

Agenda Item C3

Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket' Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report for the period November 2017 – January 2018

Vessel priorities:

- Enforcement
- Candidate interviews
- Clam Survey
- Oyster Survey

Fisheries Enforcement

This is a shorter period than normal with fishing activity reduced due to adverse weather conditions and again as markets close for the Christmas break. Blue Jacket was the principal vessel used for enforcement duties this period. The main enforcement priority was on the new Essex Estuaries bottom trawling byelaw.

Blue Jacket spent some time operating out of Burnham and was tasked to conduct night patrols of the river Roach and Crouch. It was a quiet period in the Essex estuaries during which the patrols the vessels logged 3 vessel sightings. Non-boarding inspections were conducted on a further 2 vessels. The patrol vessels also inspected 11 sets of gear with no offences found.

Conservation/Survey Work

Clam Survey

Following reports of an abundance of clams on the Buxey and Ray sands, Tamesis spent some time conducting preliminary survey utilising the sample grid and methodology for the cockle survey.

Oyster survey

Survey work continued with Essex University PhD student Alice Lown. Strings have been laid at a number of sites in the Blackwater, Crouch and the Ray Sands to measure growth in native oysters in the respective areas. Strings are hauled and checked at regular intervals to record growth and mortality. Water temperature and salinity is also recorded at each site.

Marine Mammal observations

Patrols have led to numerous sightings of marine mammals with many individual seal sightings in the Roach and Crouch and groups of seals observed at low tide on the Buxey and Foulness sands

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. Tamesis is currently on hard standing in Levington marina for annual refit and a fresh coat of antifouling paint. The starboard propeller shaft is being replaced with a refurbished unit from stock due to excessive wear from the seal. She is also undergoing investigative work into an ongoing fault in the electronic systems.

Other Information

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on 5 occasions and took 610 litres of fuel and travelled 123 nautical miles. Blue Jacket also put to sea 5 times using 240 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 143 miles.

Other trips

Candidates for the post of Essex IFCO were taken to sea and assessed on Tamesis in mid-December.

Operations were conducted in accordance with standard operating procedures; the procedures outline safe working practices for employees and other agencies whilst working on the boat.

Invitation to Authority Members and P.R

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

Colm O'Laio
Skipper & IFC Officer