

**North Western Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority**

Quarterly Meeting: 16 March 2012

Morecambe Town Hall: 11.00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

8

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

GENERAL

From the beginning of November all cockle beds across the district were closed and with poor tides and limited daylight very little survey work was able to be conducted. After the closure of the Southport and Wirral cockle beds early in the period, the Science Team has been predominantly focused upon the management and other issues regarding harvesting of undersize mussels at West Kirby, along with furthering several other important projects such as The Sustainable Fisheries Review, Sea Angling 2012 and Cockle Transplantation.

SURVEY WORK

Foulhaze Survey

A survey of the Foulhaze cockle bed was completed using a vessel to transport quads and science officers to the bed in November. A Natural England officer was in attendance to look at bird utilisation of the area. Survey results were presented at previous IFCA meeting.

West Kirby Mussel Bed

Science officers and IFCO's performed a visual survey and sampled the mussels for length frequency in December. Officers also aided in a Chinese Mitten Crab survey of the site in January as part of biosecurity measures.

PROJECT AND MANAGEMENT WORK

Sea Angling 2012

Two science officers, along with 2 of the IFCO's, attended a workshop with CEFAS and the two other northern IFCA's, to discuss the methodology of the Sea Angling 2012 Project in December 2011. This provided a better overall understanding of the project and how to approach the surveys. The surveys are to commence by the end of January 2012. Science Officers completed the site list and will continue to monitor progress of the project.

Wind farms

A science officer attended the FLOWW (Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables) meeting in Edinburgh in November 2011 to discuss the furthering of the group and to push for wet renewable representatives to attend in future. The science officer continues to monitor the construction of two wind farms off the coast of Barrow and the planning and consultation of extensions to two existing wind farms within the district.

West Kirby Mussel Bed – Dee Estuary

Science officer worked on creating a management plan for the undersize mussel fishery with other IFCA Officers. Liaison work was undertaken with fishermen, local authorities and Natural England. An Assessment of Likely Significant Effect was completed and signed off by Natural England in January. A full report on the Fishery was put to the TSB Sub-Committee on 17th February.

Morecambe Bay Sewage

Science officers have monitored meeting report and liaised with the relevant environmental health authority regarding the discharge of sewage into Morecambe Bay in November. All shellfish beds within the area were closed until mid-January.

Cockle Transplant – Ribble Estuary

Extensive preparatory work was undertaken by Science Officer leading to an initial, small scale relaying of approx. 3 tonnes of cockles. IFCOs and the Wildlife Trust graduates assisted throughout. Monitoring of the affected areas will resume in the next quarter.

Morecambe Bay Fishery Order

Science Officer responsible for Fishery Order has been working on the Order following comments from MMO, CEFAS and Natural England following consultation from DEFRA.

Roosecote biomass power station

Science staff responded to a request for information on the location, extent and importance of the fisheries in the Barrow/Walney/Roosecote area from consultants conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the conversion of Roosecote power station to biomass fuel.

Liverpool Bay razorshell and clam fishery

A number of discussions were held with operators with a view to establishing a trial fishery for razorshells and clams within the southern half of the District.

Lancaster University

An invitation was received to provide a guest lecturer for the university's 2011/12 Conservation Biology module. A series of lectures and a site visit were arranged for students to learn about fisheries management in general and the specific problems of managing shellfishing in Morecambe Bay.

Communities of Practice web forums (CoP)

A new platform for CoP is being introduced which requires the migration of all existing forums by April 2012. Preparatory work was completed to ensure a smooth transition to the new "Knowledge Hub".

CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

Sea Angling December 2011
Coastal Futures January 2012
IFCO Enforcement Training Jan 2012 for MK

MEETINGS

Halite Gas Storage – Meeting with appropriate authorities regarding discharge permit Nov 2011
Wildlife Trust Marine Graduate Scheme– Meeting with coordinator December 2011
Facilitated a meeting of the Sustainable Fisheries Review Working Party December 2011
Attended NWIFCA Committee Meeting Dec 2011
Attended TSB Meeting Jan 2012
Cross-agency (Defra family) survey co-ordination group Nov 2011

OTHER

Science officers continue to aid in Shellfish Hygiene sampling and supporting all IFCO's and IFCA Officers in their duties.

Science Team
21 February 2012