

Enforcement Report

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

Introduction

In undertaking its regulatory responsibilities, KEIFCA starts from the position that the vast majority of the community of people, organisations and industries using the marine area are compliant with the regulation and control that affects them. KEIFCA works to try to ensure that all parties understand both what rules apply to their industry and the rationale for the regulation being necessary.

Full compliance with EU, UK and in particular, local fisheries and environmental legislation is the overall aim of the Authority. This aim is best achieved through the adoption of an adaptive co-management approach to fisheries management.

Enforcement Activity

Between January and May, 76 patrols both at sea and ashore have been carried out.

There has been an increase in the number of patrols this quarter as weather conditions start to improve and as Nerissa has come into regular operation. The number of patrols does fluctuate throughout the year and whether they occur on shore or at sea, which is affected by several factors including the specific risks being targeted, staff resources, weather, other duties and the objectives of the patrols.

The objectives of many of the patrols during this period were to ensure that both commercial and recreational fishermen were compliant with the whelk permit byelaw as well as carrying out routine inspections of fin fish vessels although low quotas continue to restrict the number of days which these vessels can work. 143 inspections were carried out in this period.

Whelk Fishery

The whelk fishery started up towards the end of last quarter, which primarily takes place off the Kent coastline. A targeted operation has been underway since early December with inspections both at sea and on land being carried out on a regular basis.

Essex rivers patrols

The Essex rivers (Roach, Crouch, Blackwater, Colne and Stour) are some of the more remote areas of the District, where low level offending can go undetected for some time when officers are handling priority issues. These rivers contain vessels working on privately owned areas, several orders and some public ground. There have been in recent years a significant number of concerns raised from other fishermen and members of the public regarding vessels working within these rivers. As a result, enforcement work has continued to be a priority here. A significant number of patrols have targeted these rivers both ashore and at sea with Blue Jacket being utilised on a regular basis throughout the period as the smaller size of this vessel compared to the large patrol boats and its much quicker transiting speed means it can inspect these remote areas regularly and in a time efficient manner. In addition, Nerissa has also been utilised in this area on a number of occasions with vessels being routinely inspected throughout.

Offence Reports

Whelk Fishery Offences

A large number of the offences being detected are continuing to be connected to the whelk fishery.

Six verbal warnings were issued for low level offences including compliance with whelk riddle requirements and marking of gear.

Four Financial Administrative Penalties have been issued for landing of undersized whelks and one whelk fishery offence has been reported for prosecution.

Other Offences

A number of other low level offences were detected during this period which were primarily addressed by education and verbal warnings by the inspecting officer.