

Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket'
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Report for the period May – August 2017

Vessel priorities:

- Cockle damage rates
- Cockle enforcement
- Bass fishery
- River Roach Several Order
- Pre & post Harrow Surveys

Fisheries Enforcement

With the spring oyster dredge survey and cockle stock assessments successfully completed, the vessels were tasked with the summer priority workstreams. The majority of Essex based sea enforcement was conducted using Blue Jacket.

Principal enforcement priorities for the period included the bass fishery, the Thames Estuary cockle fishery and the Roach Several Order. KEIFCA officers were accompanied by the Marine Enforcement Officers from the MMO on 5 of these patrols, which were particularly aimed at targeting vessels netting for bass. Blue Jacket also spent a number of patrol days assisting Nerissa in collecting samples of cockles from the TECFO fleet in order to assess the damage rates.

In the course of these patrols the officers logged 87 commercial vessel sightings. Non-boarding inspections were conducted on 46 of these vessels and 10 vessels were boarded. No offences were reported as a result of these boardings, although MMO are examining a licence issue with one vessel following a boarding. Officers logged 28 recreational vessels (including charter recreational) on which there were 16 non-boarding inspections.

The patrol vessels also recorded gear sightings on 57 occasions, with gear being inspected on 22 of these. As a result 6 offence notices were issued, however no gear was seized.

Conservation/Survey Work

Harrow Survey

Tamesis was engaged in the harrow survey at the end of June on the sites on 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. The area was then scheduled to be surveyed again immediately after the harrowing had taken place, however this was hampered by a combination of poor weather and technical issues with the sidescan sonar. The sonar survey of the Ray Sand sites could not be completed on this occasion and the equipment was returned to the supplier for repairs. The 6 week post-harrow survey proceeded as scheduled and was satisfactorily completed in late August

Marine Mammal observations

Marine mammals were sighted on 17 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. Porpoises were sighted on 5 occasions from the mouth of the Colne up to Walton, with 2 separate sightings of an adult accompanied by a calf in the vicinity of the Colne bar.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels and both were serviced during this period. In addition to routine maintenance, the port side drive shaft on Tamesis was replaced with a previously used shaft from stock due to wear in the vicinity of the seal. The starboard side also needs replacement however, the location of the hydraulic pump means that it is best if this work is carried out when the vessel is not in the water. Tamesis was also on the hard for a scrub down to remove growth from the hulls. Blue Jacket has had a replacement plotter/sounder fitted as the system which came with the vessel was deemed unsuitable for use in particularly rough weather. The propeller shaft was also replaced as it appeared to be slightly bent. There were no marks on the propeller to indicate any contact with the sea bed.

Other Information

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on 15 occasions, took 1250 litres of fuel and travelled 405 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea on 17 occasions and covered a patrol distance of 912 miles.

Invitation to Authority Members and PR

An open invitation is extended to Authority Members to join the crew on an enforcement patrol or survey aboard the vessel.

Colm O'Laoui
Skipper & IFC Officer

