

Agenda Item C4

Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa'

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly report for the period September to November 2018

Priorities of vessel for quarter

- Cockle damage rate checks
- Cockle boarding and landing checks
- Check closed Cockle areas
- Cockle Permit fishery, boarding and damage rates.
- 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).

Risk based fisheries enforcement

Nerissa has worked on mainly intelligence led patrols with routine patrols to cover areas not visited. Intelligence has been gathered regarding vessel sightings, boardings and observed activity changes; this information has been entered into MCSS (National database) and circulated. Border Force have joined us on board for a targeted patrol of mutual benefit and the MMO have chartered the vessel for a few days for their own enforcement work.

The weather has been variable over the quarter however the opportunity has been taken to get Nerissa to sea when possible. The crew have been attending to shore enforcement and surveys as well as attending training when not at sea.

The River Medway has been patrolled with RIB Nereus whilst also assisting with small fish surveys. These patrols followed the edge of the no fishing area and allowed us to visit angling boats anchored within the river.

Pots and traps have been hauled to check for compliance, every marker interacted with has had a notice of inspection or offence attached and fishermen have been contacted directly where possible.

The cockle permit fishery was monitored for compliance of start times and boardings undertaken to check damage and catch rates. The activities of vessels visiting the district were observed after they had collected their allocated quota.

Conservation/Survey work

As mentioned above RIB Nereus has assisted with small fish surveys within the River Medway. Staff have attended training for small fish survey methods and joined a cockle vessel to sample new beds.

Statistics

Nerissa has patrolled 764 miles since my last report. Fourteen fishing vessels have been boarded, additionally the rib and patrol vessel have stopped alongside and spoken to vessels fishing. It has not been necessary to issue any verbal warnings during boardings. Four inspection notices have been left following static gear inspections, one offence issued and a string of 31 items seized for non-compliance. We have sighted and identified 79 fishing vessels, most of which have been sighted on a few occasions and two of which were charter or private angling vessels. During our patrols MCZs and closed areas have been observed for compliance including the three newest "No Bottom Towed Gear" boxes within the Margate and Longsands SAC. The vessels log recorded 153 sighting of static gear markers during our patrols. 18 individual marine mammal sightings have been logged, seals have been sighted individually and in groups hauled out on sandbanks. Some of these mammal sightings have been Porpoises in small pods.

Maintenance

Daily and monthly checks have taken place as well as annual surveys for fire safety, lifting gear and workboat code. Future plans for a lift out are being put together for maintenance and adjustments. Rib ramp rams have been off for service and repair after a small leak was discovered.

Other matters

Since my last report the patrol vessel has taken three candidates out individually as part of an interview process.

If any Authority Members would like to take the opportunity they are welcome to contact the office regarding a day on patrol with our vessel Nerissa.

Ben Hermitage
Skipper FPV Nerissa