

Agenda Item - C4
Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa'
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period January 2018 to May 2018

Priorities of vessel for quarter

- Check closed cockle areas
- Undertaken cockle grab surveys
- Patrol district for any large vessel infringement of byelaws
- Patrolled areas closed to bottom towed gear
- Inspect trawling vessels for EU gear legislation and catch composition
- Record data of all vessel sightings
- Record data of all static fishing gears, fixed nets and pots
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS)
- Inspect pots and traps for compliance of byelaws
- Check potting vessels for compliance of byelaws
- Check for compliance of whelk byelaws
- Sightings and observations logged and information reports forwarded

Risk based fisheries enforcement

Over the quarter opportunities have been taken to undertake sea patrols where possible taking into account the changing condition; both enforcement and survey duties have been undertaken. Fishing effort was low at first with efforts and methods used not out of character.

With information from internal and external Tasking & Coordination Group Meetings together with officers' knowledge, directed patrols have taken place both at sea and ashore giving good results. We have also been working with other agencies on dedicated patrols and sharing intelligence. Crew have also joined the Border Force vessel on sea patrol sharing local knowledge and closed and restricted areas have been monitored for activity. The six-mile limit has been monitored for incursions by large/foreign vessels into our district. We have logged and put in Information Reports on several unusual sightings of larger foreign vessels steaming through the district.

Fishing activity has been monitored throughout the district with Nerissa carrying out patrols in the Thames, along the Maplin sands, North Kent coast, down to

Dungeness point following the 6-mile limit to the outer Thames and the river Medway.

In January, Nerissa facilitated the MMO boarding a foreign pulse beam trawler outside of our 6-mile limit; gear was checked and some seized due to non-compliance. Other non-UK vessels were sighted, identified and logged into our database and MCSS.

Conservation/Survey work

Nerissa has undertaken cockle survey work across the Kent sites and near Leigh on Sea using the day grab. The crew have all continued to contribute to the work relating to MPAs ashore. Survey equipment has been maintained, serviced and repaired where necessary.

Statistics

From mid-January 2018 to the start of May 2018, Nerissa has patrolled 1210 miles, boarded ten vessels and carried out three non-boarding inspections when deploying the RIB wasn't possible. It has not been required to issue any verbal warnings during boardings, but six notices have been left following static gear inspections. We have sighted and identified 73 fishing vessels, most of which have been sighted on a few occasions and seven of which were charter or private angling vessels. During our patrols MCZs and closed areas have been observed for compliance including the three new areas closed to bottom towed gear within the Margate and Long Sands SCI. Ninety-one entries in the vessel log have been made recording the sighting of collections of static gear amounting to 222 fleets or individual markers. Over the quarter 80 seals have been sighted as individuals and larger groups on sandbanks, Porpoises have also been sighted on three occasions.

Maintenance

Daily and monthly checks have taken place. The next routine service has been booked for May and it is planned to put the vessel on the hard to inspect and clean the underside.

An Invitation to the Authority Members

Authority members are welcome to contact the office regarding 'A day on patrol' with our vessel Nerissa.

Ben Hermitage
Skipper FPV Nerissa & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority