



Agenda Item C1

Shore report, Kent

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly report for the period November 2019 to January 2020

Overview

Weather conditions have dictated when boats can work over the Winter months; December is typically a slow month for many boats.

Fishermen are getting to grips with the 2019 technical conservation measures for gear and landing obligation. A new MMO catch recording app has been rolled out which is proving useful.

Some of the TECFO cockle boats have been landing cockles caught outside the KEIFCA district, while others have been carrying out maintenance on their boats.

This period is where the whelk fishing normally picks up to then slow down when the whelks spawn. A workshop was held at Ramsgate with whelk permit holders in December 2019 to discuss management, Science and enforcement. There were some productive discussions with the industry which will have positive outcomes for the whelk fishery.

Bass have been landed late into 2019. The 2020 proposals from the EU (to be published in January 2020) have indicated there will be a slight increase in bass limits for allocated vessels and recreational fishers.

Queenborough

After the busy cockle season, the commercial fishing activity has slowed over this period; vessels continue to trawl in the Thames Estuary in favourable weather days.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

Faversham

One of the boats usually up Oare creek worked down in Rye for three weeks targeting a mixed fishery but came back to Kent as conditions made it difficult to make it financially worthwhile.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

Whitstable

Following the four cockle fishing boats finishing the 2019 cockle TECFO season along with one trip for the outside cockle permit fishery, some vessels went out of the 6-mile limit to exploit a cockle bed located there for a short period of time.

The skippers and crew remain busy with maintenance and other jobs.

All the whelk boats have now begun whelk fishing again with some starting earlier than planned due to finfish landings slowing down. Whelk spawning began in the North Kent area which tends to slow the whelk fishing down over the Christmas period.

Two vessels continue to dredge for oysters on the Kentish flats with one boat fishing for herring. Some catches are sold locally at the fish shop in Whitstable harbour, but a lot of catches still go to France.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 15

Herne Bay

Commercial activity has ceased in Herne Bay. Occasionally, trailer-based vessels work over the high water to fish recreationally.

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 0

Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

Fishing vessels visiting from Sussex are still catching whelks outside the district and landing them in Ramsgate. Some vessels have acquired new mechanical riddles to streamline their fishing process at sea. Permit boats have been working inside and outside the district for whelks.

Boats have been netting throughout the winter season.

Herring and sprats have been landed and sold locally by one boat at Margate. There has continued to be no fishing activity in Broadstairs.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 31

Deal and Walmer

Fishing activity has decreased significantly over this period with many of the boats being sold on and catches have been down for the boats that have been working. Small amounts of skate were caught, and herring has been sold locally as soon as they were landed.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 6

Dover

One boat works locally setting crab pots close to the white cliffs and continues to land both crab and lobster. Charter angling vessels have been out consistently when the weather is good. One boat has also been rod and line fishing, launching nearby to work off the Dover area.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 3

Folkestone and Hythe

The Hythe boats have been working close to shore and near the Hythe MOD firing range mostly netting and potting for whelks, crabs and lobsters.

In Folkestone, the fishermen are seeing reduced catches overall. Fish that are landed are mainly skate and smooth hound which are sold on to France.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 14

Dungeness

Whelk fishing has been good for the Dungeness boats over this period.

Crab and lobster potting also occurred in this period and spider crabs are also caught regularly by the commercial fishermen.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 6

Ahmed Mohamed

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer