

# NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

11 December 2012: 11.00.a.m.

AGENDA

ITEM NO.

10

## SUMMARY OF INSHORE FISHERY AND CONSERVATION OFFICER'S (IFCOs) REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2012 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2012

The re-opening of the cockle fishery at Foulnaze Bank, Ribble Estuary in August for two weeks in October and at Marshside Southport in November, took extensive planning. This fishery also drew down far too much Officer enforcement time from across the district resulting in reduced cover in other areas.

However, following the controversy of 2011, we can report that the fishery took place without any serious safety incidents and was largely successful for both the cockle industry and the NWIFCA. The fishery was operated by boat. Gatherers travelled in small boats from Seafield Road at Lytham St Annes while cockles and equipment were transported on registered fishing vessels based in Preston Marina. These vessels travelled down the Ribble daily and dried on the Foulnaze Bank. They collected all the harvested cockles from the gatherers on the sand and shipped them back to Preston where they were offloaded onto lorries for onward transport. This system proved to be reliable and safe, also allowing catches to be accurately recorded and registration documents to be comprehensively collected and checked.

The fishery opened Monday to Thursday for three weeks during August, and for a further 9 days during October. From an enforcement perspective there was good compliance with the regulations and permit schemes and effective co-ordination between the NWIFCA and several other agencies, including the GLA, Coastguard, police and local authorities.

However, successful enforcement required Officers from across the district to be taken away from normal duties to assist, and some reports were received of poaching in their absence. Most other fisheries reported poor catches, with the weather limiting many vessels' time at sea. Trawling was particularly badly affected; however the potting sector managed reasonable returns. Many pots are now being returned to shore as fishers move to netting for the winter season.

Seed mussel has been unusually prolific this year. The Morecambe Bay dredge fishery on South America skear in Morecambe Bay took 12,320 tons and a hand fishery at Heysham skear continued for about 6 weeks from September to November.

Throughout the district, angling has been reported to be healthy, with reasonable catches and active participation on both shore and boat (weather permitting).

The '*Solway Protector*' continued to be largely free of major problems, and operated throughout the 3 month period with only minor repairs necessary. '*Protector Bravo*' and a new vessel, the Humber RIB, '*Protector Gamma*', have been active in assisting with enforcement in the north of the district, whilst the re-fitted RIB '*Protector Alpha*' has been used in boardings and closings around Liverpool Bay. '*Protector Bravo*' requires a significant amount of re-fitting in order to bring it up to standard for MCA coding, so '*Protector Gamma*' will remain in Whitehaven until it comes back online.

A lot more detail of specific fisheries across the district are found in the individual Officer's area reports on the following pages.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

Officers have issued a number of cautions for byelaw offences, with 10 being handed out in Cumbria, plus 5 verbal warnings. Some offences were also recorded during the Foulnaze fishery openings and are being processed.

**SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

**21 November 2012**

**Master of the "Solway Protector" - H Thinnesen**

**"SOLWAY PROTECTOR"**

During the quarter the "Solway Protector" has again provided us with 3 months of valued service, both with inshore and offshore enforcement activities, along with scientific and survey work carried out.

I would like to make Members aware that the patrol boat is now in her 23<sup>rd</sup> year of operation, and as you would expect with a vessel of this age ongoing repairs and maintenance are only likely to increase as she gets older. Despite this, I am pleased to report that the "Solway Protector" has only encountered minor running problems during this quarter. These are as follows:

- Whilst undertaking a routine fisheries patrol on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, power supplied to most of the vessels navigation equipment was lost. On investigation it was found that the voltage reading on the main control panel was too high. Further investigating revealed the voltage regulator had been overheating which had then resulted in a power loss to the onboard navigation equipment. A replacement regulator unit was ordered and fitted by the patrol boat's Engineer.
- Problems were also encountered with the port side main battery bank. This seems to be a repetitious problem which has occurred a number of times over the years. When the "Solway Protector" was built, the vessel was fitted out with less than half the electrical equipment that she now has operating onboard. This results in harsh loads of power at times being required out of the batteries. As a rule of thumb we generally expect to get about 24 months of usage out of the units before they need replaced. New replacement batteries have now been fitted and all the onboard navigation equipment and deck lights are all in working order.

We are also encountering different electrical faults on a daily basis, however these are too numerous to list individually.

- During a routine patrol around the Heysham Lake area in Morecambe Bay, the port side high water bilge alarm activated. On entry into the engine room the automatic bilge system pumps continued running. It was soon evident that the level of water was not decreasing, even though the automatic pumps were running. The main suction pumps were then activated to clear the rest of the water in the bilge space. A quick investigation revealed that the excessive water ingress was entering the vessel through the port side stern tube. With bilge pumps still running best speed was made for Heysham Harbour, where I had made arrangements to berth alongside in case a portable salvage pump was required from shore side. Once alongside it was decided that no shore side assistance would be required and the necessary repairs could be safely carried out by patrol boat crew. Prior to leaving Heysham Harbour the port side stern tube was re-packed, and the patrol boat was back on station two hours later.
- Repairs were also carried out on the patrol boat's Webasto heating system. We have encountered a number of problems with the system over the last 12 - 18 months, and as a result the patrol boat Engineer has advised that the unit should be replaced as it is uneconomical now to repair. We hope to have a new system fitted when the patrol boat is slipped at Maryport in January 2013.
- Once again whilst undertaking a routine patrol we encountered another bilge system fault in the steering compartment. Investigations revealed that a non-return valve on the automatic bilge system pipe work had jammed in the open position. This had allowed sea water to siphon back through the pipework and into the steering compartment. The seacock was immediately closed off to stop any more water flooding into the steering compartment, and the main engine suction pumps were activated to discharge the sea water. A new non-return valve was fitted the following day while berthed alongside the marina at Whitehaven.

- Repairs were carried out on the 1.5 tonne hydraulic deck crane which had developed a fault with the operating valves. The crane control system was disassembled in order to carry out the necessary repairs to the valves.

The “Solway Protector” is scheduled to be slipped at Maryport boat yard in January 2013. As there is a considerable amount of essential repairs and maintenance to be carried out, the vessel is expected to be offline for between 4 - 6 weeks.

All oil changes and planned essential maintenance schedules are all up-to-date.

#### **BOARDING RIB on board “Solway Protector”**

Over the last couple of months we have encountered problems with the boarding boat’s steering system, which has been locking up in position. The steering system and cabling were disassembled in order to carry out a thorough inspection. It was found that the moving parts on the system had become worn due to general wear and tear, resulting in the helm locking up. Replacement parts were ordered and a new helm and Teleflex cable assembly was installed by patrol boat officers. This boat can only be used in very calm weather conditions mainly due to health and safety restrictions, albeit it still needs to be kept in tip top condition.

#### **“PROTECTOR BRAVO” – 7 metre Osprey Viper - RIB**

“Protector Bravo” continues to provide excellent service and is a valuable asset to the Authority’s Officers when carrying out enforcement and scientific work.

The vessel is in her 13<sup>th</sup> year of operation and is now in the need of a major refit. As previously reported the rubber tube sponsons on the vessel are at the end of their working life and need to be replaced, along with some minor structural repairs, rewiring, a new net and pot hauler, and the fuel tanks serviced, pressure tested and re-sealed. In essence a complete re-fit to bring the vessel up to standard for the MCA small commercial vessel (SCV) coding.

As the vessel’s hull is structurally sound and the engines are relatively new, it was decided that a re-fit could possibly be the best option at present. The replacement costs for a vessel of this standard could be up to £80,000. We estimate that a complete re-fit would be in the region of £15,000 - £20,000. It is planned to have the vessel surveyed over the next couple of weeks, in order to obtain a better indication of the likely costs involved.

During a period of poor weather we took the opportunity to give “Protector Bravo’s” road trailer a bottom half re-build. New brakes and cables were fitted along with new wheel bearings and stainless steel roller washers and split pins. This work was also carried out by patrol boat crew.

“Protector Bravo’s” radar system malfunctioned during the quarter, with the fault being traced back to a burned out circuit board along with other electronic components. A new circuit board was fitted to the system along with its associated wiring. I am pleased to report that the radar system is now back online in good working order. These repairs were carried out by K R Marine.

#### **“PROTECTOR GAMMA” – 6.3 metre Humber – RIB**

“Protector Gamma” was transported by road trailer to the Hull based company Humber Rigid Inflatables on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012. This was in order to code the vessel for 6 persons, and to comply with the MCA small commercial vessel code. “Protector Gamma” came back online on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. The vessel is now coded to Category ‘C’ which includes operating at night with a maximum of 6 persons onboard.

Due to the north Cumbrian coast being the most actively fished area within the NW IFCA district, with respect to potting, netting, trawling and angling activities, it was decided that “Protector Gamma” would stay at Whitehaven for the present time, in order to maintain an inshore presence until “Protector Bravo” is back online. “Protector Gamma” is expected to then be re-located to Barrow-In-Furness, where new shore side facilities have been acquired for the vessel to be stored securely with other equipment.

## **PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS**

Periods of poor weather, along with a shortage of crew, and patrol boat officer's being tasked with duties ashore, has resulted in a considerable amount of patrol days at sea being lost. This apart a total of 20 patrols were carried out in the district using "Solway Protector", "Protector Bravo" and the new Humber RIB "Protector Gamma".

Sightings of fishing vessels along with recreational sea anglers made from the "Solway Protector" totalled 70 with 37 being logged as visiting vessels. A total of 11 boardings and inspections were carried out at sea in "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo".

Compliance with byelaws and other relevant fisheries legislation at sea has been on the whole been good. Thus no serious infringements were detected with only a small amount of hobby fishermen's potting and netting gear being seized

Details of patrols and sightings can as usual be found in appendices 'A' and 'B'.

## **SURVEYS**

Cockle and mussel surveys are planned for the upper Solway during the months of November and December 2012. I shall report the results of the surveys to Members at the next meeting.

## **FISHING**

### **Trawling**

Trawling activity during the majority of the quarter has been moderate to poor, mainly due to bad weather and strong tides. The activity only picked up during October with reports of good catches of skate and plaice. To the frustration of most local fishermen, lesser spotted dogfish have continued to be in large quantities throughout the whole of the Cumbrian district. The shrimp beamers fishing out of Silloth have continued to record poor catches this year.

### **Scalloping**

The majority of the vessels in Whitehaven and Maryport have been getting ready to take part in the scallop fishery off the Isle of Man. Some of the larger Scottish registered vessels had also started to arrive in Whitehaven during the last two weeks of October, in preparation of the fishery opening on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

### **Potting**

Throughout this period the potting effort has been winding down in preparation for the winter period, with most fishermen gradually bringing their pots ashore. Catch reports are showing falling numbers, which is to be expected with the reduced effort at this time of year.

### **Whelking**

This year we have only seen one fishing vessel targeting whelks, all of which are caught outside the NW IFCA district. Regular landings are made mainly into Whitehaven, with reports of positive returns.

### **Deep Water Netting**

There has been an increased activity by vessels from Whitehaven, Workington, and Maryport netting in the area. These vessels mainly targeted bass in the early part of the quarter, with some good returns reported. October has also seen a return of decent numbers of codling being caught.

It has been noted that there are a number of non-commercial fishermen working nets on a regular basis, bringing in some large quantities of fish, claiming to be for their own personal consumption. These fishermen are under close scrutiny in attempts to identify any possible infringements being committed. The local MMO officer has been informed about our concerns.

### **Angling**

Recreational boat angling in Cumbria has continued to be popular, fishing all the known marks all along the coastline. Reports received are of good quantities of bass, and increased catches of codling being made throughout October. Other species targeted include plaice, small whiting, dab, and flounder. However boat anglers have reported that it is almost impossible to avoid catching the lesser spotted dog fish.

## **WEATHER**

On the whole the weather has been poor for most of the reporting period. At the beginning of the quarter the wind was mainly south to southeast, moderate to fresh. During the last week in August and throughout the whole of September the wind direction was mainly southwest and west southwest, strong, and at times gale-force which has curtailed most fishing activity offshore throughout the whole of the district.

The first week in October didn't start any better with the winds remaining southwest 6 - 7 on the Beaufort scale. The last 3 weeks of the quarter saw the wind change around to a more northerly direction, this gave some much appreciated and settled weather for about 6 - 7 days with vessels able to get out to their fishing grounds on most days.

## **H. THINNESEN**

Master "Solway Protector" and  
Deputy Enforcement Director/IFCO (Whitehaven)

**" Solway Protector "**  
**DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS**

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time	
			Hrs.	Mins.
13/08/2012	Prawn pitch/North West Corner/Maryport	19	6	0
14/08/2012	South Walney/Prawn pitch/Scallop Bank	15	9	50
15/08/2012	Prawn pitch/Workington	5	3	30
26/09/2012	Prawn pitch/Caulderton/St Bees	1	4	20
27/09/2012	Harrington/Workington/Silloth	9	6	45
19/10/2012	Eskmeals/St Bees/Workington/Maryport	2	4	30
23/10/2012	Prawn pitch/Haverigg/Selker	8	9	10
24/10/2012	St Bees/Workington	8	3	0
25/10/2012	West of Whitehaven/Seascale/Haverigg	3	8	5

**" Solway Protector "**  
**PATROL STATISTICS**

	<b>1/8/2012 - 31/10/2012</b>		<b>1/5/2012 - 31/7/2012</b>	
Number of patrols and passages	9	patrols	21	patrols
Seatime	55 hrs	10 mins	171 hrs	50 mins
Average length of patrol	6 hrs	08 mins	8 hrs	10 mins
Total distance covered	483	miles	1609	miles
Average distance per patrol	54	miles	77	miles
Fuel used	1267	gallons	2876	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	141	gallons	137	gallons
<b><u>Total identified sightings:</u></b>	<b>70</b>	<b>vessels</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>vessels</b>
Local	33	vessels	219	vessels
Visiting	37	vessels	20	vessels
<b><u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u></b>	<b><u>&lt; 45'</u></b>	<b><u>&gt; 45'</u></b>	<b><u>&lt; 45'</u></b>	<b><u>&gt; 45'</u></b>
Trawlers	17	1	129	22
Beam Trawlers	0	0	3	0
Twin Rig Trawlers	0	29	0	20
Pair Trawlers	0	0	0	0
Anchor Seiners	0	0	0	0
Fly Draggers	0	0	0	0
Gill Netters	3	0	3	0
Shrimpers	1	0	0	0
Twin Beam Shrimpers	2	0	1	0
Whelk Potters	0	0	12	0
Potting Boats	13	0	0	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	0	0	1
Mussel Dredgers	0	3	0	0
Cockle Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Netters	0	0	0	0
Anglers	1	0	48	0
<b><u>Total:</u></b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>43</b>

## **NORTHERN (CUMBRIA)**

## **BURGHMARSH POINT-HAVERIG POINT**

**IFCO, E. Thinnesen**

### **GENERAL**

This reporting period covers the following shore based activities - supporting enforcement duties at Lytham St Anne's and Barrow areas, and also crewing the "Solway Protector".

During routine patrols of the area from Haverigg point to Burghmarsh Point, large numbers of anglers have been seen targeting bass, codlings, flounders and plaice, from piers, beaches and at sea.

Some individuals were cautioned for breaches against the Authority's byelaws and gear seized under Section 264 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MACAA).

Some late night patrols were carried out as a result of reports received relating to alleged offences being committed against the Authority's netting byelaw.

Trawling vessels have made some average landings of Nephrops at Whitehaven and Maryport.

Potting boats targeting lobster and brown crab both hobby (permitted under byelaw) and licensed vessels alike have been busy throughout the period.

Reports were received of a vessel fishing nets set illegally off the north of St Bees Head. This was dealt with by removing and seizing a number of gill nets from the area (see Offshore netting).

### **TRAWLING**

Early August to late October has seen some busy periods of fishing when weather conditions were suitable. Vessels targeting nephrops fished through the night as well as the day time. Inspections at ports revealed some good landings at the beginning of the period, but were much reduced as the summer came to a close. Up to 300 stones of whole prawns were inspected during landings from some vessels at the height of the season, dwindling to around 50 - 70 stones for 2 - 3 days fishing. At the latter end of the season some vessels changed fishing locations, to either fish the Clyde or out of North Shields targeting the North Sea winter fishery. Reports from these vessels were good as prominent west south west winds kept our local vessels in port and unable get to sea. The vessels fishing out of North Shields have seen catches of 50 - 100 stones of nephrops for one haul, and at times, vessels have had to head back to port to sort out their catch as they had hauled too much to handle at sea. Average prices throughout the summer months have been around £35 per stone for nephrops (whole prawns). These vessels also had a by-catch of mixed fish consisting of codlings, whiting, plaice, squid, and plenty of lesser spotted dog fish (which has very little commercial value). A new market has arisen for the trawlers as the potting vessels who fish mostly for whelks, are now buying lesser spotted dog fish to bait their pots. Other vessels have changed over to scallop fishing as the Isle of Man scallop season opens on 1<sup>st</sup> November each year.

### **SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH**

Reports throughout the quarter relate to mixed landings of shrimps from 50 kgs - 250 kgs for one tide. Adverse weather conditions and strong tides kept vessels in port for long periods of time. Prices for shrimp average at £2.50 per kg, which have been sold to local processors.

One report from a skipper was that they were catching an increased amount of cockles in their shrimp gear near the Middle Bank in the Solway Firth. Officers are planning to undertake a survey along with the science team just as soon as weather conditions, tides and officers time allows.

### **SCALLOPS**

There are no reports of scallops being landed throughout the period covered by the report. However as the 2012 Isle of Man scallop season has only just opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> November (albeit outwith this reporting period), reports on landings were 30 - 50 bags for the first 12 hours of being open. Local

vessels from Whitehaven and Maryport who tend to land into their own home ports are reported to have landed 70 kg bags at 95p per kilo.

### **POTTING**

Potting for lobster, brown crab and whelks have seen busy periods throughout the quarter, with landings from vessels having at times been up to 13 x 100 kg boxes of brown crab and 25 - 45 kgs of lobster for one day's fishing. Inspections throughout the quarter have seen no infringements being detected in this sector of the district.

The large whelk vessel "Fleur-de-France" J86 has made numerous landings into Whitehaven with 3 day trips yielding an average of 10 tonnes of whelks, at an approximate cost of £650 per tonne. This vessel has been consistent with his landings of whelks, none of which have been caught in our district; all catches are from Scottish waters in the Solway Firth and areas around Mull of Galloway.

Regular landings have been made from the hobby fishermen, permitted sector of potters who fish five pots and are allowed to retain 1 lobster, 5 brown crabs or 10 kgs of whelks per day. Reports from most skippers are that more undersized and berried lobsters were being caught in pots. Regular inspections of vessels at the usual landing stations were made throughout the period with legislation being rigorously enforced. Prices over the quarter for lobster averaged out at £10 per kg, and as October came to an end most vessels targeting lobster and crab had brought their pots in for winter and are now engaged in netting.

### **OFFSHORE NETTING**

Offshore netting has seen more and more vessels taking part in this fishery than usual. This may be due to the increased number of people out of work who own small fishing vessels, and are seen fishing for their own consumption. Some of the commercial fishing vessels have seen good landings throughout the quarter of thornback ray (skate), bass, and codlings, and towards the latter end of the quarter, some landings were made of 500 kgs of skate and 20 - 30 kgs of codlings. Some inspections carried out seen bass only in low numbers 3 - 5 single fish, all of legal landing size.

Reports were received of illegal netting activity from a vessel working the area, mainly targeting lobster at St Bees Head. The nets were believed to have been set in less than 3 metres of water, contravening the old CSFC byelaw 10 (3) – deep water fishing (currently still in force) - *no nets shall be set in any part of the district unless it has 3 metres of water above the headline at all states of the tide*. A joint operation was carried out between the Environment Agency (EA) using their Cheetah catamaran, and co-ordinated by myself from the shore. Whilst seizing 3 nets, a vessel was sighted which was believed to be the one that set these nets. Officers on board the "Solway Shepherd" the EAs vessel, approached this craft, and ascertained as to whether they had set nets in the area, but the occupants of the vessel replied that they were only looking for "cuvins" (Periwinkles). This vessel was monitored over a period of time until the vessel returned to port, where the owner took the vessel away by road to a secure location.

### **BEACH NETTING**

No sightings were made of nets set on any beaches throughout the district during the quarter, due to restrictions imposed under the old Cumbria SFC byelaw 10 (4) - shallow water fishing (which is still in force) – *the placing and use of fixed engines for taking sea fisheries resources is prohibited within the district, from midnight 31<sup>st</sup> May – midnight 30<sup>th</sup> November in the same year*.

### **ANGLING**

Angling activity was consistent, where anglers were seen and inspected throughout the district. Once again Whitehaven saw most of the activity from the 2 piers, where over 380 anglers were seen at times throughout the quarter and some catches inspected. Anglers throughout the district were seen targeting bass, codlings, whiting and plaice. Although plagued by lesser spotted dog fish, most fishermen were more than happy about the numbers of codlings they were seeing, with the majority of codlings taken being between 2.5 – 3 pound in weight, a good sized codling for any plate. Plenty of small codlings were caught and released, and during the school half term holiday, I found myself as usual explaining to youngsters the do's and don'ts of angling. Reports of undersized bass being caught and retained at Dubmill Point had been received, but after numerous routine inspections both during day time and night time no undersized bass was seen anywhere within the district. Deploying

a risk based enforcement approach within our day-to-day activities nowadays, enforcement of these areas will be monitored throughout the district as a matter of course, and more so when reports of activity increases. In areas to the south of patch fishing was similar with beach anglers happy with catches of codling and bass.

**BAIT DIGGING**

Bait digging throughout the district has not been monitored to the same extent this year as in previous years. This in the main was due to other duties taking me away from my normal working areas, and the added workload due to the resignation of the other northern shore based IFCO. Thus only a small amount of quad patrols were carried out on recognised bait digging areas. Some areas accessible on foot were inspected and good numbers of bait diggers were found and inspected at these locations. Species such as shore crabs, lug worms and rag worms were targeted by bait diggers, and inspections revealed that lug worms were still the main quarry. Up to 700 lug worms were taken by the professional diggers or “pumpers” in one tide, and at £35 per 100 lug worms this makes this a lucrative fishing at times of big tides. Some diggers work up to 10 tides throughout periods of big tides, making a good wage at the end of fishing. The crabbers who normally work the district were seen at times, usually taking for their own use, although from time to time a squad of North East fishermen come over and take quantities of over 1000 shore crabs each visit, which have been counted out of buckets when checking for undersized brown crabs. Prices can be as high as 50p per crab at times of low harvest; this fishery also has the potential to be a very lucrative fishery.

**OTHER DUTIES**

Other duties carried out through the quarter have been:

- To support enforcement operations at Lytham St Anne’s, when the Foulnaze cockle fishery was opened, with up to 10 individuals cautioned during this period for non-compliance of IFCA byelaws. Equipment seized were a vessel and other gear used in illegal fishing of cockles.
- To support enforcement work onboard of “Solway Protector” to cover periods of leave, toil and sickness of other crew members.

These duties took me away from normal shore duties and enforcement on shore at times of high activity, which has resulted in an increase in concerns raised amongst fishermen that certain areas were not being enforced. This is borne out in my report above where, the Environment agency assisted myself in dealing with an incident, which I would normally have dealt myself.

**ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION**

Infringements for the period which I was involved with, has resulted in 10 cautions against IFCA byelaws which are still in the process of being dealt with; a few minor offences which verbal warnings were given; also nets seized for byelaw (10) offences.

**Officer Statistics for the period 1<sup>st</sup> August – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012**

Shore Patrols	47
Fishing Locations visited	451
Quad Patrols	2
Locations by quad	17
Anglers seen	586
Bait Diggers seen	24
Shellfish gatherers (Winkle Pickers)	0
Inspections all	141
Beach nets inspected	3
Days assisting other areas of district	15

**TRAWLING**

Throughout the last quarter I have observed no trawling activity taking place on a commercial basis, the trawler 'Talisker' has undergone maintenance work and has also been re-registered in Barrow, this was moved from the Dock museum dock to a mooring in Walney channel during October but I have yet to observe it actively fishing. There are 4 small trawlers at moorings in Walney channel but I have only observed one of these fishing on a non-commercial basis in the Foulney/Walney channel area.

**SHRIMPING**

I have observed shrimp fishing activity by tractors and tra-la-la units operating mainly from Flookburgh during the quarter when conditions were favourable, and when the fishermen were not working elsewhere on the cockle fishery. Catches were moderate at best, two fishermen from Flookburgh favoured the Leven channel area, along with the one remaining shrimp fisherman from Baycliff, and another from Newbiggin who fished when other work commitments allowed who reported the size and quality of the shrimps caught in the Mussel Hollow area were generally good. The majority of shrimp fishermen from Flookburgh tended to favour the area known as 'Goldmine' and the Kent channel area south of Jenny Browns Point, results here tended to be better than in the Leven channel.

**COCKLES**

During the last quarter I have not observed any cockling activity, although I have received reports from several sources of cockles having been spilt onto the road to Humphrey head during late September, subsequent patrols have not recorded any illegal activity.

I continue to take cockle samples from Aldingham, Newbiggin, Leven Island and Flookburgh for South Lakeland District Council.

**MUSSELS**

During the last quarter I have observed a high level of activity on the South America seed mussel authorised fishery, where 7 dredgers were fishing. I have been busy signing export certificates for the mussels which were going to Ireland, either by dredger or road, on behalf of CEFAS, on a daily basis when the tides were right for dredging. Reports were received of one dredger being sighted fishing outside the authorised area and warnings were given to all dredgers that any unauthorised activity would result in authorisation being revoked. Several checks were made by myself and the Authority's patrol vessel after an unconfirmed report of one of the Southern Irish dredgers who were only permitted to transport the mussels back to Ireland and not to dredge or carry dredging gear, was reportedly dredging, all the checks revealed complete compliance and no dredges were seen at all, the owners even offered to supply the IFCA with the vessels track records to prove no wrong doing. Four hand gatherers were given verbal warnings for removing undersize mussel from Foulney mussel bed on the 20<sup>th</sup> September. Subsequently 2 of these men and 1 other were reported for removing 3 tonnes of seed mussel from Foulney on the 29<sup>th</sup> October, statements have been given to the IFCA office to further the investigation.

I continue to take mussel samples from Foulney on a monthly basis for Barrow Council.

**POTTING**

I have observed no commercial lobster potting in my area, several reports have been received of Byelaw 30 permit holders occasionally catching lobsters, some around the windfarms. I intend to check this once the enforcement vessel is stationed in Barrow.

Whelk potting by a licensed vessel from Barrow has continued in the outer Walney channel area, however this has not been on a regular basis.

## **NETTING**

Very few beach nets have been observed in my area during the last quarter, the ones I have checked have all complied with IFCA byelaws.

Drift netting boats launching from Walney and fishing in Morecambe bay and the Irish Sea have reported good catches of Bass, especially in September and October, with some cod also being caught during late September and October. Of the boats I have seen only three are registered and licensed fishing vessels, the other netting boats are all unlicensed, with various reports received regarding the sale of fish by these vessels, which were passed on to the Marine Management Organisation Officers. I have checked several netting boats and all of these have complied fully with IFCA byelaws including marking of gear, mesh size and fish size. Some of the catches by these boats is as high as 450 kilo's in one night. I have undertaken joint enforcement patrols with MMO Officers in the Barrow area.

## **ANGLING**

Once again anglers were observed in significant numbers around the Furness coast, with the west coast of Walney, Roosebeck and Ulverston being popular, catches consisted mainly of flounders, but a good showing of Bass and Cod during September and October were reported.

Boat anglers have been seen in large numbers during the reporting period, launching from Walney and fishing the south Walney/Morecambe Bay/west coast Walney area, with catches of Bass and Cod reported. Inspections recorded good compliance with minimum landing size of Bass.

Several long lines have been checked in the Roosebeck/Newbiggin area, although these were not being fished regularly and reports suggest the usual catch consisted mainly of Flounders/Plaice with occasional Bass recorded. However several long lines set in the Duddon Estuary in the Askam area returned good catches of Bass, with reports of up to 18 good size Bass in one night tide.

## **GENERAL**

During this quarter I have spent several weeks working in other areas, mainly on the cockle fishery in the Ribble estuary and Southport, with several offences being recorded.

I have also worked with the Officer who covers the north Cumbria area due to being one staff member short, main duties involved ATV patrols for beach nets between Haverigg and St Bees.

I have also assisted with the enforcement of the Heysham seed mussel fishery.

## **NORTHERN AREA**

## **ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END**

**IFCO, S. J Waite**

## **TRAWLING**

This fishery continues to be extremely low key. I have observed no trawling activity taking place either on a commercial or hobby basis. The fishery continues to prove very disappointing and I expect no improvement in the foreseeable future.

## **SHRIMPS**

The poor landings reported in my last report have, unfortunately, continued throughout this last quarter. Fishermen have continued to concentrate most of their effort working channels on the south side of Morecambe Bay. Full time activity remains poor, although effort by hobby fishermen using small inshore boats improved over weekend periods although effort has remained low key.

Throughout the first half of the last quarter I saw no improvement in effort from fishermen working both tractor and tra la la units and from fishermen working push nets. October saw the first signs of improvement with fishermen working push nets to the east of the Stone Jetty at Morecambe while fishermen using tra la la units concentrated their effort west of the Stone Jetty. One fisherman associated with the drift net fishery also fished using his inshore drift net boat working in association with push netsmen.

## **COCKLES**

Throughout this last quarter I have checked all recognised cockle beds on a regular basis. I have received no further reports of Chinese gatherers removing cockles from the shore opposite Green Street slipway. Throughout this last quarter I have checked the area on an almost daily basis.

I have observed no improvement in stocks of mature and immature cockles and as a result all beds in my area remain closed.

## **MUSSELS**

During this last quarter I have observed nor received any reports of mature mussels being gathered throughout the south side of Morecambe Bay. 6<sup>th</sup> September saw the opening of Heysham Flat Skeer for the removal of seed mussel. Effort in this fishery has proved fairly low key with all the mussels being purchased by one buyer. These mussels were destined for Belfast for relaying.

During this last quarter I have continued to collect shellfish samples for Lancaster City Council and Wyre District Council.

## **DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS**

This quarter saw the continuation of the good landings of Bass mentioned in my last report. Prices for Bass, however, have proved very disappointing due to the amounts being caught by drift and stake net fishermen as well as boat anglers. As a result, effort has been down on previous years. This fishery over the last few years has proved very disappointing. Unfortunately, this fishery is moving to a part time or hobby fishery as fishermen reach retirement or look towards other ways of making a more stable income.

During this last quarter I have continued to observe and check both stake and set nets in my area. This fishery continues to prove low key. Effort has been limited to a few nets working towards the top of Morecambe Bay, with occasional nets being set at Heysham and Pilling. Fishermen working have reported good landings of both Bass and Plaice. Fishermen using both set lines and nets have reported an increased problem with foxes damaging fish and gear.

## **DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING**

During this last quarter effort has continued to be high from both dinghy and shore anglers, fish species targeted by dinghy anglers being Bass and Plaice. Very good landings have been reported and checked. Fishermen have also reported codling starting to show. Anglers continue to report large numbers of Dogfish throughout my area which has been confirmed by reports from members of the public reporting dogfish along the shoreline.

Shore anglers have continued to fish over high and low water tides at the top end of Morecambe Bay, the Stone Jetty at Morecambe, Heysham and Arnside, species caught being mainly Bass, Plaice, Dabs, Flounder.

## **CENTRAL AREA**

## **RIVER WYRE TO RIVER ALT**

**Senior IFCO, S. Brown**

## **GENERAL**

The quarter has been dominated by the Ribble cockle fishery during both open and closed periods. The exceptionally wet and windy weather has had an adverse effect upon both the shrimp and trawl fishery.

## **TRAWLING**

Trawling has been very restricted by the stormy conditions. During the few respites from the onslaught one inshore trawler and one inshore beam trawler have fished from Fleetwood. These vessels have been sighted working Lune Deep Shell Flat Bank and Below Shell Wharf. Modest catches of Plaice, Sole and Thornback Ray have been reported.

As a result of changes in licensing strategy the majority of local vessels have now been re-registered and proudly display the PLN of their home port. This change is far from aesthetic, several vessels have had their licence category downgraded. This administrative downgrade has serious consequence for the fishermen; many fishermen have lost both significant fishing opportunity and asset value.

### **SHRIMPING**

Shrimp catches from Lytham and the Sefton Coast have gradually improved during September and October. Fishing opportunity has been seriously restricted by the adverse weather.

Fishermen have been observed shrimping in the shelter of the R. Ribble and the Lower Penfold Channel.

Moderate catches have been taken but the run of shrimps has been small, a great deal of riddling has been needed.

Push netters at Fleetwood and along the Fylde Coast have been out regularly modest catches have been taken.

### **COCKLES AND MUSSELS**

The high profile opening of the Foulnaze fishery resulted in the removal of about 800 tons of cockles before the fishery was closed for assessment. Subsequent administrative delays prevented the fishery re opening until October. Following the severe weather the cockles were hard in, later landings have been disappointing. All cockles have been landed at Preston.

While these operations have been administratively successful they have taken up all the resources we have as well as local government, GLA and Police time. The industry knows we cannot be in two places at once and there has certainly been considerable well organised cockle poaching activity both around the Ribble and elsewhere in the District as a result.

A few size mussels have been gathered from the Ribble Walls for local markets but that is all.

### **ANGLING**

Shore angling has been most popular along the Fylde Coast with the occasional Bass and Codling taken on dark tides. Seed whiting have been the predominant daytime catch.

Shore anglers have also been observed fishing for Flounder from Preston Bullnose and occasionally fishing LW marks along the Sefton Coast.

BL boat and charter angling off the Fylde Coast has been restricted by the weather, catches of Bass and Codling have been reported.

### **NETTING AND LINES**

Most shore netting has been severely restricted by the strong winds and debris brought down the rivers by heavy rain.

The Lytham drift netters have worked during the more stable periods modest catches of Bass have been reported. Some Lytham fishermen have recently been forced to re-register (see also trawling) as a result their licences have been capped. As a result these vessels can only realistically work for none PSL species. The majority of their income is from Bass; many fishermen are very worried that the proposed imposition of Bass quotas will put them out of work.

Good catches of Bass and Cod have been reported from lines set on the North Wharf off Fleetwood.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

The significant amount of collective effort in policing the Ribble cockle fishery renders individual tallies of inspections and use of pooled equipment inappropriate. I must however record my thanks to all staff involved in what has been an extremely busy period.

Somehow routine collection of MSH samples and other routine patrol work has been carried out during the few relatively quiet periods.

## **SOUTHERN AREA**

## **MERSEY, WIRRAL AND DEE**

**IFCO, A. Brownrigg**

### **GENERAL**

The southern area remains busy. Activities such as enforcement, sampling and surveying have been undertaken throughout the district, during this quarter the vast majority of my time has been spent offering support to other officers with the opening of the cockle beds at Lytham St Annes and Southport.

### **COCKLING**

The cockle bed within the area still remains closed and will do during the rest of the 2012 cockling season in order to allow the bed to settle. Routine hygiene samples from Wirral North cockle bed continue to be collected on behalf of Mersey Port Health Authority and samples from Penfold North Cockle bed for West Lancashire Borough Council will continue throughout the forthcoming months. Presently, only adult size shell fish remain from 2010's spat.

### **RAZOR CLAM**

During September up to forty oriental gatherers have been observed harvesting Razor Clam on Leasowe/Moreton beach at particularly low tides. Although thought to be mainly for personal consumption, several observations suggest that some are being sold commercially. However, since the colder weather and longer evenings this figure has dramatically reduced to one or two being observed particularly over the weekends.

### **SHORE ANGLING**

Recreational Angling continues to take place throughout the area. The North Wirral Coastline, Otterspool Promenade and New Brighton (Perch Rock and Kings Parade) are very popular areas. Bass, Dab and Codling remain the most popular fish being caught in the area

### **BAIT DIGGERS**

Bait diggers, roughly two to six in number, can be seen daily along the North Wirral coastline, with New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area of beach off Leasowe Common being identified as the most popular areas.

### **NETS**

Presently, there are five set nets in the area off East Hoyle Bank. All nets identified are owned by one local fisherman all of which are correctly marked in accordance with Byelaw 11.

### **FISHING BOATS**

During the last quarter, there has been very little activity from any fishing boats moored at Meols. Regular repair work is being carried out but most craft remain unused for long periods. No regular fishing pattern is being carried out due to most fishermen only working part time.

### **SEA ANGLING 2012 SURVEY**

Since my last quarterly report no other surveys have been carried out within my area. However, six surveys have been completed since the start of the year which involved private and chartered vessels (from the Dee Estuary and Liverpool Marina), along with individual anglers. While undertaking these surveys, we have noted numbers ranging from fifteen anglers fishing to none at all. The distribution of fliers regarding the Sea Angling Survey 2012 throughout the angling community has led to a slight rise in the awareness of the survey.

### **ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, North Wirral Coastline and Dee Estuary remain ongoing, and officer support has been offered to other areas in the form of Shore/ATV patrols survey work and enforcement work. Protector Alpha, the area's 5m Rigid Inflatable Boat, has been active in undertaking boardings and closings on several craft in the area. In the last few weeks I have been

relocated to outside my area to support the opening of Foulnaze and south Ribble cockle beds enforcing the some 130 to 160 Byelaw 3 permit holders accessing the beds daily. Finally, assistance to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, Mersey Port Health Authority, Merseyside Police and Sefton Council remains ongoing.



AREA	<u>FISHING EFFORT</u>				FISHING METHODS
	UNITS	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ANGLERS	
<u>NORTH MORECAMBE BAY</u>	People Boats Vehicles	15 5 10	19 12 -	120+ 40+ -	Trawling, Shrimping, Cockling, Musseling, Potting, Angling
<u>SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY</u>	People Boats Vehicles	42 12 23	14 14 12		Trawling, Shrimping, Cockling, Musseling, Netting, Angling
<u>CENTRAL</u>	People Boats Vehicles	25 13 6	16 5 10	380 +150 itinerant shellfish harvesters 125 -	Trawling, Shrimping, Potting, Cockling, Musseling, Netting, Angling
<u>SOUTHERN</u>	People Boats Vehicles	Up to 72 11 -	5 + 3-6 daily - -	9-31 daily - -	Cockling, Netting, Angling

# NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

## ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2012

### 1. ENFORCEMENT BURDEN

1.1	Length of District coastline	
1.2	Number of vessels currently fishing in the District	72 (237 incl. anglers)
1.3	Number of vehicles currently fishing within the District	61
1.4	Number of men (full and part-time) engaged in fishing	131 (excluding Southern Area) (781 incl. anglers and itinerant shellfish harvesters) Southern Area: 77 + 12-37 daily

### 2. RESOURCES

2.1	Number of patrol vessels	1 + 4 RIBs + 1 Zodiac
2.2	Number of patrol ATVs (intertidal)	8
2.3	Number of Fishery Officers	7 f/t, 1 p/t + 3 warranted officers with other duties

### 3. ENFORCEMENT AT SEA

3.1	Number of patrol hours at sea	12.5
3.2	Number of patrols at sea	4
3.3	Number of nautical miles of patrol	18
3.4	Number of closings	0
3.5	Number of inspections	0
3.6	Number of boardings	0
3.7	Number of infringements detected	0
3.8	Number of:-	
3.8.1	Prosecutions	0
3.8.2	Home Office Cautions	0
3.8.3	Prosecutions pending	0

3.8.4	Cautions issued	0	
3.8.5	Written warnings	0	
3.8.6	Verbal warnings	0	
4.	<u>ENFORCEMENT ON LAND</u>		
4.1	Number of inspections	1271	
4.2	Number of ATV patrols	21	
4.3	Number of hours ATV patrols	46.3	
4.4	ATV miles covered	277.2	
4.5	Number of infringements detected	23	
4.6	Number of:-		
4.6.1	Prosecutions	1	Liverpool Magistrates – Byelaw 5. J. T. Leyland, D. Davock, D Howard (£250 fine each + £15 Govt Tax + £851 costs + Forfeiture of all goods
4.6.2	Home Office Cautions	0	
4.6.3	Prosecutions pending	10	
4.6.4	Cautions issued	3	
4.6.5	Written warnings	0	
4.6.6	Verbal warnings	44	

N.B. Prosecutions pending – are only counted as such after approval is given to take the case forward by the Authority. People under caution who are likely to be prosecuted may therefore not be included in this figure.