

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

17th September 2026

REPORT NO.

4

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT – **1ST MAY 2026 – 31ST JULY 2026**

Purpose: For information.

Recommendations: That the report is received.

General Update

New Vessel Build

At its meeting in June, the Committee approved the progression of the contract with SwiftCat for the construction of the new 10-metre catamaran. SwiftCat has since commenced the build, beginning with the manufacture of the wheelhouse structure. This has involved laying up the composite materials and using a vacuum-infusion process to distribute resin through the reinforcing fibres.

Officers have continued to work closely with SwiftCat to finalise the remaining design and procurement details. During this process, several additional components were identified as important to ensuring that the completed vessel can safely and effectively meet the Authority's operational requirements.

A meeting of the Vessel Task and Finish Group was subsequently convened to consider these items and agree a proposed way forward. The Group's discussions and conclusions have informed the preparation of the accompanying ancillary report, Report No. 7.

Images showing progress with the build, together with updated renderings illustrating the anticipated appearance of the completed vessel, are provided below.



Intelligence Reporting

During the reporting period officers have continued to submit intelligence reports to the purpose built MMO and IFCA intelligence system “CLUE”. The system continues to assist in the standardisation of intelligence reporting and sharing among partner organisations along the coast, improving the searchability of data, linking compliance risks and helping deliver strategic enforcement.

The following table demonstrate the information reports submitted to CLUE for this reporting quarter.

Intelligence Reports	May	June	July	Total
IFCOs	25	20	22	67

This reporting period saw an uplift in intelligence submitted mostly likely due to seasonal change. The reports submitted related to breaches of bass regulations, illegal shellfish gathering and angling which is part of seasonal risk profiles for the spring and summer.

Operation Wistful

Although this activity falls outside the formal reporting period covered by this report, officers have maintained an operational focus on the North Wirral coastline during the six weeks preceding its preparation. This work has been undertaken through Operation Wistful, which aims to protect North Wirral's bivalve stocks by increasing communication, education and enforcement activity to promote compliance with NWIFCA Byelaw 2.

The operation initially focused on encouraging voluntary compliance through targeted communication, improved signage and an increased officer presence. This was intended to raise awareness and improve understanding of the requirements of Byelaw 2. These measures have been supported by proportionate, risk-based enforcement activity, directed by intelligence and analysis towards the locations and times at which offending is considered most likely. This visible presence has supported both the prevention and detection of suspected offences.

Officers worked extensively throughout July and August, covering all but one of the tides classified as red risk. This required a significant commitment from staff, including substantial unsocial-hours working during an already busy operational period.

During this period of enhanced coverage, 27 suspected offences were detected. These matters are now under investigation, and any enforcement action will be determined in accordance with the Authority's Compliance and Enforcement Strategy and associated sanctions policy. As the investigations remain ongoing, no further details can be provided at this stage. Outcomes will be reported in due course.

Shellfish Classification

It has recently become apparent that the FSA has changed the sampling timetable required for the classification of new bivalve mollusc production areas. The previous regime of ten samples taken at weekly intervals has been replaced by a requirement for twelve official-control samples collected over a minimum period of six months, with samples taken at least two weeks apart, before a provisional classification can be awarded. Sampling must then continue for a full twelve months before an annual classification can be granted.

This change presents significant challenges for the opening of new fisheries, particularly ephemeral mussel beds and developing cockle stocks. Bivalve fisheries are naturally dynamic, and extending the period required to obtain a provisional classification has implications for both fisheries management and industry. Furthermore, the stated six-month period does not fully reflect the practical time needed to undertake the sanitary survey, establish the sampling plan and accommodate tidal access, adverse weather, stock availability, unsuccessful sampling attempts or unsatisfactory results.

The revised process is therefore frustrating for all stakeholders. It may delay access to commercially viable fisheries, increase the risk of stocks being lost before harvesting can take place, place additional financial pressure on Environmental Health services and create further resource demands for NWIFCA.

To help mitigate these risks, NWIFCA officers have adopted a more proactive approach. Using the findings of the latest stock assessments, officers have contacted the relevant Environmental Health departments and industry representatives to identify prospective fisheries and begin the classification process at the earliest opportunity. This forward planning is intended to ensure that beds have an appropriate classification in place should stocks subsequently meet the requirements of the NWIFCA cockle fishery management plan.

Meetings/Training/Sessions attended

Safe Working in Water Training
Mud Working Training
National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group
North/South Welsh Cockle Group
Multi agency Group Meetings
Dee Estuary Cockle Fishery Advisory Group
Dee Regulating Order Meetings
NWIFCA Vessel Trip with Chairman
Sea Work Exhibition
Sea Fish Fishing Restrictions Group
Mobile Working App Group

Specific Fishery Reporting

During this reporting period, officers completed a total of 77 district patrol days across the Liverpool, Morecambe Bay and Whitehaven reporting areas. These patrols resulted in 292 fisheries sightings and the detection of 20 suspected offences. Patrol coverage increased across all three areas compared with the previous quarter, reflecting the continued use of intelligence-led and risk-based tasking to direct resources towards priority locations and activities.

Liverpool recorded the highest level of activity, with 148 sightings across 37 patrol days. Nineteen suspected offences were identified, producing an offence rate of 12.8%. Patrol effort was particularly concentrated around the North Wirral coastline, including the Gun Site car park, Leasowe, Derby Pool, Leasowe Lighthouse slipway and Kings Parade, New Brighton.

Morecambe Bay recorded 60 sightings across 18 patrol days, with no suspected offences identified during the reporting period. Activity included bait collection, fixed-net fishing, mussel gathering, potting and recreational and commercial rod-and-line fishing. Whitehaven recorded 84 sightings across 22 patrol days and one suspected offence, with observed activity including bait collection, fixed-net and haaf-net fishing, potting, lobster fishing and recreational angling.

Patrol-vessel activity increased compared with the previous quarter. North Western Protector completed 11 days at sea, comprising six days in Whitehaven, four in Morecambe Bay and one in Liverpool. These patrols generated 51 sightings and nine vessel boardings. Officers inspected 149 items of fishing gear, including 136 recorded as appropriately marked and seven identified as unmarked. Three items of gear were removed.

The accompanying maps in annex 1 demonstrate the geographical distribution of fisheries activity, patrol effort, vessel boardings, inspected gear and detected offences across the district. This information will continue to support operational planning by helping officers identify patterns of activity, areas of higher risk and locations where future patrol coverage may need to be strengthened.

Patrol and activity mapping shows coverage extending along much of the Cumbrian coastline, with concentrations around Whitehaven, Maryport, Seascale and the Solway coast. The high number of visits to the “Maryport Golf Course” site demonstrates the continued operational response to monitoring the Allonby Bay Highly Protected Marine Area.

North Western Protector – Quarterly Activity Report

The data below in Annex two does not cover the full reporting period due to a switch over of reporting systems. In this report it is hoped it provides an example period of the illustrative nature with which reporting will take moving forwards.

Northern Western Protector undertook seven patrol days between 3 July and 14 August 2026, from a total of 31 available operational days. This represented overall patrol coverage of 22.6%. Four patrol days were completed during July and a further three during August.

During these patrols, officers recorded 51 vessel sightings and completed nine boardings. Activity was highest in July, when 47 sightings and eight boardings were recorded. The boardings included four private rod-and-line vessels and four potting or creeling vessels, together with one vessel whose activity was not categorised in the report. Boardings and sightings of otter trawlers,

single-rig vessels, potters and creelers, and private rod-and-line vessels all increased compared with the previous quarter.

Patrol activity extended along the Cumbrian coast and throughout Morecambe Bay, with concentrations around Whitehaven, Workington, Barrow, Walney and the eastern side of the Bay. The mapping also demonstrates activity within or close to designated marine sites and prohibited areas, supporting the continued use of targeted patrols to monitor compliance and assess fisheries activity across the district.

The wider gear-sighting data, covering the period from 24 February to 12 August 2026, recorded 450 items of fishing gear. This comprised 436 lobster pots, 10 beach nets, two crab tiles, one item of rod-and-line equipment and one item of shrimping equipment. Sixteen items were identified as unmarked, including 12 lobster pots, two beach nets and two crab tiles.

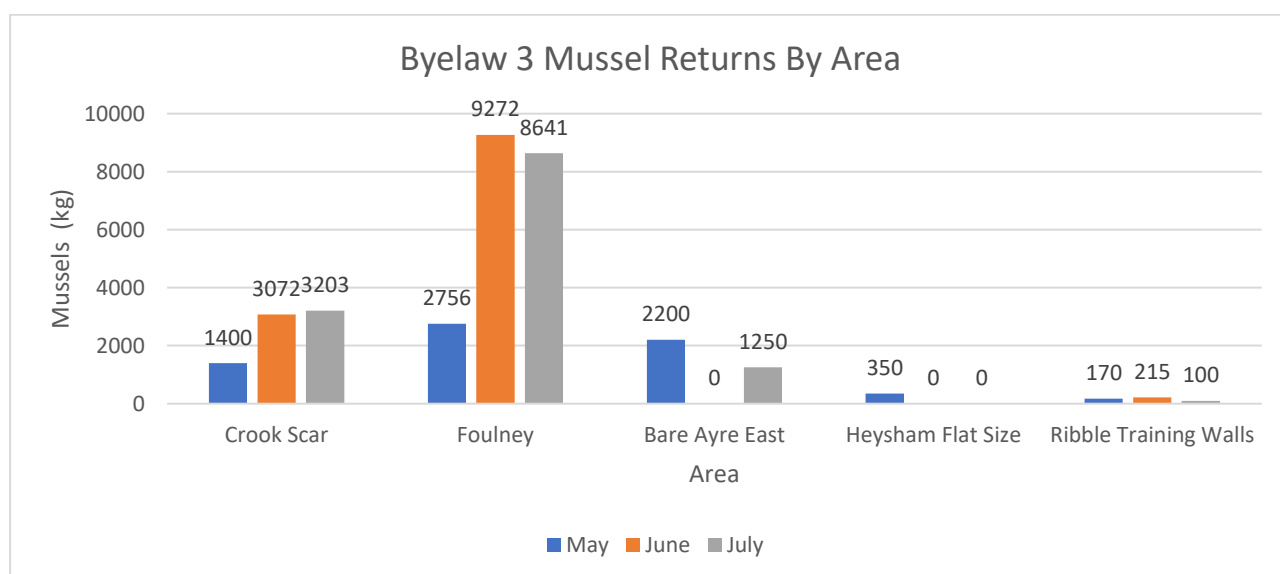
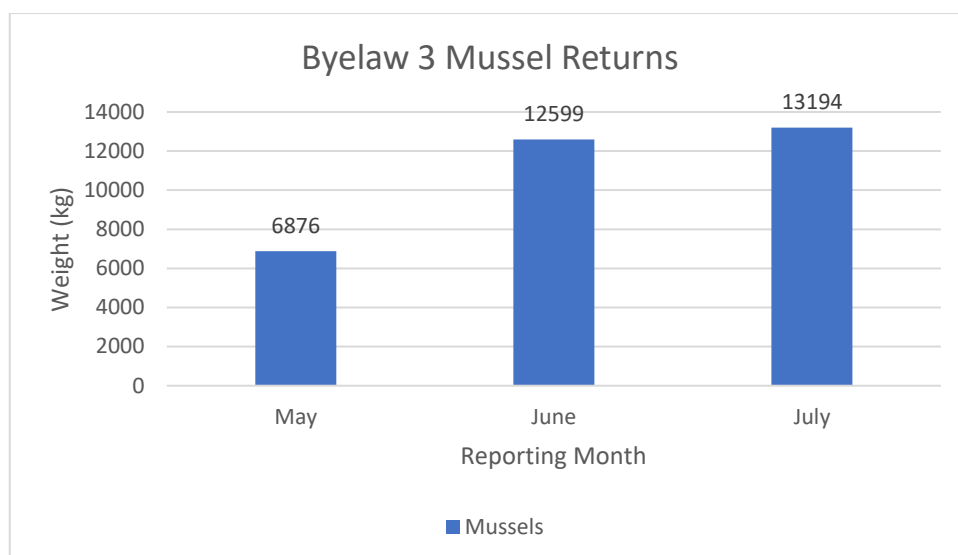
The new reporting format provides a clearer visual record of vessel activity, boardings and the distribution and marking status of fishing gear. This information will assist with future intelligence development, risk assessment and the targeting of patrol-vessel activity.

Full reporting period data

- Number of vessels inspected 14
- Number of gears visually inspected 265
- Number of vessels sighted at sea 43
- Nautical miles sailed 866
- Hours at sea 91
- Number of offences at sea 4 sets of unmarked gears
- Weather days lost 9
- Crew on other duties 8 days No available crew at least 8 days?
- Repairs and maintenance 14 days?
- Sea Patrols to HPMA 5

Returns data

As in the previous reporting period, mussels remained the main species gathered by Byelaw 3 permit holders. Byelaw 3 permit holders have continued to fish mussels often exploring smaller fishing beds to gather size mussels for depuration for smaller live market orders. This is supporting the need for even smaller shellfish beds to remain classified so that they can support fishers through this period of difficulty around export requirements and a lack of other opportunities.



Byelaw 4 shellfish returns have not been presented due to commercial sensitivities.

Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity

There were no sanctions applied during the reporting period although several investigations are ongoing and cannot be commented on further at this time.

Annex One

District Activity in Morecambe Bay for Q2 2026

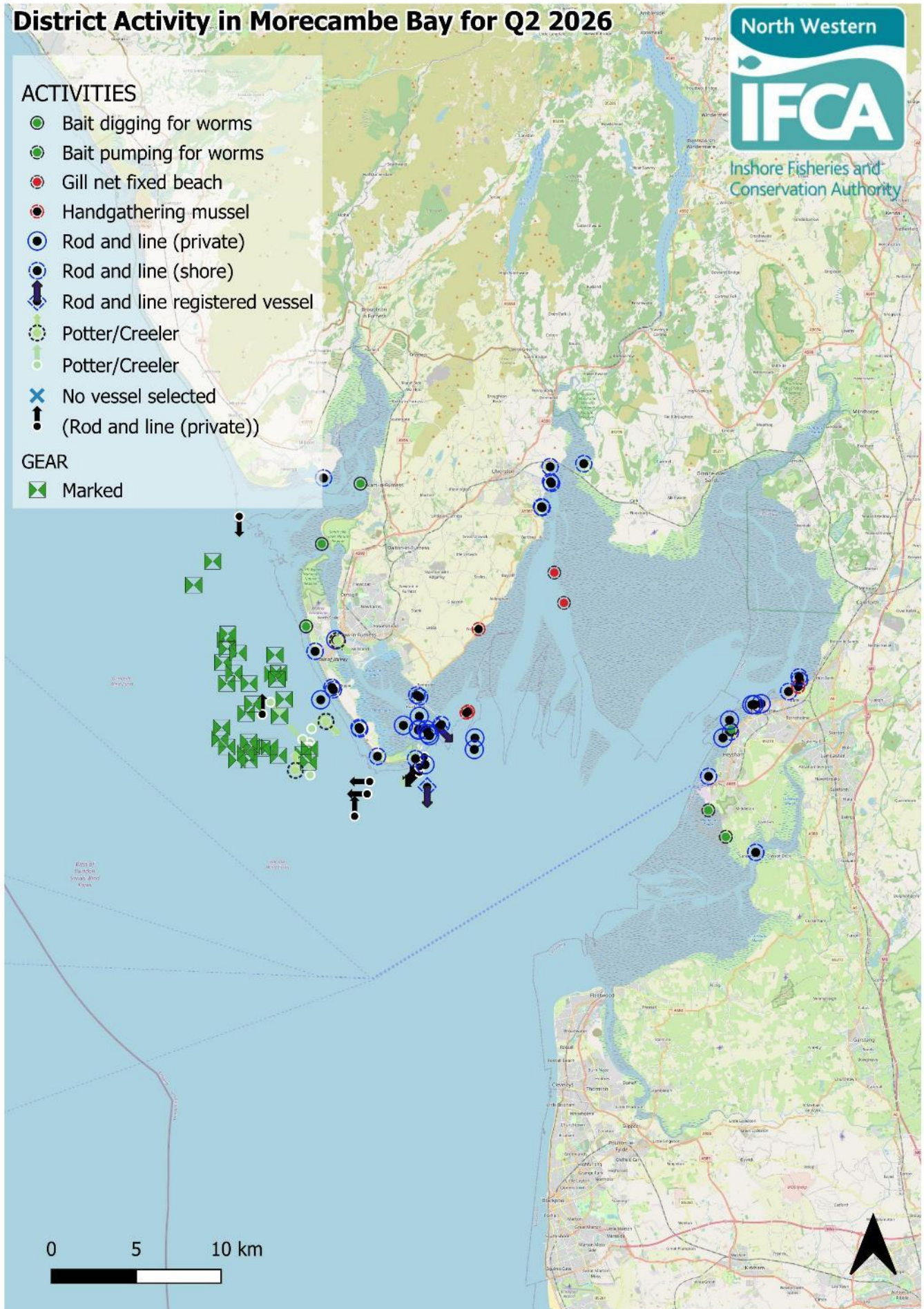


ACTIVITIES

- Bait digging for worms
- Bait pumping for worms
- Gill net fixed beach
- Handgathering mussel
- Rod and line (private)
- Rod and line (shore)
- Rod and line registered vessel
- Potter/Creeler
- Potter/Creeler
- ✕ No vessel selected
- ↑ (Rod and line (private))

GEAR

- ✱ Marked



District Activity in Whitehaven for Q2 2026

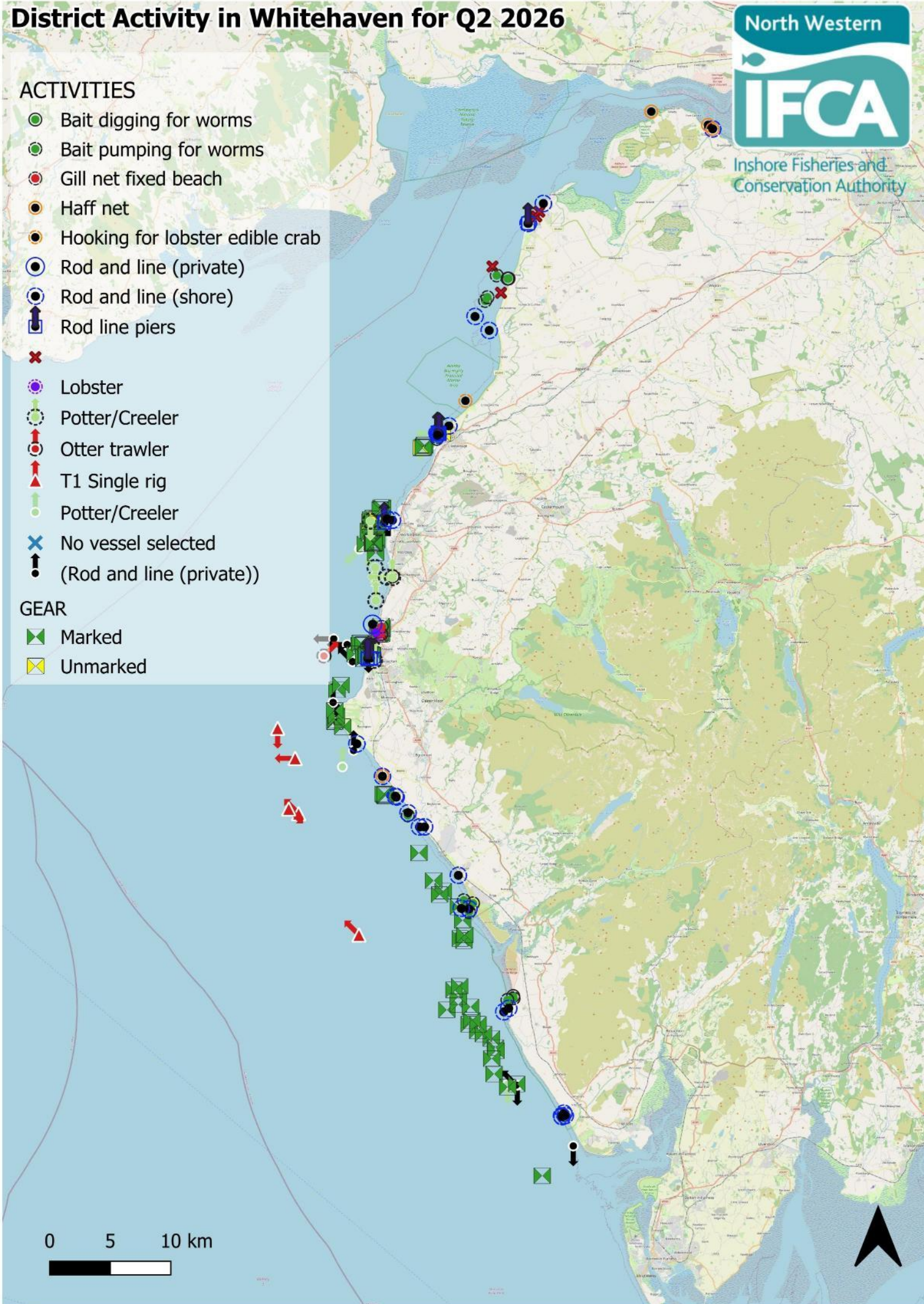


ACTIVITIES

- Bait digging for worms
- Bait pumping for worms
- Gill net fixed beach
- Haff net
- Hooking for lobster edible crab
- Rod and line (private)
- Rod and line (shore)
- Rod line piers
- ✕
- Lobster
- Potter/Creeler
- Otter trawler
- ▲ T1 Single rig
- Potter/Creeler
- ✕ No vessel selected
- (Rod and line (private))

GEAR

- Marked
- Unmarked



District Activity in Liverpool for Q2 2026



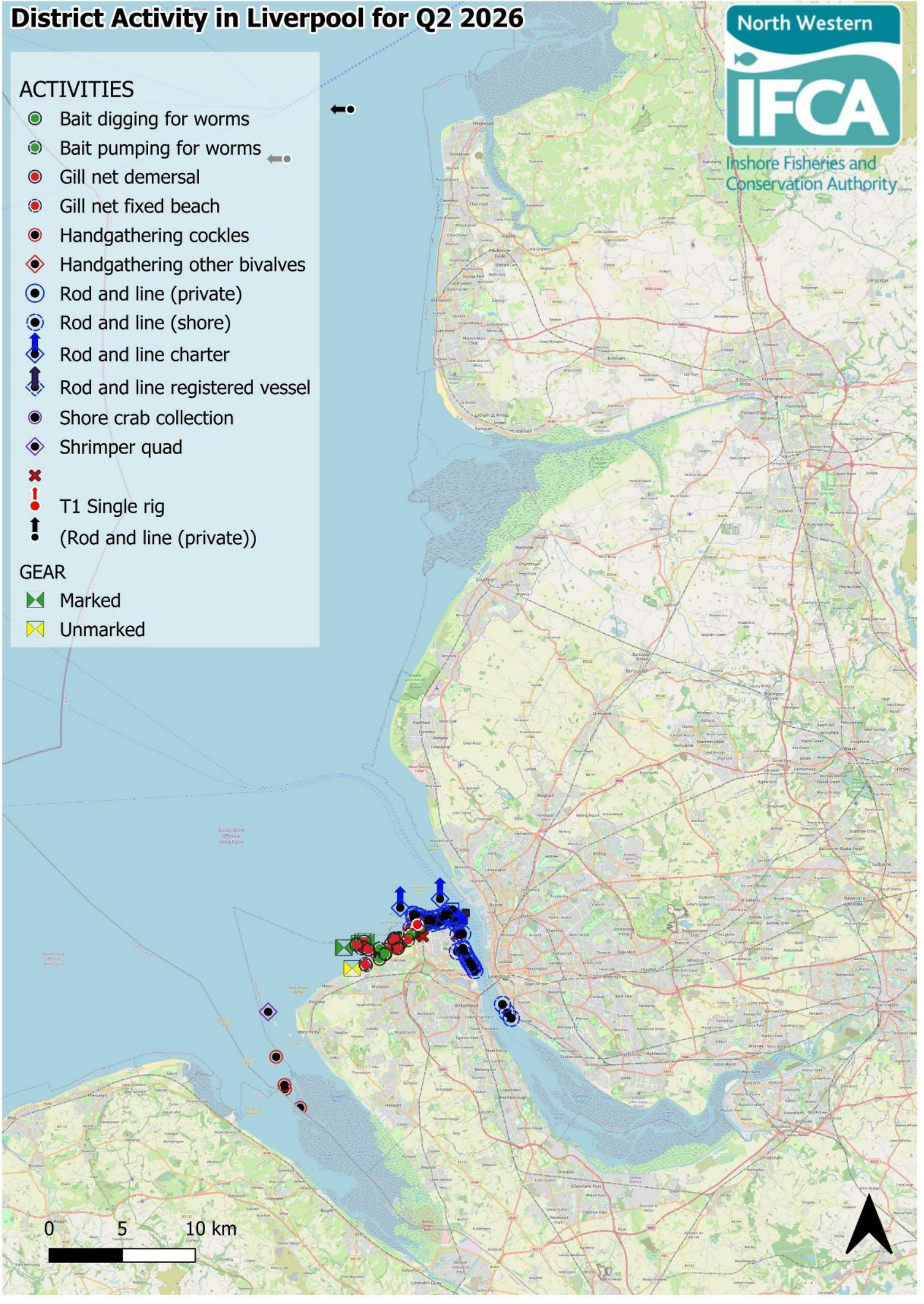
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

ACTIVITIES

- Bait digging for worms
- Bait pumping for worms
- Gill net demersal
- Gill net fixed beach
- Handgathering cockles
- Handgathering other bivalves
- Rod and line (private)
- Rod and line (shore)
- Rod and line charter
- Rod and line registered vessel
- Shore crab collection
- Shrimper quad
- T1 Single rig
- (Rod and line (private))

GEAR

- Marked
- Unmarked



Patrol Effort Map (Average per district)

Colour = share of district patrol days that included a visit to this location

- No recorded Visits
- 1 - 5%
- 6 - 15%
- 16 - 31%
- 32 - 51%
- 52 - 75%

District	Location	Visits
Liverpool	Gun Site Carpark	141
Liverpool	Leasowe	103
Liverpool	Derby Pool	100
Liverpool	Leasowe Lighthouse Slipway	87
Liverpool	Kings Parade New Brighton	68
Morecambe	Newbiggin	14
Morecambe	Roosebeck	12
Morecambe	Oakly Road	11
Morecambe	Biggar Quay Rocks	11
Morecambe	Aldingham	10
Whitehaven	Whitehaven North Pier	20
Whitehaven	Seascale	16
Whitehaven	Workington	14
Whitehaven	Mawbray	14
Whitehaven	Maryport Golf course	14

This map depicts how often an officer is visiting a location each time they go on a patrol. Each locations visits are averaged against the number of patrol days

Head of Enforcement Summary Report

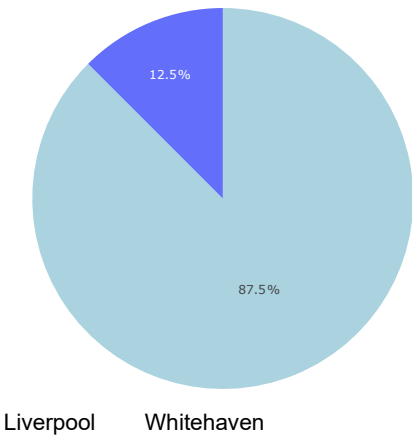
District summmary (Trends are compared to previous financial quarter)

District	Patrol Days	Sightings	Offences	Offence rate %	Patrol coverage %	Offence rate trend	Coverage rate trend
Liverpool	37	148	19	12.8	40.2	↑	↑
Morecambe Bay	18	60	0	0	19.6	→	↑
Whitehaven	22	84	1	1.2	23.9	↑	↑

Officer Summaries

Officer	Sightings logged	Inspections	Days on Patrol
D.Haile	4	1	3
H Thinnesen	6	0	2
RLoveNWIFCA	3	0	3
a.brownrigg	25	2	13
a.schweizer	42	3	19
c.taylor	26	0	7
e.thinnesen	47	0	10
g.edwards	8	0	5
i.dixon	27	0	11
m.taylor	104	13	26

Offence rate per district



District	Most common offence
Liverpool	Fishing in a prohibited area
Liverpool	Unpermitted shellfish gathering

NWP Patrol Summary

District	Days at Sea	Sightings	Boarding	Gear Inspected	Gear Unmarked	Gr Marked	Gr removed
Liverpool	1	2	0	8	2	6	0
Morecambe Bay	4	21	8	32	0	32	1
Whitehaven	6	28	1	109	5	98	2
TOTAL	11	51	9	149	7	136	3

Activity	Prev. Qrt
Boardings	↑
Otter trawler	↑
Potter/Creeler	↑
Rod and line (private)	↑
T1 Single rig	↑

Boardings and Offences District Overview



Enforcement Activity Summary

 Unmarked Gear

 Offence

Boarded Vessels

 Otter trawler

 T1 Single rig

 Potter/Creeler

 No vessel selected

 (Rod and line (private))

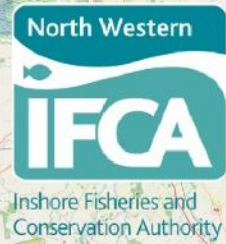


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Annex Two

North Western Protector Vessel Sightings Overview 03/07/2026 - 14/08/2026

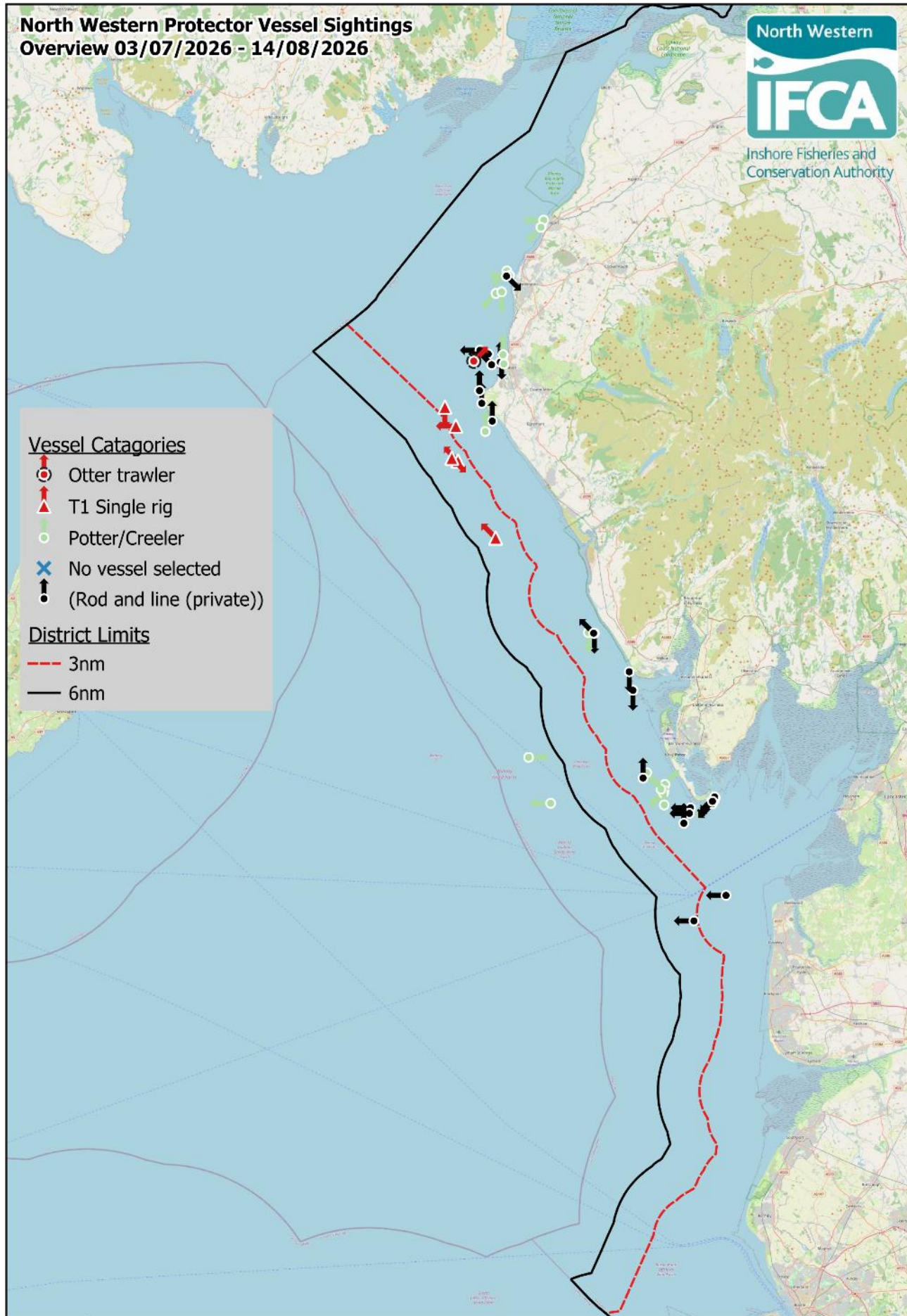


Vessel Categories

-  Otter trawler
-  T1 Single rig
-  Potter/Creeler
-  No vessel selected
-  (Rod and line (private))

District Limits

-  3nm
-  6nm



North Western Protector Gear Sightings Overview 24/02/2026 - 12/08/2026



Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

MST - Gear

- Beach net
- Crab Tiles
- Lobster pots
- Rod and line
- Whelk pots

Gear status

- Marked
- Unmarked

Gear Type	Total	Marked	Unmarked
Beach net	10	8	2
Crab Tiles	2	0	2
Lobster pots	436	413	12
Rod and line	1	1	0
Shrimping equipment	1	1	0

North Western Protector Report

Patrol Summary

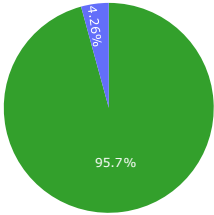
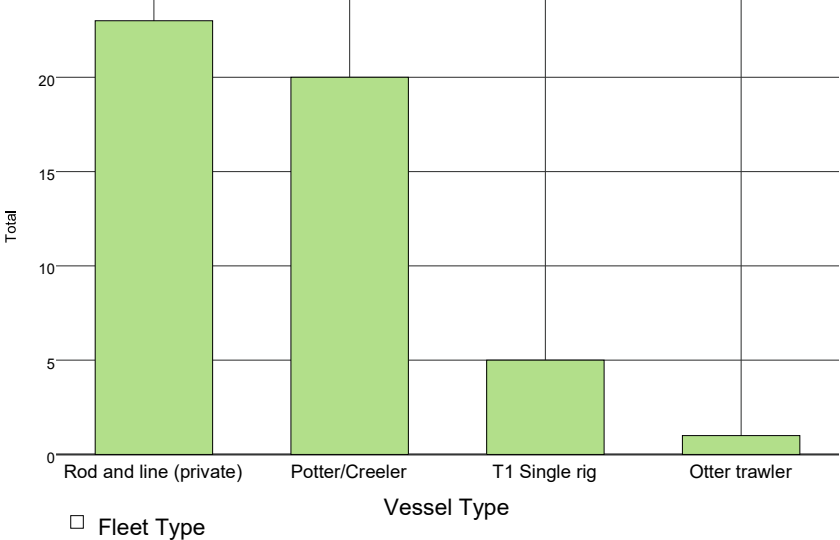
Month	Available Days	Patrolled Days	Coverage
2026-07	21	4	19
2026-08	10	3	30
TOTAL	31	7	22.6
AVERAGE	15.5	3.5	24.5

Vessel Catagories

Month	Sightings	Boardings
2026-07	47	8
2026-08	4	1
TOTAL	51	9
AVERAGE	25.5	4.5

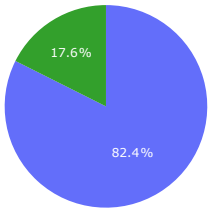
Fleet Size (10m)

Fleet Overview



Under Over

Boardings



Not Boarded Boarded

Vessel Locations

Vessel Catagory	MCZs	SPA/EMS/SSSI/SAC	Prohibited areas
	1	0	1
Angling	2	15	3
Other	2	8	4
Trawler	0	1	0

Activity	Previous Quarter
Boardings	↑
Otter trawler	↑
Potter/Creeler	↑
Rod and line (private)	↑
T1 Single rig	↑

North Western Protector Boardings Overview 03/07/2026 - 14/08/2026



Vessel Type	Boardings
Rod and line (private)	4
Potter/Creeler	4
	1

Legend

- Observed vessels
- T1 Single rig
- Potter/Creeler
- No vessel selected
- (Rod and line (charter))
- (Rod and line (private))

