

**NWIFCA ANNUAL MEETING:
14 June 2013: 10.30 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT'S REPORT ON THE FISHERIES
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST February to 30th April 2013x**

GENERAL

A number of IFCOs attended training courses on both maritime operations and enforcement techniques during the quarter. A new system of internal training is currently being implemented to avoid the fading of new skills and knowledge that have been acquired on these courses.

The "Solway Protector" was hampered with engineering problems following 6 weeks of the quarter on the slip at Maryport. "Protector Bravo" and the Zodiac are currently going through the final stages of work to comply with MCA coding requirements. The final quotes for a new RIB for the southern patch of the district were received and the final decision is currently being considered. This vessel will be bought pre coded.

IFCOs continued to operate out-with their normal patches and routine responsibilities as required, often in inclement weather. This flexibility is important to efficient working and remains greatly appreciated.

ENFORCEMENT

Compliance across the district was generally good during the quarter with only the enforcement actions at the Foulney mussel fishery alluded to below being required. Maritime enforcement was inhibited during the quarter due to problems with the "Solway Protector" and other vessels going through coding. The impact of this was mitigated to a large degree by vessel based fishing activity being so low during the quarter.

WEATHER

All sectors of the industry were hindered by inclement weather during the quarter – both in terms of wind and sea state hampering opportunities and the low temperatures stalling the start of the spring fisheries.

COCKLES AND MUSSELS

Three mussel fisheries operated across the district during the quarter:

- Foulney in north Morecambe bay
- A small fishery based on the Ribble training walls
- A small fishery on the West Kirby beds in the south of the district

The mussel fishery at Foulney saw enforcement actions being taken on 10 occasions due to unacceptable proportions of the catch being under the Minimum Landing Size (MLS) of 45mm. The contributing factors to the problems regarding breaches of the MLS have been:

- Fishing occurring in the hours of darkness
- Commencing fishing too early before low tide when not enough of the bed has ebbed off
- Fishing on tides of greater than 1m ebb when there is no access to the largest and most valuable mussels and fishermen can only reach beds of mixed size mussels.

No permitted cockle fishery operated in the district during the quarter. Occasional reports of possible breaches of Byelaw 3 were reported in the Lytham area. Patrols were increased but no incidents occurred. With the onset of BST during the quarter and the increasing day length the opportunities for this type of illegal nocturnal activity are now severely reduced.

TRAWLING

The spring start to the Nephrops fishery in the north of the district failed to materialise. Local vessels saw very poor catches when the few opportunities to fish arose with one vessel reporting a haul of one prawn. Vessels targeting Thornbacks did fair slightly better.

SHRIMPING

The Shrimp fishery started during the quarter but unfortunately saw low catches and poor prices.

POTTING

As with all other sectors the commercial and hobby potting sector was hampered by the weather during the quarter.

NETTING

A slow start to the spring netting season was seen district wide during the quarter.

ANGLING

The number of anglers observed increased through the quarter across the district, including at Heysham power station. The new Byelaw 5 at Heysham did not come into force as hoped during the quarter and IFCOs continue to enforce the MLS. An IFCO presence at a Morecambe angling competition was conducted during the quarter.

**Head of Enforcement
Andrew Deary
27th May 2013**

PATROL VESSELS

Master of the “Solway Protector” - H Thinnesen

“SOLWAY PROTECTOR”

Unfortunately the “Solway Protector” has been out of service and offline for most of the quarter. This has been due mainly to a 6 week period on the slipway in order to carry out essential repairs and maintenance, and then a major gearbox problem which has resulted in the engine and gearbox being removed from the vessel once again.

The vessel was taken offline and slipped at Maryport on the 7th of February 2013, and the repair work carried out is as follows:

- Renew all bilge suction and discharge lines in the engine room. As previously reported this work was a priority due to the condition of the pipe work.
- Remove and service all the main seacocks and discharge valves. Service valve chest for main bilge suction system and replace faulty Webasto heating unit.
- Propellers were taken off and the prop shafts drawn for inspection. Excessive grooving was found on both shafts where they are sighted inside the cutlass bearings, movement was found on the starboard side cutlass bearing which had to be replaced.
- Fortunately the propeller shafts in the “Solway Protector” are tapered at both ends, which gives you the option to simply reverse them (end for end) and extending the lifespan on the shafts.
- Both rudders were removed as excessive movement was found during the inspection. New rudder shaft bearings were fitted.
- Extra lighting was fitted to the engine room space.
- The main electrical control panel was also rewired and a new battery charging control unit was installed by the patrol boat’s engineer.
- We decided to replace the faulty gas cooker with an electric one, mainly due to health and safety issues and to reduce maintenance costs.
- New Morse control cables were fitted to the port main engine. A new galley fan and a replacement sink pump were also fitted.
- The windows in “Solway Protector” had started to leak heavily in the poor weather conditions. The main front window was resealed along with two of the side windows. While in the boat shed we also took the opportunity to re-seal all the glands on the wheelhouse roof.
- A leaking exhaust, along with the port main engine being taken out of the patrol boat on four occasions over the last fifteen months has taken its toll on the paint work in the engine room. Four coats of fire retardant paint were applied, along with all the pipe work in the engine room being colour coded.
- While the boat was still inside the shed, we took the opportunity to paint all the woodwork on the aft working deck, along with the woodwork behind the wheelhouse. Both the main and aft working decks were also given a coating of none slip paint.
- The main hydraulic oil tank for the patrol boat’s deck machinery had developed a leak during the quarter. The tank was removed for repairs and painted before being re fitted.

Prior to the Solway Protector going back into the water on the 21st march 2013 the hull was pressure washed down and two coats of antifouling paint applied and new sacrificial anodes were also fitted.

Unfortunately up until time of writing this report, the port main engine has again been removed from the patrol vessel, to undertake gearbox repairs.

All oil and planned maintenance schedules are up to date.

“PROTECTOR BRAVO” – 7 metre Osprey Viper - RIB

Unfortunately “Protector Bravo” remains offline. The vessel was transported by road trailer down to the Wigan based company North West RIBs on the 25th April 2013.

We have asked North West RIBs to supply us with a quotation, which is required in order to undertake the replacement of the rubber sponsons, along with other work necessary to have the vessel coded under the MCA Small Vessel Code. We are of the opinion that this work is worth doing and cost effective, as “Protector Bravo” is an essential item when carrying out fishery patrols and inspections close inshore. To build a vessel of a similar standard as “Protector Bravo” could cost upwards of eighty thousand pounds.

ZODIAC

Officers are presently sourcing the items of equipment necessary to comply with the MCA Small Vessel Code. This vessel will be coded to category 6.

PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

Annual slipping, mechanical break downs and crewing problems to cover periods when officers are on annual leave, has unfortunately resulted in only a hand full of patrols being carried out during this quarter. There were no sightings or inspections from “Solway Protector” this quarter, and none recorded from “Protector Bravo” as the vessel remains offline.

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

WEATHER

At the start of the quarter the winds were mainly from an easterly direction, fresh to strong at times. This continued throughout January before changing around to a west to southwest direction, strong to gale force. From the second week in February the winds settled back into an easterly air flow giving three weeks of relatively calm conditions. These up and down easterly wind patterns have continued throughout the rest of the quarter with the odd day of south to south-westerly winds, again strong to gale force.

H THINNESEN

Master “Solway Protector” &
Deputy Enforcement Director/IFCO (Whitehaven)
Manager of sea going operations

" Solway Protector "
DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time	
			Hrs.	Mins.
07/02/2013	Passage to Maryport	0	1	0
21/03/2013	Passage to Whitehaven	0	0	45

" Solway Protector "
PATROL STATISTICS

	1/02/2013 - 30/04/2013		1/11/2012 - 31/01/2013	
Number of patrols and passages	2	patrols	12	patrols
Seatime	1 hrs	45 mins	89 hrs	10 mins
Average length of patrol	0 hrs	53 mins	7 hrs	25 mins
Total distance covered	24	miles	694	miles
Average distance per patrol	12	miles	58	miles
Fuel used	220	gallons	1731	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	110	gallons	144	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	0	vessels	67	vessels
Local	0	vessels	66	vessels
Visiting	0	vessels	1	vessels

NORTHERN (CUMBRIA) DISTRICT

BURGHMARSH POINT TO HAVERIGG POINT

Senior IFCO, E Thinnesen

GENERAL

This reporting period has resulted in nothing more than the norm, when undertaking shore patrols at this time of the year. The weather as usual has restricted the local commercial fishermen from getting to sea on most occasions, which is to be expected at this time of the year. The easterly winds are being blamed, as the old saying goes "*When the winds are from the east, fishing is least*", this is proving to be a true saying.

Routine patrols throughout the district revealed anglers in their numbers fishing off the piers at Whitehaven, Workington and Maryport on a regular basis.

TRAWLING

The start of the quarter, when undertaking routine inspections of vessels revealed poor catches from the Whitehaven vessels. Some have been engaged in the scallop fishery in Manx waters, and these vessels when fishing, have averaged between 11 – 20 bags for the days fishing. Maryport based vessels were mostly fishing scallops in Manx waters with catches similar to Whitehaven. The catch didn't seem to improve after an inspection during the first week of March which revealed only a few prawns, but vessels fishing for thornback ray made better catches of up to 40 boxes for one days fishing, this was landed into Maryport from vessels which had changed over to bottom trawling. Towards the end of April trawlers reported landings which contained not enough to take home, let alone cover expenses.

SHRIMPING

Shrimping in the northern sector of the district is mainly prosecuted out of the port of Silloth. Reports throughout the quarter revealed poor catches when inspections were carried out, due to the prolonged weather conditions, this combined with poor catches kept the boats in port on most of the days the port was visited.

SCALLOPS

The beginning of the quarter seen all the local Maryport scalloping vessels fishing the Isle of Man scallop fishery, which had opened on the 1st November. Landings consisted of 10 - 30 bags on average for the days fishing. One inspection from one of the larger Scottish scallop dredgers at Silloth revealed a catch of up to 200 bags for a two day trip.

During March and beginning of April landings from scallop vessels inspected revealed on average between 10 and 15 bags, these were mostly from local vessels.

POTTING

As to be expected at this time of the year, lobster and brown crab potting effort has been quite low during the period under review. Regular inspections of vessels at the usual landing stations were made, with all regulations being rigorously enforced.

During the quarter a commercial whelk vessel landed on average 8 tonnes of whelks into Whitehaven. At the same time a small Whitehaven potting/netting vessel's landings have been poor with the odd day here and there. This local vessel is now fishing out of Harrington in order to be nearer the

grounds and the vessel makes a saving on the fuel costs for the boat. Inspections undertaken at the usual potting ports mainly revealed poor landings, and the last day of April 4 potters were inspected at Workington, both hobby and licenced vessels alike. However poor catches were seen landed although one hobby person was quite content with his 4 crabs and 1 lobster. No infringements were detected in this sector during the period.

WINKLE GATHERING

Inspections of the beach at Nethertown revealed 3 winkle gatherers taking around 2 - 3 stone and were expecting to sell the winkles for around £5 per stone.

OFFSHORE NETTING

There has been some commercial netting carried out throughout the quarter, with some good catches being made by hobby fishermen targeting thornback rays. However this fishery diminished by the end of the quarter.

BEACH NETTING

During inspections netters on beaches have reported mixed fishing with codlings and bass being caught along with turbot. The heaviest targeted areas have been Nethertown to Drigg.

ANGLING

From the beginning February and throughout the quarter has proven to have been extremely popular with anglers, and as usual were seen in moderate numbers throughout the district, the majority of effort being in the northern part of the area. The piers at Whitehaven, Workington and Maryport proved to be as popular as ever. Catches are reported as being mainly codling, small whiting, dab, flounder and the occasional bass. At the time inspections were carried out anglers were complaining about seals chasing fish away, and as well as the easterly winds, catches have been poor but like most anglers it's a hobby and as some say "*It gets them out of the house*".

BAIT GATHERERS

Bait digging throughout the district increased in March with the annual shore crab collection undertaken by 42 crabbers seen. Inspections revealed some good numbers of crab being taken from the shore at Allonby up to Beckfoot flats, a few were for resale but most were for their own use. Digging for worms has been moderate with diggers evident at Drigg and Eskmeals. Twenty four lug worm diggers were inspected at Drigg and other locations during March and April, revealing between 200-700 contained in buckets over one tide. Some being professional diggers, and the price being paid per 100 worms was £35 - £40.

OTHER DUTIES

Other duties were carried out in the Barrow area where assistance to the local officer was required to police the on-going mussel fishery on Foulney mussel scar. Some Cautions were issued due to the number of undersized mussel being removed.

ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION

Compliance with our byelaws and other legislation this quarter, has on the whole been very good. There have only been a number of Cautions issued out to mussel gatherers for landing undersized mussel from the Foulney mussel fishery at Barrow.

Shore Patrols carried out	16
Total locations visited	347
Routine Inspections	797
Fish holdings inspected	6
Vessels working off shore	12
Total anglers seen	178
Bait Gatherers inspected	55
Shell fish gatherers inspected	2
Beach nets inspected	13
Quad patrols	3
Breaches of regulations	41
Rib Patrols carried out	0
Boarding's and gear inspections by Rib	0

NORTH MORECAMBE BAY

HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE

IFCO, I. Dixon

TRAWLING

During the last quarter I have observed no reports of commercial trawling activity. I have observed a small boat trawling in Walney channel targeting Plaice, on a hobby basis; reports suggest very little was caught.

SHRIMPING

The only shrimping activity in the North Morecambe Bay area was confined to the last fortnight in April when fishermen from Flookburgh went shrimping to satisfy demand for orders from regular customers, catch reports weren't promising and the cold weather was said to be the reason for a slow start to the shrimp fishing, as opposed to this time last year when catches were good and weather conditions were significantly warmer.

COCKLES

I have observed no cockling activity during the last quarter, neither have I had any reports of cockling on North Morecambe Bay.

I continue to take Food Hygiene samples from Flookburgh, Leven Island, Newbiggin and Aldingham for South Lakeland District Council, however there is no noticeable increase in stock levels in this area.

MUSSELS

The majority of my time this quarter has been spent ensuring compliance with IFCA Byelaws on the mussel fishery at Foulney, with up to 40 gatherers present whenever tide conditions allowed access to the stocks of sizeable mussels, which was basically a fortnight a month since mid-January. Gatherers had been averaging roughly one ton per man, especially during February and early March. From mid-

March to the end of April however it became apparent that undersize mussels were being gathered along with mussels of 45mm plus, resulting in enforcement action being taken against several individuals, and a greater IFCA presence needed on the mussel beds to prevent undersize mussel being gathered, although this was usually unintentional. The problem was not helped by several groups of gatherers accessing the mussel bed before the tide had ebbed off enough to access the areas when the sizeable mussels were, despite being informed by IFCA Officers that it was too early to begin gathering and there was a good chance that the mussels they would begin gathering would be undersize.

Also a small mussel bed in Walney Channel was fished by a few local gatherers to satisfy small orders, this was checked on a regular basis and compliance with Byelaws was respected.

I continue to take mussel samples from Foulney for Barrow Borough Council.

NETTING

Very little netting activity either from boats or on the shore has been observed or reported this period. One licensed fishing vessel from Barrow has netted for Roker and Turbot in the area from the Duddon bar northwards but catch reports weren't promising, and as a result effort considerably reduced. At the end of April several netting boats were seen back on moorings in Walney channel, coinciding with reports of occasional Bass being caught in the district, although I have not observed any drift netting as yet.

I have only seen and checked one beach net set near Newbiggin and the catch consisted mainly of Flounders.

ANGLING

Angling continues to be popular around the Furness coastline, with numbers increasing as reports of Bass being caught are heard. The usual catches consist of Flounders and Plaice. No rod angling from boats has been observed yet although I expect this to increase shortly when weather conditions improve.

GENERAL

During this quarter I have attended a training course aimed at increasing enforcement skills.

I continue to assist with the development of skills and knowledge of the IFCA Officers who recently started.

I have assisted the Science team with surveys of the Foulney mussel bed.

I have also worked in other areas of the District to cover leave of other Officers or to lend assistance' also I would like to thank other Officers who assisted with the enforcement of the mussel fishery at Foulney.

I have been preparing the Humber RIB for use in the coming months.

I have undertaken export health checks on mussel exports on behalf of CEFAS on all loads of mussels sent to Ireland from Barrow.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

Senior 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. This fishery continues to prove very disappointing and, as reported in previous reports, I expect no improvement in the inshore boat fishery.

SHRIMPS

Effort in the inshore fishery during this last period has improved on the previous quarter. Fishermen associated with the inshore shrimp fishery reported reasonable catches of shrimps although these proved to be small, only improving towards the end of the quarter. I have observed no effort from fishermen working on a hobby basis working small inshore shrimp boats.

I have also observed no activity by fishermen working tractor and tra la la units although one fishermen working with his push net worked on an occasional basis working towards the top of Morecambe Bay. As yet, however, landings have proved very poor.

COCKLES

This last quarter I have checked cockle beds on an occasional basis. I have received no reports of gatherers removing cockles from any of the beds in my area.

All recognised cockle beds in my area have seen no improvement in stocks of either mature or immature cockles with stock levels proving very poor. I see no improvement in this fishery for the foreseeable future 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. What mussels have been harvested this quarter continue to be by fishermen associated with gathering in my area working on mussel beds on the North side of Morecambe Bay as previously mentioned in my last report.

This last quarter saw very good settlements of seed mussel on most of the recognised mussel beds throughout my area with the exception of Bare Ayre Skear situated towards the top of Morecambe Bay. I expect to see seed mussels settle on the bed during the next quarter.

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

DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS

During this last quarter all recognised inshore drift net boats remain away from their seasonal moorings with fishermen continuing to work on their boats and gear in readiness for the return of the seasonal Bass fishery. Unfortunately, as mentioned in my last quarter, this fishery's future is currently moving towards a part time basis as fishermen reach retirement or look towards other ways of making a more stable income.

During this quarter few nets remain in use. Whitebait nets have continued to be set in the Lune Estuary, and have been fished on selected tides. Contrary to my last report landings of Whitebait have improved significantly and on occasion landings had to be released due to fishermen being unable to process their catch.

During this last quarter I have observed little activity from anglers setting lines although one fisherman towards the end of the last period reported landing the occasional Bass.

DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING

Throughout this last quarter effort from dinghy anglers has proved extremely low key with effort only improving the last few days of the quarter. I expect effort to improve greatly throughout the summer period.

During this last quarter 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 Knott End. During this last period I have checked and had reported some good size Plaice and Flounder being landed over low and high water periods.

During this last quarter I have received no negative feedback from Bay users regarding the proposed closure of the Heysham Bass Nursery Area. All users of the Bay see the closure as a positive step forward to a much improved fishery in the future.

CENTRAL AREA

RIVER WYRE TO RIVER ALT

Senior IFCO, S. Brown

GENERAL

The weather has dominated events this winter with the most persistent period of cold easterly and northerly winds experienced in recent times. Coastal waters settle gin clear for prolonged periods and it has not been uncommon to see ice and occasionally snow out on the sands. The weather pattern finally broke in mid-April when the first changes to a spring fishery were observed. Not surprisingly fishing opportunity has been at an all-time low causing great hardship for the indigenous fishing community.

TRAWLING

The areas one remaining true inshore trawler has made the occasional trips to the fishing ground below Shell Wharf and around the Shell Flat bank. Almost all of the traditional winter fishing grounds for this class of vessel have been lost to wind farm development. Some work has been carried out with the multiple trawl selective gear trails.

In March plaice landed were in such poor condition that finding a market was impossible, catches in April were so poor that they didn't cover the fuel bills.

One larger trawler has worked mostly on standby duties from Fleetwood.

SHRIMPING

Offshore a Morecambe shrimper has been seen working the winter Blackpool and Salters fisheries. Rumours of moderate catches have been received.

Elsewhere a few hardy push netters have ventured out along the North Fylde coast, catches have been practically non-existent. Southport and Marshside fishermen report very poor catches up until the middle of April when a gradual improvement began after the winds came around to the West.

COCKLES / MUSSELS

All cockle fisheries have been closed throughout this quarter in this part of the District. Reports have been received and investigated of the occasional nocturnal foray to the small patches of cockles that lay around the Mousehole off St Annes. There is no indication that any significant amount of fishing activity has taken place.

A survey on Foulnaze in March found only moderate stocks of mature cockles and that some weather and age related mortality had taken place. Subsequent patrols to the Penfold Channel beds suggest that there has been a very significant mortality of mature cockles. On Penfold North moderate amounts of seed cockle have survived the winter in the more sheltered parts of the bed.

Low level mussel harvesting from the Ribble walls by indigenous fishermen has been the only significant fishing activity observed in the area. Early indications of a mussel spatfall have been seen on King Scar off Fleetwood.

NETTING

Set nets have been worked without any great success along the Rossall out fall pipe off Fleetwood. A few Cod and the occasional Bass have been landed.

The Lytham drift netters have only made the occasional exploratory voyage. Ashore reports have been received of a few Brill and Turbot being taken from North Shore Blackpool. Set nets placed along the Sefton Coast have produced little more than a few Flounder.

ANGLING

A few hardy anglers have been observed along the North Fylde coast, fishing reports have in general been very poor. Catches of Plaice and Flounder were reported from the R. Wyre during April. Shore anglers have also been seen at the Bullnose Preston and up the R. Wyre at Stannah.

Beach launched and charter angling vessels have fished when the weather has been suitable.

OBITUARY

Well known Fleetwood fisherman Frank Clarkson passed away last month. The son of a Ribble pilot he turned his hand to inshore fishing from Fleetwood in the early sixties. In a period when improvised craft were the norm he caused quite a stir when he brought the modern ex Dutch shrimp beamer Noordzee to Fleetwood in 1972. Always willing to experiment Frank also fished the Clyde, the North Sea and even turned his hand to Tuna fishing in the SW approaches. In his latter years he is perhaps better remembered for his letters to the Fishing News and local papers.

ENFORCEMENT

Routine patrol work has been undertaken despite the very low levels of fishing activity. The ATV has covered 214.5 nautical miles in 30.3 hours running time on patrol and sample gathering work. 10 inspections have been carried out with satisfactory results. I have attended the RYA Radar Course and the MMO Advanced Investigative Law Course.

SOUTHERN AREA

MERSEY, WIRRAL AND DEE

IFCO, A. Brownrigg

GENERAL

During this quarter I have attended several enforcement courses which have been conducted throughout the country. My daily routine activities have comprised of enforcement, sampling and survey work and this continues to be regularly undertaken throughout my area and the NWIFCA district.

SPECIFIC

COCKLING

Routine hygiene samples from Wirral North cockle bed continue to be taken on behalf of Mersey Port Health Authority (MPHA) and assistance is given in the collection of samples from the Ribble Cockle beds for West Lancashire Borough Council and MPHA; this will continue throughout the forthcoming months. In the meantime, Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to be during the rest of 2013 in order to allow the bed to settle.

MUSSEL

During March, the Food Standards Agency promoted the class of mussel from a Category (C) to (B). Despite the grade in class improving and the possibility of a more valuable catch, very little mussel harvesting has been observed taking place on West Kirby mussel bed. On behalf of CEFAS several mussel inspections (for relaying) have taken place and this will continue. During other inspections, we have observed a total of 14 tonne being harvested for commercial use. A detailed survey of the mussel bed will take place during this quarter.

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) again prove to be very popular areas. Routine patrols continue observation at Crosby Promenade, the River Alt, the 'Wall' in the Port of Liverpool and Albert and Kings Dock, all these areas have had very little or no fishing activity observed during this quarter.

BOAT ANGLING

Registered and unregistered fishing vessels continue to fish in the River Mersey and Liverpool Bay and along the north Wirral coastline towards, weekends remain the most popular times for fishing.

BAIT DIGGERS

Bait diggers, roughly 1 - 3 in number, can be seen daily along the North Wirral coastline. New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area of beach off Leasowe Common being identified as the most popular.

NETS

Presently, there are four set nets in the area off Leasowe Common. All nets identified are owned by one local fisherman all of which are correctly marked in accordance with NWIFCA byelaws.

COMMERCIAL BOAT ANGLING

Commercial fishing boats, identified as being from Liverpool Marina, can often be observed moored off New Brighton and Liverpool Bay. Each craft can transport between eight to ten anglers, however, no significant catches have been noted up to this date. Good relationships remain and advice and guidance are provided, along with inspection of fishing gear and equipment when requested.

ENFORCEMENT

The only outstanding prosecution was dealt with earlier this year in which a Byelaw 3 permit holder was fined for removing cockles from a closed bed. At present, I have no other outstanding issues.

'PROTECTOR ALPHA'

Due to financial reasons and practical constraints, it has been decided that 'Protector Alpha' the area's 5 metre Rigid Inflatable Boat will not be coded. Instead, the craft will remain within the Authority offering in-house training to all IFC officers and scientific staff. The quotations for a replacement vessel has been narrowed down to two contenders, both have provided a second and more detailed quote incorporating the specifics required for the craft to be coded. Once a decision has been finalised it is anticipated that a build and delivery time of between eight to sixteen weeks is expected. It is hoped that a boat presence on the River Mersey, Dee and along the north Wirral coastline as well as support to other areas will be seen from September or earlier.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, north Wirral coastline and Dee Estuary remain in place, and officer support has been offered to other areas in the form of Shore/ATV patrols and survey work. During February, I travelled to Scarborough to attend a two day Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) and Interview Training course run by PHF Training. I have also completed both parts of the Advanced Investigation Law course run by the Marine Management Organisation held in Blackpool and London. Further training has also been undertaken in the form of a one day Royal Yacht Association Radar and a Professional Practices and Responsibilities course held at Glasson Dock, Lancaster. A meeting with Seafish regarding a new course-training programme for the fishing safety course has taken place in Carnforth. I have also attended a meeting with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) regarding the Dee Estuary Cockle Fishery. Finally, assistance to the GLA, MPHA, NRW and Merseyside Police has remained, and this will continue.