

## **Agenda Item C3**

### **Report on the patrol vessels 'Tamesis' and 'Vigilant'** **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority** **Report for the period November 2020 – January 2021**

#### **Vessel priorities:**

- Monitor areas closed under Cockle Permit Byelaw
- Patrol district boundary for incursions by oversize or foreign vessels
- Area 7 Cockle & Clam survey
- EU Exit preparations & patrols
- Patrol areas closed for bottom trawling under Essex Estuaries byelaw
- Record data of all vessel sightings
- Record data of all static fishing gears (fixed nets and pots)
- Input key enforcement information into national fisheries enforcement database (MCSS)
- Inspect pots and traps for compliance with KEIFCA byelaws
- Vessel Maintenance

#### **Fisheries Enforcement**

This quarter is traditionally quiet with regards vessel activity in Essex due to reduced fishing effort over the Christmas period, and regular adverse weather conditions. This year was quite different with additional workstreams as a result of EU-Exit but limited by the third national Covid-19 lockdown.

KEIFCA patrol activity has not been unaffected by the pandemic with a greater emphasis on Covid secure non-boarding inspections, and with the introduction of the third lockdown, patrols have been mainly focused on gathering intelligence on EU-Exit readiness, and later on EU Exit impacts on the fleet. Sea patrols covered the district from the river Stour in the North, along the six mile limit, into the Essex rivers, the Thames up to Dartford creek, and along the North Kent coast.

Tamesis was redeployed to Ramsgate before Christmas from where she was tasked to conduct 3 patrols over the New Year period for the MMO, to observe and detect any potential infringements following Britain's departure from the European Union. In this short period, officers logged 30 vessels, of which 5 were charter recreational vessels, and 2 recreational anglers. Non-boarding inspections were conducted on 10 commercial vessels, with no offences being recorded.

One full boarding inspection was conducted on a commercial fishing vessel, which was found to be compliant with regulations.

The patrol vessels also recorded gear sightings on 27 occasions, with gear being inspected on 15 of these. Two offences of gear not being marked correctly, with additional fleets being noted for follow up investigation.

## **Conservation/Survey Work**

### *Surveys*

Throughout the year planned survey work on Tamesis was particularly impacted by the pandemic, as the crewing requirements for the planned survey work were not compatible with the ability to maintain social distancing. Protocols and procedures were developed to allow the vessel to recommence surveys, though with reduced crew. The cockle and clam survey of area 7 resumed, however the limited number of days available due to the Christmas break and the redeployment of the vessel to Ramsgate meant that only 2 survey days were completed in this period.

### *Marine Mammal observations*

Marine mammals were logged on eleven occasions with individual seal sightings in the Blackwater and on the Dengie, and Kings Channel, and in the south of the district on the Goodwin sands. A large group of seals comprising a mix of adults and juveniles was also observed at low tide on the Buxey sands.

## **Maintenance**

Routine maintenance was conducted on the vessels as required and monthly safety checks were carried out on schedule. FPV Vigilant was returned to Ribcraft for rectification of some minor issues under warranty. Tamesis had issues with a hydraulic pump which required replacement and an exhaust clamp which corroded and triggered a fire alarm whilst at sea. As a consequence, CCTV cameras have been installed in the engine bay to allow remote monitoring in future.

## **Other Information**

### *Statistics*

During this period FPV Vigilant put to sea 11 times using 745 litres of fuel to cover a patrol distance of 426 miles. Prior to her redeployment in Kent, Tamesis has been at sea on 9 occasions taking 1835 litres and covering 466 nautical miles.

### *Invitation to Authority Members and P.R*

An open invitation is usually extended to Authority Members to join the crew on an enforcement patrol or survey aboard the vessel, unfortunately however under circumstances due to government guidance on social distancing requirements and the size of the vessels it will not be possible to do until further notice.

Colm O'Laoi  
*Skipper FPV Tamesis & Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer*