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13/10/17

RE Native oyster permit byelaw consultataion

Dear KEIFCA

Although I have commented via the questionnaire earlier this year , I would like to comment on question 12 of the consultation regarding the restoration box (area 2a) being closed to other fishing activities.

Although we as a company are mainly involved in catching/growing oysters in the River Blackwater & our own private beds since 1992 in the Mersea and Tollesbury creeks ,and the River Crouch, we also fish in and around the restoration box using fixed gill nets for skate,bass & grey mullet .We also use pots for lobster .Some other boats also span both oyster and fishing industries . All catches are sold locally providing income for local businesses.

All of these are considered low impact & to stop any of these types of fishing would be financially detrimental to the coastal community , detrimental to good relations between the fishing and oyster industries ( the Tollesbury & Mersea oyster co. has never enforced its right to stop fishing including trawling).

As im sure the expert panel & the committee are aware ( although its not mentioned at all in the consultation or any other ENORI literature ) is that the River Blackwater including the restoration box has been infected with Bonamia since 2003/4 ,hence the very low stock levels of adult natives. Most years we still have an appreciable spatfall of native oysters on our private beds in the Mersea creeks( which have had Bonamia since 1982) which are now used to grow gigas oysters. The vast majority of these perish at 2 years old , never reaching a marketable or spawning size .

With this in mind ,serious thought about the reality of the extreme difficulties of Bonamia ought to be given , & allowing viable low impact fishing to continue & not be stopped at the expense of a scheme ,whose future is at best ,highly uncertain.

I do hope this ill thought out proposal by people with little or no knowledge of the diversity of the fishing & oyster industries , isnt implemented as fishing in this area & its value to the local economy should not be ignored.

Yours sincerely

David Gladwell

Gladwell Oyster Growers Ltd