improved as the warmer weather approached.

Boat Fishing

Reports suggest that cod fishing has been one of the worst seasons for a long time with many boats not seeing a cod all winter. Thornback has been the main fish targeted during February and March with smooth hounds beginning to be caught in late March with good numbers coming aboard during April and May. Whittings and spotted dogfish have continued to feature in catches.