

Agenda Item C2

Shore Report - Essex

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period September 2019 to November 2019

Overview

During this quarter the weather has contributed to minimal fishing opportunities for the commercial fleet and together with the typical transition from the summer to winter fisheries this has caused a slow period for the local boats. With the colder weather settling in cod has been virtually non-existent for another year, although there have been some reports of codling being caught from charter boats and anglers. Sole and skate have been the main target species for this period with plenty of dog fish and some bass still around, and large shoals of whiting hitting the coastline. Several boats have been targeting herring but low market value makes for a poor return for the effort. As temperatures have declined so have catches of crab and lobster, whilst 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. Charter boats and anglers have seen steady catches of skate, dogfish and autumn bass, with some mackerel, dabs and the odd wrasse from the piers.

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 thornback rays and smooth hounds, with vast shoals of whiting and a small amount of codling also being reported.

Number of vessels fishing from these ports: 20

Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe, Clacton

Fishing effort has remained steady in these ports, with most vessels focusing on trawling, and to a lesser extent, netting. As in summer, sole has remained a popular target species with steady catches and a quota of four tonnes for the quarter. Similarly, reasonable catches of skate have continued despite the time of year.

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 from trawlers alongside numerous whiting. Sizeable cod have still not shown in the area with a few netters turning their effort from sole to herring

as temperatures 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 4th October this year, with the permitted cockle fishery opening at 0600 8th October to 1200 10th 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 cubic metres 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 thornback rays and whiting, with a few small wrasse present at the end of Southend pier. Cod was sparse but there have been reasonable amounts of mackerel 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,

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