

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

19th September 2014: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA
ITEM NO.
6

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES **FOR THE PERIOD 1ST MAY TO 31ST JULY 2014**

GENERAL

The quarter saw favourable weather and fishing activity generally consisted of the following:

- Significant static gear in the Northern District
- Steady mussel gathering in the Duddon estuary
- Nephrops activity in the Northern District
- The hobby fishing hitting full swing

Regular patrols of the Heysham Byelaw 5 area were also conducted.

The implementation of Byelaw 3 returns for Cockle and Mussel fisheries was commenced during the quarter. This has been very successful and compliance with regards to actual fishing effort has been complete. A detailed report on the returns was submitted to the TSB Sub-Committee on the 15th August and a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

A successful members' training day was held in Whitehaven with subsequent ones possible if members support the idea.

Officers from the IFCA attended a water safety day at Barrow on the 6th July with Cumbria police and the Barrow port authority.

A meeting with the Head of Enforcement and the Environment Agency (EA) to identify any need and potential advantages of Cross Warranting between IFCA and EA enforcement staff was held on the 10th July and a paper was put to the TSB for consultation – a verbal update will be given at meeting.

ENFORCEMENT

Compliance during the quarter has generally been good with the following sanctions being required:

- One Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP) being issued for an unpermitted Byelaw 3 offence at the Duddon. This has not been paid and the case is on-going
- 4 official warning letters
- 4 verbal warnings

Court Activity:

Although not within the reporting period members should be aware of recent court cases that have been heard in court.

Dariusz Bednarczyk and Pawel Bednarczyk pleaded guilty to landing undersized mussels in breach of paragraph 6 of Byelaw 3 and section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MACAA) 2009 in the Foulney area on the 19th November and 4th December.

In the case of Mr Pawel Bednarczyk the case proceeded to court due to the non-payment of a Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP) issued on the 21st November for the offence on the 19th November. The court imposed the following in respect of both defendants:

- A fine of £325
- Costs of £75
- A victim surcharge of £32.50

A case against Mr Wayne Wilson for two counts of alleged breaches of section 292 (obstruction) of MACAA on was also heard on the 7th August. Mr. Wilson pled not-guilty to the offences and a trial date is due to be set in late August.

TRAWLING

Significant Nephrops landings were made into Whitehaven with the fishery operating a normal dawn/dusk pattern for the time of year, this activity was within or close to the 6nm limit. Close monitoring and a high level of inspections (200+ boarding's) during the spates of activity saw good compliance.

POTTING

Potting has been prevalent during the quarter, particularly in the Whitehaven area with both commercial and hobby fishermen in full flow while the weather was favourable. Intelligence relating to a number of areas across the District was received indicating possible breaches of the Lobster byelaws were received.

SHRIMPING

Shrimping during the quarter has been very poor.

COCKLES

All beds in the District remained closed and the IFCA received no intelligence regarding breaches of the closures during the quarter.

MUSSELS

The mussel fishery on the Duddon continued but activity is starting to tail off at the time of writing. The fishery went well and is a testament to the strength of a multi-agency approach taken between the IFCA and the National Trust.

The fishery saw the continuation of the trend towards gatherers fulfilling their own small orders rather than landing to larger concerns. Around 30 fishermen attended the fishery on spring tides with the tail end of the tides seeing around 5-10 fishing when access to quality mussels was more problematic.

Although busy at times the difficulties with access were overcome and the fishery had no impact upon the Natterjack toads within the area.

At the time of writing the bed is beginning to sand over and scour off and very low levels of activity are expected in the future. A verbal update on the tonnage removed from the bed from July onwards will be supplied verbally at the meeting.

Foulney saw no gathering during the quarter although a small number of gathers have prospected to see its condition. The beds currently have a significant amount of seed on it. Proposals for possible management approaches were tabled at the TSB on the 15th August for discussion.

NETTING

Bass netting continued through the quarter with landings being highly variable success, when landings were inspected compliance was found to be good.

SHORE ANGLING

Shore angling continued along the District with varying degrees of success. A number of successful angling stakeholder meetings were held in the southern part of the District during the quarter.

Head of Enforcement
20th August 2014

PATROL VESSELS

Master of the “Solway Protector” - H Thinnesen

“SOLWAY PROTECTOR”

On the whole the patrol boat continues to give a valued service, and remains to be a key asset for both inshore and offshore enforcement throughout the NW IFCA District despite her 25 years age. 39 patrols have been carried out in the 6 months to 31 July including a number of night patrols mostly to observe and inspect the local and visiting fleets off the Cumbria coast fishing prawn (Nephrops)

Down time.

There were 20 days down time this quarter due to service and repairs which has had an impact on our main sea going enforcement duties. Almost all work done has been carried out very cost effectively by the Engineer and crew.

As reported previously, the vessel continues to be unsuitable for certain scientific work which is occasionally required. When the “Solway Protector” was built in 1989 the vessel was commissioned as a purpose built fishery protection vessel. Over the years scientific work has slowly come into our role, and we have adapted the vessel to the best of our ability. However, we cannot deploy certain equipment such as the Day Grab for sea bed sampling, the mussel dredge to carry out stock assessments and the beam trawl for fish samples along with other items of equipment. Some years ago, the existing lifting apparatus for the above equipment was deemed unsuitable and had, to be removed on instruction of the certifying authority “Lloyds” who would not issue a test certificate.

After looking into ways around the problem, we have however not found anyone willing to provide the equipment required due to the limited space on the working deck, along with structural and stability issues.

The repairs carried out on “Solway Protector” this quarter, are as follows:

- Starboard main engine exhaust developed a water leak. On inspection a fracture was found around the base of the water jacket. The exhaust was removed and repaired locally by McGrady's Engineering.
- An oil leak developed around one of the port main engine rocker covers. Upon inspection, one of the fastening bolts was found to have stripped its threads within the housing. The hole was re-tapped and the rocker cover refitted with new seals.
- The vessel's Kabota 5 Kw main generating set failed twice over the quarter. Firstly a failure with the raw water pump followed by a faulty fuel pump. Both items were replaced.
- Diesel leaks were found on both forward and aft fuel tanks. Investigations found they were both leaking from the tank tops, which house the fuel sender units. Fuel was transferred in order to carry out the necessary repairs. Both tank tops which house the fuel sender units were removed, thoroughly cleaned and prepared before being refastened back into position with new sealant and gaskets.
- A new Kodon DGPS navigator was also fitted during the quarter. The old unit had been faulty for quite some time and proved not cost effective to repair. A new unit was supplied and installed by K R Marine.

- The vessel's Webasto heating system developed a problem. The fault was found, not on the unit itself, but on the associated wiring from the vessel's electrical control panel. New wiring was run in from the control board to the heating unit.
- A raw water intake pipe on the starboard main engine fractured while out on a routine patrol. The automatic bilge pump alerted us to the problem as a considerable amount of water had ingressed into the engine compartment. Once back in port the pipe was removed and it became evident that the pipe had fractured due to the metal wearing thin with age. As a precaution, we removed the same pipework on the port main engine, and had two new pipes manufactured at McGrady's Engineering.
- There has also been a number of minor repairs carried out on the vessels wiring system over the reporting period.
- All routine and planned oiled maintenance schedules are up-to-date.

"PROTECTOR BRAVO" – 7 Metre Osprey Viper – RIB

"Protector Bravo" has again provided us with a safe and secure platform to carry out inshore enforcement along with over 200 inspections of static gear close inshore. The vessel is also used as the boarding vessel from "Solway Protector" when weather conditions are suitable for the vessel to be towed behind the main patrol boat.

A new bilge pump and float switch was fitted. The vessel's VHF radio was replaced as it would no longer transmit. A new ICOM dsc VHF has now been fitted and was also supplied by K R Marine. A small crack was detected around the base of the 'A' frame mast, which has also been repaired.

PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

"Solway Protector" has carried out a number of night patrols to fit in with fishing patterns of both local and visiting vessels. A total of 33 patrols and over 200 boardings and inspections were carried out at sea from both "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo" in this reporting period. The full statistics are provided in Appendices A & B.

Apart from two verbal warnings being issued, compliance on the whole has been good.

POTTING, NETTING AND ANGLING

Throughout the quarter activity has been high with mixed reports, both good and bad. High numbers of small lobsters and berried hens have been reported throughout the district. Decent landings of brown crab have also been reported. This has been mainly from vessels fishing between St Bees Head and Barrow.

The whelk vessel "Fleur-de-France" J86 has continued to make positive landings into Whitehaven.

Netting in the district from boats, at best has been moderate, Thornback ray being the main species, with one vessel the "Maverick" R486 making light landings of prime fish, such as turbot, into Whitehaven.

As can be expected at this time of year, activity was increased and there have been reports of decent mackerel fishing off south of St Bees Head at times, with very little signs of any other species being caught.

TRAWLING

Due to the long periods of settled weather, the local fleet have put to sea on most occasions. Prawn fishing has mainly been buoyant throughout the reporting period, with reports of good fishing from both the local fleet and visiting vessels. Apart from the larger visiting vessels, most of the local fleet have predominantly fished through the night for prawns. Catch reports have been

varied with the inshore vessels yielding between 10 – 50 stone of prawns per night, and the larger vessels, some of which are now towing 4 nets, reported catching up to 300 stone for a single day/nights fishing. Some of the other local vessels have fished the Wigtown Bay area, again with positive results. Fin fish (plaice, cod, haddock, turbot etc.,) landings have on the whole, been poor.

SURVEYS

No surveys have been carried out by “Solway Protector” during the reporting period. We did however carry out a dummy run using the Authority’s newly purchased side scan sonar equipment, of which the tests were carried out over several days. Unfortunately the imagery from the equipment was grainy at best. IFCO M Burdekin contacted the supplier of the equipment to explain the problems we were encountering. They requested the data we had gathered in order to analyse and find the problem. They reported back that the problem might be with one of the sounders on board the patrol boat interfering with the signals from the tow fish. We will be carrying out further tests and hopefully have better results to report.

OTHER

While carrying out a routine patrol on the 10th June 2014 “Solway Protector” was contacted by VHF from the fishing vessel “Crystal Star” WA37, a local trawler which had broken down with gear box problems west of St Bees Head. The weather at the time was moderate. Shortly after the “Solway Protector” took the vessel in tow and much to the delight of the skipper returned the vessel safely back to Whitehaven harbour.

On 17th July 2014 the NW IFCA held a training day for Members of the Authority, followed by a short patrol on board the “Solway Protector”. The weather on the day was oily calm and sunny. Several Authority Members took up the offer of a trip out on the patrol boat, firstly running down to St Bees Head, then out to the northern prawn grounds before returning back to Whitehaven.

The “Solway Protector” also took part in the annual Maryport Trawler race in her usual role as the race starter and safety vessel. Although the weather conditions were not the best on the day, nevertheless the race again was a huge success, and maintains our relationship with the local fishing industry.

The patrol boat whilst undertaking an overnight patrol, was asked to assist with another local vessel who had encountered engine problems. Fortunately the vessel’s own crew were able to get the engine working again, and the patrol boat was stood down.

H THINNESEN

Master “Solway Protector” and IFCO (Whitehaven)

18th August 2014

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

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time	
			Hrs.	Mins.
01/05/2014	Prawn pitch	11	10	0
17/05/2014	Workington/Maryport	5	5	0
22/05/2014	Seascale/St Bees/Maryport/Workington	0	7	40
23/05/2014	Parton	1	4	30
28/05/2014	Prawn pitch/Selker/St Bees	6	5	45
29/05/2014	W of St Bees/Workington	12	6	50
05/06/2014	Test side scan equipment	1	3	0
06/06/2014	Test side scan equipment	0	5	40
09/06/2014	Prawn pitch/Haverigg Point/	2	7	30
10/06/2014	St Bees/RTB with FV Crystal Star	1	1	15
11/06/2014	W of Sellafield/West of Drigg/St Bees	8	3	10
12/06/2014	W of St Bees/Prawn pitch	11	9	30
16/06/2014	Sellafield/Selker/Nethertown/W of Whitehaven	10	4	30
18/06/2014	Prawn Pitch/Selker/W of Whitehaven	12	6	55
19/06/2014	Sellafield/Workington/Maryport	3	8	25
23/06/2014	Prawn pitch @ sea	6	2	15
24/06/2014	Inner and outer prawn grounds/Selker	10	12	0
26/06/2014	W of Sellafield/Walney/Heysham @ sea	20	10	0
27/06/2014	Prawn Pitch/St Bees	16	9	20
08/07/2014	W of Whitehaven/Prawn pitch @ sea	3	2	0
09/07/2014	W of Whitehaven/Prawn pitch	4	10	30
10/07/2014	W of Whitehaven/Workington/Maryport/Harrington	7	8	45
17/07/2014	Members training day -	7	4	30
21/07/2014	W of Haverigg Point/Sellafield/St Bees @ sea	35	3	0
22/07/2014	Southern Prawn grounds	28	9	0

" Solway Protector "
PATROL STATISTICS

	1/5/2014 - 31/7/2014		1/2/2014 - 30/4/2014	
Number of patrols and passages	25	patrols	14	patrols
Seatime	159 hrs	0 mins	114 hrs	10 mins
Average length of patrol	6 hrs	22 mins	8 hrs	10 mins
Total distance covered	1270	miles	798	miles
Average distance per patrol	51	miles	57	miles
Fuel used	3075	gallons	2093	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	123	gallons	149	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	220	vessels	166	vessels
Local	130	vessels	68	vessels
Visiting	90	vessels	98	vessels
<u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>
Trawlers	121	9	45	58
Beam Trawlers	0	0	0	0
Twin Rig Trawlers	0	49	0	41
Pair Trawlers	0	0	0	0
Anchor Seiners	0	0	0	0
Fly Draggars	0	0	0	0
Gill Netters	4	0	0	0
Shrimpers	0	0	3	0
Twin Beam Shrimpers	0	0	0	0
Whelk Potters	0	1	0	0
Potting Boats	8	0	6	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	2	2	0
Mussel Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Cockle Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Netters	1	0	0	0
Anglers	25	0	11	0
<u>Total:</u>	159	61	67	99

GENERAL

This reporting period covers various shore based activities from all sectors of the fishing community, as follows:

- The usual ports and landing sites were checked on a regular basis, while the recreational angling activity gathering pace, mostly from Whitehaven.
- The prawn trawlers for most of the quarter encountered some favourable weather conditions, which in turn has provided the boats with a good run of fishing opportunities.
- The shrimpers and potters have been active and making good use of the fair weather we have experienced recently.
- Most beach netters have complied with the old CSFC legacy byelaw no: 10.

Some mussel fishing in the upper Solway has resulted in moderate harvests. It does seem as though we have had a good spat settlement this year, and providing the winter storms don't wash them away, there could potentially be a viable fishery by the end of 2015 towards mid-2016.

All in all a good quarter was had for both the local and visiting vessels alike due to the prolonged spell of calm and hot weather.

This year has seen an increase in dead mammals being washed up on our shores, 2 large fin whales washed up only a month apart at locations near Sellafield and Eskmeals gun range; 3 harbour porpoise were seen and 5 were reported to officers as being located mostly in the southern end within 4 miles of Eskmeals and Sellafield.

TRAWLING

Between early May and the end of June has seen some busy periods of fishing due to weather conditions being suitable. Vessels targeting prawns (nephrops) fished through the night as well as the day time later on in the quarter. At the beginning of the quarter, inspections at ports revealed some moderate to good landings of around 20 - 50 stones of prawn and very little fish. Most of the trips were carried out at night as the prawns (nephrops) were only being caught during that period. In June and July vessels were having some good trips of prawns (nephrops), the biggest catches came from the Northern Irish twin riggers, some visiting twin rigged vessels had over 800 stones for a single landing giving them in the region of £70,000 for the landing. The local inshore fleet took their share as well, and during one inspection the vessels at that time, were still sorting their catch in port due to the amount of bulk they were seeing. At the latter end of the quarter the twin riggers were accompanied by larger triple and quad rigged trawlers, which were catching prawns in daylight north of the Walney wind farm site, outside of the six mile limit for multi rigged vessels. Further up the coast at Maryport fishing was similar with some vessels choosing to fish in Scottish waters near Wigtown Bay. Reports and inspections seen similar landings and on occasions some were far better, with very little fish being caught, and the odd box of thornbacked ray and plaice being landed as being the norm. One of the smaller trawlers has been engaged in net trials with CEFAS for fish discards. This was undertaken with the support from the Authority, and a dispensation from the MMO to fish in certain areas with smaller mesh sizes. Reports on the results of the trials are encouraging.

SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH

Reports throughout the quarter relate to mixed landings of shrimps from 50 - 200 kg for one tide. Prices for shrimp have gone up in recent weeks to as high as £3.50 per kg. A Maryport vessel targeting shrimp over in Scottish waters in the Solway had on occasions, days which saw landings of over 300 kgs giving them a good day's pay. However this fishing lasted only for a week or two.

POTTING

Potting for lobster, brown crab and whelks have seen busy periods throughout the quarter, with landings from vessels at times being up to 6 - 7 bins of 200 kg of brown crab by larger vessels and 25 - 100 kgs of lobster for one day's fishing. Smaller vessels working further north off Whitehaven, Workington and Maryport have been reporting various catches from 7 single lobsters and brown crabs to 25 kg of each lobsters and crabs. Prices over the quarter for lobster averaged out at £6 - £7 per kg. Inspections throughout the quarter have seen one verbal warning being issued after consultation with the Head of enforcement, for one undersized lobster being taken.

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 £650.00 per tonne. This vessel has been consistent with its 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 potting vessels) who fish 5 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.

OFFSHORE NETTING

Reports from this sector is patchy, as some areas are seeing good numbers of thornbacked rays, and others are lucky to see any fish at all, most of the rays have been caught north and west of Workington.

BEACH NETTING

Netting for the quarter was limited, with nets seen mostly at Nethertown with up to 31 nets being seen on any one day, located between Nethertown and Ravenglass. Catches varied with some bass and mullet being caught with amounts of other fish making up their catch. As byelaw 10 was enforceable from the beginning of June, regular patrols of all beaches resulted in no less than 5 nets being seized after they were found on the beaches during inspections in the first couple of weeks in June. Most of these nets were abandoned by (some) careless fishermen who seem to be either too lazy or afraid of being reported if seen retrieving their nets. These abandoned nets will continue to 'ghost' fish, which results in the unnecessary slaughter of any fish or cetaceans which swim into the nets, as well as crabs and bird species. On occasions working with the Environment Agency on joint patrols has resulted in a net being seized near Sellafield, two weeks later a further two were seized by IFCA enforcement officers. At the time of seizure and after many long hours of waiting to see if anyone would come onto the beach to check these nets, resulted in no convictions as no fishermen appeared or came forward to claim these nets.

ANGLING

Throughout the period saw an increase in anglers begin to target the early mackerel which were seen mostly from the piers at Whitehaven. Over 800 anglers were seen with half of them being inspected, some of whom were catching up to 3 - 10 mackerel per tide. Most of the anglers have reported a lack of mackerel being caught this season. Some dabs and the odd plaice and codling have been caught. At other stations some dabs, small codlings and the odd bass were also being caught. It is noticeable that bass have started to be caught in greater numbers from the beaches, as one report was of an angler having caught 86 bass with just 3 hours fishing. No infringements of undersized bass being caught this quarter as most of the anglers are from angling clubs who have a voluntary minimum landing size (MLS) of 42 cm which is greater than the national MLS of 36cm.

BAIT DIGGING

Bait digging throughout the District has seen over 34 diggers operating, some of which were collecting for their own consumption, others were commercial diggers with 100 - 700 worms per tide being taken at times. Commercial prices are believed to be in the region of £30 - £35 for 100 worms.

BAIT CRABBERS

Gatherers have been seen north of Maryport fishing for shore crabs, where 17 of which have been inspected. No brown crab have been seen in the buckets, and concerns have been voiced from local crabbers about the amount of visitors coming and taking every crab they find. Up to 300 - 500 crabs can be taken for a few days fishing, prices for these crabs can be up to £1.50 per crab, with big money being made. This fishing is mostly undertaken in March and beginning of April up to 100 crabbers could be seen and inspected during this period.

Officer Statistics for the period 1st May – 30th July 2014

Shore Patrols	63
Fishing Locations visited	770
Quad Patrols	17
Locations by quad	127
Anglers seen	795
Bait Diggers and crabbers seen	51
Shellfish gatherers (Winkle Pickers	2
Sightings/closings/inspections/boarding's	8198
Beach nets inspected	51
Days assisting other areas of district	9

NORTH MORECAMBE BAY

HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE

IFCO, I. DIXON

GENERAL

The majority of this reporting period has again been spent monitoring the various mussel fisheries which have been operating on the North Morecambe Bay area, driven by a continued demand for mussels both nationally and internationally. This is covered in more detail in the mussels section.

TRAWLING

During the last quarter I have not observed or had any reports of commercial trawling activity. I have observed 2 small boats trawling in Walney channel targeting Plaice and shrimps, on an infrequent hobby basis, I have not heard any catch reports.

POTTING

One licensed potting vessel from Barrow worked pots regularly throughout the last quarter, steadily increasing the amount of pots being worked up to the 300 mark. The same vessel has also begun to sell a quantity of its catch of lobsters and brown crab in the local area directly from the boats landings. A licensed potting vessel from the north of my area continues to work strings of pots in the area in front of Walney and close to the Windfarms. RIB patrols have been undertaken to monitor the potting activity and compliance with byelaws has been generally good.

Three pots were seized from the Roa Island area of Walney Channel when they were observed being set from an unlicensed vessel which also did not possess a Byelaw 30 permit, and the buoys were unmarked. Enforcement action was taken and the situation rectified. Despite there

being many Byelaw 30 permit holders around Morecambe Bay I have only inspected one single byelaw 30 holders pot, and have observed no others.

SHRIMPING

Shrimp fishing activity has been at a very low level this quarter, due to the lack of shrimps in the traditional areas in Morecambe Bay. I have had reports from many shrimp fishermen who have been prospecting for shrimp but have not caught anywhere near enough to make it worthwhile. Some have been able to fulfil small orders for potted shrimp, but it is beginning to cause real concern for most of the shrimp fishermen that there is still no sign of any shrimp in what should be their busiest period.

COCKLES

During the last quarter I have received no reports of cockling activity on the North Morecambe Bay area. Regular patrols both at night and during the daytime have not identified any illegal cockling activity either.

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

MUSSELS

During this quarter the majority of my time has been spent monitoring mussel gathering activity on the mussel bed known as Hard Acre in the outer Duddon Estuary. Up to 30 permitted gatherers have worked the area on periods of spring tides, the quality and size of the mussels meant that effort shifted from Foulney and Walney Channel mussel beds onto the Duddon. Shellfish buyers from North Wales have also been involved at the Duddon whereas Foulney was predominantly covered by local shellfish buyers. Several small groups of gatherers are now beginning to source their own smaller orders which enables them to work on the mid-range tides when there isn't enough time to fulfil large orders. Compliance with IFCA Byelaws has been good on the Duddon fishery, with only one incident of unpermitted activity reported. One Byelaw 3 permit holder continues to travel to Walney from the North East of England to gather small quantities of large mussels for use as angling bait.

Surveys were undertaken on the Duddon and Foulney mussel beds with the IFCA Science Officers. Foulney has experienced a far heavier spatfall than in recent years, a trend which has been observed throughout all the mussel beds in Morecambe Bay. The Duddon mussel bed has no signs of spat at all. I continue to take mussel samples from Foulney for Barrow Borough Council. I have been taking mussel samples fortnightly from the Duddon mussel bed since it achieved classification.

NETTING

Netting activity, both from boats and beach nets, has been at a relatively low level during the last quarter. The vast amounts of jellyfish in the area have proved a problem and caused some of the more experienced fishermen to bring the nets in.

Drift netting in Morecambe Bay increased during June and July although catches were poor, reports suggested that the Bass that were caught were of a good size. Concerns were raised by fishermen over the lack of mullet in the estuaries and Walney channel. Two unlicensed vessels netted regularly in the Duddon estuary, one on a subsistence basis, targeting Bass, Plaice and Mullet, again poor catches of mullet were reported.

Seven beach nets were observed in the Leven Estuary, although catches were moderate at best, consisting mainly of Flounder, with a few Plaice, Mullet and Bass. Demand for lobster pot bait for local vessels and ones further afield saw an increase in effort by commercial netsmen in the

estuaries. One verbal warning was issued to a commercial netsman for retaining an obviously undersize flounder.

ANGLING

Angling continues to be popular in the Walney area, along the coast road and at Greenodd. Good catches of Codling were reported at the beginning of the quarter which was later in the year than usual. Boat anglers were observed and inspected in increasing numbers during the quarter as better weather and Bass numbers increased. Inspections and reports suggest that Bass numbers are not as high as last year but the size of the Bass tends to be larger. Concerns were raised over the lack of mackerel numbers.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During this quarter I have continued to undertake export checks on behalf of Cefas for oyster seed exports from Walney hatchery.

SUMMARY OF RIB PATROLS

<u>Crew</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
MB/JM	West of Walney	44nm	22 strings of pots checked.
MB/JM	West of Walney	30nm	
SB/JM/MB	Morecambe Bay/Fleetwood	68nm	13 pot inspections Rossal pipe
AD/JM/ST/MB	West of Walney	32nm	1 licensed Potter boarded, 5 angling boats checked
ET/JM/JS	West of Walney/Morecambe Bay	80nm	2 licensed potters boarded, 57 lobsters measured/11 angling boats checked, 3 bass measured.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

SENIOR IFCO, S. J. WAITE

TRAWLING

This fishery continues to be extremely low key. I have continued to see no improvement in activity taking 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.

SHRIMPS

Throughout this last quarter I have observed little effort in the inshore shrimp fishery. Fishermen associated with this fishery have complained of very poor landings continuing as reported in my last report. As a result, effort in the commercial fishery remains extremely low key.

This fishery remains very disappointing with only 2 fishermen working on a commercial basis. The inshore shrimp fishery over the next decade will unfortunately, I believe, move to a hobby fishery.

During this last quarter I have observed only occasional effort taking place from part time fisherman working their inshore shrimp boats on a hobby basis. In addition, I have continued to observe no activity by fishermen working tractor and tra la la units on the south side of Morecambe

Bay and only occasional activity from one fisherman using his push net towards the top end of Morecambe Bay.

COCKLES

Throughout this last quarter I have received no reports of cockles being removed by either commercial gatherers or from members of the public removing cockles for private consumption. This is due to the almost non-existence of both mature and under size cockles throughout my area.

During this last quarter, I have seen no improvement in stocks of either mature or immature cockles as mentioned in previous reports and I see no improvement in this fishery in the foreseeable future. All beds in my area remain closed.

MUSSELS

During this last quarter I have observed and received no reports of mature mussels being gathered from any of the recognised skears in my area although fishermen associated with the harvesting of shellfish have checked skears on an occasional basis.

All skears have been checked within this last quarter and although mature mussel stocks have continued to be extremely low, all recognised beds had a good settlement of seed mussel on recognised mussel skears on the south side of Morecambe Bay.

During this next quarter I expect Heysham Flat to open for the removal of seed mussel as has been the practice in previous years.

During this last quarter I have continued to collect shellfish for Wyre District Council.

DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS

During this last quarter all recognised inshore drift net boats returned to their seasonal moorings with the addition of a new inshore boat. Unfortunately, as a result of the very poor stocks of shrimps in Morecambe Bay, this has had a knock on effect for the Bass fishery. Very few Bass have been landed and as result, effort in this fishery has proved extremely low key.

Unfortunately, as mentioned in previous reports, effort in this fishery continues to be on a seasonal basis with fishermen choosing to work outside the inshore fishing industry once the Bass fishery comes to a close.

During this quarter most set and stake nets remain removed from the fishery with only occasional nets being fished on Pilling Sands and towards the top of Morecambe Bay. The Whitebait nets mentioned in my last report have been removed from the Lune Estuary as a result of the start of the licensed seasonal salmon fishery.

DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING

Throughout this last quarter effort from dinghy anglers continues to be low key with no improvement in effort from the last quarter. This has been due to extremely poor landings of bass and other species of fish.

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 North Wall, Heysham and Knott End. Dinghy and shore angler effort has, however, proved poor. In addition, their effort has been further compounded by the continued presence of large quantities of smooth hounds.

TRAWLING

Fleetwood's remaining inshore trawlers have worked steadily landing catches of plaice, sole and thornback ray. The fishermen report no shortage of fish particularly small plaice on the grounds but fish prices are so low that even quite good landings are of limited viability. In many cases the price paid to the fishermen is less than that realised 20 years or more ago.

Lune Deep and below Shell Wharf have been the most productive grounds, the Top of the Bank has produced a few large plaice. The occasional trips down to Blackpool have not been particularly worthwhile.

The last of the larger trawlers based in the port has sailed occasionally; her activities have been restricted by shortage of water in the dock over neap tides and the deteriorating health of her skipper-owner. This vessel was heavily dependent on the southern prawn grounds much of which have now been lost to wind farm development.

SHRIMPING

This has been a particularly poor spring shrimp fishery, the predominantly offshore winds and high water temperatures experienced this quarter are not favourable for this fishery. The Southport and Marshside tractor units that work the Penfold Channel and the Sefton Coast have had a very poor time.

One shrimp boat from Lytham persisted up until the middle of July making modest landings from the slightly deeper waters of the Ribble.

I have not seen any push netting activity along the Fylde Coast and have received very poor reports from those stalwarts that have given it a try.

COCKLES- MUSSELS-WHELKS

As yet there has been no significant spatfall of cockles observed on the beds in this part of the District. Stocks of mature cockles at the designated MSH sample points are so low that some beds have been downgraded to 3 monthly sampling despite the best efforts of Officers to obtain suitable samples.

There has been a modest mussel spatfall on parts of the Ribble Walls and the North Wharf mussel beds. Parts of the Black Scar mussel bed off Fleetwood have sanded over considerably reducing the area of this bed available for settlement.

Two Whelk potters J86 and M33 have landed to Fleetwood.

LOBSTER

Small landings of Lobster have been made from pots set along the Rossall outfall pipe and along the Mersey training walls. While not normally a significant fishery in this part of the District the lobster fishery has certainly helped out a few fishermen in what would otherwise have been very lean times. Incidental catches taken by inshore trawlers suggest that lobsters are particularly mobile at present.

NETTING

The Lytham drift netters have worked regularly making the most of the good weather. Catches have consisted mostly of Bass with a handful of plaice, sole, mullet, flounder and the occasional thornback ray. All the fishermen have reported very significant losses to seal predation. The

netting boats at Fleetwood have worked Morecambe Bay and the Neckings, the fishing starting slightly later than the Ribble-Gut fishery, only modest catches have been made.

Beach nets set in the Penfold Channel and along the Sefton Coast have produced modest catches mostly of Sole and Bass.

ANGLING

The weather has certainly been good for angling even though catches have been a little disappointing.

Shore anglers have regularly been observed all along the Fylde Coast from Fleetwood South to Preston Bullnose. Catches from the Ribble have been mostly of Flounder, the Fylde Coast from South Shore up to Rossall predominantly of dogfish and small Tope, Rossall and Fleetwood the occasional Bass, Plaice and Flounder.

Better sport has been reported by the angling and charter boats that have been sited from the Penfold Channel out at Gut and along the Fylde Coast up to the North Side of Lune Deep. Catches have again been predominantly of dogfish but Bass, Plaice, Thornback Ray and Mackerel have also been taken.

NW RESERVE FORCES BUSINESS AWARDS

I am pleased to report that my partner and I were chosen to represent the Authority at this prestigious award ceremony held at the Imperial War Museum Manchester. The Authority was nominated for the support that it gave to IFCO Brownrigg for his duties with the Royal Marine Reserve.

Awards were made to show appreciation of the support given by the business community and Local Authorities to staff members who serve as either reservists or cadet force adult volunteers.

The NWIFCA was nominated second in the small business class.

SOUTHERN AREA

MERSEY, WIRRAL AND DEE

IFCO, A. Brownrigg

GENERAL

During this quarter both IFC Officer Capper and I have continued to undertake activities such as enforcement, sampling and survey work throughout our area and the NWIFCA District. Both officers have also had the chance to undertake routine seaborne patrols on the River Mersey, Liverpool Bay and Dee Estuary with 'Bay Protector' the area's new vessel.

COCKLING

Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to do so throughout 2014. Beach closure notices to cockling have been updated and are now displayed along the coastline. Assistance in the collection of samples from the Ribble Cockle beds for West Lancashire Borough Council and Mersey Port Health Authority (MPHA) remains on going.

MUSSEL

A recent walk of West Kirby mussel bed has shown the bed to have very little commercial stock value. The area is patchy and made up largely of dead shell; reports from local cocklers gathering on the Dee Estuary suggest that the cockles are trying to relocate on to the bed. This will be monitored by both the enforcement and science staff. In the meantime both West Kirby and Caldys Blacks beds will continue to remain open during the next quarter. Reports of musseling activity

taking place in the River Mersey and Hilbre Island were reported on the last quarterly report, since then I am pleased to say that no reports or observations have been made of any musseling activity in those areas. NWIFCA and MPHA have walked the mussel bed situated in the river Mersey with a view to MPHA carrying out sampling collections. At present MPHA are waiting for an RMP site to be given from Cefas. In the meantime all shellfish within the Mersey estuary remain prohibited for harvesting.

RAZOR CLAM

During this quarter we have observed between 18 to 31 Oriental gatherers harvesting Razor Clam off Leasowe/Moreton beach, the numbers of which have dropped considerably since last year. This activity normally takes place over a three day period particularly during spring tides. On inspection we have observed individuals gathering between 2 - 5kg of Razor Clams, and I anticipate gathering will continue throughout August and September.

SHORE ANGLING

Very little recreational angling has been observed throughout this reporting period. The North Wirral coastline and New Brighton (Perch Rock and Kings Parade) again have been the popular areas.

BOAT ANGLING

Daily sightings have observed registered and unregistered fishing vessels continue to fish in the River Mersey and Liverpool Bay area. Again weekends or times of competitions remain to be the most popular times for boat angling.

BAIT DIGGERS

Bait diggers are predominantly seen along the North Wirral coastline. New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area off Leasowe Common are the most popular spots. Between 0 – 3 bait diggers are recorded daily taking 50 – 150 worms per individual.

BAIT COLLECTION

Recent patrols at low water in the River Mersey (New Brighton to Seacombe) has shown there to be activity with regard to bait collection utilising Crab tiles/pipes which are located on the lower foreshore. Presently four areas have been identified, two along the north Wirral coastline and a further two located along the beach from Magazine to Egremont parade with one area having up to 96 crab pipes.

This type of activity remains an "activity of interest" and will continue to be monitored.

COMMERCIAL BOAT ANGLING

Eight to nine commercial fishing boats work locally out of Liverpool Marina with a further two observed moored off New Brighton. Vessels have been observed carrying between four to eight anglers with no significant catches being noted up to this date. Good relationships remain ongoing and advice and guidance is routinely provided, along with inspection of fishing gear and equipment when requested.

SEA PATROLS

'Bay Protector' has been active around the area with some 42 hours on patrol and 443 miles covered during this quarter. Several boardings, closings and inspections have taken place on commercial charter boats and local private unregistered fishing vessels from the local area. As an observation 'Bay Protector' took to sea with a full boat (six) in force 3 to 4 with 15 mph winds. The vessel handled the full complement and weather well.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, north Wirral coastline and both sides of the Dee Estuary remain ongoing and officer support has been offered to other areas in the form of Shore/ATV patrols and sample work. Both officers along with science staff attended Sefton Sea Anglers Club to assist in a presentation. Joint enforcement patrols with the Marine Management Organisation and Welsh Fisheries have taken place. Finally; assistance to the GLA, MPA, NRW and Merseyside Police has remained ongoing, and will continue to do so.

Mersey Dee area summary of RIB patrols					
Date	Sea time	Crew, AB+PC+others	Patrol area	miles covered	work done
24/04/2014	2.5	AB+PC	Mersey & North Wirral shore	35	20 angling vessels
13/05/2014	3	AB+PC	Upper & lower Mersey	34	Anglers, 1 comm FV, shrimp netter, 1 boarding
15/05/2014	6	AB+PC MMO	Mersey & Dee	68	
02/06/2014	5	AB+PC JM/ST/2WFU	Mersey & Dee	70	Anglers, 2 boardings, 1 closing
11/06/2014	2.25	AB+PC	Mersey	24	
12/06/2014	1.5	AB+PC JM	Marina	2	Service & training
17/06/2014	3	AB+PC	Mersey	20	3 vessels, 3 anglers
19/06/2014	3.5	AB+PC MB/MMO/2WFU	Dee	60	2 boardings, welsh side
25/06/2014	2	AB+PC JM/MB/MMO	Mersey & Liverpool Bay	32	2 anglers, 2 boardings
07/07/2014	10	AB+PC MB/MMO	Mersey Liverpool Bay	60	5 anglers, 1 comm FV, 2 charter angling, 3 boardings
31/07/2014	3	AB+PC	Mersey	35	3 vessels 2 boardings

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

1ST MAY TO 31ST JULY 2014

1. ENFORCEMENT BURDEN

1.1 Length of District coastline 878.5 n.m.

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 with other duties 7 f/t, 1 p/t + 3 warranted officers

3. ENFORCEMENT AT SEA

3.1 Number of patrol hours at sea 100
3.2 Number of patrols at sea 35
3.3 Number of nautical miles of patrol 1003
3.4 Number of closings 14
3.5 Number of inspections 166
3.6 Number of boardings 23
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 Official Warning Letter 0
3.8.6 Advisory Warning Letter 0
3.8.7 Verbal warnings 0

4. ENFORCEMENT ON LAND

4.1 Number of inspections 1893
4.2 Number of ATV patrols 79
4.3 Number of hours ATV patrols 132.68

4.4	ATV km covered	1669.70
4.5	Number of infringements detected	4
4.6	Number of:-	
4.6.1	Prosecutions	0
4.6.2	Home Office Cautions	0
4.6.3	Prosecutions pending	1
4.6.4	Fixed Admin Penalty	1
4.6.5	Cautions issued	0
4.6.6	Official Warning Letter	4
4.6.7	Advisory Warning Letter	0
4.6.8	Verbal warnings	2

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.