

# NWIFCA Meeting: 15th September 2021: 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO.  
9**

## HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT – 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2021 – 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2021

**Purpose:** For information.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the report is received

### Introduction

**Patch Summaries** for the quarter are given in the table below:

Patch	Summary Points
Haverigg Point – Burghmarsh Point – IFCO Thinnesen & Thompson	<p><b><u>TRAWLING</u></b> - Some activity from local and visiting trawlers targeting prawns (Nephrops) from grounds, southwest of St Bees 6 to 10 nautical miles. Reports were of 50 stones of prawns for larger vessels and 20 - 50 stones of prawns for smaller vessels, being caught in the early part of the quarter, in daylight hours. During the latter part of the quarter vessels were either fishing through the dark, or one haul into the dark and one haul after the dark called “dusker and dawning” hauls.</p> <p><b><u>POTTING</u></b> - Activity on VMS over the quarter showed whelking vessels out of Whitehaven, Fleetwood and Maryport frequently seen, with around 139 sightings of vessels engaged in whelk potting outside of the district. When weather permitted vessels from Whitehaven were seen fishing in an area known locally as the “Three Corners”, where the medium lines from the Isle of Man, Scotland and England meet, and west of Lune Deeps.</p> <p>Vessels from Fleetwood were seen mostly fishing north of north Wales, 6 – 10 miles off the coast.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b> - Throughout the quarter - only 43 anglers were seen on piers, 90 on beaches, and 16 angling vessels seen.</p> <p>After some of the Covid lockdown restrictions were lifted, officers interacted with fishers once again. Inspections seen huss, sea bass, dabs and thorn backed rays having been caught.</p> <p>Officers posted bass regulations notices around the district to remind fishers of 2021 bass Regulations. Some educational words were given to the odd angler, all were compliant with bass Regulations and fish sizes.</p> <p>Some fish size charts and byelaw booklets were handed out to fishers that requested them.</p> <p>Later in the quarter during an exceptional spell of weather reliable intelligence was received about bass offending in the Ravenglass Estuary area and the beaches either side. Officers scaled-up their presence and carried out 11 cursory inspections (these are generally glancing into open boxes and containers where an officer hasn’t needed to use their powers) and 5 full inspections which are recorded on the appropriate documentation (SF1 Form). These were a mixture of vehicle and fishing equipment inspections.</p> <p><b><u>BEACH NETS</u></b> - nets were seen around the district throughout the month of May, most activity from fishers were in areas from Seascale.</p>

	<p>Thornback rays were seen and inspected in nets and fishers were reminded on CSFC Byelaw 9 restrictions on size for thorn backed rays, which remains 45cm from wing tip to wing tip. These nets were 300mm mesh sized when measured by officers.</p> <p>All fishers were compliant with rules and regulations from byelaw 10-box areas, which came in to force on 31<sup>st</sup> March.</p> <p><b><u>OTHER DUTIES</u></b> - Other duties throughout the quarter were VMS satellite surveillance work.</p> <p>Patrols carried out on shore this quarter totalled 52, due to restrictions with Covid-19 and leave, 9 quad patrols were also carried out.</p> <p>A total of 31 intelligence reports were submitted by officers in this district for various suspected fisheries offences. All in all this quarter it was busy by vessels and anglers alike, taking advantage of the fair weather. A total of 129 intelligence reports were processed and disseminated by the region's intel officer who is based in the northern most sector of the district</p> <p>A total of 23 SF1 inspection report forms were completed after inspections were carried out with fishers in the northern most sector of the district.</p>
<p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – IFCO Dixon</p>	<p><b><u>MUSSELS</u></b> - usual level of activity on Foulney during spring tides, with up to 12 gatherers present, fulfilling relaying orders within the UK, during May more gatherers were present due to 4 fishermen fulfilling orders for a Deeside based buyer. No issues with mls or permits.</p> <p><b><u>SHRIMPING</u></b> – very low levels of activity, 1 shrimp fishermen was observed occasionally in the Leven estuary, catches were poor in general, prospecting from Flookburgh shrimp fishermen was observed but no catch reports were heard.</p> <p><b><u>POTTING</u></b> – 1 vessel from Barrow was potting for crab and lobster within the district on a fairly regular basis, with catch reports improving as they established the more favourable grounds, 1 other vessel from Barrow was observed on 1 occasion setting pots, 1 larger potting vessel from north of my patch was observed occasionally, 2 vessels from Barrow continue to pot outside the district.</p> <p><b><u>NETTING</u></b> - Activity increased during the quarter, with licensed vessels from Barrow reporting catches of Sole, Mullet, Pot bait (Flounder/Plaice) and Bass.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b> – Angling continued to be popular along the coast road from Ulverston to Roa Island, the west coast of Walney, and the upper Leven estuary with increasing numbers of Bass being present, along with Sole, Thornback Rays, Flounder and Plaice.</p> <p>An increasing number of recreational angling vessels from Walney were observed on a regular basis in the area between Aldingham and Foulney, and in the central Bay area, and the south end of Walney.</p>
<p>Arnside – Lytham IFCO Graham &amp; Burdekin</p>	<p>Resources in this area were disrupted this quarter.</p> <p>IFCO Burdekin was on extended paternity leave returning July 2021 and is now fully operational</p> <p>IFCO Graham changed role on 1 April 2021 becoming 50% digital communications officer and 50% IFCO on this patch. Further training was required to take up this move including completing a boat operation qualification. On becoming operational he was frequently tasked to support urgent patrols in the south of the District as activity in the Wirral area increase in summer months.</p> <p>For both officers, bass fishing was a high priority on this patch. Commercial and recreational rod and line vessels landing at Knott End were a constant problem as was the Heysham Bass Nursery Area. The Pilling cockle fishery has needed high monitoring whilst closed as the stock is desirable to poaching. Reports of netting on the Lune and</p>

	<p>on Pilling could not be substantiated despite targeted patrols. Recreational angling continues throughout the area with catches of Tope and Bass. Commercial bait collection from Lytham to Fleetwood continues at its normal rate. Assistance to science surveys and monitoring of the state of shore has been given with regard to Pilling.</p>
<p>Dee-Southport IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor</p>	<p><b><u>GENERAL</u></b> - Under the Emergency Byelaw the north Wirral coastline has remained closed to the gathering of all bivalve molluscs and NWIFCA signs remains in place highlighting this.</p> <p>With the gradual ease of Covid restrictions regular routine shore, inter tidal and seaborne patrols have resumed within the area during this quarter.</p> <p>Officers have provided both in and out of area support to the science department during the many cockle and mussel surveys and MSH sample collections. Officers have also used this period to take annual leave and carry out officer personal development.</p> <p><b><u>SPECIFIC</u></b></p> <p><b><u>BAY PROTECTOR</u></b> - The fishery patrol vessel Bay Protector (BP) was at sea in July. Covid restrictions and a delay in the repair of the lock gates within Liverpool Marina effectively prevented patrols previously. BP carried out a 3 hour patrol undertaking closings of recreational angling and charter boats operating in the river Mersey and Liverpool Bay.</p> <p><b><u>HAND GATHERING BI VALVE</u></b> - Despite the Emergency Byelaw being in place along the north Wirral coastline officers were still active in carrying out enforcement action against persons attempting to gather cockles, otter and razor clam. During this quarter some 37 inspections took place. Offence detection and SF1 inspection forms were raised and sent to the HoE for review. To date, Op Wistful has seen almost 200 Offence reports raised.</p> <p><b><u>RECREATIONAL NETTING</u></b></p> <p>Netting activity along the north Wirral and Sefton coastline was prominent throughout the quarter. Some 60 inspections have taken place along both coastlines with the north Wirral coastline again remaining the most popular area. Modest catches by purse seiner and set net continue to be recorded with sole, plaice, flounder, thornback ray, smooth hound all being observed. In accordance with NWSFC Byelaw 10 and 19 netters have been routinely inspected both on the beach and on landing. Any offences have been recorded and sent to the HoE for review.</p> <p>Frustrations continue to be seen through social media regarding the legality of gill netting within the area. Officers have continued to effectively engage with the general public and the rod angling community by offering advice and guidance in what is a 'delicate' topic. Reports of members of the general public carrying out inspections and enforcement the beach have been noted and do raise concern. A detailed account regarding this activity will be highlighted in the next area report.</p> <p>Netting activity on Taylor's Bank, Formby and on Southport beach has continued to take place. To date, 4 set nets have been inspected with no catch recorded.</p> <p><b><u>RECREATIONAL ANGLING –</u></b></p> <p><b><u>SHORE</u></b> - Rod angling has continued in the area. Inspections of some 190 shore anglers were done. Kings parade, New Brighton, the promenades along Wallasey front, Seacombe, Magazine promenades, and Otterspool promenade were all popular areas.</p> <p>North Bank and New Brighton at low water were also popular locations. I am pleased to say that during our many inspections no minimum landing size issues were detected.</p> <p><b><u>BOAT ANGLING</u></b> - Recreational and commercial boat angling has been popular over the summer period. Officers have noted the slipway at New Brighton as the only recognised launch and recovery for trailers and small boats. Popular areas are the Rock channel</p>

adjacent to New Brighton, Crosby channel, the north Wirral coastline, Liverpool Bay and river Mersey. Officers have observed up to 20+ trailers and vehicles parked up along the beach. Due to issues along the north Wirral coastline officers have not been able to actively record catch landings. Officers are aware of this and will look to see how this issue can be resolved.

**BAIT DIGGING** - Bait digging both by spade and pump has continued to take place along the coastline with pumping remaining as the most popular method of collection. Mockbeggar Wharf and the beach area adjacent to derby pool and gunsight car parks have continued to be the most popular area of beach fished. A total of 68 inspections have been carried out during this quarter.

**POTTING** - Potting remains active in the area with up to 20 pot markers located within the area of Liverpool Bay. With the area's FPV unable to get out to sea officers have been unable to accurately record activity. However, regular communication between NWIFCA officers and the pot owner does take place. The owner is a commercial operator who is well known and respected. A detailed potting report will be highlighted in the area next quarterly report.

**OTHER DUTIES & COMMENTS** - Despite the relaxation in Covid restrictions no premise's inspections have been carried out during this quarter. Officers attended an RYA first aid course in order to keep current and competent in their duties.

Assistance to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, Merseyside Police, Mersey Port Health Authority, Natural Resources Wales, Wirral and Wyre Council remain ongoing.

## **General Update**

- Officer Burdekin welcomed back from extended paternity leave
- HoE has continued with UK MPA monitoring project and Seafish legislation mapping project.
- NIMEG attended in July alongside other marine enforcement statutory bodies.
- HoE attended NW Fisheries advisory group meeting.
- Comments have been completed on the North Wirral Bivalve Byelaw.
- HoE restructuring MCRS Byelaw based on comments received from MMO and the implementation of other IFCA byelaws.
- HoE has begun drafting NWIFCA Netting Byelaw.
- Development has begun on a NWIFCA annual plan sub working group.
- Initial working groups have taken place Nationally with AIFCA in relation to formation of Fishery's Management Plans.

## **Training**

### **Accreditation**

During this quarter Head of Enforcement began a training course and assessment to be an assessor for the national accreditation scheme which would allow HoE to assess NWIFCA officers who are progressing through the scheme. The training course is a series of training days followed by a lengthy written assessment. This will allow better development of formal training alongside the informal training which takes place.

Officer Thinnesen has continued with completing the accreditation scheme, HoE is completing expert witness forms to assist with assessing the competence of the practical assessments.

Other staff have progressed through sea going training such as Power boat qualifications and the on-going renewal of certification where required.

## **North Wirral Shellfish Gathering**

Throughout the quarter IFCOs have been patrolling the North Wirral coastline enforcing the Emergency Byelaw which has been in place for over a year now. Towards the end of the 12 month period in place the emergency byelaw was extended. During the reporting period there has been a continual low level of mostly family groups who still travel from across the country to gather bivalves from the beach. Numbers have been at a level where officers can seize and return shellfish to the beach. There are difficulties in gaining accurate details still but as officers are able to return the shellfish to the beach there is a minimal environmental impact as the shellfish is not removed from the fishery in most cases. Where appropriate verbal or written sanctions have been imposed. To date, no repeat offenders have been detected and thus sanctions have not been escalated.

### **Byelaw 3 reporting**

No cockle fisheries were open due to the cockle closed season (1<sup>st</sup> May- 31<sup>st</sup> August) however the Foulney mussel fishery was assessed regularly by permit holders. This is reflected in the table below.

#### **May to July 2021**

#### **Byelaw 3 Returns**

Activity		Cockles			Mussels
		Flookburgh	Newbiggin	Pilling	Foulney
Amount Removed (kg)	May-21	0	0	0	22581
	Jun-21	0	0	0	15086
	Jul-21	0	0	0	15885
Attendance	May-21	0	0	0	39
	Jun-21	0	0	0	22
	Jul-21	0	0	0	26
Hours	May-21	0	0	0	120
	Jun-21	0	0	0	53
	Jul-21	0	0	0	73
No. Inspected Fishing	May-21	0	0	0	2
	Jun-21	0	0	0	8
	Jul-21	0	0	0	0
No. MLS Inspections	May-21	0	0	0	14
	Jun-21	0	0	0	12
	Jul-21	0	0	0	4
Days Covered by IFCO's	May-21	0	0	0	3
	Jun-21	0	0	0	0
	Jul-21	0	0	0	2

### **I-VMS**

There has been further progress on the introduction of vessel monitoring for the under 12m fleet (I-VMS). Suppliers of devices that meet the technical specifications for monitoring location, speed and heading of commercial fishing vessels have been invited to submit their products and technologies for assessment. To support fishers in selecting a device that is suitable for their vessel, the MMO's 'type approval' process is intended to bring as many suppliers into the marketplace as possible so that there's a broad choice of products at a range of prices to choose from.

In the under-12m fishing fleet, the specifications for vessels are diverse, so vessel owners are best placed, with the right support from suppliers, to decide which device and service package suits them. Fishers will be able to start researching devices once assessments are complete and a list

of approved products is published in November 2021. Once the approved list is published fishers will be asked to organise installation of a device on their vessel in phases. The expected timetable for the roll-out of I-VMS devices next year is as follows:

Vessel length Expected dates:

10 to 11.99m	17 Jan to 14 Feb 2022
8 to 9.99m	15 Feb to 13 Apr 2022
6 to 7.99m	14 Apr to 18 Jul 2022
Below 6m	19 Jul to 14 Nov 2022

Engagement has taken place with fishers on their main requirements for I-VMS devices and this has been communicated these expectations to the companies seeking approval for their products. Engagement over the summer and a survey of fishers demonstrated that they want a choice of devices and prices; reliable equipment with support if it develops a fault; clear explanations of how each device might be suitable for their vessel and dependable processes for installation. Commitments to providing a grant contribution towards the initial cost of devices and are assessing how fishers will be supported if their device fails and requires repair or replacement.

### **Vessel Procurement**

Tendering for a new small patrol vessel is attached as an annex to this report. This will be sent out for tendering once approved.

### **North Western Protector**

(Report compiled from vessel logs in the absence of the Master, who is recovering from Covid-19)

North Western Protector and Protector Bravo have again given performed well throughout the quarter.

Northern Irish vessels (up to 15 on any one day) along with local vessels were sighted, fishing the prawn grounds within the district, with moderate to light landings of nephrops (Prawns) and thornback rays being landed into Whitehaven.

Again the whelk vessels which fish the eastern Irish Sea continue to make regular landings into Whitehaven for onward transportation to the regular markets.

The larger lobster and crab vessels have continued fishing throughout the quarter. The smaller potting vessels have slowly, set their pots on local inshore grounds with most vessels now being active.

Boat angling as can be expected for this time of year, is very popular throughout the district with reports of some decent fish being caught on most days, with thornback ray being the most popular fish caught.

Patrol boat crew have again assisted with shore patrols when required throughout the district when required during the quarter.

### **Priorities/Patrols/ boarding's/and inspections statistics**

- Patrol district for large vessel infringement of byelaws
- Record data of nets and pots in district
- Inspect lobster/brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels
- Inspect gill nets for compliance with EU legislation
- Record data of nets
- Inspect nets for compliance with Byelaw 10 (3)

- Inspect vessels for compliance with EU fishing gear legislation
- Record all 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 offences

At the end of the first week in May the patrol vessel picked up a distress call from Belfast Coast Guard of a small vessel in trouble close to the shore near Workington. NWP made best speed to the area and found the vessel “Amber Jack” inshore approximately 150 yards off the slag bank at Workington. NWP took her in tow and ran out into deeper water, then handed the tow over to Workington life boat. No casualties reported.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May, a steering fault had to be investigated and found to be a drive belt failure – which was rectified and vessel continued with the planned sea patrol. The following day the vessel was dried out in the outer harbour during May where the anodes were replaced and the hull washed down.

Fishing activities have been monitored throughout the district in both North western Protector and Protector Bravo. The weather conditions during the first two months of the quarter have been mainly settled.

Patrols, boarding’s and inspections of vessels at sea along with static gear inspections using both North Western Protector, Protector Charlie and Protector Bravo totalled can be found in the annexes to this report.

Compliance with byelaws and other legislation this quarter has on the whole been good. However some unmarked gear was seized and brought ashore.

All vessel maintenance and service schedules are up to date. North Western Protector’s planned annual slipping has been delayed, until the Master is back to full health and at work again. The date has yet to be confirmed.

**Shore Based Activity Report**

Number of:	Haverigg Point – Burgh Marsh Point	Haverigg Point – Arnside	Arnside – Knott End	River Wyre – River Alt	Mersey, Wirral and Dee
Shore patrols by all NWIFCA officers*	52	64	42	80	
ATV patrols	9	20	13	27	
ATV patrol hrs	28.43	35.39	24.5	62.79	
ATV kms covered	237.30	281	165	719	
Inspections under taken	163	70	10	227	

\*undertaken either by vehicle or on foot without using ATV

**Annex A**

Vessel	No of patrol (days)	Patrol time (hrs)	Distance patrolled (nm)	Boarding’s	Closings	Sightings	Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
North Western Protector	21	156.58	1295	9	97	181	263 (inspections of static gear)
Protector Bravo/	2	3.66	40		0	1	13 (inspections)

Charlie							of static gear)
Bay Protector	1	3.00	34	0	3	3	2
<b>Totals for the quarter</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>163.24</b>	<b>1369</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>278</b>



## Annex B

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boardings	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
<b><u>North Western Protector</u></b>									
05/05/21	7.75	75	W of Sellafield, NW Corner, Maryport, Workington, Harrington	Potting, netting, & angling activity	Solway Firth SPA	0	0	0	0
07/05/21	6.00	70	Prawn pitch, Scallop Bank Maryport, Workington– distress call	Trawling activity		0	3	3	0
11/05/21	6.00	80	W of St Bees, Middle Bank	Trawling, potting & netting		0	5	5	0
12/05/21	6.50	70	W of Sellafield, prawn pitch & Seascale	Potting, netting, angling activity, bass fishing & trawling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	20	20	0
13/05/21	6.25	75	Prawn pitch	Trawling activity		0	21	21	0
14/05/21	11.50	50	Prawn pitch, Seascale, St Bees	Trawling, potting & netting	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	20	20	0
17/05/21	5.50	70	Prawn pitch	Trawling		0	5	5	0
18/05/21	9.50	50	Maryport & Workington	Potting netting, bass activity	Solway Firth SPA	0	2	2	0
19/05/21	10.75	110	Prawn pitch, Walney, Lune Deep	Trawling, potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria Coast MCZ, Liverpool Bay SPA, Shell Flat/Lune Deep SAC	0	0	7	0
27/05/21	8.50	28	Harrington, Workington, Maryport, dry out in outer harbour	Potting, netting & bass activity	Solway Firth SPA	0	0	0	0
28/06/21	6.00	55	W of Whitehaven, Selker & Parton	Potting, netting activity		0	0	12	0
29/06/21	4.75	50	Prawn pitch, Ravenglass & St Bees	Trawling, potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria coast MCZ	0	0	10	0
30/06/21	9.25	75	Prawn pitch, W of Whitehaven	Trawling, potting & netting		3	0	9	0
01/07/21	10.00	80	Prawn pitch, Selker & Walney	Trawling, potting, netting & bass activity	West of Walney MCZ	4	0	13	0

02/07/21	8.00	42	Prawn pitch, W of Sellafield	Trawling, potting & netting	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	15	15	0
06/07/21	6.75	50	W of Sellafield, NW corner, Workington, Maryport	Trawling activity, potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria Coast MCZ Solway Firth SPA	2	6	8	0
07/07/21	7.50	30	Harrington, Workington, Flimby, Maryport	Potting, netting, angling & bass fishing	Solway Firth SPA	0	0	5	0
08/07/21	7.00	70	Prawn pitch, NW corner	Trawling		0	0	4	0
09/07/21	7.50	75	Prawn pitch, Ravenglass Haverigg, Saltom Bay	Trawling, potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	17	0
13/07/21	6.58	50	Prawn pitch, Seascale, Braystones, Caulderton, St Bees	Trawling, potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	3	0
14/07/21	5.00	40	W of Ravenglass, Seascale, St Bees	Potting, netting & bass activity	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	2	0
									263 static gear
<b>21</b>	<b>156.58</b>	<b>1295</b>				<b>9</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>263</b>

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
28/06/21	1.16	10	W of Whitehaven, Selker, Parton	Inspections of static gear		0	0	0	1 static gear
07/07/21	2.50	30	Harrington, Workington, Flimby, Maryport	Potting, angling & inspections of static gear	Solway Firth SPA	0	0	1	12 static gear
<b>2</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>40</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
09/07/21	3.00	34	River Mersey, Bromborough, Liverpool Bay, Crosby	Angling activity & inspections of static gear	Liverpool Bay SPA Mersey Estuary SPA	0	3	3	2
<b>1</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>34</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>