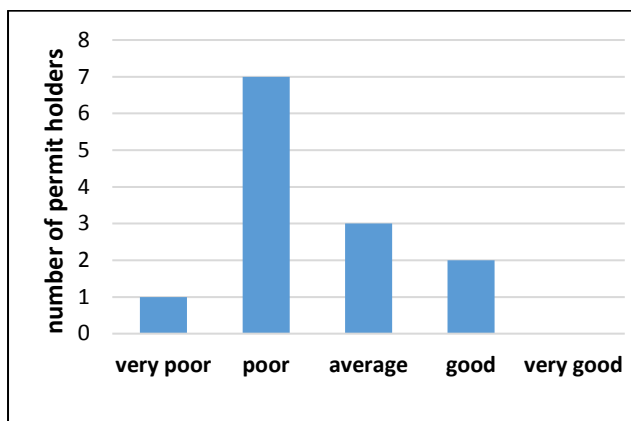


1) How has whelk fishing been this year?

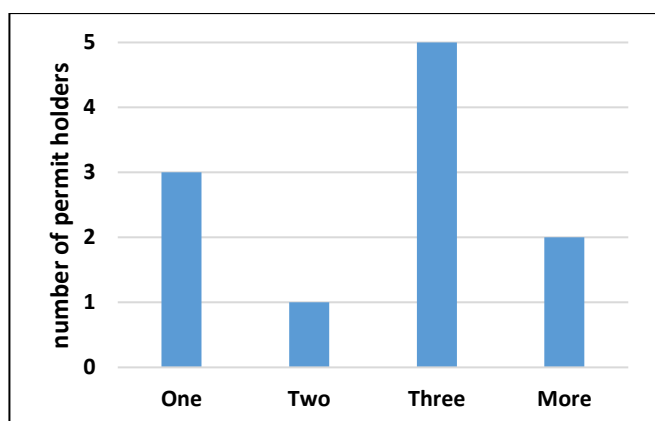


Is there any specific reason for this?
Very poor - 25mm riddle too big
Poor - 40% of catch goes through 25mm riddle
 - too many pots in water, increase to riddle size
 - 25mm riddle lets huge amounts of big whelks out
 - size too big
 - size limits in areas of Essex too large
 - excessive riddle size, losing a lot of sizeable whelks and whelks in recovery after being fished heavily for a few years
 - too many boats using too many pots

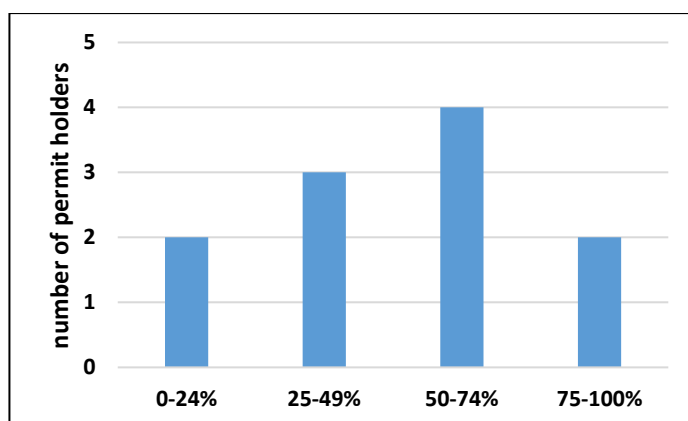
2) Where have you sold your catch to this year (fill in estimated percentage)?



3) On average how many people have you employed fishing for whelks this year?



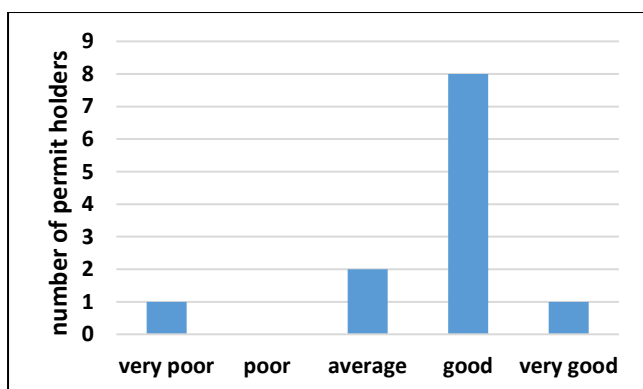
4) What percentage does whelk fishing contribute to your total income from fishing?



5) Do you fish for whelks outside the 6 nautical mile limit?

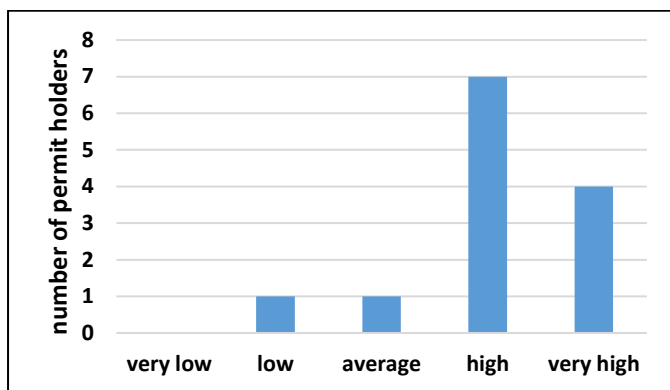


6) How have prices for whelks faired over the year?



Is there any specific reason for this?
Very poor – no increase in price worth talking about for years
Average – fixed price all year
Good – supply & demand

7) What kind of numbers of juveniles or small whelks have you seen this year?



Is there any specific reason for this?

Low – too many boats using too many pots

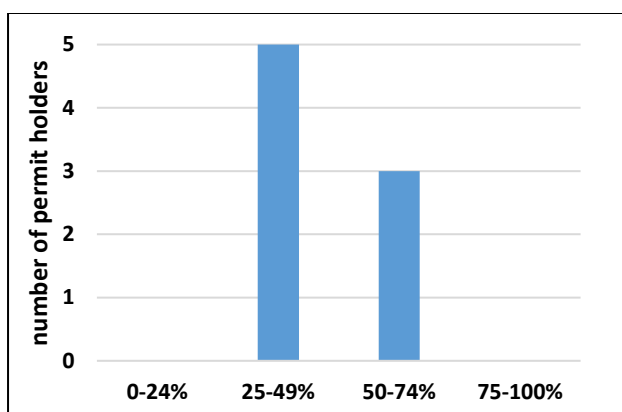
High – 22mm to 25mm, lots more to go over

Very high – Essex whelks have never been large (see recent survey)

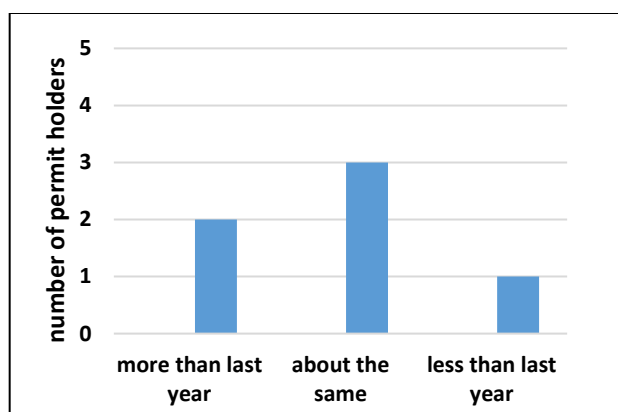
Any other comments on the fishery this year?

- we have lost a lot of sizeable whelks due to new riddle size
- 25mm riddle is allowing 45mm sizeable whelks through therefore it is costing us money
- we are losing too many sizeable whelks through the new size limits
- I think fishery was affected by a combination of warm water and bigger riddle making yields poor
- we will be packing up next week as it's not worth doing. Boats well north still land small whelks - why?
- the Essex area whelks should be reduced back to 22mm as the survey states there is no benefit to the larger 25mm size to breeding stock
- unsustainable

8) How many undersized whelks are usually returned (estimate percentage)?



How does this compare with last year?



9) What do you think fishing will be like next year?

very poor 1
 poor 2
 normal 4
 good 3
 very good 0

Is there any reason why you think that?

- I don't know, every year is different
- too many part-time fishermen with licences/too many pots in water/too many whelk licences handed out.
- because of high number of small whelks returned
- large amount of small whelks
- more activity
- can't answer this as it depends on what kind of winter we have, temperature affects stock also
- I'd like to think stocks may recover due to less effort this year
- 25mm riddle size
- too many boats with too many pots

10) What do you think the management of the stock should be next year?A) *Number of pots*

<u>Category 1 (Full time)</u>			<u>Category 2 (Hobby)</u>		
Less than 300 pots	Keep at 300 pots	More than 300 pots	Less than 10 pots	Keep at 10 pots	More than 10 pots
3	5	5	2	4	

Additional comment:

- 100 pots should be enough per boat. Hobby fishermen do not need the amount of whelks caught in 10 pots for personal use
- 300 is a good number in combination with the 25mm riddle, any less pots would be hard to make a living
- I think Hythe bay should have separate permit allowing only local boats to fish. As the local boats only work seasonally leaving the winter for stock to replenish
- some boats work more than 300 pots, impossible to police
- if riddle stays at 25mm need more than 300 pots, if riddle goes back to 22mm 300 pots is enough

B) *Riddle size (the size of the gauge used to measure the riddle)*

Less than 25mm	Keep at 25mm	More than 25mm
10*	4	

* one permit holder replied that the riddle should be less than 25mm in Essex, but remain at 25mm elsewhere

Additional comment:

- 22mm was perfect for this area. Riddle size should be different for different areas.
- 22mm was the right size to get 45mm whelks
- I'm happy for 25mm riddle, it does let lots of oversized whelks out however I can only see that as a good thing for stocks, but no bigger please
- 25mm lets too many sizeable whelks through
- losing too many prime whelks
- perfectly good sized whelks are going through riddle. Go back to 22mm riddle

C) *Escape holes*

Less than 10 holes	Keep at 10 holes	More than 10 holes	Less than 25mm	Keep at 25mm	More than 25mm
3	5	5	2	4	

Additional comment:

- holes in the pots are pointless, this clearly has been brought in with very little knowledge. All big holes do is make each pot weaker increasing the likelihood of plastic pollution in our seas which I am passionate about. I was most disappointed that a conservation group such as yourselves allowed this rule to ever happen???
- most pots come with holes drilled already and usually 25mm
- small whelks are still in the pots so bigger holes make no difference, it's all down to the riddle
- PLEASE no more hole alterations; does not make any difference and is just a nuisance
- can't keep changing size of escape holes as won't be any pot left

11) Is there any research you think we should carry out to better understand the stock?

- yes look into how many part-time fishermen have whelk permits. If they cannot prove that 75% of their earnings come from fishing they should not have them.
- it is necessary to work more with the fishermen to ensure correct decisions are made
- limit the number of boats
- allow each permit holder 20 or 30 pots in strings of 5 to allow them to investigate other unsurveyed areas (separate colour tag)
- have been whelking for many years and 25mm riddle is ridiculous, 22mm is adequate as still juveniles to go back to sea