

Agenda Item - C3

Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket'

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Report for the period May 2018 – August 2018

Vessel priorities:

- Monitor areas closed under Cockle Permit Byelaw
- Monitor TECFO areas for compliance with regulations
- Assist with collection of samples for cockle damage rates
- Patrol district boundary for incursions by oversized or foreign vessels
- Patrol areas closed for bottom trawling under Essex Estuaries byelaw
- Board and inspect vessels for compliance with EU technical measures
- 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 with KEIFCA byelaws
- Inspect recreational angling vessels to ensure compliance with regulations
- Set and retrieve whelk pots to obtain seasonal samples for EMFF Population Study
- Conduct interim sampling on oyster strings for Essex Uni PhD
- Vessel Maintenance

Fisheries Enforcement

The patrol vessels are traditionally very busy during this period. As spring turns to summer and with the oyster dredge survey and cockle stock assessments successfully completed, the vessels were tasked with the summer priority workstreams. The majority of Essex based sea enforcement was conducted using Blue Jacket, with Tamesis being used for survey work and some gear inspections.

Principal enforcement priorities for the period included the bass fishery, the Thames Estuary cockle fishery, the Essex Estuaries, and the river Stour. KEIFCA officers were accompanied by Marine Enforcement Officers from the MMO on seven patrols during this period, many of which were particularly aimed at vessels netting for Bass. Blue Jacket also assisted Nerissa in collecting samples of cockles from the TECFO fleet in order to assess the damage rates, and to assist the MMO with boarding cockle vessels to address e-log and licence issues. Blue Jacket was relocated to Suffolk Yacht Harbour to conduct three days of consecutive patrols in response to intelligence reports of vessels netting for bass in the Stour. No

significant netting activity was detected though officers did manage to inspect a number of commercial and recreational vessels during the patrols.

Officers logged 97 vessel sightings over this period. Boarding inspections were conducted on 21 commercial vessels and non-boarding inspections were conducted on 20 of these vessels. One byelaw offence was detected with a case in progress, and one skipper was given a verbal re-brief for being marginally outside the correct catch composition. MMO officers also discovered some e-log and licence issues. Officers conducted non-boarding inspections on 19 recreational angling vessels including two charter vessels to ensure to ensure all were aware of, and compliant with, landing restrictions on bass and minimum landing size of other species.

The patrol vessels also recorded gear sightings on 23 occasions, with gear being inspected on 11 of these. As a result, two sets of gear were seized for non-compliance, and one lost pot was found and returned to the owner.

Conservation/Survey Work

Surveys

An ongoing part of the oyster survey which is being conducted in association with Essex University PhD student Alice Lown involves monitoring water quality and growth rates of oysters on strings which have been deployed at selected sites.

Another project which was carried out in conjunction with Essex University involved fitting temperature data loggers to numerous buoys in the Blackwater estuary which will be recovered later in the year and used to give an accurate picture of how water temperature changed across the estuary over the course of the summer.

As there are very few vessels involved in the whelk fishery in Essex, particularly during the summer months, Tamesis was tasked to collect whelk samples from inside the district which will then be analysed the data used to inform the ongoing EMFF population study.

Marine Mammal observations

Marine mammals were logged on five occasions with many individual seal sightings in the rivers Roach, Crouch and Colne and large groups of seals observed at low tide on the Buxey and Foulness sands. Unusually for the time of year porpoises were not observed by the patrol vessels.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. Tamesis went on the hard in Brightlingsea for a scrub and a fresh coat of antifouling paint.

Blue Jacket had a major engine service during which it was discovered that an engine oil seal had failed, and some wear was discovered on the gearbox input shaft. Both issues were resolved by the Suzuki dealer in Brightlingsea. The vessel was attended by a MECAL appointed surveyor for a biannual test. Some minor

defects identified and were easily addressed, and the vessel was certified for another year.

Other Information

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on nine occasions and took 1245 litres of fuel and travelled 276 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea eighteen times using 1312 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 865 miles.

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'Laoi
Skipper FPV Tamesis & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer