

## **Agenda Item C4**

### **Report on the patrol vessel 'Nerissa'** **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority** **Quarterly report for the period Mid-January 2020 through to August** **2020**

#### **Priorities of vessel for the 6 months**

- Checks of Cockle areas, open and closed, inside and outside.
- Patrol District limits for any large vessels.
- Patrolled areas closed to bottom towed gear.
- Inspect trawling vessels.
- Record data of all vessel sightings.
- Record data of all static fishing gears (fixed nets pots and traps)
- Inspect pots and traps for compliance of byelaws.
- Check potting vessels for compliance of byelaws.
- Check for compliance of Whelk byelaws.
- Sightings, boardings and observations logged and reported.
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS).

#### **Risk based fisheries enforcement**

Covid 19 has caused some operational issues for the Kent crew, so in order for Nerissa to continue to operate and be maintained the decision was made to temporarily move her to Brightlingsea which was done on 12 May. This allowed her to continue to receive routine maintenance and safety checks. At the end of July Nerissa returned to Ramsgate and started works under updated crewing requirements and additional procedure protecting against Covid 19.

Since the lockdown measures were introduced and with the inability to get the Kent patrol vessel to sea, officers have collected intelligence in other ways and have fed this into central intelligence.

Following the reduction in restrictions as a result of Covid-19, Nerissa has been able to return to sea since August and able to sight fishing vessels and gear and log their activities.

A notice of inspection or offence has been attached to gear markings that we have interacted with. The opportunity has also been taken to ask fisher to haul or retain pots and traps on board so they can be inspected as part of a boarding.

### **Conservation/Survey work**

Nerissa had her deck plates fitted ready to undertake cockle surveys on the Kent coast. Two days were dedicated to undertaking cockle grab sampling surveys on the Kent coast. Interview candidates joined the vessel for these survey days assisting with the sorting of collected samples and recording findings.

### **Statistics**

Over this time Nerissa has covered 955 miles, sighting 65 registered fishing vessel and 17 charter and private angling vessels. Boardings were undertaken prior to Covid-19 on four registered fishing vessels and we assisted the MMO by taking them to sea and boarding a further two registered fishing vessels. Seventy one log entries were made on the sighting of static fishing gear amounting to 159 strings or individual pieces of gear. We hauled nine buoys or marker flags to check for compliance, mainly because we were unable to see any identification. Six notices of offence were issued, and one string of lobster pots seized for multiple offences.

Marine mammal observations during our patrols made 22 log entries giving a total of 200 seals and 17 porpoises sighted with two sightings of whales. We deployed the RIB to stop one of the whales pushing further onto a sand bank and reported our sighting and interaction (later confirmed to be a sperm whale). The other was possibly a minke whale but this was unconfirmed.

### **Maintenance**

Daily and monthly checks have taken place with additional drills now taking place monthly. No major issues to report on the vessel, some hydraulic soft pipework will require replacement shortly and a rotation and condition check of batteries is due to be looked at.

The opportunity was taken to have internal batteries replaced in some of the electronic navigation equipment by the local engineer whilst the vessel was in Brightlingsea.

**Ben Hermitage**  
**Skipper FPV Nerissa**