

**NWIFCA Annual Meeting:  
18 June 2020: 11:00 a.m.**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO.  
11**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT –  
1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 – 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020**

**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 – Burgh Marsh Point – IFCO Thinnesen	<p><b><u>1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 to 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020</u></b></p> <p><b><u>TRAWLING</u></b> Throughout the early part of the quarter, local Whitehaven trawlers reported very few days at sea when officers were at ports, with reports of mixed landings of dog fish, or thornback rays. A limited amount of vessels from Maryport were at sea, when officers were in port, some targeted Nephrops. Most of the Maryport vessels are fishing scallops in the IOM scallop fishery. One vessel fishing queen scallops, fishing with nets, 10-12 miles west of Whitehaven.</p> <p><b><u>SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH</u></b> Shrimp trawlers had some trawling days, no reports on landings as vessels were at sea at times of port visits.</p> <p><b><u>POTTING</u></b> Lobster and brown crab catches have been slight as this is the norm for this time of year, inspections seen from vessels had anything from 5 lobsters to 25 landed for a couple of days soak. Brown crab were poor, this is normal for this time of year between Whitehaven to Maryport.</p> <p>Whelk potters are fishing with reports of steady landings of 30 – 100 bags for 2-3 days, with some landings reported to have been better than this.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b> At the early part of the quarter anglers gave mixed reports depending on whereabouts anglers had fished. Some to the south of St Bees had seen some codlings at night, numbers suggest plenty of feed at night close inshore along cliffs and beaches.</p> <p>Some anglers inspected on piers have seen some small whiting, dabs and plaice, plenty of dogs are still being caught, some anglers suggesting every cast you get a dog.</p> <p>This fishery closed due to COVID-19 around the middle of March so only 50 anglers seen in all settings.</p> <p><b><u>BEACH NETTERS</u></b> Very small number of netters have been seen and inspected over the period before this fishery closed due to COVID-19 around the middle of March so only 2 nets were seen on Caulderton beach with one Cod.</p> <p><b><u>OTHER DUTIES</u></b> After the introduction of COVID-19 conditions I have been enrolled on the IFCA officer</p>

	<p>accreditation scheme which is distance learning based and also monitoring the vessel monitoring system.</p> <p><b><u>25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020</u></b></p> <p><b><u>TRAWLING</u></b> Local trawlers have had very little days at sea due to Covid 19, when they did go to sea nearly all targeted Nephrops. Dogfish and plaice have also been landed for pot bait.</p> <p>Gathering information on fishing activity has been extremely difficult due to the working practices we are under. Scallop vessels have also been tied up throughout most of the reporting period as all the onshore cold storage facilities are full to capacity.</p> <p><b><u>SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH</u></b> Patrols to Silloth continued throughout the reporting period and have not seen any vessel activity in the upper Solway.</p> <p><b><u>POTTING</u></b> Lobster and brown crab catches have been slight as this is the normal for this time of year. I am pleased to report that a small amount of commercial vessels did manage to find markets for their lobster and crab throughout this difficult period. Again due to the restrictions I have found it almost impossible to get information on quantities of fish being landed from the smaller day boats. Whelk vessels continue to make regular landings and have been almost unaffected during lockdown as the markets for Whelks managed to open back up fairly quickly.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b> Recreational angling as everyone is aware has not been allowed for most of the reporting period, which I can confirm that from the 25<sup>th</sup> March, when I took on the role of shore officer in Northern part of the District.</p> <p>Compliance with the COVID 19 restrictions throughout the Cumbrian area has been very good and no sightings of anglers either on the beach or the piers have been observed.</p> <p><b><u>BAIT DIGGING</u></b> No bait digging has been observed throughout the District</p> <p><b><u>OTHER DUTIES</u></b> Delivered PPE to officers throughout the district when required</p>
<p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – IFCO Dixon</p>	<p><b><u>COCKLES</u></b> Activity <b>dropped</b> during the quarter due to reduction in orders, small groups of gatherers fishing small live market orders and occasional bigger orders for boiling, most of the cockling was at Flookburgh, centring on the same area that was worked all season. Only 2 cockle gatherers were observed occasionally at Newbiggin.</p> <p><b><u>MUSSELS</u></b> Apart from one set of spring tides in March where a large order for size mussel was fished by up to 30 gatherers, Foulney mussel bed was fished on spring tides by the same small groups of gatherers that head worked the area regularly for the past months.</p> <p><b><u>SHRIMPS</u></b> One fisherman observed regularly in the Leven channel, catches were moderate at best but enough to continue fishing, reports suggest the size of the shrimps was better than last season.</p> <p><b><u>POTTING</u></b> There has been occasional activity for whelks in the Barrow area by one local vessel, however covid 19 restrictions abroad stopped this activity. Very little lobster potting activity early in the reporting period, then stopped completely in mid-March due to covid 19 and restaurant closures.</p>

	<p><b><u>NETTING</u></b></p> <p>From April activity increased when commercial fishermen were able to land Bass, although activity was still at a fairly low level, 1 vessel regularly netting in the outer Duddon area, and a couple more observed in Morecambe Bay. No beach nets were observed in the reporting period.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b></p> <p>Usual levels of activity for the time of year on Walney, Coast road and Greenodd, no activity observed following lock down restrictions.</p> <p><b><u>BAIT COLLECTION</u></b></p> <p>One commercial crab tile fisherman has observed regularly near Foulney during April gathering peeler crabs, no recreational crab tilers were observed due to lock down restrictions.</p>
<p>Arnside – Lytham IFCOs Waltho and Burdekin</p>	<p><b><u>COCKLES</u></b></p> <p>There has been minimal effort of cockle gathering at Pilling sands as gatherers appear to have focused on other beds that have been open in the district. The seasonal cockle bed closure was at the end of April.</p> <p><b><u>ANGLING</u></b></p> <p>Heysham Bass Nursery Area remains to be a problem area with several of the same individuals repeatedly breaching Byelaw 5 legislation forbidding fishing within the Heysham Bass Nursery Area. Joint patrols have occurred with Lancashire Constabulary. Several pieces of fishing gear have been seized.</p> <p>Several reports suggested that the bass being caught from the Power Station were being sold locally in restaurants and takeaways. Following joint inspections with the Marine Management Organisation and Environmental Health helped highlight likely restaurant outlets for the bass and provided an opportunity to remind local restaurants not to buy undocumented fish.</p> <p>Angling sightings were low during February following a couple of storms that likely led to high river run-off.</p> <p>Angling levels dropped mid-March and through April in accordance with Covid-19 government guidelines.</p> <p><b><u>SAMPLING</u></b></p> <p>The sampling schedule for Pilling cockles and Ribble Training Wall Mussels has continued as usual, maintaining monthly collections for classification monitoring.</p> <p>Warton Sands cockle bed classification sampling schedule was postponed at the start of the government lockdown as it was not deemed essential. Classification samples will continue to be collected in May-June.</p> <p><b><u>COVID-19</u></b></p> <p>Where officers have had to work from home, they have fulfilled their duties including processing returns data, producing intelligence reports and working towards completing an officer accreditation scheme.</p>
<p>Dee- Southport – IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor and Capper</p>	<p><b><u>GENERAL</u></b></p> <p>Despite the country being in lock down during the Covid-19 outbreak. This quarter has been particularly busy for the southern area IFCO's. Officers have continued to concentrate their efforts enforcing the 6 day cockle fishery (Op Lowena) situated along the north Wirral coastline and the Mussel fishery (Op Notorious) on the Dee Estuary.</p> <p>Officers have also provided enforcement support at Fleetwood as part of Op Valiant. Relaxation of the lock down saw a big surge in netting, recreational angling, both shore and boat angling and bi valve gathering. As this report goes to press an emergency byelaw preventing the removal of bi valve shellfish along the coastline is about to be approved.</p>

## **SPECIFIC**

### **COCKLES**

Leasowe cockle bed remained open throughout the lockdown with officers providing enforcement support throughout. I am pleased to say officers had no issues with compliancy. Op Lowena came to a natural close at the end of April with the 400 ton TAC still not met. During the late part of May IFCO officers observed a steady increase in the numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese gatherers attending the north Wirral coastline; over a two day period alone officers observed up to 450 gatherers collecting on Leasowe Cockle bed and the areas of beach immediately around. IFCO's continue to observe, inspect and remove gatherers from the beach. An update to this will be provided in the next quarterly report.

### **MUSSELS**

Low level musseling has taken place on the mussel beds located in the Dee Estuary. One inspection was carried mid-May where officers inspected two ton of mussel – no enforcement issues were observed. NWIFCA Science Officers have inspected both Caldys Blacks and West Kirby beds and will report back to the HoE in due course.

### **OTTER CLAM**

The gathering of Otter Clam has been popular since the relaxation of the lock down. Officers have observed large amounts being gathered and brought off to the car parks. Individual inspections have noted anywhere between 5-25kg. While there is no maximum amount an individual can gather the intent is always to gather as much as they can which is seeing a large of amount of individuals targeting a particular shellfish. Otter Clams are also located on Leasowe Cockle bed so the intent to gather cockles at the same time is high.

### **RAZOR CLAM**

During March officers assisted the science department and Liverpool University in a two day Razor clam survey along the north Wirral coastline. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 the survey was never completed. It is hope that the survey will continue next March.

### **CHARTER BOATS**

As part of the lock Liverpool Marina closed its lock gates and so prevented the nine charter boats located in the marina the ability to work. I am pleased to say Liverpool Marina's lock gates opened in mid-May to allow all craft access to the River Mersey. Charter craft are presently reviewing their respective risk assessments to allow charter boat angling to resume while keeping to the 2m social distance guidelines.

### **SHORE ANGLING**

Recreational angling continues to take place throughout the area. The North Wirral Coastline, Otterspool Promenade, New Brighton (Perch Rock and Kings Parade) and Wallasey front (Seacombe Promenade) are very popular areas. Large amounts of Plaice have been observed during our inspections and report of undersize Bass being mentioned. To date, IFCO's have not observed this during their inspections.

### **BAIT DIGGERS**

Bait diggers, roughly two to four in number, can be seen over the tides along the North Wirral coastline, with New Brighton, Mockbeggar Wharf and the area of beach off Leasowe Common being identified as the most popular areas.

### **NETS**

Netting has sprung back into life with the relaxation of the lock down a total of eleven nets have been observed and inspected. Six set nets along the north Wirral coastline and five set nets along the Sefton coast. All nets are correctly marked up and conform to NWIFCA bylaws. Officers have also observed a large surge with Oriental netting along the north Wirral coastline. On a recent ATV patrol officers observed three active set nets, on inspection officers observed a large amount of undersize plaice trying to be gathered forty five undersize plaice were returned back to the sea. Also observed mackerel and dog fish.

### **RECREATIONAL FISHING BOATS**

With the relaxation of lock down officers have observed a steady rise in recreational angling boats working in the river Mersey, Liverpool Bay and along the north Wirral coastline, in particular the Rock channel. Wirral Small Boats club has particularly been active.

### **ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, North Wirral Coastline and Dee Estuary remain on going. Due to lock down Bay Protector the areas 8m RIB has been unable to out to sea. All being well routine sea going patrols will look to take place in the coming weeks. Premises inspections such as: Liverpool Fish and Meat Market and the Shrimp tractor compound in Southport will also look to resume once open. Finally, assistance to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, Mersey Port Health Authority and Wirral Council remains ongoing.

## **General Update**

- Head of Enforcement attended NIMEG and MPA symposium in early March
- Shellfish Liaison Group Meeting
- Other subsequent meetings were cancelled

### **COVID 19**

In late March as lockdown conditions were imposed as a result of the global pandemic work and life changed dramatically for the fishing industry and NWIFCA Officers. IFCO's all became home based and changes were made to allow IFCOs to function from home. A number of officers had to shield and self-isolate at home either because of health or family circumstances.

With immediate effect HoE began working on a national basis with counterparts around the country to establish new working practices, initially all inspections were suspended. Working practices around joint working, information sharing, health and safety, risk assessment were all produced. This has been crucial in allowing NWIFCA to continue to provide a regular service for our stakeholders. Officers continued to patrol the coastlines developing intelligence on how industry was responding to Covid-19, and helped inform government on how to assist the industry during these difficult times and formulate an appropriate financial response to support those in need..

Different sectors of industry responded very differently to the conditions imposed. The whelk fleet continued as it had with exports still be shipped or product frozen. The cockle industry buyers switched from live market to boiling and canning produce. The inshore fleet was badly hit by the change in ownership of Fleetwood market which simultaneously led to the prawn fleet not going to sea for 2 months.

Slowly with appropriate risk assessment and guidance normal routine activities are beginning to take place such as RIB patrols and inspections with measure in place such as adequate personal protective equipment and social distancing.

National coordination of assets and joint working is being arranged through weekly patrol updates between IFCA's and MMO as well as regional Covid response group meetings and weekly situation updates provided to DEFRA on issues arising from Covid 19 and how industry is adapting with changing markets as well as resource pressures facing the authority due to staff isolating or ill.

In response to intelligence received several planned operations have taken place.

### Emergency Byelaw

In response to increased effort gathering bivalve molluscan shellfish on the beaches at Leasowe an emergency byelaw was introduced. A separate report is included within the meeting agenda.

### Heysham Bass Nursery Area

Within UK lockdown several persistent offenders have continued to offend at HBNA. This has been dealt with jointly alongside Lancashire Constabulary and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary who have been assisting in removing individuals breaching Byelaw 5 from the area and supplying statements for investigation. These matters are continuing to be investigated thoroughly despite the difficulties surrounding conducting PACE compliant investigations under Covid 19 regulations. IFCO's will continue to be tasked to the area in response to intelligence led tactical decisions. Sanctions for offenders are being prepared.

### Magistrates Court

All summary offences have been deferred until later in the year due to courts being freed for dealing with Covid condition breaches. Cases now have dates for case management and hearings and will hopefully will progress now that conditions are lessening.

## **Fishery Report**

Reporting data from IFCO sightings reports and Byelaw 3 permit returns are collated below.

Activity	Cockles				Mussels
	Flookburgh/Leven	Newbiggin	Pilling	Leasowe	North Morecambe Bay Incl Foulney Mussel Beds
<b>Overall Attendance (from returns)</b>	Feb: 160 Mar: 223 Apr: 259	Feb: 0 Mar: 9 Apr: 0	Feb: 0 Mar: 1 Apr: 0	Feb: 80 Mar: 66 Apr: 59	Feb: 79 Mar: 130 Apr: 56
<b>Av per day</b>	Feb: 6 Mar: 7 Apr: 9	Feb: 0 Mar: <1 Apr: 0	Feb: 0 Mar: <1 Apr: 0	Feb: 3 Mar: 3 Apr: 2	Feb: 3 Mar: 4 Apr: 2
<b>No. inspected fishing</b>	Feb: 47 Mar: 12 Apr: 47	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 1	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 0	Feb: 87 Mar: 101 Apr: 32	Feb: 7 Mar: 58 Apr: 22
<b>No. MLS inspections</b>	Feb: 6 Mar: 11 Apr: 17	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 0	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 0	Feb: 1 Mar: 0 Apr: 36	Feb: 46 Mar: 104 Apr: 9
<b>Days covered by IFCO's</b>	Feb: 4 Mar: 2 Apr: 3	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 1	Feb: 0 Mar: 0 Apr: 0	Feb: 11 Mar: 13 Apr: 8	Feb: 5 Mar: 4 Apr: 4
<b>Reported landings</b>	Feb: 21,949 kg Mar: 40,127 kg Apr: 47,665 kg	Feb: 0 Mar: 1,837 kg Apr: 0	Feb: 0 Mar: 70 kg Apr:	Feb: 12,290 kg Mar: 9,926 kg Apr: 8,591 kg	Feb: 45,564 kg Mar: 109,877 kg Apr: 33,728 kg
<b>Man hours</b>	Feb: 662 Mar: 940 Apr: 1,121	Feb: 0 Mar: 36 Apr: 0	Feb: 0 Mar: 4 Apr: 0	Feb: 339 Mar: 270 Apr: 263	Feb: 250 Mar: 473 Apr: 137

## **Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity**

A total of zero sanctions were applied during the quarter. A number of investigations are on-going. The table below summarises these;

<b>Sanctions</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Verbal</b>	None
<b>Advisory Letters</b>	None
<b>Official warning letters</b>	None
<b>Home office Cautions</b>	None
<b>FAPs</b>	None
<b>Permit suspension</b>	None
<b>Prosecutions</b>	None
<b>Prosecutions Pending</b>	One- Referred for case management One- Adjourned for sentencing One- Awaiting trial.



## 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*	42	52	28		132
ATV patrols	0	7	6		6
ATV patrol hrs	0	7.99	4,5		14.25
ATV kms covered	0	62	35		164
Inspections under taken	59	542	11		344

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

## Annex A

Vessel	No of patrols	Patrol time (hrs)	Distance patrolled (nm)	Boarding's	Closings	Sightings	Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
North Western Protector	3	30.25	333	0	0	23	0
Bay Protector	2	10.25	81	1	7	9	5
<b>Totals for the quarter</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>40.50</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>

## Annex B

Patrol Vessel	Patrol Date	Patrol Time (hrs)	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
North Western Protector	04/03/20	12.17	153	Whitehaven to Silloth	Side scan survey/Hamon grab sampling	- Solway Firth EMS	0	0	15	0
North Western Protector	05/03/20	13.75	150	Workington to Silloth	Mussel survey, potting & netting activity bass compliance	- Solway Firth EMS	0	0	4	0
North Western Protector	06/03/20	4.33	30	Workington to St Bees	Potty & netting activity, bass compliance	- Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30.25</b>	<b>333</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>

Patrol Vessel	Patrol Date	Patrol Time (hrs)	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
Bay Protector	06/02/20	7.25	35	Liverpool Bay & River Mersey	Potting & angling activity	- Liverpool Bay SPA - Mersey Estuary SPA	1	3	4	4
Bay Protector	20/05/20	3	46	Liverpool Bay & River Mersey	Potting & angling activity	- Liverpool Bay SPA - Mersey Estuary SPA	0	4	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10.25</b>	<b>81</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>