



## **Agenda Item C1**

### **Shore report, Kent**

#### **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Quarterly report for the period November 2020 to January 2021**

##### Overview

This has been a very difficult time for the Kent fishermen as they have had to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to the way fish is exported to the EU, lack of fish and the usual mixed weather conditions over this period. Fish prices were significantly affected in National and European lockdowns, as demand reduced with restaurants and other public facing businesses closing.

Whelk fishing continues to be the most common form of fishing in Kent. Whelk prices have remained steady at around £1.10 per kilo for a while however bait prices are high as there has been low availability with the brown crab catches slowing. There are still plenty of dogfish about so netters have been selling bait to the whelk fishermen.

Fishing merchants are slowly adjusting to exporting fish to the EU from the start of 2021 with new paperwork requirements and health checks needed each time. Boats have been netting on good weather days but this has been a very quiet period for many of the fishermen.

##### Queenborough

The boats in the creek have been using this time to carry out essential maintenance and a new trawling vessel is being prepared to be used for trawling soon. Some boats have been herring fishing and netting but fishing activity has been low.

Number of vessels fishing from Queenborough: 9

##### Faversham

The boat that began whelk fishing towards the end of last year reported some steady catches but has recently stopped and plans to start again in a couple of months. The other vessel has done a small amount of Herring drifting and has been selling locally.

Number of vessels fishing from Faversham: 2

### Whitstable

The whelk season began after the waters cooled down and fishermen have had good catches of whelks. Three out of the six whelk boats now use a mechanical rotary riddle to grade their catches. The fishermen reported spawning whelks which slowed catches during this time. Bad weather and Brexit uncertainty also made life difficult for many of the fishermen that dealt with a company from the Republic of Ireland.

Native oysters have been caught by the oyster fishermen in Whitstable however they have reported difficulties in selling them to their usual customers with lockdown affecting this. The recent filming of the TV series 'The Whitstable Pearl' in Whitstable has brought good publicity about the fishing industry in the harbour and some of the boats have been used for the filming of the TV series.

One of the boats in the harbour travelled south to go scallop fishing and there has been a small amount of trawling activity with fish being sold locally where possible.

Number of vessels fishing from Whitstable: 15

### Herne Bay

There has been no commercial activity in Herne bay

Number of vessels fishing from Herne Bay: 1

### Thanet Ports (Ramsgate/Broadstairs/Margate)

Whelks have been the main fishery worked during this period in Thanet. This is from Ramsgate. There are still two visiting whelk boats from Sussex that work outside the 6nm limit and land their catches in Ramsgate. Whelks have been landed consistently from here. One small boat has begun whelk fishing nearby.

Netting boats have been out fairly regularly and have been selling their catches locally. Fishing activity has been very low in Margate and no boats have been fishing from Broadstairs.

Number of vessels fishing from Thanet Ports: 31

### Deal and Walmer

Deal boats have been selling herring and other fish to the locals in Deal, but this has been a challenge over lockdown with less people out and the weather less favourable.

Number of vessels fishing from Deal and Walmer: 3

### Dover

Dover's commercial fishing activity is low and one commercial boat fishes part time, potting and netting nearby. The other is used as a charter boat when weather and lockdown rules allow customers to come aboard.

Number of vessels fishing from Dover: 2

### Folkestone and Hythe

The Folkestone boats have been netting recently mostly for skate, bass and mixed finfish. The local fish merchant has been selling what they can locally however the third national lockdown has reduced the number of people out and therefore business. They have been exporting some fish to the EU which hasn't been so easy to start with. They conducted some trial exports of fish to the EU to get used to the new process. One of the boats has been scallop fishing but boats have mostly been netting and occasionally trawling.

Hythe fishermen have not been out as much recently. One of the boats sells his catch right off the beach but has not been out recently due to bad weather and lack of fish.

Number of vessels fishing from Folkestone and Hythe: 14

### Dungeness

Vessels are mostly whelk fishing from Dungeness when the weather has allowed. Some crab and lobster fishing still occurs however the lobster catches have almost completely stopped. Some cod have been reported but in small numbers from the netting boats. Fish have been sold locally and exported but market closures over Christmas slowed this down.

Number of vessels fishing from Dungeness: 6

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