

## **Agenda Item C2**

### **Shore Report - Essex**

#### **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

#### **Quarterly report for the period September 2018 to November 2018**

### **Overview**

This quarter typically sees the transition from the summer fisheries such as sole to the winter species such as cod. However, due to an unusually mild autumn, catches and quotas of species usually targeted in summer have remained relatively high with considerable landings of sole and skate throughout this period, with skate quota increasing to 2 tonnes a month from 1.4 tonnes in October. In contrast, cod have yet again failed to show in sufficient numbers for a profitable fishery, a trend which has been observed for the last few winters. Herring has been generally abundant but under targeted. As temperatures have declined so have catches of crab and lobster, while whelk vessels have started to deploy their pots again. The beginning of this quarter also saw the seasonal close of the TECFO cockle fishery and a successful opening of the permitted cockle fishery. The bass ban for recreational fisherman has been lifted, and from 1 October to 31 December 2018 the regulations allow one sizeable bass per person per day to be retained.

### **Harwich & Walton**

Trawlers have maintained a reasonable effort on sole and skate for the majority of the quarter, with catches only starting to tail off at the start of November. Despite abundant herring in the area, few boats have targeted this species due to low market prices. Walton pier and beaches have provided good catches of thornbacks and smooth hounds, with vast shoals of whiting and a small amount of codling reported. Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

### **Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, Clacton**

Fishing effort has remained steady in these ports, with most vessels focused on trawling, and to a lesser extent, netting. As in summer, sole has remained a popular target species with steady catches and a decent quota of 4.5 ton for the quarter. Similarly, reasonable catches of skate have continued despite the time of year. There have also been reports of reasonable numbers of codling in trawls, which fishermen hope will remain in the district to grow by the end of the next quarter. The small number of whelk fishermen have started to deploy pots from these ports, whereas lobster potting effort has decreased.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 14

### **West Mersea & Tollesbury**

Trawlers and netters have continued to fish for sole and skate, with occasional sizable bass also being landed in trawls alongside numerous whiting. Sizeable cod have still not shown in the area, with catches restricted to a handful of fish in recent landings. A few netters have turned their effort from sole to herring as temperatures have dropped towards the end of the quarter. Potting effort has started to slow, matching the overall trend for a reduction in effort for the majority of vessels in these ports as winter draws closer. Hand gathering of wild pacific rock oysters continues as a lucrative fishery at low tide, although the native oyster fishery remains closed in public grounds.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 21

### **Maldon & Bradwell**

There has been no reported commercial fishing activity from Maldon during this quarter, and as there are only three commercial vessels working out of Bradwell marina, effort is low for these ports overall.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 3

### **North Fambridge, Burnham-On-Crouch, Barling, Paglesham & Rochford**

Activity has been mostly centred on private grounds for native and pacific oysters, as the native oyster fishery in public grounds remains closed. There are also very low levels of netting in the rivers, targeting herring and whiting. Dredging for clams continues in the Crouch and Roach at low levels and bait potting also occurs in the in the area.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 4

### **Southend-On-Sea & Leigh-On-Sea**

The Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order was closed on 28 September this year, with the permitted cockle fishery opened 0900 2 October to 1200 4 October, with one trip allocated to each permit holder for Area 7. A total of 22 vessels took part in the permitted fishery, with the majority of vessels filling up with the maximum 13.6 m<sup>3</sup> of cockles. After the cockle season was over most vessels turned to whelks, and a couple of boats looked to shrimping in the Wash. Recreational fisherman reported good catches of thornbacks and whiting, with a few small wrasse present at the end of pier. Cod was sparse but reasonable amounts of mackerel were around.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 26

### **Holehaven & Thurrock**

Fishing effort remains low and in decline from Holehaven and Thurrock. Vessels operate only on a part time basis with trips out working now very infrequent as winter weather closes in for the end of the year.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 2

Martin Ward,  
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer, Essex