

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

16th September 2016: 11.00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
9**

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES FOR THE PERIOD 1ST MAY TO THE 31ST JULY 2015

Purpose: to report on fisheries activity and the work of the IFCOs during the quarter.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received
2. That the recommendations in Annex C are adopted:
 - a) Future Byelaw 3 returns reporting is anonymised as outlined in Annex C
 - b) The current approach of the enforcement team to Byelaw 3 returns compliance is approved

Introduction

1. Full details of fishing activities within the District are as usual provided in the officers' reports. In summary:
 - A moderate quarter in respect of catches – specifically in respect of Shrimps, Lobster/Crab and Nephrops fisheries
 - Poor Bass returns across the District
 - Light inter-tidal hand gathering of mussels
 - The S. America dredge fishery commencing on the 11th July – will be reported to TSB at a future date
 - Cockle beds remained closed and the Byelaw 3 closed season commenced at the beginning of the quarter
2. Byelaw 3 (Cockle and Mussel) returns are summarised in Annex A. This annex reports Byelaw 3 returns in the way recommended to the authority below.

General Update

3. IFCOs assisted Lake District National Park (LDNP) and the Head of Enforcement (HoE) with completing the design of the new permit database. The 2016/17 Byelaw 3 permits are all being issued using the database and will now be on robust credit style plastic card.
4. The HoE was on paternity leave from the 23rd May to the 16th June.
5. IFCOs have continued to assist with survey work and sample runs across the District.

Health and Safety Review

6. All officers have continued to engage with the Health and Safety (H and S) review, specifically:
 - Improving the current risk assessment and better coordination of them across the IFCA
 - Attaching Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) to risk assessments for maritime and inter-tidal work

- Identifying specific training needs for newer staff have been identified and internal training is being put together

Enforcement

7. Specific enforcement activities during the quarter included:
- Patrolling to check Byelaw 26/27 permit compliance within the netting boxes – which run 1st May to the 30th November
 - Patrols within the Dee estuary to check compliance with the Bass prohibitions within SI1156 of 1990 (as amended)
 - Joint enforcement patrols at sea in both ‘Bay Protector’ and ‘Solway Protector’ and ashore with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
 - A joint patrol with the Environment Agency (EA) in the upper Solway Specific work on Byelaw 3 returns compliance
8. The following sanctions were used during the quarter:

Sanction	Comments
Verbal warnings	13 in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 for removal of two undersized crabs at Walney island 21st July (returned) 7 in connection with Byelaw 3 returns investigation 5 in connection with the Heysham seed authorisation
Advisory letters	1 in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For an unlicensed vessel towing in close proximity to the Walney channel prohibited area (Byelaw 6)
Official warning letters	57 in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54 in connection with returns investigation 3 in connection to individual who had failed to notify a change of address – the three individuals were cautioned

Returns Compliance Update

9. IFCO Walters led, with assistance from all IFCOs, a specific drive to investigate and improve compliance with the Byelaw 3 reporting requirements. The time frame for this ran from the 18th July to the time of writing.
10. The aim was to:

Apply the IFCA sanctions policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until compliance was or has been achieved Establishing an audit trail of sanctions applied for use in court if required
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when required All Byelaw 3 holders received a guidance letter (and forms) with their 2016/17 Byelaw 3 permit renewal form
Type of non-compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross reference IFCOs records of gathers activity with returns compliance to distinguish fishing effort/nil returns non-compliance

11. A detailed account of the results is given in Annex B and a summary is given below:
- Compliance has improved from 45% to 75% at the time of writing
 - A total of 113,456kg of mussel and 6779kg of cockle previously unreported on the 18th July has now been accounted for

12. The 25% non-compliance constitutes 22 non-compliant individuals varying from:
 - New permit holders who have very recently entered the system
 - Individuals where there is no evidence of having fished but they have failed to nil return
 - 7 individuals that represent serious non-compliance
13. A formal internal process is now in place to monitor and identify non-compliance with a focus on ensuring:
 - Compliance is complete on a month by month basis
 - Compliance with a fishery specific reporting requirement and on closure of the fishery

Response to the Authority

14. Although not present at the quarterly meeting on the 10th June the HoE has been made aware of queries raised by members in respect of:
 - Some of the numerical detail in Annex A – summary of Byelaw 3 fishing effort
 - The Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 implications of publishing the data
 - Current levels of compliance with Byelaw 3 returns and the enforcement of it
15. A response is given in Annex C.

Andrew Deary
Head of Enforcement
2nd September 2016

Annex A - Summary of Byelaw 3 Fishing Effort for the Quarter

Beds fished within the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foulney (mussel) • Ribble Training wall • Seafield slip
Number permit holders who fished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21
Tonnage gathered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 139,386kg – mussel • 0kg – cockle

Annex B – Summary of the Byelaw 3 Returns Compliance

Compliance			Tonnage Recorded				
			Month	Mussels (kg)		Cockles (kg)	
18 th July	Present			18 th July	16 th Sept	18 th July	16 th Sept
Compliant	44	69	Jan	44870	69435	13,947	20726
Non-compliant	42	22	Feb	16178	50113		
% compliance	48	76	March	30777	54262		
			Apr	34597	93134		
			Total	153488	266944		

Annex C – Response to the Authority Queries of the 10th June meeting

1. Three issues were raised by members during the discussion on the Byelaw 3 returns at minute 74 of the quarterly meeting.
2. The response comes with the following recommendations:
 - **Reporting of Byelaw 3 returns data should be anonymised in the way outlined below**
 - **Members approve the current approach the enforcement team is taking towards Byelaw 3 returns compliance**

Annex A. Query

Content of Annex A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The figures reported are a simple addition of the returns that have been received by the IFCA - there is no analysis• Days effort denotes a day when the permit holder has filed a fishing return– the returns form is recorded in hrs. effort but is reported as a discrete day in the quarterly report• For example – “21 days, 169 days effort” means there has been 169 days effort carried out by 21 individuals
Queries of specific figures	<p>The discrepancy raised by Mr. Manning is due to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 50 attendees on the first day at Leven was recorded directly by the IFCA• The 21 referred to in Annex A reports the number of gatherers who had filed returns at the time of writing• This is reflective of compliance at the time of writing – thus the investigation reported above

DPA Implications and Confidentiality

3. Mr. Manning and Dr Andrews raised issues with respect to the data contained in Annex A being in the public domain – specifically with reference to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998.
4. I have carried out an analysis of the DPA and its associated guidance in respect of this query. The DPA defines “personal data” as:

“data which relate to a living individual who can be identified”

— (a) from those data, or (b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller, and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual”

5. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) provides guidance on the DPA and with specific relevance to the query the following publication:
 - Anonymization: managing data protection risk code of practice
6. ICO advice states that the DPA does not apply to data that has been rendered anonymous and that there “*is clear legal authority*” to consider such data not personal and publish it.
7. This same publication provides guidance on the anonymisation process prior to the publication of personal data. A framework of data anonymisation in the document refers to the “likelihood” rather than “possibility” of an individual being identified from published data as reference points.
8. With this in mind it is therefore recommended that catch data from Byelaw 3 permit holders is published in the following format in future:
 - A list of beds that have been fished is included
 - District wide totals of number of Byelaw 3 permit holders who have fished and the tonnages removed is included
 - An example, has been used in Annex A of this report
9. It is not recommended that the accuracy of the returns themselves is reduced – just what is reported publicly – as this may impact on the management of a specific fishery.
10. There are likely to be future occasions where returns data for specific fisheries needs to be published to inform management decisions (i.e. use of TAC). It is recommended that in this

instance officers should consider the DPA implications prior to publishing the data and will ensure anonymisation of the data in accordance with the above.

11. The commercial sensitivity of the Byelaw 3 returns data is recognised and therefore:
 - The data is held under Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) mark OFFICIAL
 - Officers are briefed not to disseminate or discuss the data externally and failure to adhere to this would be a disciplinary issue

Master of the "Solway Protector" - H Thinnesen

PRIORITIES, PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

- Patrol throughout the district for large vessel infringement of byelaws
- Record data of nets and pots set within the district
- Inspect Lobster/Brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels
- Inspect gill nets for compliance with EU legislation
- Input enforcement information and vessel activities into MCSS (Monitor and control surveillance system)
- Record data of nets
- Inspect nets for compliance with Byelaw 10 (3)
- Monitor and patrol Plaice box area - Byelaw 20 Protection of immature Plaice
- Inspect vessels for compliance with EU fishing gear legislation
- Record all fishing vessel sightings data
- Maintain service and repair patrol boats
- Inspect and carry out checks with hobby fishermen/vessels Byelaw 26
- Patrol throughout district for detection of fishery limit line offence
- Attend meetings on behalf of NWIFCA

As would be expected for this time of the year the weather conditions have been a bit more settled during this quarter, and we continue to monitor fishing activities throughout the district in both "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo".

On the whole the main patrol boat has performed well over the reporting period. Essential repairs and maintenance along with crew leave, has resulted in some patrol days at sea being lost.

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. However two breaches of EU regulations were detected during the quarter regarding mesh sizes on nets which the MMO (Marine Management Organisation) are currently investigating.

TRAWLING, POTTING, NETTING & BOAT ANGLING

Trawling once again has been mainly 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. Prawns (Nephrops) are also soft shelled this time of year which makes the meat go quite soft, resulting in the market price being lower and returns back to the boat being moderate at best.

We have only seen a handful of visiting vessels in the Cumbrian part of the district this quarter, mainly due to these vessels finding more prosperous fishing grounds closer to home. Any vessels we did encounter only fished in the area for two to three days at best, with moderate fishing reported.

Scallop vessels although fishing outside the district continue to make regular landings into Whitehaven.

Netting at sea this quarter has been low key with no reports of any decent landings being made. Potting as you can imagine is in full swing at this time of year, with mixed reports being made. Our main potting operator who fishes 1000 plus pots in the south end of the Cumbrian district, remains out of commission up until time of writing this report. Two local fishermen in the northern part of the district have reported fishing having picked up in the last two weeks of July, with 75 kgs of Lobster and a 100 plus kgs of Brown Crabs from 250 pots hauled.

The whelk vessels continue to land their catch into Whitehaven with continued reports of good landings being made into the port.

Reports from boat anglers have once again been positive with landings of sized Cod, Plaice, and a number of Thornback ray in the northern part of the district. Again this has been mainly close to shore and south west of St Bees Head when weather permitted.

There was a report in one of the local newspapers 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 within the local angling community.

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

MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND SERVICING OF PATROL VESSELS

- New sensors were fitted and wiring renewed on the engine room fire detection system
- Electrics rewired on the deck crane
- Repair fuel system and cooling system on main generator set
- Starboard main engine overheating. Replaced two regulators on cooling system
- Repairs carried out on starboard side boarding ladders - cracks around welding found
- Replace fractured water cooling pipe on starboard main engine
- Main engines and gearboxes serviced oil and filters changed all manufacturers recommended services for warranties have been carried out on both main engines
- All monthly safety checks and service schedules are all up to date

“PROTECTOR BRAVO”

“Protector Bravo” continues to be a much valued asset regarding inshore enforcement duties. The vessel has on the whole performed well with only a couple of minor running problems to report, which are as follows:

- Replace deck lights
- Replace and relocate all-round white mast head light
- Repair net/pot hauler post, fractured swivel ring taken off and sent away for re-welding
- “Protector Bravo’s” road trailer was fully serviced, new brakes and cables fitted along with wheel bearings

“ZODIAC BRAVO”

- “Zodiac Bravo” had work carried out for the MCA workboat code, and the vessel is now fully compliant to the workboat standards
- Service carried out on the vessel’s road trailer

JOINT ENFORCEMENT WORK

Two joint enforcement operations were carried out from the main patrol boat during the quarter, to which I am pleased to report were both successful.

The first one was undertaken on the 15th June 2016, with three Environment Agency enforcement officers on board, where boarding’s of fishing vessels in the upper Solway and observations of vessels by-catch were carried out.

The second joint operation was on the 21st July 2016, with two of the Marine Management Organisation’s enforcement officers on board. This work involved boarding vessels both inside and outside the NWIFCA district mainly concentrating on EU regulations and technical measures.

SURVEYS

Trials were carried out using the Authority's own side scan survey equipment. Unfortunately again no data was being received back from the Tow Fish.

OTHER

Both myself and the patrol boat engineer attendED a meeting with Seafish's Senior Surveyor, Richard Blackhurst on the 11th and 12th of May 2016, to discuss technical issues regarding the tendering process for the new patrol boat.

H THINNESEN

2nd August 2016

" Solway Protector "
DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time
12/05/2016	West of Sellafield/Mulberry	15	7.50
13/05/2016	Prawn Grounds	19	5.25
16/05/2016	West of Sellafield/Marypot	6	5.00
17/05/2016	Duddon Sands/Ravenglass/Selker Rocks	4	4.75
18/05/2016	Workington/Scallop Bank/Prawn Grounds	2	4.58
19/05/2016	Workington/Maryport/Silloth	3	4.58
24/05/2016	West of Sellafield	11	4.17
01/06/2016	West of Whitehaven	0	1.00
14/06/2016	Prawn pitch/Haverigg Point	1	7.08
15/06/2016	Joint operation with EA - Silloth north	4	6.17
16/06/2016	Harrington/Parton	0	2.75
06/07/2016	Western prawn pitch	21	5.50
07/07/2016	Prawn pitch	6	3.17
20/07/2016	Whitehaven, Flimby, Haverigg Point	8	6.82
21/07/2016	West of Seascale	6	11.08
27/07/2016	Eskmeals/Haverigg/Walney	5	8.00
28/07/2016	Prawn pitch/Barrow mussel fishery	9	12.75

"Solway Protector"
PATROL STATISTICS

	01/05/16 - 31/07/16		01/02/16 - 30/04/16	
Number of patrols and passages	17	patrols	13	patrols
Seatime	100.15		76.59	
Average length of patrol	5.89		5.89	
Total distance covered	852	miles	718	miles
Average distance per patrol	50	miles	55	miles
Fuel used	2170	gallons	1660	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	128	gallons	128	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	120	vessels	123	vessels
Local	74	vessels	53	vessels
Visiting	46	vessels	70	vessels
<u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>
Trawlers	21	42	16	19
Twin Rigg Trawlers	0	3	16	44
Gill netters	0	0	2	0
Shrimpers	5	0	0	0
Potting Boats	9	8	9	0
Mussel dredgers	4	0	0	0
Anglers	28	0	17	0
<u>Total:</u>	67	53	60	63

Protector Bravo - 7m Osprey Viper RIB

Operating base: Whitehaven

Area of operation: Burghmarsh Point (Solway Firth) to Haverigg Point (South Cumbria)

Date	TOTAL	06/05/2016	17/05/2016	22/05/2016	13/06/2016	14/06/2016	15/06/2016	16/06/2016	19/07/2016	20/07/2016	21/07/2016
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		AF & HT	Solway Protector crew	AF & HT	AF & HT	AF & HT	AF, HT & PM	AF & HT	HT & TA	HT, NW & JS	AF, HT & MMO
Area patrolled & comments:		Whitehaven to Flimby	Duddon Sands, Ravenglass, Selker	Whitehaven, St Bees Head, Sellafield, Workington	St Bees Head to Harrington	Selker north	Joint operation with EA at Silloth	Whitehaven-Harrington	Whitehaven, Couderton, Siddick	Duddon to Workington	Prawn pitch
Number of hours patrolled	56.65	02:20	04:45	05:00	04:15	07:05	06:10	02:45	04:20	07:15	12:45
Number of miles patrolled	342.1	27.7	55	36	26.3	55.1	48	8	35	46	5
No of patrols days:	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	11	3		2			1		2		3
Vessels checked	20	3		2	4		1		7		3
Pots Checked	122		13	17	21	8	9	14	20	20	
Nets Checked	3										3
No: of crabs measured	33		11	22							
Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:											
ZONE 1- Burgh-by-Sands to Campfield Marsh	1						1				
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	3	1		1					1		
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	4	2		1					1		
Prawn Patch - W of Sellafield	3									3	
Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel boarded:											
Trawler (single rigged)	3								1	2	
Trawler (twin rigged)	1									1	
Shrimp beam trawler	1						1				
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	3			2					1		
Gear inspected per type of fishing vessel boarded:											
Trawler (single rigged)	2								1	1	
Trawler (twin rigged)	1									1	
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	32					15		14	1	2	
Lobster & crab potter (IFCO permitted)	51		13	17		6	9			6	
Recreational Angling vessel	3	3									
Closings of vessels at sea:											
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	7			2	4					1	
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	2			2							
Prawn Patch - W of Sellafield	2									2	
ZONE 6 - Seascale to Kirksanton	3		3								
Type of fishing vessel when closing undertaken:											
Trawler (single rigged)	3								1	2	
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	1									1	
Recreational Angling vessel	14		3	1	4				6		
Sightings of vessels at sea:											
ZONE 1- Burgh-by-Sands to Campfield Marsh	4						4				
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	7	1							6		
Prawn Patch - W of Sellafield	4									4	
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL SIGHTED:											
Trawler (single rigged)	2									2	
Trawler (twin rigged)	2									2	
Shrimp beam trawler	4						4				
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	1	1									
Recreational Angling vessel	9			3					6		

GENERAL

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

- Prawn trawlers have been active throughout the quarter. Unfortunately the landings of prawns has been poor by normal standards, with day boats having between 12 – 20 stone of Prawns, with Thornback rays as a by-catch with as much as 6 -10 boxes at times. By the end of June and mid-July, the odd boat from Whitehaven and Maryport were seeing better results, with landings topping 140 – 160 stones for 36 hours fishing. The odd visiting vessel targeting prawns haven't stayed on the grounds for long due to lesser quantities being caught on our grounds, compared to the grounds on the west of the Isle of Man.
- Shrimp fishing from boats in the district have seen patchy landings this quarter with reports ranging from 12 kilos to 150 kilos being caught over a tide.
- Licensed potters were active with inspections carried out by officers seeing 10 - 75 kilos of Lobsters and 15- 50 Kilos of Brown Crab. The whelk boats are making regular landings into Whitehaven of around 8 - 10 tonnes each time.
- Anglers fishing from piers and beaches are still catching some Codlings, with some Plaice being also caught. More Smooth Hounds are being caught this season than normal. Codlings are still mostly being caught in the dark hours with some landings being in double figures,
- Netters were active during the first month of the quarter, catches were mostly Cod and Thornback rays. By mid-May some bass were being caught by commercial fishermen.

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

One of our larger potting vessels had sustained near terminal damage after a collision at sea, luckily all hands were saved. However the skipper did sustain a head injury, and thankfully he has made a full recovery.

TRAWLING

- Over the quarter the prawn boats have been active, with landings ranging from 12 stones from the smaller day boats, to 160 stones from the larger vessels out of Whitehaven and Maryport, depending on the time spent at sea and the size of vessels targeting the prawns.
- The visiting Irish fleet haven't really made their usual trips on our side of the Irish sea this quarter due, to good fishing in waters on the west side of the Isle of Man. Reports of the odd twin rigged trawler fishing just outside of the district fishing for prawns, have been reported to be catching around the 200 – 300 stones for few days, but these vessels are few and far between and not much has been landed into the ports in our district by these vessels.

SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH

Shrimp vessels this quarter have been active, with catches between 12-150 kilos for a tide when weather has permitted. This has been the worst year on record for catching shrimps in the Solway, and many things are being blamed for the lack of stock including the windfarm at Robin Rigg. The skippers have noticed that year on year more and more sand banks are appearing, than at anytime throughout history. This I'm told seems to have coincided with the erecting of the Robin Rigg wind farm. The skippers have also said that year on year the fishing is getting worse as more and more banks are appearing which take the traditional runs away, others blame the El Niño phenomenon which has occurred this year.

KING SCALLOPS AND QUEEN SCALLOPS

Vessels from Maryport along with vessels from Scotland have been landing regular landings of queen scallops into the ports; with landings topping 500 bags having been seen by officers.

POTTING

Vessels have been active throughout the quarter, and inspections carried out have seen landings between 10 and 75 kilos of lobsters and 15 – 50 kilos of brown crab for a couple of days soak.

Whelk boats landing into Whitehaven on a regular basis have seen landings ranging from 8 -10 tonnes, with prices around £635 per tonne. One local vessel who was fishing whelks was getting paid £1200 per tonne which he was catching every two days. This operation has been halted because of old CSFC Byelaw 25 issues relating to the requirement for escape gaps in pots, traps and creels, thus rendering whelk pots ineffective in catching whelks. Although the whelkers do not fish on the same grounds as where Lobster and Crabs are known to reside, they have been told that they cannot use their pots unless they have gaps fitted in them when fishing in our district. Skippers are asking why have they been allowed over the last 17 years to fish for whelks with the knowledge of the Chief Officer, and now they cannot.

Crabbers and lobster men in the south of the patch have reported moderate landings of Brown Crab 15 – 400 kilos and 20 – 70 kilos of Lobster.

One vessel has been helping with the Lobster enhancement programme that the Maryport Aquarium has ongoing, with derogation from the authority. I can inform the Authority that it is going well with around 50,000 juveniles at the moment happily growing in his tanks.

One of our larger potting vessels had sustained near terminal damage after a collision at sea. Luckily all hands were saved, the skipper did sustain a head injury, and thankfully he has made a full recovery.

OFFSHORE NETTING

Reports from this sector are that seals are a common sight around gear, and as a result catches seem to be well down due to this factor. The odd days can see 2-4 boxes of thorn backed rays caught along with the odd sea Bass from commercial vessels.

BEACH NETTING

- Inspections carried out regularly at known netting areas have seen a mixed fishery, with Cod and Thornback rays being the mainstay of catches, bass have 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 did, and therefore was asked if he was hobby or commercial fisherman. He reported that he was commercial, and was therefore advised that under the new EU Bass Regulations, he must provide evidence of the sale of the fish caught. This he did the next day. Officers followed up the fish sale receipt to a restaurant which turned out to be correct. Officers were then satisfied that the netter was commercial.
- By the end of May all fishing of beach nets had stopped due to Byelaw 10 coming into force. One fisherman has decided to try his hand again this season at beach drifting, and reports are that catches have been sporadic, some days catching some not. This method of fishing is less dependent on height of tide but less effective in shallow waters it would seem.

ANGLING

This quarter has seen Codling being caught by anglers at the usual stations, with the best of the catches being caught at night and anything up to 4 - 8 codlings being kept, all around the 3 – 6lb mark. Some Plaice, smooth hounds and Mackerel have also been caught mostly on the Whitehaven piers.

A large number of Thornbacks have been getting caught at Silloth again this season. Officers regularly monitor this fishery as reports of fish being thrown on grass banks behind fishermen as some were regarding them as a nuisance, this I'm glad to report has now been stopped due to officer education.

BAIT DIGGING

Very little bait gathering has been seen this quarter, 4 diggers have been seen by officers and very little in buckets, 50-100 for own use.

Reports from one commercial lugger are that he has been getting between 600-700 per tide; prices are £30 - £35 per 100 lugs.

OTHER DUTIES

Other duties have been joint working with the EA, and assisting other officers with sea duties on board "Protector Gamma" and the "Solway Protector".

ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Beach netters and anglers alike have been educated regularly about the EU bass regulations in force, where if they intend to sell bass and claim they are commercial then they must provide proof of sale, to officers, which in turn will be followed up by officers visiting premises where the fish have been sold to, in order to prove the sale of any Bass caught.

Officer Statistics for the period 1st May – 31st July 2016

Shore Patrols	40
Fishing Locations visited	573
Quad Patrols	6
Locations by quad	31
Anglers seen	606
Bait Diggers & crabbers seen	76
Inspections all	356
Beach nets inspected	9
Days assisting other areas of district	3
All vessels sighted	6`509

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.

One small unlicensed vessel was observed trawling for Plaice in Walney channel during a RIB patrol; an advisory letter was subsequently issued due to the close proximity to the Byelaw 6 closed area to bottom towed gear in the Channel.

SHRIMPING

Shrimp fishing has been carried out regularly by five tractor and tra-la-la's from Flookburgh and one from Baycliff, catches have been moderate at best, reports from fishermen suggest the shrimps in the Leven Channel area are smaller than usual. A report from one fisherman late in the reporting period suggested that there had been encouraging increases in catches which they hope will continue late into the season.

COCKLES

All cockle beds have been subject to Byelaw 3 closed season during the entirety of this quarter.

Surveys conducted on the North Morecambe Bay cockle beds revealed an increase in the numbers of juvenile cockles in the beds accessed from Flookburgh, many of the cockles were just under the minimum landing size. Further surveys are planned to monitor the growth levels.

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, with 11 permit holders fishing small amounts of size mussel, on the southernmost tip of Foulney. Many areas of Foulney and the surrounding mussel beds have experienced a heavy spatfall.

An authorised seed mussel dredging area was opened on the 11th of July and was fished by three vessels, the two large mussel dredgers from Menai area were observed and boarded and inspected. One under 10m vessel from Barrow dredged on one occasion, landing around one tonne of seed mussel.

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

NETTING

Several licensed vessels from Barrow were observed or reported to have been netting for Bass, one fisherman who is one of the only full time fishermen had moderate success which was down to putting in the time and effort required. Reports from other licensed vessels suggested a lack of Bass numbers although the size of the Bass was above average for recent times. Average catches were 20kg or less of Bass, with several Dover Sole also being caught. Large amounts of weed hampered activity and also predation by seals was said to be becoming more of a problem, with some Bass caught having been partially eaten. Mullet prices increased which saw fishermen targeting them but catch reports were poor. Trammel netting for flounders for pot bait also recorded poor results.

Two unlicensed vessels were observed netting in the Duddon estuary. One was stopped as it returned by IFCA and MMO Officers, no catch was on board.

Several beach nets were inspected and observed in the Duddon estuary and Morecambe Bay but weed was a problem which reduced activity.

Flue netting in the Leven estuary was carried out by 2 Flookburgh based fishermen but results were poor.

POTTING

During the quarter potting activity in the Barrow area was at a low level inside the District. One of the larger potting vessels which operates inside the District was unfortunately involved in an incident which prevented it continuing fishing for the quarter. Two licensed vessels continue to pot outside of the IFCA District, working from Barrow. Two licensed vessels have been working a small number of pots west of Walney and in the channel approaches with limited success.

One licensed vessel has been working a small amount of pots for whelks in Walney Channel although catch reports have been low due to the small amount of pots and familiarisation with the area and the fishery. Very few Byelaw 30 permitted pots have been observed or reported.

Hand gathering of lobster and crab at low water on spring tides has been monitored this quarter in Walney Channel and the west side of Walney. One verbal warning was given to a recreational fisherman origin for retaining 2 undersize edible crabs, which were returned to the sea when requested.

ANGLING

Angling activity both afloat and from the shore increased this quarter when the weather conditions were favourable. Many of the boat anglers were seen on the outside cod marks west of Walney, with catches of cod and Pollack reported although in low numbers. Bass catches were poor, effort increased slightly after the 1st July when 1 Bass per day could be retained. Many of the anglers spoken to said they were just sport fisherman who would occasionally take a Bass to eat if it was of ideal size. Several anglers were observed in Walney channel targeting Plaice following reports of a 3lb fish being caught, although many never caught any.

Long lines seemed to have declined in popularity over recent years, 2 long lines were observed in the Duddon estuary, and one in the Newbiggin area, catch reports were generally poor.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

IFCO, J. Moulton

During the last quarter fishing within my area has remained stable when good weather conditions have been present. I have continued to collect shellfish hygiene samples in the area and assisted other officers with gathering samples when required. There has been a busy schedule of surveys on both cockle and mussel beds throughout the district which I have been a constant part of.

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. Throughout this quarter the shrimp boats have continued to fish over both low and high tides if they wish landing no more than 4 stone of shrimp. The boats continue on such a small scale as they only need to provide for their own businesses.

There has been a small amount of recreational trawling for shrimps and push netting recorded in the area mostly during weekend working.

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.

Levels of juvenile cockles have continued to increase across the area however there are of yet no 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

The excellent settlement of spat recorded in the previous quarter has continued to grow on and it is expected that there will be a substantial seed fishery on Heysham Flat.

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

This quarter featured the return of drift netting for commercial fisherman, despite this there has only been one boat which has prosecuted this fishing method. Even with drift netting allowed there have been very poor landing of bass. All the boats in Morecambe have remained tied up.

A small number of stake nets have been fished in the areas permitted under byelaw 26/27 and fishermen have been observed checking them regularly.

A small amount of recreational long line fishing has been seen in the Morecambe and Heysham area with good reports of bass being caught and returned alive.

DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING

During this last quarter shore anglers have continued to fish over high and low water tides being observed at Throbsaw point, Bare Ayre and Heysham North Wall. Dinghy angling improved through this quarter with the change to bass legislation allowing one fish per man per day, although despite this most bass angling seems to be targeted at sport fishing with the fish returned alive. The local angling club has been seen to launch upwards of 6 boats in a tide from Heysham.

Compliance of Byelaw 5, Heysham Bass Nursery Area has continued to be excellent.

CENTRAL AREA

RIVER WYRE TO RIVER ALT

IFCO. N. Walters

GENERAL

This quarter has had some varied weather patterns. An extremely hot May and subsequent colder/wetter June have had effects on shellfish growth but also on the amount of freshwater being transported southwards down the coast.

TRAWLING

During this period, Fleetwood's last commercial trawler FD 170 (The Albion) has stopped functioning and the boat has been listed for sale. Other trawling from Fleetwood has been on a recreational scale and has been limited.

SHRIMPING:

Lytham shrimping has continued through the quarter but periods of heavy rain has caused freshwater to enter the Ribble therefore effecting the shrimping catches. Shrimping for Lytham is only carried out by

two people; one of them is recreational so catch quantities have remained relatively low. Southport shrimpers have continued with limited success also.

Push netting at Rossall has been adequate for domestic needs.

POTS

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

COCKLES

The warm weather has caused a cockle bed at Penfold North to survive and it continues to flourish. Currently it is not of a commercial size. Sampling for Environmental Health has almost concluded and classification is imminent should the bed become of a commercial nature.

Patches of near size cockles were found at Seafield in Lytham and near the North Run at St Annes, potentially washed over from the Penfold Bed. These beds however did not survive more than a few days and have been washed out.

MUSSELS

Mussels have been relatively poor throughout the quarter, the beds on Seafield and the majority of the Ribble Training Wall have gone. There have been enough for the two main Byelaw 3 holders to continue but stocks are limited.

Mussels have been found at Perch Scar in Fleetwood but with the opening of Heysham seed fishery, these will not be actively fished and as such remain unclassified.

During the later stages of July, Seafield failed an Environmental Health test and therefore the bed is closed.

NETS – LINES

Beach netting has continued, especially in the Southport area with relatively poor returns.

The Lytham gill netters have been working steadily, intermingled with Salmon fishing. Bass quantities are still poor for the time of the year.

ANGLING

Angling at Blackpool continues to be poor. Discussions with up to 50 – 60 anglers at a time reveal very poor catches. Weeds in the water have often been a problem, this supposedly occurs from run off but it constantly affects fishermen's lines. A variety of fish have been caught when there has been success, these included flatfish, whiting, codling and weevers.

Recreational angling boats continue to launch on good weather with reports of large tope and occasional cod being caught.

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

BAIT DIGGING

Bait digging continues to thrive along the coast. Many of the bait diggers collect for personal consumption and report good quantities.

ENFORCEMENT

Two written section 265 notices were attached to unmarked nets in Southport. No other issues with compliance.

GENERAL

During this quarter both IFC Officer Capper and I have continued to undertake activities such as enforcement, survey and sample work. IFCO Brownrigg, has provided officer support to the Heysham Flat seed mussel fishery during July. "Bay Protector" has been active carrying out enforcement duties in the southern area and around other parts of the NWIFCA district.

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. During a recent ATV patrol cockles roughly 6-8mm in size have been observed all over Wirral North cockle bed and in patches along the north Wirral coastline. This will continue to be monitored by both NWIFCA and Mersey Port Health Authority (MPHA) officers. A detailed report will be given in the next quarterly report.

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 on 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), Perch Rock (New Brighton) and Crosby promenade and beach have seen the most regular activity. These areas have seen between one to fifteen anglers fishing at any one time where Dab, Flounder, Bass, Whiting and Plaice have been observed being landed. The River Alt, Alexandria Wall and Brunswick, Albert and Kings Dock have had very little or no activity observed during this last quarter

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. Numbers routinely remain between 0 – 3 bait diggers being noted daily with anywhere between 20 – 50 worms gathered. The area has three main crab tile points two situated in the river 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 with catches of up to 30 Peeler crabs being noted.

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. Reports of Plaice, Flounder, Dab, Mackerel, Whiting, Dogfish and Tope (up to 50lb) being made. Presently the area has eight commercial angling vessels and several recreational angling vessels working from Liverpool Marina and moorings off Bromborough, New Brighton and Meols. Several boats from Wirral Small Boats Club have been active within the river Mersey and Liverpool bay areas over the weekends.

TRAWLING

Four commercial shrimp beam trawlers remain moored off Thurstatson slipway; however due to poor weather, the active cockle fishery in the Dee Estuary and NWIFCA taskings outside our area we have been unable to observe any regular fishing activities.

“BAY PROTECTOR”

Despite strong winds within the area “Bay Protector” has been active within the Southern area and NWIFCA district. Several boardings and closings have taken place within southern area and up to Blackpool and Fleetwood. It was pleasing to hear the positive comments from anglers on seeing the enforcement vessel active within their area. To date, over 16 hours and 350 miles have been covered undertaking enforcement duties.

NETS

During the recent ATV patrols along the north Wirral and Formby coastlines a total of seven set nets have been observed; 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. As part of our routine monthly inspections for Razor and Otter Clams over 40 Oriental gatherers have been observed and inspected during this quarter with 40 kilograms of Otter Clam being noted. During one of our inspections, a joint enforcement operation was carried out resulting in two Oriental gatherers being detained by the United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF). Finally; assistance to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, MPHA, Natural Resources Wales, UKBF and Merseyside Police has remained ongoing.

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY: 31ST JULY 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	17	10	4		5
Patrol hours (sea time)	100.15	56.65	13		16.5
Nautical miles	852	342.1	115		347
Sightings of vessels fishing	120	18	8		11
Closings	98	18	0		2
Inspections	97		29		9
Boardings	11		5		9
ENFORCEMENT ON LAND:					
Number of:	Cumbria	Barrow	Morecambe	Fleetwood	Wirral
Shore patrols*	57	91	28	46	33
*Undertaken either by vehicle or on foot, to any beach/foreshore/landing station/harbour/pier (not using an ATV)					
ATV patrols	7	16	8	8	5
ATV patrol hours	17.92	25.75	8	16	15
ATV kms covered	176	267	39.3	104	137
Inspections undertaken	435	131	1	58	58
INFRINGEMENTS:					
	At Sea		On Shore		TOTAL
Verbal warnings			13		13
Advisory warning letters			1		1
Official warning letters			57		57
Official Cautions issued					
Prosecutions pending					
Home Office cautions issued					
FAPs					
Prosecutions					

