

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:  
11<sup>th</sup> December 2015: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO.  
8**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES  
FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

**Purpose:** To report activity and the work of IFCOs during the quarter

**Recommendation:** That the report is received

**Introduction**

Full details of fishing activities within the District are as usual provided in officers' area reports. In summary:

- Mussel fisheries at Lytham (seed) Heysham (seed) and a small number of size mussel fisheries throughout the District
- Whelk landings into Whitehaven
- Light Nephrops fishery in the daylight
- Scallop landings into the District from the IoM fishery

A full report on mussel fishing activity across the district is supplied in Annex A.

**General Update**

- IFCOs received specific training in the shellfish classification scheme
- 'Protector Gamma' and 'Protector Bravo' passed their coding
- The intelligence management pilot is progressing well

**Enforcement**

Compliance during the quarter remained good. With the following sanctions required:

<b>Sanction</b>	<b>Comments</b>
9 verbal warnings	All related to cockles being present during recreational bivalve collection in North Morecambe bay – individuals were compliant with instructions from the IFCO to redeposit the cockle
29 advisory letters	28 relate to continued effort to improve compliance with the requirement to file Byelaw 3 returns 1 relates to seized fishing gear in the northern district being marked properly – gear was returned as required
Prosecution	See below

No other sanctions were required during the quarter.

Compliance with the returns has improved significantly during the quarter with IFCO Walters conducting the routine monitoring and reporting to the HoE. The response to the advisory letter alluded to above was pleasing. The returns have been used to generate the figures in Annex A.

## **Court Proceedings**

Two cases saw activity at court during the quarter:

- Brian Faulkner appeal of sentence – verbal update at the meeting
- Christopher Parker – prosecution

### Christopher Parker

Mr. Parker pled guilty to the following offences at Workington magistrate's court on the 20<sup>th</sup> October:

Landing 14 Edible crabs below the MLS (130mm)	Contrary to article 19 (1) of 850/98 (as amended) as read with Annex XII and section 30 of the Fisheries Act 1981)
Landing 21 Crab and 1 Lobsters	Contrary to the quantities of shellfish permitted para 2c of your Byelaw 26 (Permit to fish for Lobster, Crab and Whelks)

Mr. Parker refused to engage with any investigation and refused three opportunities to attend a voluntary attendance interview under caution. Mr. Parker was offered a Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP) for both offences of £750 in an attempt to dispose of the matter out of court. The court imposed the following sanctions:

- Fines of £500 for the Crab MLS offence and £250 for the Byelaw offence
- £850 costs
- £50 victim surcharge
- Total fines £1650
- Permit suspension for 12 months – (MACAA 164 (5b))
- Forfeiture of the crab

Of specific importance with this case was the matching of the fine level to the level of the FAP offered and the suspension of the permit.

### Legislative Changes

The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Miscellaneous Byelaw Amendments (England) Order 2015 has now amended the following IFCA byelaws as per below:

<b>Wording</b>	<b>Byelaws affected</b>
"Unless the landing obligations under article 15 of Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 requires the fish to be landed"	CSFC byelaws: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 (Skate Fishery)</li><li>• 14 (Shrimps or Prawns)</li></ul> NWSFC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 19 (Specified Fish Sizes)</li><li>• NW 6 (Shrimps or Prawns)</li></ul>
Adjusting 36cm as MLS for Bass to 42cm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NWSFC Byelaw 19 (Specified Fish Sizes)</li></ul>

The national MLS Bass SI (SI 1285 of 1989) has been revoked but an MLS for EU legislation remains in place through the EU technical regulations – thus giving coverage in the Northern District in absence of Byelaw 19.

**Head of Enforcement**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015**

## Annex A

<b>Bed</b>	<b>Amount fished (kg)</b>	<b>Effort (No. of people and days effort)</b>
Heysham	470,781	23 people, totalling 327 days effort
Foulney	31,164	9 people, totalling 37 days effort
Seafield	16,625	5 people, totalling 32 days effort
Ribble Training Wall	17,380	2 people, totalling 31 days effort
West Kirby	2,578	2 people, totalling 6 days effort
Silloth	10,000	4 people, totalling 20 days effort
Knott End	5,464	4 people, totalling 4 days effort
<b>Total fished</b>	<b>556,202</b>	<b>457 days effort</b>

**Master of the “Solway Protector”, H Thinnesen**

**PRIORITIES, PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS STATISTICS**

- Patrol and monitor CSFC byelaw 20 - plaice box area for compliance
- Patrol throughout the district for large vessel infringement of byelaws
- Record data of nets and pots located within the district
- Inspect lobster/brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels
- Inspect gill nets for compliance with EU legislation
- Record enforcement information and vessel activities for input into MCSS (Monitor and Control Surveillance System)
- Record data on nets
- Inspect nets for compliance with CSFC 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 – CSFC byelaw 26
- Patrol throughout district for detection of fishery limit line offences

Fishing activities have been monitored throughout the district during the quarter, both in the “Solway Protector” and “Protector Bravo”.

The weather conditions have again this quarter been unsettled – 9 days, and this along with crew annual leave – 13 days, and general maintenance and repairs – 31 days, has resulted in quite a number of patrol days at sea being lost.

Patrols, boardings and inspections of vessels gear a t sea using both “Solway Protector” and “Protector Bravo” can be found in Appendices ‘A’ to ‘C’. Compliance with byelaws and other National and EU legislation has on the whole been good, with only one verbal warning issued for a breach of Byelaw 26.

**TRAWLING, NETTING, POTTING AND ANGLING**

Trawling has been very poor this quarter with only light catches of prawns (Nephrops) reported with 3 - 6 stone per haul for the inshore vessels, on a good day.

A number of local vessels switched over early and concentrated on the queenie (Manx Scallop) fishing where reports are that they have been doing quite well.

September saw moderate fish landings of thornback ray, plaice, brill and monk. However this was short lived and vessels got a week or two fishing out of this at best.

Netting this quarter at sea has been low key with no reports of any decent hauls. Potting on the whole has been hit and miss most vessels reporting poor returns, and this year a number of potting vessels have had their gear brought ashore now for over a month.

Reports from boat anglers have been a little more encouraging, with again some good landings of cod at times, with fish averaging from 9 to 10 lbs in weight, all caught close to shore and around St Bees Head. Reports of a lot of small codlings across the district have continued this quarter, and again spotted dogfish are in abundance throughout the District.

## **MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND SERVICING OF PATROL VESSELS**

### **“Solway Protector”**

- Repair faults on Koden Radar
- New oil lubrication fitted to starboard engine raw water pump
- Wiring repaired on Racal Decca Radar
- Hyab crane lower sheave removed, repaired and re-assembled, new sheath pins shafts and bearings fitted
- Repair wiring on domestic water supply pump
- Trouble shoot and repair faults on accommodation lighting system
- Re-new AIS box on Olex plotting system
- Trouble shoot and repair steering fault
- Renew starboard main engine exhaust coupling
- Fit new pipes and hoses to starboard bilge pump system
- Starboard engine seacock fault - vessel lifted out of water on 24<sup>th</sup> September to investigate blocked seacock, which was contaminated with Tube worm. Hull and all inlets pressure washed off, anodes, prop shafts and rudders checked, starboard seacock cleaned and freed off
- Fit new window wipers
- Remove main battery charger and send away for repairs
- Replace starboard battery banks top blown off battery fault on charger unit (over charging)
- Renew fuel delivery pipes to starboard engine
- Repair Simrad cr 54 plotter
- Main engines and gearboxes serviced, oil and filters changed, all manufactures recommended services for warranties have been carried out on both main engines
- All monthly safety checks and maintenance schedules are up to date
- PAT testing on electrical equipment on board carried out by patrol boat engineer

### **“Protector Bravo”**

“Protector Bravo” continues to give a valued service and is important asset with respect to inshore enforcement duties. The vessel has, on the whole, performed well with only a couple of minor running problems to report, which are as follows:

- Repair an engine starting fault
- Renew wiring to electric bilge pump and replace float switch
- Fit new trim tabs
- Repair breaks and bearings on the vessel’s road trailer

On the 23rd October 2015 both “Protector Bravo” and “Protector Gamma” went through the MCA Small Vessels Coding (SVC). I am pleased to report that both vessels passed their inspections with flying colours.

## **SURVEYS**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 we carried out sea trials with the side scan sonar system. Unfortunately the trials had to be called off after 20 minutes, as the unit was not working and no data was being received from the tow fish, back to the base station. The unit was sent back to the suppliers in order for them to carry out necessary repairs.

I am pleased to report that the unit has now been repaired and we hope to get the equipment back in the water and tested sometime during the next quarter, and hopefully start to build up some good quality and useful seabed mapping data.

### **WEATHER**

On the whole the weather has been unsettled, with predicted weather forecasts at times being way off the mark.

Mid-August and early September, and some parts of October have seen the best of the weather with good spells of light easterly winds, which enabled the local vessels to put to sea, which on the whole has been one of the worst years I have ever seen for the fishing industry.

### **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the patrol boat crew along with two Authority Members visited Holyhead boatyard to look at a possible replacement vessel for the main patrol boat "Solway Protector". A brief report on the visit is attached.

**H THINNESEN**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015**

## "Solway Protector"

### *Appendix 'A'*

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time
06/08/2015	Selker/Prawn pitch/Scallop Bank	0	8.25
07/08/2015	West Sellafield/Workington/Maryport	17	7.00
12/08/2015	West of Sellafield	0	0.17
13/08/2015	South prawn grounds/West of Sellafield	7	8.90
09/09/2015	West of Whitehaven harbour	0	6.00
10/09/2015	Harrington/Workington/Silloth	5	6.25
14/09/2015	West of Whitehaven to Silecroft	9	6.00
15/09/2015	Parton/Harrington/Workington/Maryport/Silloth	12	5.50
14/10/2015	Prawn pitch sea trials	17	3.42
15/10/2015	Northern prawn grounds/Fleetwood	13	10.00

### *Appendix 'B'*

	1/8/2015 - 31/10/2015		1/5/2015 - 31/7/2015	
Number of patrols and passages	10	patrols	4	patrols
Seatime	61.49		32.25	
Average length of patrol	6.15		8.06	
Total distance covered	484	miles	289	miles
Average distance per patrol	48	miles	72	miles
Fuel used	1336	gallons	538	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	134	gallons	135	gallons
<b>Total identified sightings:</b>	80	vessels	59	vessels
Local	79	vessels	56	vessels
Visiting	1	vessels	3	vessels
<b>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</b>	<b>&lt; 45'</b>	<b>&gt; 45'</b>	<b>&lt; 45'</b>	<b>&gt; 45'</b>
Trawlers	25	0	21	0
Twin Rig Trawlers	0	0	0	3
Gill Netters	0	0	1	0
Shrimpers	3	0	1	0
Whelk Potters	0	0	0	1
Potting Boats	12	0	7	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	1	0	0
Anglers	39	0	25	0
<b>Total:</b>	79	1	55	4

**Protector Bravo - 7m Osprey Viper RIB**

Operating base: Whitehaven

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

2015						
Date	TOTAL	08/09/2015	09/09/2015	17/09/2015	30/09/2015	01/10/2015
<b>IFCOs undertaking the patrol:</b>		<b>AF HT</b>	<b>AF HT</b>	<b>AF HT</b>	<b>AF HT</b>	<b>AF HT</b>
<b>Area patrolled &amp; comments:</b>		Whitehaven to Drigg then Parton	Whitehaven to Maryport	Whitehaven to Workington	Whitehaven to Eskmeals then Workington	Whitehaven to Workington
Number of hours patrolled	<b>20:01</b>	03:36	04:15	03:45	04:15	04:10
Number of miles patrolled	<b>135.2</b>	31.7	21.3	19.8	44.8	17.6
No of patrols days:	<b>5</b>	1	1	1	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	<b>1</b>	1	0	0	0	0
Vessels checked	<b>7</b>	1	0	0	6	0
Pots Checked	<b>82</b>	10	31	17	15	9
<b>Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:</b>						
<b>ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington</b>	<b>4</b>		1	1	1	1
<b>ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield</b>	<b>4</b>	1	1	1	1	
<b>ZONE 6 - Seascale to Kirksanton</b>	<b>2</b>	1			1	
<b>Gear inspected per type of fishing vessel boarded:</b>						
Lobster & crab potter (IFCO permitted)	<b>58</b>	10	31	17		
Angling charter vessel	<b>19</b>	11	1	7		
<b>Closings of vessels at sea:</b>						
<b>ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington</b>	<b>9</b>		3	4	2	
<b>ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield</b>	<b>7</b>		2	3	2	
<b>ZONE 6 - Seascale to Kirksanton</b>	<b>2</b>				2	



**REPLACEMENT PATROL VESSEL**

Our attention has been brought to a vessel which has recently come up on the market for sale, berthed at Holyhead. The vessel is owned solely by windfarm service operators Turbine Transfers.

I was asked by the CEO if I could arrange a meeting and visit for both myself and crew, along with two Members of the previous Patrol Boat Sub-Committee, in order to ascertain if it could be a suitable replacement for the current patrol vessel the "Solway Protector". Trevor Jones along with Ron Graham (Vice-Chairman) attended at the request of the Chairman of the Authority, Councillor Tony Markley (Cumbria County Council) who was unable to be present due to post-operative confinement.

The vessel is called the "Penrhos Bay", which we visited at its berth in Holyhead on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015. A brief description of which can be found below:

- Constructed of aluminium
- Length - 20.47m overall
- Draught - 1.1m
- Forward deck space 37mtr<sup>2</sup>
- Aft deck space (after modifications - 36m<sup>2</sup>
- Main engines – 2 x MTU 1200hp - 2100rpm (per engine)
- Gearbox - Twin Disc MGX Quick shift
- Ultra-Dynamics UJ575 waterjets
- Navigation equipment –
  1. GPS
  2. DGPS
  3. GMDSS A2
  4. VHF/DSC Radios
  5. 1 x MF DSC
  6. 2 x Radars
  7. 2 x Chart plotters
  8. ECDIS system
  9. Echo sounders
  10. Navtex
  11. Telephone
  12. AIS
  13. e-mail and internet access
  14. Wind speed indicator
  15. MOB locating system
- Generator set - Onan 17.5kw
- Deck crane
- Heavy holding anchor winch
- CCTV system throughout the vessel

**Information gained from the visit**

The vessel is now 5 years old and was built by South Boats to DNV classification with high specification navigation and safety equipment on board.

The vessel has been maintained to an exceptionally high specification throughout, and all maintenance schedules and paperwork are up-to-date and can be inspected at any time.

The fuel consumption when the engines are running at 85%, can achieve a cruising speed of 20 knots, is 120 litres per hour, where the "Solway Protector" is 175 litres per hour at 16 knots. At low speeds 5 – 6 knots it burns 10 - 15 litres per hour.

The vessel has an Onan 17.5kw generator set with a fuel consumption of approximately 20 litres continuous running over a 24 hour period.

### **Alterations which could be made to the vessel to make it fit for purpose**

Part of the vessel's interior layout would need to be altered to accommodate a wet lab/dry lab and possibly a double cabin. There seems to be sufficient space available for this conversion.

It needs to be fitted with a pot and net hauler along with an 'A' frame aft and cargo winch, in order to launch and recover the boarding RIB along with deploying survey equipment day grabs, beam trawls, ATV quad bikes etc.

### **Conclusions**

After spending half a day looking over this vessel, it was the opinion of all present that this vessel would be an ideal vessel to replace the "Solway Protector" with. It would enable us to carry out our duties more efficiently and safely, and would enable us to undertake all scientific and survey work in areas where it was not previously possible.

**Hugh Thinnesen**  
**Master "Solway Protector"**  
**29<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

### **NORTHERN (CUMBRIA)**

### **Haverigg Point-Burghmarsh Point**

**Senior IFCO, E Thinnesen**

### **GENERAL**

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

- Prawn trawlers have not been as active this quarter with poor landings of prawns, some have had good catches of thorn-backed rays, one vessel had a 30 box haul.
- Shrimp fishing from boats in the District have seen patchy landings this quarter with reports ranging from 15-180 kilos being caught over a tide.
- Licensed potters have been active, with inspections seeing 10-35 kilos of Lobsters and 15-250 Kilos of Brown Crab.
- The whelk boats are making regular landings into Whitehaven of around 8 - 10 tonnes each landing.
- Anglers fishing from piers are catching Codlings, Plaice and Smooth Hounds. Good catches of Codlings are still being caught in the dark hours with some landings being in double figures,

anything from 5-14 keepers for a tide when fishermen were inspected. This seems to be the norm for this time of year.

All in all a moderate quarter for the vessels and fishermen.

The Maryport Aquarium is ready to release their first batch of juvenile Lobsters into the sea. This will be done with the assistance of local lobster fishermen

### **TRAWLING**

Over the quarter the prawn boats have not been as active, due in the main to the lack of prawns, and weather at times. Some of the boats out of Whitehaven and Maryport have been targeting Nephrops on the grounds to the west and south of St Bees Head, also in Scottish waters.

Some have had good catches of thorn-backed rays, one vessel had a 30 box haul.

Inspections carried out at ports have seen landings for a day's fishing ranging from 10 – 15 stones of Nephrops (Langoustines) or locally known as Prawns, most of the fishing has been carried out throughout the daylight hours. Some visiting vessels at the start of the quarter reported moderate fishing outside of the six mile limit but were short lived. Some of these vessels were multi rigged vessels, and to date, no multi rigged vessel has been seen by officers inside of the six mile limit.

Some 16 local vessels have changed over to scallop fishing and are waiting for the Isle of Man (IOM) Scallop season to begin at the start of November.

### **SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH**

Shrimp vessels this quarter have not been as active, but when they did put to sea the catches have been 15-180 kilos for a tide when weather has permitted. Little fishing was carried out in Scottish waters across the Solway Firth by vessels, as most of the fishing was undertaken just off Silloth.

### **KING SCALLOPS & QUEEN SCALLOPS**

A small number of vessels are still targeting King Scallops and these vessels have been landing into Silloth, most of them belonging to T N trawlers from Annan. Two vessels have arrived back from the east coast and are waiting for the IOM scallop season to open; some vessels have been targeting Queen Scallops while waiting for the season to begin, good landings have been reported to officers. There are 16 local vessels waiting for the IOM Scallop season to begin at the start of November.

### **POTTING**

Over the quarter vessels have been fishing when weather has permitted. Regular landings have ranged from 10-35 kilos of Lobster and 15-250 kilos of Brown Crab mostly from the larger potting boats. Three whelk boats landing into Whitehaven on regular occasions have seen landings ranging from 5-10 tonnes, with prices around £635 per tonne.

Potters are reporting an increase in cod being caught in their pots more so than nets, as seals cannot get into the pots to eat the cod. Reports throughout the summer by a potting vessel south of Whitehaven, was that if they were allowed to retain cod for resale they would have been landing in excess of a tonne of cod a day, but with tight quotas they are only allowed 30 kilos a month. The vessel which reported this amount has the capacity to haul in a day over 1500 pots.

## **OFFSHORE NETTING**

Some vessels are targeting cod now that the lobster season is all but over, which is the norm for this time of year. Reports are that netters have at times been getting some good sized cod and thorn back rays. Most netters are complaining that the seals are cleaning the nets before they get to haul them in.

Licensed fishermen have again expressed their frustration on the lack of quota they have for cod, 30kilos to land and sell, and an unlicensed vessel is unlimited in the amount of cod they can bring in for their own consumption. At times some inspections have seen greater landings from unlicensed vessels than from licensed vessels due to the lack of quota they can catch.

## **BEACH NETTING**

With byelaw 10(4) in place, no fixed engines have been seen on any of the beaches within the District. Although reports from one fisherman would suggest that beach drift netting has been on-going (this method of fishing does not come under byelaw 10 restrictions). With catches of Codlings Thorn backed rays and Sea Bass being reported, fisherman were reminded about the 3 bass rule which is now in place.

## **ANGLING**

This quarter has seen a good number of Codling, being caught by anglers at the usual stations, with the best of the catches being caught at night with up to 5-15 codlings being kept, all around the 4 – 9lb mark. Some Plaice caught were above 27cm and still meaty, and most of the codling have been caught using bait made from the inners of brown crab called, CART, which is processed into sausage type meat and frozen, when used they pin prick the sausage to let out a scent which attracts cod.

During daylight hours anglers have been seen on piers where some have reported good sized Plaice and the odd Codlings being caught. Mackerel are still being caught by the odd ones, some angling vessels reporting dozens for a tide being caught further off shore.

## **BAIT DIGGING**

Very little bait gathering has been seen this quarter. Only 19 gatherers have been observed spread between Drigg and Silloth. Between 30-100 Lugs have been seen caught with no commercial bait diggers having been seen this quarter.

## **INTERTIDAL ACTIVITY**

A mussel fishery with mussels sizing up to (65mm) has come on on the outer of Ellison's Scar west of Mawbray. This bed is accessible from Newtown Road End, and is only accessible on good spring tides with a LW of 0.8m or less. No fishing has taken place as of yet.

Crab and Lobster hookers have been sighted on big tides off Drigg, two men with 4 Lobsters, two of which were under the minimum landing size of 87mm. As they were still on the scar and not landed or banded, an educational approach was taken to explain the minimum landing size for lobsters and the severity of taking or landing undersized from the fishery.

## **OTHER DUTIES**

Other duties carried out this quarter have been to support enforcement operations with the EA. We also regularly undertake joint enforcement duties with the local constabulary where one of their officers would join us out on our day-to-day activities. This officer is at the moment being put through

a quad bike course and basic seamanship courses in order to be able to join us on sea and quad patrols. The idea behind this joint working is to work closely with the police and for the police to get a better understanding of the fishing activities and operations in the area.

## **ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION**

An educational approach was taken to explain the minimum landing size for lobsters because they were still on the scars at time of an inspection, and the severity of taking or landing undersized lobsters from the fishery. The two men had in their possession 2 undersized lobsters out of 4.

### **Officer Statistics for the period 1<sup>st</sup> August – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012**

Shore Patrols	55
Fishing Locations visited	630
Quad Patrols	3
Locations by quad	20
Anglers seen	780
Bait Diggers seen	19
Inspections all	158
Beach nets inspected	0
Days assisting other areas of district	3
All vessels sighted in ports	8023

## **NORTH MORECAMBE BAY**

## **HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE**

**IFCO, Ian Dixon**

### **TRAWLING**

During the last quarter I have not observed or had any reports of commercial trawling activity.

### **SHRIMPING**

Reports from the nine fishermen observed from Flookburgh and one fisherman from Baycliff and observations from patrols suggested that the shrimp fishing was the best it has been in recent years. Despite a slow start to the summer, good catches were continuing at the end of October, no doubt helped by the unseasonably mild weather. Some fishermen were disappointed that despite good hauls of shrimps the price was very poor due to imported shrimp from Holland flooding the market.

### **POTTING**

Only one licensed vessel has been active regularly during the last quarter, working the Irish Sea in front of Walney from Barrow, with up to 200 pots. Catches have been moderate to poor and eventually resulted in the vessel switching from lobster/crab potting to begin prospecting for Whelks. Two other vessels have been observed potting occasionally during the quarter, one from the north of my area working a large number of pots and another vessel potting occasionally outside of the IFCA district.

There are 3 licensed vessels new to the area which I expect to see working pots in my area in the near future.

## **COCKLES**

During the last quarter I have received no reports of commercial cockling activity on the North Morecambe Bay area. On two occasions I have observed family groups of eastern Asian descent who had travelled from Manchester and Cambridge, gathering cockles in the Newbiggin area, both groups had very few cockles and no specialist gathering equipment. All cockles were relayed and full compliance was achieved, all information was passed on to the Head of Enforcement. On one of these occasions a local man was with the family groups and reported that he was a co-ordinator for the North West Chinese Community and had a website to inform people of any issues. He had mistakenly been informed that the cockle beds open on September 1<sup>st</sup>: I corrected him and gave him a NWIFCA Cockle bed closure notice to display on his website to discourage further incidents. Regular patrols both at night and during the daytime have not identified any commercial cockling activity either.

Reports from shrimp fishermen and observations from ATV patrols have shown dense patches of spat across most of the Bay, the most many of the fishermen have seen for many years.

## **MUSSELS**

During the quarter mussel fishing activity has almost ceased on the North Morecambe Bay area. This is largely due to the Hard Acre mussel bed in the outer Duddon Estuary seeing a dense mussel seed settlement which covered all the existing mussels and all the scar ground. Gatherers and buyers decided to let the bed develop again following a successful mussel fishery being prosecuted there for the past year or more, with large sized and good meat content mussels compared to other beds in the district. A small group of Byelaw 3 permit holders gathered small amounts of size mussels from the Foulney area on suitable tides, but the majority of permit holders who had worked the Duddon and Foulney beds decided to work on the seed mussel fishery at Heysham. Surveys were carried out on Foulney mussel beds and the South America/Falklands beds using the IFCA RIB, no new mussel settlement was observed on any of these beds, although the Falklands area held a patch of size mussels from last year's settlement.

One Byelaw 3 holder from the North East continues to travel to Walney Channel mussel beds to gather 100kg of mussels for angling bait a couple of times a month.

I continue to take mussel samples from Foulney and the Duddon for Barrow Borough Council.

## **NETTING**

During the last quarter a large percentage of my time has been spent monitoring Bass fishing activity following the new EU ruling of a 3 Bass limit per person per day for recreational fishermen. Netting activity from vessels was at a much lower level than previous years, with fishermen reporting a lack of Bass numbers and unsettled weather conditions, this led to a reduction of effort. Observations and catch reports revealed that no large hauls of Bass had been taken, with 6 boxes being one of the better hauls reported although this was a one off, one licensed vessel which was one of the more active boats in the area had several hauls of 70kg plus. All the observations and reports suggested the average size of Bass had increased with many fish of 5lb plus being seen, a lack of "schoolie" Bass was reported with one netting vessel reporting only 3 undersize fish being caught and returned. Other licensed vessels experienced poor results so they decided to concentrate efforts on potting. Unlicensed netting activity has decreased since the much publicised 3 Bass limit and a lack of Bass numbers. One unlicensed netting vessel was observed in the Duddon estuary although catch reports were poor and effort significantly reduced compared to previous years.

Beach nets have been checked in the Duddon and Leven Estuaries and in the Newbiggin area, although inspections and catch reports have been moderate to poor. Most of the nets were set for

Flounders for commercial sale locally or for pot bait, with occasional Bass being caught. One net at Newbiggin was being fished commercially and had several reasonable catches of large Bass which were sold to a local fishmonger, catches of Plaice and cod were also reported.

## **ANGLING**

During the last quarter a high percentage of my time has been spent monitoring Bass fishing activity and enforcing the 3 Bass ruling. As with the netting I have noticed a reduced level of activity in the usually popular boat angling, possibly due to the new ruling on Bass. Beach angling seemed to be as popular as usual though, with anglers reporting good catches of Bass at South End of Walney and Earnse Bay, also fishing well was the outer Duddon estuary at low water where several anglers used ATV's to access the area, no breaches of the 3 fish rule were observed or heard, Bass of up to 8.5lb were reported. Good catches of Plaice and Flounder were reported and observed from anglers on the coast road. Barrow docks continued to produce catches of Cod and Pollack as well as plenty of whiting.

Several inspections were undertaken on boat anglers at Walney, no catches of more than 3 Bass were observed.

Long line fishing activity was also at a reduced level due to poor catches.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

A report was received detailing that a couple of people had been observed gathering small amounts of non-native oysters from Walney Channel, near the footbridge from North Scale to the area close to the College. These oysters were also reportedly being offered for sale locally. Environmental Health was also made aware of this situation due to no classified oyster beds existing in the area. During routine patrols of the area no activity was recorded, several non-native oysters were observed.

Patrols were undertaken on the exceptional Spring tides after reports suggested that razor clams were expected to be targeted by hand gatherers for commercial purposes from the North Morecambe Bay area. No activity was recorded.

## **SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY**

## **ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END**

**IFCO, J. Moulton**

During the Last Quarter I have assisted Steve Waite in his transition towards retirement. Steve retired on the 12<sup>th</sup> October after 30 years with the Sea Fisheries Committee and NWIFCA. As well as conducting 36 shore, 5 quad bike patrols and boat patrols within the South Morecambe Bay Area I have assisted in cover across the entirety of the District from South to North with patrols and sampling for Local Authorities. I have also been developing the Intelligence management programme within NWIFCA and alongside the nationwide programme being piloted by the MMO.

## **SHRIMPS**

The inshore shrimp industry in Morecambe continues to be on a micro scale with only two fisherman operating commercially licensed boats. Shrimp landings have improved in the last quarter in both weight and size. Both boats operate almost daily when the weather allows, fishing on either tides. Although fishermen have been content with their catch, shrimps have been harvested from limited recognised areas. As a result fishermen still have concerns about the future of the inshore shrimp fishery.

Occasional hobby shrimping has taken place from boats in Morecambe. No use of Tra la la tractor units has been observed from Hest Bank to Heysham in this period although Tractors from Flookburgh have been observed regularly fishing close to Morecambe and Hest Bank.

### **TRAWLING**

This fishery continues to be extremely low key. No improvement in trawling activity has taken place either on a commercial or hobby basis. This fishery continues to prove very disappointing and, as reported in previous reports, no improvement is expected in the foreseeable future on a commercial or hobby basis.

### **COCKLES**

Throughout this last quarter I have received no reports of cockles being removed by commercial gathering. Two incidents of members of the public gathering handfuls of cockles from Morecambe Central Beach were dealt with by IFCO Waite at the time.

During this last quarter, I have seen a slight improvement in stocks of immature cockles and I intend to carry out patrols on all recognised beds in my area. I have observed no improvement in mature stocks. All beds in my area remain closed.

### **MUSSELS**

During this last quarter only a small amount of size mussel was gathered at the beginning of August from the end of Heyham Flat. This was due to a limited number of tides allowing access.

After an extremely good settlement of mussel spat on Heysham Flat the seed mussel fishery opened on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. Under the authorisation issued to remove undersize mussel an average of 25 Byelaw 3 permit holders began to prosecute the fishery removing approximately 40 tonnes per day on good tides. This level of effort continued into September until other fisheries became available. Throughout October levels of effort were around 15 gatherers per day. The fishery was mostly compliant throughout with only a small number of problems detected due to the issuing of permits. This was usually dealt with by removing fisherman from the beach.

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

### **DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS**

Effort in the inshore drift net fishery remains low key with fishermen associated with the inshore drift net fishery choosing to concentrate mainly in other seasonal licenced fisheries. Those fishermen who ventured out to sea have landed very few bass with only the occasional reasonable landing being reported. Fish that have been landed have proved to be of good size. This fishery's future is continuing to move towards a part time basis.

Stake nets have only been occasionally fished with most being tied up.

Very little setting of long lines has occurred with fisherman complaining of the number of dogfish caught.

### **DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING**

During this last quarter shore anglers have continued to fish over high and low water tides being observed at Throbshaw point, Bare Ayre and Heysham North Wall. Dinghy and shore angler effort has, however, proved poor with very few bass being caught although there has been some nice sized



plaice caught. Effort from dinghy anglers has proved poor with very few bass being landed. Anglers, however, have been pleased by the occasional landing of sole. Fishermen have also reported occasional skate being landed and they have continued to land plaice and flounder towards the top of Morecambe Bay.

Compliance of Byelaw 5, Heyham Bass Nursery Area has on the whole continued to be good. Only one occurrence of an angler fishing at the power station outflows resulted in enforcement action. There has only been one other report of a breach of byelaw.

## **CENTRAL AREA**

## **River Wyre to River Alt**

### **SENIOR IFCO, S. Brown**

## **GENERAL**

While the weather has been relatively mild and dry northerly and easterly winds have prevailed, not good conditions for many coastal fisheries. Routine patrols have been undertaken ashore, afloat and on intertidal areas.

## **TRAWLING**

Marketing opportunities remain poor at Fleetwood. It is only the sale of lesser Spotted Dogfish and Flounder (that have been landed in some quantity) for use as pot bait that has kept the remaining inshore trawlers viable during what should have been a prosperous time of the year. Modest amounts of Plaice and Thornback Ray have also been landed.

Popular fishing grounds have been the southern side of Lune Deep and Below Shell Wharf out to the Point of the Bank; vessels have occasionally been sighted fishing Shell Flat and the edge of the rough at Blackpool.

## **SHRIMPING**

In comparison to last year's excellent fishery shrimp catches especially south of the Ribble have been rather poor. The northerly and easterly winds have not helped, neither wind being conducive to shrimp fishing on either the Fylde or Sefton Coast.

If that was not enough the Lower Penfold Channel has shifted to the west, what was once a good sheltered fishing ground has degenerated into a rather insignificant puddle with just about enough sea room to accommodate a couple of tractors.

One professional fisherman and 3 pleasure fishermen have been working the Ribble, fishing opportunity is limited due to siltation and catches have been modest.

One commercial boat and a couple of pleasure boats have occasionally fished for shrimps in the River Wyre. Push netters have been sighted from Blackpool up to Rossall Point again only modest catches have been taken.

## **POTTING**

One Fleetwood netting boat has turned his hand to potting as well as netting. Pots have been set along the Rossall pipe, NW and South Boulders. There has been some other low level potting activity from smaller commercial vessels and small amounts of Byelaw 30 permitted potting activity. Catches have not been significant.

## **COCKLES**

No significant stocks of cockle have been located about the Ribble estuary, as previously stated there have been some considerable changes to the geography of the area over the last year or so. That said while no significant spatfall has taken this year some areas such as the lower Penfold are particularly suitable for cockle settlement.

## **MUSSELS**

The excellent mussel spatfall previously reported on the Ribble Walls has survived to date. Two distinct fisheries have emerged small quantities of good quality size mussel from the outer Ribble Walls and a seed mussel fishery adjacent to the moorings at Seafield Slip Lytham.

There was limited harvesting from the Lytham bed last year and despite some losses the bed survived the winter. Another spatfall occurred and the bed now contains seed mussel that are ideal for relaying. Officers have worked to get and the Authority has approved the opening of this fishery. Unfortunately at the time of writing (and opening of the fishery) we have experienced two weeks of heavy rain and the river is in spate. It remains to be seen how much of this fishery will remain when the river levels begin to fall.

## **WHELKS**

The fleet of whelk potters have only made occasional landings at Fleetwood this quarter. They have however maintained a unit on the dock and continue to purchase bait from the local inshore trawlers. Their demand for bait and ready local supplies has kept two inshore trawlers in work this Summer and Autumn.

## **NETTING**

The increase of the MCRS for Bass to 42cms and the introduction of the 3 Bass limit for non-commercial fishermen will bring about significant change in the pattern of the coastal fishery in this part of the District. At present few problems have been met because we are at that part of the Bass cycle where only a few larger Bass are expected. As the cycle continues and stocks recover significant problems must be expected when the slower growing northern estuarial stocks begin to recover.

The commercial netmen from Lytham have only fished at opportune times; catches have been to say the least marginal, consisting of a few Bass and Codling. The Fleetwood boats have had such a poor season that at least two of these purpose built vessels have been put up for sale. I have received a report that one of the registered commercial angling vessels had a single good hit-trip.

There has been little netting activity along the Fylde and Sefton Coast catches have certainly not warranted the effort and most fleets of nets have been rapidly brought back ashore.

## **ANGLING**

The easterly and northerly winds have not been good for shore angling which has however remained as popular as ever. Catches have been poor with very few Bass being taken. The three Bass limit has become a bit of a joke among shore anglers many have not taken a single Bass this year. Catches have consisted mostly of the occasional codling small dabs and flounder, very few fish have been retained.

Charter, angling boats and sea kayaks have regularly been observed off the Fylde Coast being slightly further offshore they have enjoyed better sport with a few decent fish being landed.

Angling boats from Sefton have been observed fishing Gut and the Penfold, the Preston Dock Bulnose remains popular for Flounder fishing.

## APPENDIX A

### Zodiac Bravo

Operating base: Morcambe

Area of operation: Morecambe Bay and the Ribble Estuary

2015		August		September
Date:	<b>TOTAL</b>	12	13	9
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		<b>SB/SW</b>	<b>SB/SW</b>	<b>SB/NW/JM</b>
Area patrolled & comments:		Joint patrol with SW covering Knott End, Lancaster, No1 Heysham, No2 King Scar, Danger Patch, and boarded 3 angling boats	Joint patrol with SW visiting Morecambe. One angling boat and 2 shrimping boats were boarded. One vessel had 2 stone clean rough shrimp. One angling vessel logged as a closing	One angling boat boarded King Scar nothing retained. One inshore trawler working King Scar/Lune Deep, one charter boat NW Boulders. One push netter Cleveleys N.
<b>Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:</b>				
Number of hours patrolled	<b>03:15</b>	02:00	01:15	01:30
Number of miles patrolled	<b>18</b>	10	8	8
<b>No of patrols days:</b>	<b>2</b>	1	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	<b>6</b>	3	3	1
Fish Size Checked	<b>3</b>	2	1	
<b>Zones where boardings/inspections undertaken:</b>				
Morecambe Bay	<b>6</b>	3	3	1
<b>Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel inspected/boarded:</b>				
Shrimp beam trawler	<b>2</b>		2	
Recreational Angling vessel	<b>1</b>		1	
<b>Closings of vessels at sea (not recorded as sighting, boarding or inspection):</b>				
Morecambe Bay	<b>1</b>		1	
<b>TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL (not recorded as sighting, boarding or inspection):</b>				
Recreational Angling vessel	<b>1</b>		1	

**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, Dee Estuary and Fleetwood area with 'Bay Protector' the area's patrol vessel.

**SPECIFIC****COCKLES**

Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to do so throughout 2015 and into the first quarter of next year. Beach closure notices to cockling remain in place and will do for the foreseeable future. The bed will remain to be monitored by both NWIFCA and Mersey Port Health Authority (MPHA) officers.

**MUSSEL**

West Kirby and Caldy Blacks mussel beds remain open on the Dee Estuary but both have very little commercial stock value. Both beds remain to be patchy and made up largely of dead shell. Sampling will now take place once a quarter. Mersey mussel North and South still remain nominated as pre classification sample points within the river Mersey and routine sampling continues to take place under the direction of MPHA. In the meantime all shellfish within the Mersey estuary remain classified as prohibited and are unable to be gathered.

**RAZOR CLAM**

Due to the drop in temperature, poor weather and day light the gathering of Razor Clam along the north Wirral coastline has stopped, this is predicted to stay like this until April 2016. During spring tides it was not uncommon to see in the region of six to thirty Orientals gathering. Several inspections were carried out with only minor catches being noted (2-5kgs); only on one occasion did I observe a gatherer with 10+kg of Razor Clam. From my previous reports it is interesting to note that the oriental community still have an active interest in the gathering of Oyster Clam. All of my observations have been passed on to the science staff and the Head of Enforcement.

**SHORE ANGLING**

During the last quarter number of anglers has steadily increased, anglers have been observed along both sides of the river Mersey, Otterspool Promenade, Jobs Quay (Eastham Country Park) and Crosby Promenade where both officers have observed between eight to twenty anglers fishing at any one time. Bass, Dab, Flounder and Cod have been observed being landed. Numerous inspections have taken place and no undersize has been reported. During other routine patrols New Brighton (Perch Rock and Kings Parade) again remain popular areas to the angling community. .

**NETTING**

During routine ATV patrols four set nets were regularly observed along the north Wirral coastline. All nets were marked up accordingly with the owner being contacted to confirm this. Routine inspections were carried out over this quarter however no catch was recorded. At present due to the bad weather all nets have been collected off the beach.

## **BAIT DIGGERS**

Bait diggers remain to be seen predominantly along the north Wirral coastline, with New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area of beach off Leasowe Common being identified as the most popular location. Numbers indicate between 0 – 3 bait diggers have been recorded daily with anywhere between 50 – 250 worms gathered per individual.

## **BAIT COLLECTION**

Recent low water patrols have 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 within the river Mersey with one area having up to ninety six crab pipes

## **COMMERCIAL BOAT ANGLING**

Eight charter and eight recreational fishing vessels work locally out of Liverpool Marina and from moorings off Bromborough slipway, New Brighton, Meols and the Dee Estuary. Vessels have been observed carrying between two to ten anglers with no significant catches being noted up to this date. Four angling charter vessels from Rhyl recently made the transit across to Liverpool and are now based within Liverpool Marina working the Cod fishery until March 2016. One inspection of an angling charter vessel saw over 40kg of various fish species, it was pleasing to say that no undersize was observed. Good relationships remain ongoing and advice and guidance is routinely provided. A detailed account on the Cod fishery will be enclosed in the next report.

## **SEA PATROLS**

Despite the poor weather over the last quarter, 'Bay Protector' has managed to be active around the area. Boardings, closings and inspections have all taken place on charter boats and local private unregistered fishing vessels around the southern area. 'Bay Protector' has also offered RIB patrols around the Fylde coastline and Morecambe Bay area. On the Dee Estuary four 15ft beam Trawls have been observed on moorings off Thurstaston slipway, mainly used for shrimping, whitefish and netting all vessels will continue to be checked. 'Bay Protector' has completed a 100 hours at sea and will shortly be taken off the water for her first major service.

## **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. During September both officers attended the Dee Estuary Sea Fisheries Liaison meeting. Joint enforcement patrols with the Marine Management Organisation have also taken place. Finally; assistance to the GLA and MPHA has remained ongoing, and will continue to do so.

## APPENDIX A

### Bay Protector - 7m Humber RIB

**Operating base:** Liverpool

**Area of operation:** Ribble and Dee Estuaries

2015		August		September		October	
Date	TOTAL	11	21	29	14	15	
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		AB/PC	AB/PC	AB/PC	AB/PC/JH/ST/NW	AB/PC/JH/ST/NW	
<b>Area patrolled &amp; comments:</b>		Patrol covered the River Mersey and north Wirral coastline. Charter vessels seen in transit to the wrecks. Vessels were observed tied up in Liverpool Marina, Bromborough moorings, and 2 vessels seen on the moorings at Meols	Patrol along the River Mersey. Vessels sighted in Liverpool Marina, charter and recreational angling vessels seen at Bromborough. Anglers observed along Otterspool Promenade, on Jobs Quay, the front to Eastham Country Park, and Tower parade (Brunswick Do	RIB patrol along the River Mersey, north Wirral coastline, Dee Estuary to Rhyl. Boardings were undertaken, but nothing of note to report.	RIB patrol from River Mersey to Fleetwood. Recreational angling vessels boarded one with 2 anglers, 5 rods and one codling inspected; another had one angler, two rods 3 Codling and one Whiting observed. The rest were very similar.	River Mersey to Dee Estuary. The Mersey Lass was observed going into Liverpool Lock at Liverpool Marina. Two vessels observed off north Wirral foreshore in transit towards Liverpool Marina for the Cod fishery. Beam trawlers for shrimping and netting als	
<b>Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:</b>							
Number of hours patrolled	18:30	02:30	02:30	04:30	04:30	04:30	
Number of miles patrolled	344	40	25	80	109	90	
<b>No of patrols days:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
Boardings undertaken at sea	16			3	9	4	
Vessels checked	3			3			
<b>Zones where boardings/inspections undertaken:</b>							
Mersey	5	1	1	3			
Dee	4					4	
Assistance to Other Areas	1				1		
<b>Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel inspected/boarded:</b>							
Trawler (single rigged)	2			2			
Shrimp beam trawler	2		1	1			
Angling charter vessel	8		8				
Recreational Angling vessel	8		8				
<b>Closings of vessels at sea (not recorded as sighting, boarding or inspection):</b>							
Liverpool Bay	2	2					
Rhyl	1			1			
<b>TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL (not recorded as sighting, boarding or inspection):</b>							
Angling charter vessel	2	2					
Recreational Angling vessel	1			1			
<b>Sightings of vessels at sea (not recorded as closing, boarding or inspection):</b>							
Meols	2	2					
Bromborough	4	4					
<b>TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL SIGHTED (not recorded as closing, boarding or inspection):</b>							
Unlicensed Netting Vessels	2	2					
Recreational Angling vessel	4	4					

# NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

## ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2015

### 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 23.25

3.2 Number of patrols at sea 8

3.3 Number of nautical miles of patrol 370

3.4 Number of closings 4

3.5 Number of inspections 24

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.	<u>ENFORCEMENT ON LAND</u>	
4.1	Number of inspections	860
4.2	Number of ATV patrols	52
4.3	Number of hours ATV patrols	89.97
4.4	ATV km covered	1.205.17
4.5	Number of infringements detected	0
4.6	Number of:-	
4.6.1	Prosecutions	1
4.6.2	Home Office Cautions	0
4.6.3	Prosecutions pending	
4.6.4	Fixed Admin Penalty	0
4.6.5	Cautions issued	0
4.6.6	Official Warning Letter	0
4.6.7	Advisory Warning Letter	29
4.6.8	Verbal warnings	9

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.