

Agenda Item C4

Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa'

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period May to August 2018

Priorities of vessel for quarter

- Cockle damage rate checks
- Cockle boarding and landing checks
- Check closed Cockle areas.
- 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.
- 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.
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS).
- Crew undertaken RIB capsizing training

Risk based fisheries enforcement

Over this quarter we have been able to take Nerissa out on a number of extended patrols and more work overnight thanks to longer periods of fine weather. The crew are confident with the vessel now and operations are smooth and consequently safer and faster. This was important at the start of the cockle fishery with the short time available to board and inspect all the vessels whilst fishing. Hauling and shooting of fishing gear for survey and enforcement is well practiced and becoming more regular.

Enforcement duties have been mainly intelligence led but as always more intelligence is gathered whilst out at sea or on the shore. We have acted on external intelligence and worked with other organisations both onshore and at sea. Border Force have joined us on board Nerissa for patrols, the MMO have chartered the vessel for a few days of enforcement work and we have worked closely with the Police as well. We have been beyond the extremities of the district to the south and well outside of the 6-mile limits with the MMO as well as checking our limits on routine patrols.

The River Medway has been patrolled with Nerissa, RIB Nereus and Blue Jacket, boarding and educating anglers as well as collecting intelligence and evidence of infringements.

Pots, traps and the ends of nets have been hauled to check for compliance, each one has had a notice of inspection or offence attached and fishermen have been contacted directly in the case of seized gears. Vessels have been sighted and identified and logged into our database and MCSS.

Conservation/Survey work

The patrol vessel has set and hauled Whelk pots during August in place of the normal fishing vessels that send in samples for research. We have also utilised the RIB Nereus to assist with small fish surveys within the River Medway.

Statistics

Nerissa has patrolled 1916 miles since my last report, 39 fishing vessels have been boarded and additional conversations near or alongside angling and commercial vessel when deploying the RIB wasn't possible. Verbal warnings have been issued during boarding, 25 notices have been left following static gear inspections and six items seized for non-compliance. We have sighted and identified 144 fishing vessels, most of which have been sighted on a few occasions and 20 of which were charter or private angling vessels. During our patrols MCZs and closed areas have been observed for compliance including the three new KEIFCA no bottom towed gear boxes within the Margate and Longsands SCI. Vessels near these areas have been boarded or communications made to remind them of bylaws. 183 entries in the vessel log have been made recording the sighting of collections of static gear amounting to 495 fleets or individual markers. 167 individual marine mammal sightings have been logged, seals have been sighted individually and in groups hauled out on sandbanks. Fifteen of these mammal sightings have been Porpoises in pods of up to six. One small seal was unfortunately found dead floating on the surface with signs of injury caused by a vessels propeller.

Maintenance

Daily and monthly checks have taken place. Future plans for a lift out are being put together for maintenance and adjustments. Improvements are being made to the electrical installation on board the vessel and wiring schematics have started to be created.

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