

Enforcement Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period June to August 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 May and the end of August, 125 patrols both at sea and ashore have been conducted. Sixty nine of these patrols have been at sea aboard the Fisheries Patrol Vessels Tamesis, Blue Jacket, Nerissa and Nereus.

Nereus has been utilised as a standalone fisheries patrol boat for the first time this period, with six lone patrols conducted between the Medway and Kingsdown. Gear inspections and boardings have been conducted from the RIB and these patrols have increased the Kent based enforcement capabilities.

The number of patrol fluctuations throughout the year are influenced largely by the fishing activity occurring. Whether patrols occur on shore or at sea is again influenced by the fishing activity occurring alongside other factors of weather, staff resources and specific risks being targeted.

The objectives of many of the patrols during this period were to ensure that commercial fishermen were compliant with the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order. To this end the objectives of a large majority of the sea patrols from the middle of this period were to conduct damage rate inspections and landing checks on the 14 licenced cockle boats.

The remaining patrols this period that have not focused on the cockle fishery, have been heavily intelligence led.

Intelligence led approach

The proposed intelligence gathering and sharing process has been operating successfully since May 2017. Relevant intelligence has been shared with designated officers within other IFCA's and partner organisations, such as Marine Management Organisation, Environmental Health and MCA. This makes deployment of limited resources more effective and reduces risk to staff. Over 30 reports have been received from other organisations, relating to risk to our staff, illegal activity and trends in adjoining districts. Examples of this have been information from another organisation regarding a vessel skipper who was injecting controlled drugs (not currently in our district) and a crewman who has recently been released from prison for violent offences, in addition to information on suspected illegal fishing.

Intelligence led activity and a two-weekly tasking process which reviews past activity and directs the next fortnight activity ensures enforcement activity is focussed in areas of demand and the taxpayer receives value for money. This also enables managers to maintain an oversight of operational activity and risk.

With increasing enforcement workloads with the new MPA byelaws being introduced and a greater emphasis on some high-risk fisheries, effective targeting of enforcement resource is now more essential than ever.

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.

Operational Planning

With application of an intelligence led approach having been introduced, operational planning documents are being completed for targeted patrols across the District as well as more detailed operational plans for specific operations over longer periods. These planning documents also record outcomes from the patrols to feed into future work via Information Reports.

Offence Reports

Eight verbal warnings were issued during this period for offences related to the Whelk Fishery Permit Byelaw and TECFO.

One Financial Administrative Penalty has been paid for the landing of undersized whelks and two whelk fishery offences pending legal advice.

Other Offences

A number of low level offences were detected during this period which were address by education by the inspecting officer.

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J Holl, Lead Enforcement Officer