

**NWIFCA Annual Meeting:
10th June 2016: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
11**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST FEBRUARY TO 30TH APRIL**

Purpose: To report activity and work of IFCOs during the quarter.

Recommendation: that the report is received.

Introduction

1. Apologies if I am not present at the meeting to present the report – I may well be on paternity leave. If members have any queries regarding my report please email them to me and I will be happy to answer them when I get back.
2. Full details of fishing activities within the district are as usual provided in the officers reports. In summary:
 - Leven Island cockle cram fishery in April. Cockle closed season in place from 1 May.
 - Foulney mussel activity continues dependent upon tidal conditions
 - Nephrops fishery began in April. Activity recorded within and outside the 6nm limit
 - Lobster and Crab fishery started as gear was returned to the water for the summer months.
3. Byelaw 3 (Cockle and Mussel) returns are summarised in Annex A.

General Update

4. IFCO Walters attended and successfully completed the IFCO training course at Torquay.
5. IFCOs have assisted with the design and testing of a new permit issuing database being developed for the Authority by Lake District National Park (LDNP).

Leven Island Cockle Fishery

6. The Leven cockle bed in North Morecambe bay was opened on the 4th April. A detailed report was received by the Technical Science and Byelaws (TSB) Committee on the 10th May. Summary points are:
 - This was the first time there has been a Cockle fishery opened in Morecambe Bay since 2008
 - Conditions included fishing on 4 days per week, one tide per day, a single access point, use of a cram only and a limit on the size of jumbos.
 - The fishery was open to the 30th April. On 8th April, the Authority agreed to extend to 7 days per week.
 - Attendance varied from zero to 50 per day depending on tides and industry demand.
 - At the time of writing a total of 13967kg was recorded as removed from the bed

Enforcement

7. The following sanctions were required during the quarter:

Sanction	Comments
3. Verbal warnings	4 th April first day of Leven Cockle fishery for non-possession of permit
4. Advisory letters	11 th April alleged use of a rake within Leven authorised area used where evidence was minimal
8. Official warning letters	11 th April: 4 for alleged use of a rake within Leven authorised area used where evidence was more substantial 25 th April: 2 for removal of under sized mussels from the Lytham area 28 th April 1 for removal of under sized mussels from the Foulney area

9. In addition to the formal enforcement sanctions taken above the following is also relevant to the quarter:

- 50 reminder letters were sent with reference to the weekly returns requirements for the Leven cockle fishery
- Education was used on two occasions in respect of the jumbo size at the Leven fishery

Court Proceedings

10. The appeal in respect of sentencing of Mr Brian Faulkner for two counts of obstruction of IFCOs (MACAA 292 (4)) at the Foulnaze fishery in 2013 was completed at Liverpool Crown Court. The appeal in respect of the IFCA's prosecutions was heard simultaneously with the sentencing of a prosecution brought by Mersey Port Health Authority.

11. The change in sanctions is summarised in the table below:

Sanctions on conviction at Magistrates court		Sanctions following appeal
Fines	£4000	£1000
Victim surcharge	£120	£100
Costs	£2000	£4965 + £1212 on agreement with defence solicitors as "wasted costs"
Total	£6120	£6177 (inc. £1212 to be paid by solicitors)

12. The total cost of the prosecution was £30,654 (£23,418 at Magistrates court and £7326 at Crown court) and the IFCA have retrieved £6177 of the total. A detailed timeline of the case is provided at annex B.

13. In his sentencing remarks His Honour Judge Morrow Q.C. stated in respect of the IFCA's prosecution:

"Suffice it to say that through no fault of the prosecution the proceedings lasted far longer and at greater cost than needed to be the case. Mr. Faulkner has brought the additional costs on himself."

14. And:

"We appreciate that public bodies will still be significantly out of pocket by reason of their bringing these proceedings against these Defendants. That is an unfortunate consequence of the two bodies properly exercising their important regulatory functions."

15. In addition the defence made no attempt to challenge the cost schedule submitted by the prosecution.

Legislative Issues

16. There were no legislative issues during the quarter.

Andy Deary
Head of Enforcement
May 2016

Annex A - Summary of Byelaw 3 Fishing Effort

Species	Bed	Amount fished (kg)	Effort (No. of people and days effort)
Mussel	Heysham	1,520	2 Persons, 2 Days effort
Mussel	Foulney	30,495	6 Persons, 53 Days effort
Mussel	Seafeld	2,250	1 Person, 2 Days effort
Mussel	Ribble Training Wall	13,020	2 Persons, 4 Days effort
Mussel	Wyre End	16,093	3 Persons, 5 Days effort
Cockle	Leven Island	13,967	21 Persons, 169 Days effort
	Total fished	77,345	692 days effort

Annex B – Time Line of NWIFCA V B. Faulkner

Date	Comments
22nd July	Commission of offences at Foulnaze fishery. 7 offences - 2 of obstruction (MACAA 292 (4)), 4 of breaching Byelaw 3 and 1 of fraud relating to completion of the Byelaw 3 permit application form
14 th March 2014	Plea hearing. Attempted to obtain a plea deal for the 2 obstructions charges Produced original byelaw s162 of MACAA in response to possible challenge of the byelaw Defence elected for the matter to go to Crown Court
27 th March 2014	IFCA dropped fraud charge to get the case back into Magistrates court to reduce costs
10 th April 2014	6 charges (2 obstruction and 4 for fishing without valid permit) laid at magistrates court
2 nd May 2014	Timeline for case set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Defence instructed to submit their skeleton argument by 6th June 2014 • The Prosecution to respond by 18 July 2014 • The Pre-Trial hearing set for 5th September 2014 • The Trial date set for 22nd & 23rd September 2014
4 th Sept 2014	IFCA advised of change of defence council
5 th Sept 2014	Adjournment of Pre-trial hearing at defence request
9 th Sept 2014	Re-arranged Pre-trial hearing – defence “no argument today”. Adjournment.
9 th -17 th Sept 2014	Repeated failed attempts to contact defence solicitors
18 th Sept 2014	Defence advise that 7 witnesses are required to give evidence 4 days before the trial
22 nd Sept 2014	Trial – change of defence counsel and new arguments were raised – principally that the byelaw was <i>ultra vires</i> due to a breach of process in the making of the Byelaw District judge Shaw order an adjournment to allow the prosecution to deal with the arguments – listed for 8 th January 2015
8 th January 2015	Liverpool Magistrates court – hearing for legal challenge to the making of Byelaw 3. District Judge Shaw stated: “The byelaw is signed ... and I accept the Secretary of State has had all the relevant information. I have heard both the Prosecution and Defence’s views regarding the interpretation of S. 162(3)...and I accept the Prosecution’s version.”
2 nd and 3 rd February 2015	Trial and conviction on 2 obstruction charges. Sentencing adjourned until 27 th Feb – order to produce schedule of financial position
19 th February 2015	IFCA submitted statements to defence on finance position of defendant
27 th Feb 2015	Sentencing fines and costs as above imposed at Liverpool Magistrates court
18 th March 2015	Sentence appeal notification received by the IFCA
29 th April 2015	Appeal hearing listed for 11 th June

30 th April – 4 th June 2015	Repeated attempts to contact defence solicitors and clarify status of legal aid and whether the appeal was effective
9 th June 2015	Notified the appeal hearing was going ahead
11 th June 2015	<p>Immediately upon attending Liverpool CC defence requested an adjournment having failed to comply with the order made on conviction.</p> <p>HHJ Atherton stated:</p> <p><i>"Here we are in June and you are not ready to proceed when sentencing in this matter took place in February. Last years accounts need to be before the court and I consider this application wholly irregular. I can see no proper basis advanced for this application."</i></p> <p>This hearing constitutes the "wasted costs" referred to above.</p> <p>Matter was adjourned until 4th September 2015 due to holiday commitments.</p>
Summer 2015	A case management decision to list the IFCA's appeal hearing with the sentencing hearing of case brought by Mersey Port Health (MPH) was made.
Summer to present	<p>IFCA case followed the timings of that of the MPH case to completion.</p> <p>Included in this is a brief attempt by the defence to obtain leave to appeal conviction in respect of the IFCA prosecutions. This was not followed through on production of a prosecution skeleton argument</p>
11 th May 2016	Ruling on appeal at Liverpool Crown Court

PRIORITIES, PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

- Patrol the district for large vessel infringements of byelaws
- Record data of nets and pots in district
- Inspect Lobster/Brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels
- Inspect gill nets for compliance with EU legislation
- Record data on nets
- Inspect nets for compliance with Byelaw 10 (3)
- Inspect vessels for compliance with EU fishing gear legislation
- Record all vessel sightings data
- Maintain service and repair patrol boats
- Inspect and carry out checks with hobby fishermen/vessels CSFC byelaw 26
- Patrol throughout district for detection of fishery limit line offences
- Attend meetings on behalf of NWIFCA

Fishing activities have again been monitored throughout the district in both "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo". The weather conditions have been up and down for most of the quarter, with the main patrol vessel having an extended period of time on the slipway at Maryport in order to carry out essential repairs and maintenance. As well as general maintenance and repairs, crew leave has resulted in quite a number of patrol days at sea being lost this quarter.

Details of patrols, boardings and inspections of vessels and fishing gear at sea using both "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo" can be found at appendices 'A' to 'C', to this report, and compliance with Byelaws and other EU legislation has on the whole been good.

TRAWLING, POTTING, NETTING & BOAT ANGLING

Trawling has again been poor for the local fleet throughout most of the quarter, with only light landings of prawns (Nephrops) and Thornback Ray being reported from the inshore fleet. Once again Spotted Dogfish are the predominant species throughout the district, and local vessels have continued in supplying the whelk boats with this species for pot bait. Once again the value on these landings is quite low, with only moderate to small returns back to the boat.

From late February we have continued to see both the local and the larger visiting vessels returning from the fishing grounds off the Northumbrian coast. The larger vessels that discharged their catch into Whitehaven were reported to have landed between 200 and 400 stone for three to four days fishing, with the smaller vessels landing much less.

We have encountered for the first time, a number of visiting vessels less than 10 metres and some just over 10 metres working twin rig trawls off the Cumbrian coast. Although this is not unheard of in other parts of the country, it is probably a first for the NWIFCA district and could be the start of a fleet restructuring programme for the smaller inshore vessels who are trying to maximise fishing effort and returns, when the weather conditions are suitable for this class of vessel.

Both local and visiting vessels have continued to make positive landings of Scallops into the district from the IOM fishery, on a regular basis.

Again the weather has halted netting at sea this quarter with no reports of any landings being made. A number of potting vessels have started to re-set their gear after the winter lay-up with moderate landings being reported.

The whelk vessels continue to land their catch into Whitehaven with reports of good landings of between 8 and 10 tonnes being made into the port.

Reports from boat anglers have again been positive with landings of sized Cod, Plaice, and Whiting in the northern part of the district being quite buoyant. This was again mainly close to shore and around the 'Heads' when weather permitted.

There was a report in one of the local papers of a large Thornback Ray being caught off the piers at Whitehaven. Records show the last time a Thornback Ray was recorded as being caught off the harbour wall was over 20 years ago; this has stirred up quite some enthusiasm with the local angling community.

Again to the annoyance of our local anglers, Spotted Dogfish are again being caught in large numbers throughout the district.

MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS & SERVICING OF PATROL VESSELS

The "Solway Protector" was slipped at Maryport on the 18th of February 2016 for her annual inspection, and to undergo essential maintenance and repairs, along with coding work in order for the vessel to pass her annual MCA workboat code inspection. A list of the work carried out during the quarter is as follows:

- Repairs to a starting problem on the vessel's emergency salvage pump
- Re-wire lights in void space
- Re-wire lights in toilet area
- Repair port side fuel line diverter valve
- Remove HYAB deck crane and control pedestal sent away for shot blast and repaint before refitting
- Remove five bridge windows which were heavily letting in water. These were removed, refurbished, resealed, and refitted
- Wheelhouse roof re-sealed
- Repairs carried out to deck areas where deck coating had lifted and became loose
- Repairs carried out on starboard quarter rail
- Deck re-painted with two pack non-slip marine grade paint
- Vessel's hull pressure washed down and prepped for painting
- New toilet fitted in crew's accommodation area
- New window wiper arms, blades, drive belts and rollers fitted
- Load tests and inspections carried out on lifting davit and equipment, along with the HYAB crane unit
- Fit new electrical crossover switch on main electrical panel
- Apply two coats of antifoul paint to hull and fit new anodes prior to vessel going back into water on 11th March 2016
- Main engines and gearboxes serviced, oil and filters changed, all manufacturer's recommended services for warranties have been carried out on both main engines
- All monthly safety check and service schedules are all up to date

PROTECTOR BRAVO

"Protector Bravo" continues to be a valuable asset regarding inshore enforcement duties. The vessel has performed well with only a couple of minor running problems which are as follows:

- New Honda engine for net/pot hauler fitted
- Replace float switch on bilge pumping system

WEATHER

On the whole the weather has again been mainly unsettled with some brief periods of calm and settled weather. On the whole the winds have been mainly west to northwest for most of the reporting period apart from the first week in April where we saw the winds back around to the east again, mainly strong. This was followed by a couple of weeks of relatively settled conditions, at the time of writing this report we are once again encountering fresh to strong/gale-force westerly conditions.

JOINT ENFORCEMENT WORK

We now have in place a working arrangement with the MMO (Marine Management Organization) to carry out joint enforcement work both inside and outside of the district. We hope to progress this work in a positive way over the coming summer months. I will report back to members as this work progresses.

H THINNESEN
5th February 2016

" Solway Protector "
DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time
12/02/2016	Seascale/Scallop Bank/Maryport	10	6.55
13/02/2016	Prawn pitch/Scallop Bank/Workington	4	6.92
17/02/2016	Prawn pitch/north Walney/Maryport	2	7.45
10/03/2016	Maryport to Whitehaven	0	0.75
13/03/2016	Selker to Workington	5	5.75
16/03/2016	Prawn pitch/Scallop Bank/Workington	4	7.00
17/03/2016	West Ravenglass/Sellafield/Scallop Bank	7	7.50
04/04/2016	Prawn grounds/Maryport	5	4.00
12/04/2016	Prawn Patch	9	4.00
13/04/2016	Prawn Pitch/St Bees	34	8.92
14/04/2016	Prawn grounds/west of Millom	20	4.75
15/04/2016	Prawn grounds/west of Millom	13	7.50
16/04/2016	West of Silecroft/Workington/Maryport	11	5.50

"Solway Protector "
PATROL STATISTICS

	01/02/16 - 30/04/16		1/11/2015 - 31/1/2016	
Number of patrols and passages	13	patrols	1	patrols
Seatime	76.59		9.50	
Average length of patrol	5.89		9.50	
Total distance covered	718	miles	80	miles
Average distance per patrol	55	miles	80	miles
Fuel used	1660	gallons	132	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	128	gallons	132	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	123	vessels	14	vessels
Local	53	vessels	14	vessels
Visiting	70	vessels	0	vessels
<u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u>	< 45'	> 45'	< 45'	> 45'
Trawlers	16	19	3	0
Twin Rigg Trawlers	16	44	0	0
Gill netters	2	0	2	0
Potting Boats	9	0	2	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Anglers	17	0	7	0
<u>Total:</u>	60	63	14	0

Protector Bravo - 7m Osprey Viper RIB**Operating base:** Whitehaven**Area of operation:** Burghmarsh Point (Solway Firth) to Haverigg Point (South Cumbria)

2016		
Date	TOTAL	11/02/2016
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		A FORSTER / H THINNESEN
Area patrolled & comments:		Whitehaven to Maryport
Number of hours patrolled	05:00	05:00
Number of miles patrolled	38.4	38.4
No of patrols days:	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	2	2
Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:		
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	1	1
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	1	1
Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel boarded:		
Trawler (single rigged)	1	1
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	1	1
Gear inspected per type of fishing vessel boarded:		
Trawler (single rigged)	1	1
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	1	1
Closings of vessels at sea:		
ZONE 3 - Allonby to Flimby	2	2
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	2	2
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL WHEN CLOSING UNDERTAKEN:		
Trawler (single rigged)	2	2
Unlicensed Netting Vessels	1	1
Recreational Angling vessel	1	1
Sightings of vessels at sea:		
ZONE 3 - Allonby to Flimby	2	2
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	1	1
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL SIGHTED:		
Trawler (single rigged)	1	1
Scallop dredger	1	1
Angling charter vessel	1	1

GENERAL

This reporting period covers the following shore based activities, as well as our normal enforcement duties:

- Prawns trawlers were not as active during the first half of the quarter due to poor weather conditions, which resulted in poor landings of prawns in the first half of the quarter but fishing picked up towards the end of the quarter, with landings between 15 and 25 stone of prawns for one days fishing
- Visiting vessels gave a much needed boost to the buyers in Whitehaven. Inspections saw landings from these vessels, in the region of 200 – 400 stone for a few days fishing, mostly from twin rigged vessels. Some smaller visiting vessels were also catching in the region of 15 - 180 stone for a few days fishing, similar to some of the larger local vessels
- A few odd vessels have had some good catches of thorn-backed rays, with one vessel having a 15 box haul, some larger vessels had more
- Shrimp fishing from boats in the district have seen patchy landings this quarter, with reports ranging from 25 kilos to 180 kilos being caught over a tide
- Licensed potters are active once again after a long winter off, and inspections carried out by officers saw 25 – 50 kilos of Lobsters and 15 - 400 kilos of Brown Crab. The whelk boats are making regular landings into Whitehaven of around 8 - 10 tonnes each landing
- Anglers fishing from piers and beaches are still catching some Codlings, with some Plaice also being caught. Codlings are still mostly being caught in the dark hours with some landings being in double figures, anything from 3 - 5 keepers for a tide when fishermen were inspected. Reports are that Codlings are all around the 3lb - 6lb mark with some even heavier. This seems to be the norm for this time of year, and some anglers were saying that a lot of cod have roe in them this year
- Netters have been active the first half, with catches mostly of Cod and Thorn backed rays. Into April seen the first showing of bass being caught

All in all a moderate quarter for the vessels and fishermen, with scallop and whelk fishing being the mainstay of the species landed into ports, with the exception of the last couple of weeks with Nephrops.

One of the regular scallop boats that land in the district, BA338 "Fredwood" sank in Maryport Docks after listing out. Flooding occurred to the vessel when the tide flooded.

TRAWLING

Over the quarter the prawn boats have not been as active, due in the main to the lack of prawns, and hampered by the weather at times. Most of the trawlers have been targeting Huss dog fish with very little value, due to the lack of Nephrops on the ground.

Some have had good catches of Thorn-backed rays, one vessel had a 15 box haul.

Most trawlers have been looking for and targeting Huss dog fish for the whelker boats, as they seem to be more in abundance than other species.

As the end of February approached, a change in fishing occurred as more visiting vessels were seen on the grounds, and landings in April were up considerable compared to previous months. Inspections saw landings in the region of between 15 – 180 stone, depending on trip length and vessel size.

There has been no mention of any spring Cod being caught again this year by any of the vessels, even the ones targeting fish on yesteryears traditional Cod grounds.

Some visiting vessels over the quarter reported moderate fishing outside of the six mile limit, of 150 – 400 stone of prawns and 50 - 90 boxes of Thorn backed rays being caught. Some of these vessels were multi rigged vessels, and to date, no multi rigged vessels have been seen by officers inside of the six mile limit.

SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH

Shrimp vessels this quarter have been active, with catches of between 25 - 180 kilos for a tide when weather has permitted.

KING SCALLOPS & QUEEN SCALLOPS

Vessels from Whitehaven and Maryport along with vessels from Scotland have been landing Scallops regularly from the IOM fishery, with landings of 15 - 25 bags for a day being reported.

POTTING

Vessels have only been active since the end of March and inspections carried out have seen landings of between 25 - 50 kilos for a couple of days work.

Whelk boats landing into Whitehaven on regular basis have seen landings ranging from 8 -10 tonnes, with prices around £635 per tonne.

Crabbers in the south of the patch have reported moderate landings of brown crab 15 – 400 kilos.

OFFSHORE NETTING

Little activity has been seen by this sector due to poor weather and seals on the grounds.

BEACH NETTING

Inspections carried out regularly at known netting areas have seen a mixed fishery. Cod and Thorn backed rays have been the mainstay of catches, up until second week in April when the bass started to show up in small numbers. On inspection at one location a fisherman was asked if he intended to keep the Bass, which he said he was, and was therefore was asked if he was hobby or commercial fisherman. He reported that he was commercial, so was advised under the new EU Bass regulations that he must provide evidence of the sale of the Bass caught, which he did the next day. Officers followed up the fish sale receipt to a restaurant, which turned out to be true, officers were then satisfied that the netter was commercial.

ANGLING

This quarter has seen Codling being caught by anglers at the usual stations, with the best of the catches being caught at night with up to 3 - 5 Codlings being kept, all around the 3 – 6lb mark. One exception was of a large Cod being caught over 30lb in weight at an undisclosed location by a boat angler. This was said to have been full of Roe, and it is believed that the fish was returned to the sea to fight another day.

Reports from anglers that a large number of Codlings and Cod caught this year have Roe and chitlings in them. Anglers say that they believe it's a good sign for future years. Cod have been reported and seen in greater numbers caught by anglers over the winter.

Some Plaice have been caught above 27cm.

Most of the Codling have been caught using bait made from the inners of brown crab called "CART", which is processed into sausage type meat and frozen, when used they pin prick the sausage to let out a scent which attracts Cod.

During daylight hours anglers have been seen on piers where some have reported good sized Plaice and the odd Codlings being caught.

BAIT DIGGING

Very little bait gathering has been seen this quarter. Four diggers have been seen by officers and very little in buckets, 50-100 for own use.

Reports from one commercial luger are that he has been getting, when he has been out, between 600 - 700 per tide, prices are £30 - £35 for 100 lugs.

OTHER DUTIES

Other duties carried out this quarter have been to support enforcement operations at Leven Island cockle fishery.

ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION

Beach netters have been educated regularly in the last few weeks, regarding the EU bass regulations currently in force, where if they intend to sell Bass and claim they are commercial then they must provide officers with proof of sale, which in turn will be followed up by officers visiting premises that have bought Bass from netters, in order to prove sale of any Bass sold.

Officer Statistics for the period 21st January – 18th April 2016

Shore Patrols	32
Fishing Locations visited	314
Quad Patrols	5
Locations by quad	34
Anglers seen	58
Bait Diggers seen	0
Inspections all	69
Beach nets inspected	10
Days assisting other areas of district	6
All vessels sighted in ports	5173

NORTH MORECAMBE BAY

HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE

IFCO, I. Dixon

TRAWLING

During the last quarter I have not observed or had any reports of commercial trawling activity.

POTTING

During the quarter 3 licensed vessels have been observed working from Barrow. One is a new vessel who has just begun potting and has spent time prospecting and setting pots. The other vessel began setting its gear out again after bringing it in for the winter, one vessel is fishing outside of the IFCA District. Catch reports from the vessels within the district was low as would be expected while time was spent getting more gear out from the quayside.

One vessel has been prospecting for whelks in the Barrow area although no catch reports have been received as yet.

SHRIMPING

Shrimp fishermen began prospecting for shrimp following Easter although a period of cold weather meant catches were very low, fishermen are hoping for a season like last year where it was reported to be the best for many years.

COCKLES

During the last quarter I have spent time preparing for the opening of a cockle bed in the Leven estuary area of Morecambe Bay, the first time the Bay has been open for cockling in several years.

Strict fishing conditions were applied to preserve the juvenile cockles and allow the taking of the large mature cockles. On the opening day on the 4th April, 50 Byelaw 3 permit holders attended but due to market demands and the fact that the average catch was between 2 and 3 sacks saw numbers drop to an average of 15 until the fishery closed in line with the closed season on the 30th April. 8 gatherers were cautioned for taking unauthorised rakes onto the fishery which were concealed when IFCO's inspected the area, enforcement action has been taken following this incident. Apart from the rake incident the fishery progressed smoothly and most of the gatherers were pleased that cockling was happening in the area again.

Surveys conducted on the North Morecambe Bay cockle beds revealed an increase in the numbers of juvenile cockles across the majority of the known cockle beds which is encouraging for the future.

I continue to undertake cockle samples for South Lakeland District Council's Environmental Health Department.

MUSSELS

During the quarter mussel fishing activity has continued at a low level on Foulney on spring tides during February and March, with 8 permit holders fishing small amounts of size mussel. During April effort increased due to many of the gatherers who had travelled to work the cockle fishery deciding to work mussels instead or to do one tide on mussels and one tide on cockles, with up to 26 gatherers being present. Many of the mussels on the lower extent of Foulney have experienced a heavy spatfall lately and this is hoped to be surveyed in due course at the earliest opportunity in the next reporting period. In late April one Byelaw 3 holder was cautioned and reported for landing mussels which were in breach of the minimum landing size of 45mm, all the mussels were relayed from where they were taken by the permit holder.

The Duddon mussel bed has been surveyed and still has many large mussels present however these are spread out over the bed and would be uneconomic to gather, the area has also seen 2 spatfalls, one from late last year and one more recent, the area has sanded up more than when it was last worked. Many of the large mussels were found to contain pea crab.

I continue to take mussel samples for Barrow Environmental Health Department from Foulney and the Duddon mussel beds.

NETTING

Only one licensed vessel from Barrow has been observed netting to catch flounders for pot bait in the Foulney area towards the end of this quarter, catches were relatively poor. Effort has been spent educating fishermen about the new Bass regulations. At the time of writing this report no catches of Bass has been reported.

Two more licensed vessels have been purchased by Barrow based fishermen which I hope to see working in the near future.

The only beach nets I have observed have been set to catch pot bait, all inspections of these found complete compliance with IFCA Byelaws. A report was received regarding a beach net which was set at Earnse Bay near the Nature Reserve with the reporter concerned over it being a danger to beach users, photographs and a gps location were included in the report, following inspections of the area the net was found to have been removed, its location was sufficient distance away from the foreshore not to present any danger to the public, the only possible infringement noted on the photographs was that it appeared not to be marked with a buoy, patrols will be continued on suitable tides to investigate further.

ANGLING

Angling activity continued at a relatively low level as is usual for this time of year, with anglers targeting Flounders and plaice in the estuaries and Walney Channel. The new Bass regulations have also seen a decrease in the number of anglers who would normally begin to be seen during late April, although many anglers spoken to have no issues with compulsory catch and release until 1st July. Very few angling vessels have been observed, the ones I have spoken to were targeting cod.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

IFCO, J. Moulton

During the last quarter fishing within my area has begun to arrive with calmer spring weather. During this period I have continued to conduct patrols across the area on a risk based approach as well as assisted in the enforcement of the Leven Cockle Fishery.

As a part of my communications duties I have given presentations on the role and work of NWIFCA to the Lancashire wildlife group, Marine Conservation Society and organised 3 stakeholder meetings across the district in March. In April I attended the NFFO meeting which was held at the Carnforth office. The text messaging service continues to be a valuable tool for communicating with stakeholders quickly and efficiently.

The intelligence management project has continued to develop and is now providing good information for risk based enforcement to take place across the district.

SHRIMPS

The inshore shrimp industry in Morecambe continues to be on a micro scale with only two fisherman operating commercially licensed boats. In February and March no boats were seen operating however, shrimp fishing effort increased by the two boats in this quarter leading up to Easter. Fishermen have found that due to the southward shift of the Kent channel there are less opportune grounds for prosecuted the shrimp fishery.

No use of Tra la la tractor units has been observed from either the North or South side of the Bay and there have been no recreational boats operating yet this year

TRAWLING

This fishery continues to be extremely low key. No improvement in trawling activity has taken place either on a commercial or hobby basis. This fishery continues to prove very disappointing and, as reported in previous reports, no improvement is expected in the foreseeable future on a commercial or hobby basis.

COCKLES

Throughout this last quarter I have received no reports of cockles being removed by commercial gathering in this area of the District.

With the opening of the Leven Cockle fishery I assisted in the enforcement of the authorisation issued by the Authority to open the area for gathering by craam. In the second week of opening I issued 4 cautions for the possession of a rake within the authorised area.

Levels of juvenile cockles have continued to increase across the area, however there are of yet not significant levels of size cockle in this area of the District

During this period I have on a monthly basis assisted IFCO Dixon with the collection of Shellfish Hygiene Samples for South Lakes District Council.

MUSSELS

During this last quarter there has been a small amount of gathering from the mussels beds in the vicinity of Knott End. This mussel has proven to be of an excellent size but is limited to fishery on large spring tides

All commercial beds have been inspected have seen good early settlements of mussel spat which hopefully will grow on.

During this last quarter I have continued to collect shellfish for Wyre District Council and have assisted other officers in the gathering of shellfish hygiene samples.

DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS

With the introduction of the drift net ban for bass fishing all boats have remained out of the water or tied up on sheltered moorings. Most fishermen were in agreement that they would be happy to wait for the changes in legislation come July rather than attempt to fix nets in the strong tidal conditions which are experienced around the Bay area.

Stake nets have been tied up throughout this quarter.

A small amount of recreational long line fishing has been seen in the Morecambe and Heysham area.

DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING

During this last quarter shore anglers have continued to fish over high and low water tides being observed at Throbsshaw point, Bare Ayre and Heysham North Wall. Dinghy and shore angler effort has remained very low with only few boats launching over low water to fish during good weather.

Compliance of Byelaw 5, Heyham Bass Nursery Area has on the whole continued to be good

CENTRAL AREA

RIVER WYRE TO RIVER ALT

IFCO, N.Walters

GENERAL

Weather has generally been improving with the time of year but there is still a large amount of run off from fields making its way down the coast that has been affecting angling. This coupled with strong winds has made the period somewhat unsuccessful for the majority of fishing sectors.

TRAWLING

Fleetwood's trawlers have been working more steadily with reports of large quantities of lesser spotted dogfish still being caught.

POTS

One Fleetwood potting boat has been observed in port, current success is unknown.

SHRIMPING

Commercial shrimping has been increasing at Lytham within the last month with some generous sized catches being landed which is good to see. The Southport shrimpers appear to be having slightly less luck recently.

Push netting at Blackpool has had similar success to Southport but hobby shrimping at Lytham has been going well with catches sufficient for domestic needs. All areas will continue to improve with the warmer weather.

COCKLES

Cockle survey carried out at North Run, adjacent to St Annes which yielded very limited results. There were few cockles of any year class which suggests quite sometime until a cockle fishery is expected here.

MUSSELS

Mussels have been helping commercial gathers through the last quarter with a small amount on the Ribble Training Walls and some decent sized stocks at the bottom of Seafield that are only accessible on the spring tides.

NETS - LINES

An increase of beach nets has been observed, particularly on the Sefton Coast, catches have however been poor. Hobby nets are planned to be set at Lytham shortly and an increase along the Fylde Coast is expected.

Longlining has been observed at Rossall, currently this is unknown whether it is an isolated occasion or whether it is more frequent.

The majority of the Lytham netting boats have returned from their winter moorings and have been working steadily on the majority of tides. Catches have been reportedly poor. The netting boats at Fleetwood have been observed also steadily working.

ANGLING

As usual the most popular shore fishing location has been along the Blackpool coast. Results have been disappointing with sometimes up to 60 anglers catching few fish between them. Much sport fishing has occurred within this quarter with several competitions occurring along the length of the Fylde coast. Majority of the catches are flounder, codling and dab. One bass was reportedly caught but released, in line with the current bass restrictions.

Angling boats have been out in force recently with some weekends seeing up to 15 boats within a two mile radius from Blackpool. These boats have reported to have had success with large cod.

Angling has been observed at Preston Docks also with only flounder being caught.

BAIT DIGGING

The numbers of bait diggers observed has increased recently, especially at the spring tides. The stretch between Blackpool and Cleveleys seems to be the most popular currently along with the successful Southport workers.

ENFORCEMENT

Two verbal warnings were issued within this period, both of these were under Byelaw 3 for attempting to remove undersize mussels. Offence detection reports were completed and sent to HoE.

One section 265 notice under the Marine and Coastal Access Act was issued to a beach net near to Ainsdale. This notice was issued for having an unmarked net; this is to be followed up shortly.

Two long liners in Rossall were inspected and found to have a number of undersize fish landed. It was not possible to give cautions due to the refusal for the fishers to give their details. Issue was reported to HoE.

SOUTHERN AREA

MERSEY, WIRRAL AND DEE

IFCO, A. Brownrigg

GENERAL

During this quarter both IFC Officer Capper and I have continued to undertake activities such as enforcement work, sample work and attendance at stakeholder meetings throughout our area. Both officers have offered officer support to the cockle fishery at Leven Island and survey work in the Morecambe Bay area. Due to the poor weather over the recent months both officers have taken the opportunity to carry out essential maintenance work on the area's vehicles, Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) and personal protection equipment.

SPECIFIC

COCKLES

Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to do so throughout 2016. Beach closure notices to cockling remain in place and will do for the foreseeable future. Both NWIFCA and Mersey Port Health Authority (MPHA) officers continue to monitor the bed.

MUSSEL

West Kirby and Caldy Blacks mussel beds remain open on the Dee Estuary but both have very little commercial stock value. Both beds remain patchy and made up largely of dead shell. Sampling continues to take place at Mersey mussel North and South with Mersey Port Health Authority. In the meantime all shellfish within the Mersey estuary remain classified as prohibited and are unable to be gathered.

SHORE ANGLING

During routine shore patrols very little angling activity has been observed along the river Mersey, north Wirral coastline and Dee Estuary. Otterspool Promenade, Jobs Quay (Eastham Country Park), Alexander Wall within the Port of Liverpool and Perch Rock has seen the most regular activity. These areas have seen between one to 25 anglers fishing at any one time where Dab, Flounder, Cod and Plaice have been observed being landed.

BAIT DIGGERS AND CRABBERS

Bait diggers remain to be seen predominantly along the north Wirral coastline, with New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area of beach off Leasowe Common being identified as the most popular locations. On patrol I have observed up to three bait diggers working and on inspection I have observed between 30 to 80 Lug worms in total. I have three crab tile points, two in the Mersey and one along the north Wirral coastline. Made up of plastic piping and old tyres it is not uncommon to see up to 100 'crab tiles' situated in one area. Crabbers are routinely observed over a low water gathering.

RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL BOAT ANGLING

Weather permitting, the area's commercial and recreational fishing vessels have been active along the river Mersey and local area. The Cod fishery has been eventful with reports of good catches being made. Presently the area has eight commercial angling vessels and several recreational angling vessels working from Liverpool Marina and moorings at Bromborough, New Brighton and Meols.

TRAWLING

Four commercial shrimp beam trawlers remain moored off Thurstatson slipway however; due to poor weather and the unavailability of the RIB both officers have been unable to board and inspect the vessels.

'BAY PROTECTOR'

'Bay Protector' has been out of the water undergoing her 100 hour routine service and inspection. I am now pleased to say she was delivered back to Liverpool Marina at the end of April. Already planning for routine and joint enforcement patrols has already taken place; a detailed report will be written in the next quarterly report.

NETS

During a recent ATV patrol three set nets were observed along the beach at Formby; all nets were inspected and found to be correctly marked up.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey up to the River Ribble, north Wirral coastline and both sides of the Dee Estuary remain ongoing. Both enforcement officers recently attended the Dee Estuary Sea Fisheries Liaison Group meeting held at Rhydymwyn Valley Works. Finally; assistance to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, MPHA, Natural Resources Wales and Merseyside Police has remained ongoing.

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY: 1ST FEBRUARY TO 30TH APRIL 2016

ENFORCEMENT BURDEN					
Length of District coastline		878.5 n.m.			
RESOURCES					
Patrol vessels		1 x main patrol vessel “Solway Protector” which patrols the whole of the district, and RIB boarding boat. 3 x RIBS – one based in the northern sector of the district - “Protector Bravo”; one patrolling Barrow, Walney and north Morecambe Bay – “Protector Gamma”; one patrolling the Ribble and Mersey – “Bay Protector”.			
ATVs (quadbikes)		10 in total spread throughout the district			
Patrol vehicles		2 x Nissan Navara; 1 x Isuzu Rodeo Denver; 2 x Land Rover Defender 90; 1 x Renault Trafic Van; 2 x Renault Kangoo ML19; 1 x Renault Kangoo Maxi crew			
Human Resources		3 x IFCOs (Master, Mate and Engineer on the main patrol vessel 6 x full-time IFCOs shore-based and one IFCO part-time 3 x warranted officers with other duties			
ENFORCEMENT AT SEA:					
Number of	Solway Protector	Protector Bravo	Protector Gamma	Zodiac Bravo	Bay Protector
Patrols undertaken	13	1			
Patrol hours (sea time)	76.59	5			
Nautical miles	718	38.4			
Sightings of vessels fishing	123	3			
Closings	0	4			
Inspections	1	2			
Boardings	0	2			
ENFORCEMENT ON LAND:					
Number of:	Cumbria	Barrow	Morecambe	Fleetwood	Wirral
Shore patrols*	51	64	32	40	34
*Undertaken either by vehicle or on foot, to any beach/foreshore/landing station/harbour/pier (not using an ATV)					
ATV patrols	8	17	13	6	3
ATV patrol hours	17.08	22.5	23	7.5	8.25
ATV kms covered	207.8	235	210	83	56
Inspections undertaken	151	317	40	159	1
INFRINGEMENTS:					
	At Sea		On Shore		TOTAL
Verbal warnings	0		3		3
Advisory warning letters	0		4		4
Official warning letters	0		7		7
Official Cautions issued	0		0		0
Prosecutions Pending	0		0		0
Home Office cautions issued	0		0		0
FAPs	0		0		0
Prosecutions	0		0		0