



Agenda Item – C1

Shore Report - Kent

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

Overview

The opening of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery in mid-July has taken up a significant amount of officer time during the summer period with cockle vessels being checked both on shore and at sea. Trips have been restricted to two trips per week since the fishery opened in July with most boats opting to do their two trips towards the beginning of the week.

From the start of July for recreational fishermen, there was a one bass per person per day limit of 42cm or bigger with this applicable for the second half of the year replacing the catch and release legislation for the first half of 2017. Bass have been landed as bycatch by eligible vessels holding a track record for certain fishing types. Lobster and crab stocks were good for the season with lobsters still being landed in high quantities coming into Autumn. Sea temperatures have been high this year which has drawn in warmer water species and cold water species such as cod have not been caught in numbers seen in previous years. The water has been clear this summer and favourable weather has helped which affects what fishermen catch. Many fishing vessels have been using the summer as a time to refit their vessels ready for the winter season.

The whelk fishing has slowed over the summer months due to the high sea temperatures with vessels forced to use alternative fishing techniques. Fishing vessels are predominantly relying on whelk fishing as a primary source of income due to quota restrictions for finfish. New alterations to the whelk fishery flexible permit byelaw came in place in April with a new riddle size and 10 25mm escape holes required in each whelk pot used inside the KEIFCA district.

Queenborough

Fishing vessels fishing out of Queenborough have been trawling, cockle dredging, netting and potting in this quarter and some vessels have been

working whelk pots during the summer. Lobster catches have been good and cockle vessels have been reporting steady catches throughout this period. Some vessels have also been white weeding nearer the start of this period.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 11

Faversham

Oare creek has been used by one vessel to land their finfish and have been using a variety of techniques to maximise their income. Locally caught fish have higher prices on average from this Port. Some cockle fishing vessels had work done here prior to the opening of the TECFO fishery.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

Whitstable along with Ramsgate continues to be one of the most active ports in the KEIFCA district. Vessels have been trawling, netting, dredging and potting for species such as oysters, cockles, sole, thornback ray and whelks.

Quota allowances for skate have stayed at a low level from month to month over the summer and fishermen are forced to adopt a variety of fishing methods to sustain a living. The three cockle vessels have been allocated two trips per week since the start of the season and have been landing their catch to be cooked both in Whitstable and also taken away to Boston. Two vessels have been oyster dredging throughout this quarter and one vessel has been rod and lining for bass occasionally with their bass entitlement. Lobster and crab catches have been good this summer and sustained many of the fisherman in Whitstable harbour with the bonus being that they don't have to travel as far to set pots.

Many skippers have used this period to refit their fishing vessels and prepare for the winter season ahead with six vessels in Whitstable whelk fishing inside the KEIFCA district.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 15

Herne Bay

Herne bay has been a popular launch site for recreational fishermen out for day trips. With favourable weather and reports of good bass and mackerel fishing, boats have been using the two slipways regularly throughout the summer. Lobster pots have been set from private recreational fishing vessels around Herne bay pier and also towards Reculver.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 1
Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

Landings in Ramsgate in particular have been steady and with a variety of different species caught and fishing methods used. Whelk fishing vessels from Sussex used Ramsgate as a hub to land whelks worked outside the KEIFCA district during the cooler water months at the start of 2017 and returned back to Sussex for the summer period. Sole, skate and lobsters were some of the primary species caught in this district, with a few bass also being landed from the fishing vessels permitted to land an allocated bycatch or with a rod and line entitlement. Lobsters were landed throughout the Summer with a number of potting boats setting pots all throughout the district and all throughout the year.

Margate harbour arm has seen an installation of railings making it safer for fishermen and the general public. Finfish and crabs and lobsters were worked here with gear being set close to the harbour entrance and fish being sold locally on the harbour arm. One vessel has also been setting long lines. Broadstairs has potting and netting boats in the harbour with gear set in close proximity as well.

There have been shore collectors reported throughout the Thanet coast collecting shellfish for human consumption and also fishing bait.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 27

Deal and Walmer

Crab and lobster pots and also nets have been used along this coastline near to Deal Pier and with the fishing vessels able to sell their catch right next to their boats, they are able to obtain a good price for the fresh fish being caught. Recreational fishing vessels have also been setting lobster pots

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 6

Dover

Potters for crab and lobster have been busy throughout the summer in this port and the charter vessels have reported good catches and the pier and beaches has been extremely popular with anglers when open. Fishing effort from this port remains low key with neighbouring ports busier with more fishing vessels working out of Hythe, Folkestone and Dungeness.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 4

Folkestone and Hythe

Whelk fishing has slowed throughout this quarter due to higher sea temperatures and fishing vessels using alternative fishing methods to target the summer species. Vessels have been potting for crab, lobster and whelks. Others have been trawling and netting and one fishing vessel has been used for guard vessel duties and another for channel swimming.

Hythe fishing vessels have been out infrequently and selling their catch locally to the fishmongers. Being on the border of two ICES areas gives fishermen more of a choice of which fishing methods to adopt.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 15

Dungeness

Fishing has been constant throughout this quarter and whelks and sole and a variety of finfish have been the main fish species landed and sold locally mostly. The fisherman use both ICES areas near to Dungeness to utilise their quota allowance and land species less common to other parts of the district.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 5

Robert Watson,
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