

**Agenda item C2**

**Shore Report - Essex**

**Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**  
**Quarterly report for the period ending January 2018**

**GENERAL SITUATION**

In previous years this quarter has proven to be a struggle for fishermen and this year has been no different. Although the warmer waters later in the season encouraged sole to remain for longer into the winter, the numbers have now diminished. Following a decline in skate numbers with cold temperatures, catches of the species have remained reasonable in parts of the district, however prices for skate have remained very low due to competition with foreign suppliers. Cod have failed to show in large numbers and although whiting are being caught, most are not sizeable. Herring are abundant in many areas however they are rarely targeted due to the lack of demand. Potting for lobsters has ended for the year but in contrast vessels potting for whelks have enjoyed consistent catches and good prices. The district has seen some undesirable weather conditions which meant many boats were not fishing over the Christmas period and generally there has been a reduced effort.

**HARWICH & WALTON**

Fishing effort has slowed during this quarter and catches have been poor. Lobster potting has now finished for the season with most gear being stowed away until lobsters start crawling again in spring. There are abundant herring and some sprat in the area however very few trawlers and netters have turned their attention to the species due to its poor market value, but some vessels are targeting herring for private sale.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 19**

**BRIGHTLINGSEA, WIVENHOE, CLACTON**

Fishing activities have been slow throughout this quarter. Catches of herring, whiting and skate have been reported with very little codling being found. Whelking efforts have been reduced due to limited success. Oyster dredging continues at moderate levels on private grounds. The public oyster grounds remain closed.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 12**

**WEST MERSEA & TOLLESBURY**

Tollesbury marina remains quiet with commercial boats typically operating out of West Mersea instead. Fishing activities have been slow in West Mersea with

reports showing a lack of the usual winter species. There has been only one report of a box of cod being landed throughout this quarter. Herring are plentiful however the market value has meant they are only targeted by a handful of netters. Oyster harvesting is the primary activity from West Mersea this quarter, as the oystermen continue to work private grounds with reasonable returns, and fair numbers of Pacific oysters have been hand gathered and dredged in public grounds. The public grounds remain closed for native oysters however.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20**

### **MALDON & BRADWELL**

Fishing effort from Maldon and Bradwell remains low with only two vessels operating from these ports. A lack of valuable species is the reason for low levels of activity.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 2**

### **NORTH FAMBRIDGE, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH, BARLING, PAGLESHAM & ROCHFORD**

The Essex Estuary byelaw continues to prohibit trawling in these areas. This has meant the main efforts have focused on oyster dredging on private grounds in the Crouch and Roach, while the native oyster fishery in public grounds remains closed. The clam fishery is much slower than in previous years which has resulted in fewer clams being harvested. Due to a lack of cod along with other desirable species, some fishermen have turned to herring on a small scale but effort is low. A few vessels have also been regularly towing for whiteweed during the winter quarter.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 7**

### **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA & LEIGH-ON-SEA**

With the cockle fishery remaining closed efforts have turned to the permitted whelk fishery with vessels laying up to 300 pots within the 6nm limit. Up to a tonne of whelks have been landed every few days, and therefore this remains a lucrative winter fishery with prices for whelks remaining high. Other fishing activities have been limited to trawling for herring earlier in the quarter, however apparently this effort did not continue due to the poor catches.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 24**

### **HOLEHAVEN & THURROCK**

Fishing effort remains extremely low and in decline from Holehaven and Thurrock. Both vessels operate only on a part time basis with trips out working now very infrequent as the winter weather closes in for the end of the year.

**Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 2**

**Alice Highton**

**RIB Coxswain/MPA Compliance Officer| IFC Officer, Essex**