

NORTHERN (CUMBRIA)

BURGHMARSH POINT TO HAVERIGG POINT

Senior Fishery Officer E Thinnesen
Senior Fishery Officer M Dobson

GENERAL

This reporting period for the shore was limited to some extent due to unforeseen illness to one of the shore officers, thus hampering the amount of beach quad patrols that could be carried out.

TRAWLING

There were good catches of Nephrops throughout the period for most local boats from both Whitehaven and Maryport and also some visiting Irish vessels. The majority of the catches were made during the hours of darkness, with daylight fishing picking up towards the end of the period. Local boats have been averaging around 40 stone catches of Nephrops for a night's work. The Shrimp Beamers fishing from Silloth have been catching below average totals with checks made by officers showing catches of 50-200Kg, with prices being discussed of £1.20 per Kg. The Northern Irish Seine netter, 'Arcane' N907, has landed on a regular basis into Whitehaven, with most landings consisting of well over 300 boxes of mainly Haddock (approximately 18 tons).

SCALLOPS

Very few Scallop catches were landed in the district during this reporting period and the changes in regulations for larger vessels in the Isle of Man grounds curtailed the activity of the larger Scottish vessels that would normally land into Whitehaven.

POTTING

There was a reduced potting effort compared to previous years, with reports of Lobster catches from those boats still working being lower than previously. There is still effort on the ground mainly off the rough grounds between Parton and Maryport, with some increased activity off Walney, mainly by the 'Kerry Marie', as well as this vessel's usual effort off Ravenglass/Selker. Edible Brown Crab catches remain healthy with some good catches throughout the region.

OFFSHORE NETTING

There has been activity from vessels from Whitehaven and Maryport netting in the area, targeting mainly Skate and Turbot with mixed returns.

BEACH NETTING

During this period the beaches in Cumbria were closed to netting under Byelaw 10 (Cumbria SFC) from 31st May. Prior to this there were very few nets identified, with some effort in the area of Braystones, seen only at weekends. There was one breach of Byelaw 10 identified nNorth of Maryport pier, a net which was seized by officers with no identified owner.

ANGLING

Recreational angling in Cumbria has continued to be popular, especially through the warmer weather where good catches of Mackerel have been made off Whitehaven Pier and from angling vessels throughout the region. There were reports of good catches of Cod for a short period for angling boats off both Harrington and St Bees Head. Maryport Pier had a short period of good returns of both Mackerel and Cod during July. The warmer periods also provided good fishing for Bass at most of the Cumbrian marks both on and offshore. Other species caught at times included Flounder, Dab, and small Whiting. Lesser-spotted Dogfish have continued to be caught in such numbers to be considered a nuisance to local anglers.

BAIT DIGGING

There has been activity for Lugworm digging identified mainly in the areas of Allonby, Ellisons Scar, Nethertown and also in Whitehaven Harbour. The one regular bait digger revealed that current prices for locally dug Lugworm is £35 per 100 worms. However, these are sporadic sightings due to the reduced number of Beach patrols this period through both illness to one of the shore officers and also requirement to cover as crew on the 'Solway Protector'. There have been no sightings of any Ragworm diggers through the period, nor any Razor Clam gatherers. The period saw a reduced emergence of peeling Common Shore Crabs, compared to previous years and there was only a period of 2 weeks where any amount of gatherers were identified, mainly off Dubmill Point.

OTHER DUTIES

This period has seen increased assistance to Officers in the south of the NWIFCA district, including 3 defined risk-based enforcement operations with regards to potential cockle poaching. The good weather in the earlier part of the reporting period saw the 'Solway Protector' at sea for a high percentage of time and the increased requirement for a shore officer on board covering leave and toil time.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement activity within Cumbria has included 2 persons reported for the offences of landing and transshipping a number of undersized Lobsters. It is hoped that these will proceed down the lines of a Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP); otherwise they will likely have to be put forward for prosecution. This cannot proceed further until advice is received from the MMO regarding the current use of FAPs and the single individual that can advise the IFCA is currently on 3 weeks leave. One person was also given a verbal warning for landing an undersized Codling from his set line off Silecroft. Officers from the Cumbria region were also instrumental in the discovery and relaying of in excess of 1 ton of cockles at Humphrey Head, assisted with the seizure of 2 nets off Askam and also, along with our Central Area Officer, dealt with 20 illegal cockle fishermen (Byelaw 5 breach), fishing at Leasowe, of which 8 offers of a Home Office Caution have been offered and are pending.