

Agenda Item - C3

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

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Report for the period August – November 2018

Vessel priorities:

- Monitor areas closed under Cockle Permit Byelaw
- Monitor activity and conduct boardings during Permit Cockle fishery
- Monitor TECFO areas for compliance with regulations
- Patrol district boundary for incursions by oversize or foreign vessels
- Patrol areas closed for bottom trawling under Essex Estuaries byelaw
- Monitor activity in Swanscombe rMCZ
- 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 autumn oyster survey for Essex Uni PhD project
- Vessel Maintenance

Fisheries Enforcement

The patrol vessels are traditionally very busy during the summer and into the autumn involved with the cockle fisheries, bass fishery, oyster survey and whelk survey. The vessels were tasked accordingly on 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 Permit Cockle Fishery, the Essex Estuaries and the bass fishery. Tamesis was deployed to the Crouch on a night patrol during the permit fishery to ensure there were no incursions into TECFO areas, whilst Blue Jacket was deployed to ensure compliance with the start time. Blue Jacket was particularly active in the rivers Blackwater and Crouch and

Roach to ensure compliance with the Essex Estuaries byelaw and was also engaged in monitoring fishing activity in the Wallet. Blue Jacket also operated out of Ramsgate and conducted patrols in the Medway no-take zone.

Officers logged 72 vessel sightings over this period. Boarding inspections were conducted on four commercial vessels and non-boarding inspections were conducted on 19 of these vessels. One skipper was given a verbal rebrief for being marginally outside the correct catch composition. Officers also boarded two recreational angling vessels and conducted non-boarding inspections on a further ten 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 22 occasions, with gear being inspected on six of these. One offence notice was attached, and one lost pot was recovered and returned to its owner.

Conservation/Survey Work

Surveys

The final oyster dredge survey of the PhD being conducted by Alice Lown of Essex University was carried out in September. Ms. Lown had additionally deployed a number of oysters attached to strings which were set in different areas to monitor growth rates. When dredging was completed the remaining oyster strings were also retrieved.

Another project which was carried out in conjunction with Essex University involved fitting temperature data loggers to numerous buoys in the Blackwater estuary. These data loggers were recovered and returned to the University

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 with the data used to inform the ongoing EMFF population study.

Marine Mammal observations

Marine mammals were logged on six occasions with individual seal sightings in the rivers Roach and Blackwater and large groups of seals observed at low tide on the Buxey and Foulness sands. Porpoises were observed on three occasions during this period.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. No major work was required on any of the vessels during this period.

Other Information

Statistics

During this quarter, Tamesis has put to sea on 17 occasions and took 1754 litres of fuel and travelled 468 nautical miles. Blue Jacket put to sea 11 times using 658 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 472 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