

The Kent and Essex Fishermen's Group

Supporting Fishermen across the district

KEIFCA
Paragon House
Albert Street
Ramsgate
Kent
CT11 9HD

Date
17.10.17

RE: Consultation on the proposed restoration box in the Blackwater MCZ.

Dear Sir's,

Firstly, we would like to thank KEIFCA for notifying the industry about this issue, which we were unaware was being considered.

This group oppose any form of closure to fishing within the Restoration box, shown on page 17 of the KEIFCA report for the following reasons.

Although this small area is not heavily fished it is very important to the local industry, for our smaller boats to fish with nets, pots, fyke nets (used to catch Lobsters) and light shrimp trawling, as it can often be fished when many other areas cannot, as it is protected from strong northerly winds.

This area has also been used over many century's as a convenient local training ground, for young boys who wish to learn the commercial fishing trade and the most important practical part of conservation, which obviously cannot be taught in a classroom or learnt from a book. This area can also be easily viewed from the Mersea Esplanade, by parents wishing to check on the wellbeing of their children while at sea on small boats, obviously if this area was closed to fishing, they would have to travel further away from their local safe haven and not be in an area which could be easily view by parents.

The local Oystermen give their full support to the local fishing industry to continue fishing in this small area, as the light fishing methods used are not considered harmful to the local oyster stocks and as the leading authority on the subject within this area, we would hope their views are respected and given careful consideration.

Regards
Andrew Craig.

On behalf of 50 Kent and Essex fishermen.