

NWIFCA Annual Meeting

12th June 2015: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA

ITEM

12

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES FOR THE PERIOD 1ST FEBRUARY TO THE 30TH APRIL 2015

Introduction

Full details of fishing activities within the district are as usual provided in officer's area reports. In brief:

- A stuttering start to the netting and potting season due to the weather
- Nephrops fishery saw varied returns
- The normal mussel fisheries continued through the District (Duddon and Ribble training walls)
- Razor clam gathering at Leasowe

Legislative Changes

A major feature of the quarter has been two legislative changes that have affected the IFCA's enforcement activities:

- A three Bass per person per day limit for non-commercial fishers brought in by the European Commission.
- Revocation of SI1081 of 2000 removing EU technical regulations route legislation and revoking the Lobster Minimum Landing Size (MLS).

Bass

There have been long term calls for action to be taken to mitigate the pressure on Bass stocks. The case of Bass is further complicated because 25% of fishing effort in respect of the stock is recreational. Therefore the EU fishing opportunities for 2015 legislation (that sets Total Allowed Catches (TACs) and quotas has been amended as follows:

- "(m) 'recreational fisheries' means non-commercial fishing activities exploiting marine living aquatic resources such as for recreation, tourism or sport."
- In recreational fisheries in ICES divisions IVb, IVc, VIIa, VIId, VIle, VIIf, VIIg, VIIh, VIIj and VIIk not more than three specimens of Sea bass may be retained per person per day."

This introduced a three Bass per person per day limit to all recreational fisheries inclusive. For clarity this includes.

- Non-licensed fishing vessels (by any method)
- Recreational anglers from the shore
- Recreational netting from the shore

Distinguishing between commercial and recreational activity in the inter-tidal areas will be problematic and methods of doing this through the tax system are currently being explored.

All IFCOs have been cross warranted by the MMO to enable the IFCA to enforce this legislation as TAC/quota regulation is out-with the legislation that IFCOs are empowered to enforce.

An agreed educational approach was run until the 31st May and IFCOs have done a huge amount communications work across the district to aid this.

Some IFCA signs posted to publicise the new regulations have been defaced or removed in the course of this educational period indicating some resistance to the changes.

No infringements of this new legislation have yet been detected but it is expected that when Bass start to show and the weather improves that this situation will change.

EU Tech Con and Lobster MLS

During a legislative clean up before the election purdah period the Sea Fishing (Enforcement and Miscellaneous Provisions Order (SI 191 of 2015) revoked the legislation given in the table below, also in the table is an outline of the impact and responses to them:

Legislation	Impact	Issues	Response
SI 191 of 2015 - Enforcement of Community Measures Order - as amended	This legislation was the mechanism through which IFCOs enforced EU technical regulations	IFCOs could not enforce provisions such as net mesh sizes etc.	The patrol vessel crew have now been cross warranted by the MMO
SI 1503 of 2000 – The Undersized Lobster Order	Legislation set a minimum size of 87mm for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing • Carriage • Sale of Lobsters 	This removed the ability to enforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any MLS for Lobster in the northern district • A minimum size for sale/carriage in the whole district • Requires the evidencing of “removal” when enforcing Lobster MLS in the southern district 	An emergency byelaw was created to cover these issues and will be in place until the 16 th April 2016.

It is important to note that none of the IFCA's byelaws or a raft of other national legislation such as the MLS for Crabs or Bass were affected by the above.

Enforcement

Compliance during the quarter has been good with only the following sanctions being required during the quarter:

- 1 verbal warning for a Byelaw 9 (Cumbria) offence

Court Activity

There was no court activity during the quarter following the successful prosecutions that were reported at the last quarterly on the 13th March.

There is a current appeal on-going with respect to the prosecution of Mr Brian John Faulkner of 4 Celtic Street Shotton. He was convicted on two counts of obstruction of IFCOs in breach of section 292 (4) of MACAA at the Foulnaze cockle fishery last year. The appeal is against sentence (not conviction) and is due to be heard on the 11th June 2015 so members will be updated verbally at the meeting.

A. Deary
Head of Enforcement
27th May 2015

Master of the "Solway Protector" - H Thinnesen

PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

Poor weather, along with an extended maintenance period on the slipway at Maryport, has resulted in many patrol days at sea, being lost. Patrols, boardings and inspections from both "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo" totalled 27. On the whole compliance with local byelaws and other EU legislation at sea have been good throughout the quarter, with no infringements to report.

SURVEYS

As previously reported, "Solway Protector" was having a new davit manufactured and fitted, whilst on the slipway at Maryport. I am pleased to report that the new system has now been installed and tested. This will now enable IFCA officers to carry out a wide range of survey tasks at sea from the main patrol vessel.

TRAWLING, POTTING, NETTING & ANGLING

As can be expected, activity in all sectors has increased.

Some of the local vessels have returned from the Isle of Man Scallop fishery and are back working on the traditional prawn (nephrop) grounds in the Eastern Irish Sea.

We also seen the arrival of both local and visiting vessels returning from the east coast where they have been fishing throughout the winter months.

Reports on prawn (nephrop) landings locally has been mixed, with the inshore vessels reporting up to 100 stone being landed for 3 – 4 days' work, with the larger multi-rigged vessels making landings of up to 500 stone for the same period of time.

As can be expected at this time of year, potting activity has increased with vessels continuing to set their gear over the grounds, with only light landings being reported.

Netting has been quite active, but reports on landings have at best been moderate.

Some of the local potting vessels have targeted this sector more than normal this year in order to reduce running costs, as potting bait to buy in has become very expensive.

Both shore and boat anglers have reported back on some good catches close to shore when weather permitted, with decent landings of both Cod and Plaice throughout the whole of the Cumbria area.

SERVICING OF "SOLWAY PROTECTOR"

The "Solway Protector" was taken out the water on the 16th February for her annual slipping, along with the MCA survey and inspection for Small Commercial Vessels. Work carried out at the Maryport boat yard included:

- Manufacturing and fitting a 400 kg safe working load davit, which will be used at sea for deploying Day Grabs and other survey equipment, along with the launch and recovery of the boarding RIB from the "Solway Protector"
- Two new ladders were also manufactured
- The patrol vessel's hull was pressure washed down and the hull coated with anti-foul paint

- New anodes were also fitted prior to the vessel going back into the water
- Other items serviced this quarter are as follows:
 - Remove and repair control valve on Hiyab deck crane
 - Repair control switch on Webasto heating system
 - Replace vessel's main battery charging unit
 - Fit a new engine room bilge alarm system
 - Service 1.5 tonne Spencer Carter deck winch and replace guides on rollers
 - Replace oil pressure switch on main generator set
 - Replace the power inverted for Olex chart plotter and Simrad echo sounder systems
 - Replace port side flexi drive coupling between prop shaft and gear box
 - Replace raw water pipe on starboard main engine
 - Carry out a number of electrical repairs (too many to list)
 - All planned repairs, services and oil changes are all up to date

“PROTECTOR BRAVO”

Repairs were carried out to the A-frame mast, as cracks had appeared on a number of locations around the welds. All electrical wiring was stripped out from inside the stainless steel A-frame prior to the vessel being transported by road trailer to McGrady's Engineering for repairs.

Whilst out on a routine patrol, the mechanical hauler on board “Protector Bravo” was engaged in lifting static gear and the sponson was snagged and ultimately punctured by a sea anchor, which had been fixed to the seabed. The vessel was transported to North West RIBs in Chorley to effect repair and strengthening of the sponson around the area of operation of the hauler. This has now been repaired and is ready for collection.

WEATHER

February to mid-March showed a weather pattern of strong winds from the west and south easterly directions, with a calm spell from mid-March to the 26th March. However stormy weather continued from the end of March to the second week in April. The third week of April delivered good calm weather which allowed both “Solway Protector” and “Protector Gamma” to carry out enforcement duties both on the inshore potting and netting areas and the prawn (nephrop) grounds. The last week of April saw the weather deteriorating with gales, thus leaving the “Solway Protector” weather bound.

H THINNESEN
5th May 2015

"Solway Protector"**DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS**

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time
03/02/2015	Harrington/Workington/Maryport	8	5.50
04/02/2015	South St Bees Head/Parton/Maryport	9	5.83
05/02/2015	West of Ravenglass/Workington	9	5.00
16/02/2015	Passage to Maryport	0	2.00
11/03/2015	Passage back to Whitehaven from Maryport	0	1.42
19/03/2015	Northern prawn grounds	3	3.00
25/03/2015	Northern prawn grounds/Workington	11	4.50
22/04/2015	Prawn pitch	25	11.02

" Solway Protector "
PATROL STATISTICS

	1/2/2015 - 30/4/2015		1/11/2014 - 31/1/2015	
Number of patrols and passages	8	patrols	7	patrols
Seatime	38.27		33.25	
Average length of patrol	4.78		4.75	
Total distance covered	273	miles	265	miles
Average distance per patrol	34	miles	38	miles
Fuel used	1012	gallons	956	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	127	gallons	137	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	65	vessels	46	vessels
Local	51	vessels	42	vessels
Visiting	14	vessels	4	vessels
<u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u>	< 45'	> 45'	< 45'	> 45'
Trawlers	16	14	4	0
Beam Trawlers	0	0	0	0
Twin Rig Trawlers	0	0	0	1
Pair Trawlers	0	0	0	0
Anchor Seiners	0	0	0	0
Fly Druggers	0	0	0	0
Gill Netters	2	0	7	0
Shrimpers	0	0	3	0
Twin Beam Shrimpers	0	0	0	0
Whelk Potters	0	0	0	0
Potting Boats	11	0	11	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	2	1	3
Mussel Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Cockle Dredgers	0	0	0	0
Netters	0	0	0	0
Anglers	20	0	16	0
<u>Total:</u>	49	16	42	4

GENERAL

This reporting period covers the following shore based activities - supporting enforcement duties on board the "Solway Protector" (byelaw 26 infringements). Most of the prawn and fish boats are seen to be fishing regularly now, with the improving weather conditions. Some of the boats that were fishing the Manx Scallop fishery are now targeting Nephrops. Shrimp fishing from boats in the district has been patchy this quarter with reports of up to 250-350 kilos being caught for a tide, some of which is from within Scottish waters. Potters are active again, with inspections seeing more than 10 kilos of Lobsters and 25 kilo of Brown Crab per day, with vessels fishing to the south of the patch catching mostly Brown Crab, some of which are targeting Lobsters as well. By mid-April all but a few potters have started fishing pots for both Lobster and Brown Crab. The Whelk potting boat the "Fleur-de-France" J86 has been making some good landings of whelks into Whitehaven of around 10 tonnes per landing. Fishing from piers has seen a mark of Codlings and Plaice from the usual places and piers. Good catches of Codlings are being caught during the dark hours, this is the norm for this time of year, and anything from 2 – 4 keepers for a tide when fishermen have been inspected. Netters were still enjoying the netting season on beaches with catches ranging from 2 – 3 fish, to 2 – 3 boxes caught for a tide, mostly Bass, Codlings, Turbot and Mullet. Netters have been fishing at all the stations just about, but most of the activity was around Nethertown and Braystones where the best of the fishing was seen. One infringement by a hobby permit holder, has led to a caution being given for Byelaw 26 and National legislation infringements, for undersized Brown Edible Crab. All in all a productive quarter for the vessels and fishermen and beach netters except for the prawners and fish boats.

TRAWLING

Over the quarter the prawn boats have been active with the weather improving. 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. Inspections carried out at ports has seen landings for a day's fishing ranging from 4st – 25st of Nephrops (*Langoustines*) or Prawns. Some visiting multi-rigged vessels reported good fishing further off outside of the six mile limit. Landing inspections of these vessels showed up to 150st for 3-4 days fishing for single rigged vessels, and 400-500st for a week's catch for the multi-rigged vessels. Some of these vessels are multi-rigged vessels, and intelligence received is that some of the vessels mostly from Northern Ireland are towing quad nets now. One vessel has been reported to officers by fishermen for fishing inside of the six mile limit at times when they are banned under old Cumbria Sea Fisheries byelaw (13). To date no multi-rigged vessels have been seen by officers inside of the six mile limit.

SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH

Shrimp vessels this quarter have been catching up to 150-300 kilos per tide when weather has permitted. Some fishing was carried out in Scottish waters across the Solway Firth but most off the coast at Silloth.

SCALLOPS

Scallop fishing in the Manx waters has continued with landings from the smaller local boats of up to 12 – 15 bags for a day's fishing, and some of the larger and visiting vessels have landed up to 50 – 100 bags for a couple of days fishing. Prices are believed to be in the region of £70 - £80 per bag.

POTTING

Over the quarter vessels have been seen fishing pots as early as March with landings ranging from 10 kilos to 15 kilos of lobster and 25 kilos of Brown Crab. With the season only starting there

isn't much happening at the moment. The whelker boat fishing out of Whitehaven has been landing his usual 10 tonnes when he landed prices of around £635 per tonne.

OFFSHORE NETTING

Some of the vessels have been netting with some catches of Bass and Codlings, inspections have seen up to 3 individual Codlings and Bass being landed by a single vessel.

BEACH NETTING

Beach netting has been ongoing throughout the quarter with Bass and Codlings being caught. Inspections have seen 2-3 boxes of good sized Bass and Codlings in the back of beach vehicles, along with Turbot and Mullet. Netters have been reported seen at most stations around the patch but most of the fishing that officers have witnessed has been at Nethertown and Braystones, with up to 12 nets being inspected in any one day at these stations.

ANGLING

This quarter has seen a good number of Codling and Plaice being caught by anglers at the usual stations; the best of the catches were caught at night with up to 3-5 Codlings being kept all around the 2.5 – 3.5 LB mark. Some of the Plaice caught were above 2lb in weight. It seems that all of the Codling have been feeding on shore crabs and sand eels, which is the norm for this time of year. In daylight hours anglers have been seen on piers where some have reported good sized Plaice and the odd Codlings. Some anglers braving the St Bees Head cliffs to fish below them have seen better sized Cod; one fish weighing 15lb in weight was reported to officers.

BAIT DIGGING

Very little bait gathering has been seen this quarter, only 4 were seen to the south of Maryport.

OTHER DUTIES

Other duties carried out this quarter have been:

- Supporting enforcement operations at sea on board the "Solway Protector" as acting skipper, while the Master and Deputy Master were engaged in the boarding of vessels
- We have been involved in joint enforcement duties with the local constabulary, where one of their officers joined us 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 accompany us on sea and quad patrols. The idea behind this joint working practice is to develop a closer working relationship with the police and for a better understanding by the police of the fishing activities in our area of jurisdiction.

ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Infringements for the period which I was involved with, has resulted in one caution for offences against Cumbria SFC Byelaw 26 and National legislation for undersized Brown Edible Crabs.

Officer Statistics for the period 1st February – 24th April 2015

Shore Patrols	45
Fishing Locations visited	427
Quad Patrols	4
Locations by quad	11
Anglers seen	253
Bait Diggers seen	4
Shellfish gatherers (Winkle Pickers)	0
Inspections all	44

Beach nets inspected	26
Days assisting other areas of district	2
Sightings/closings/inspections/boardings	6899

NORTH MORECAMBE BAY

HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE

IFCO, I. Dixon

GENERAL

The majority of this reporting period has again been spent monitoring the various mussel fisheries which have been operating on the North Morecambe Bay area.

TRAWLING

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

POTTING

From late March a Licensed potting vessel from Barrow began setting its pots in the area west of Walney following them being on the dockside all winter, and also trialled the use of whelk pots, no catch returns have been observed or reported at the time of writing. A vessel from the north of my area continued to work strings of both lobster and whelk pots in the area west of Walney and out towards Lune deep.

SHRIMPING

Reports of shrimp fishermen prospecting were received in mid-April; no observations were made and no catch returns were heard.

COCKLES

During the last quarter I have received no reports of commercial cockling activity on the North Morecambe Bay area. Regular patrols both at night and during the daytime have not identified any illegal cockling activity either.

A new fishmongers stall in Barrow was selling cockles which they advertised as 'Morecambe Bay Cockles' and when I spoke to the business manager to determine the origin of the cockles he told me that they were from Holland and not Morecambe Bay as the sign said, but he needed to do this because he claimed to sell 'Local Seafood'. I advised him to take the sign down. The manager of the business also spoke to the IFCA Chief Executive about this and was given the same response that he could not sell cockles which he claimed were from an area which was closed and has been closed for several years.

I continue to take Food Hygiene samples from Flookburgh, Leven Island, Newbiggin and Aldingham cockle beds for South Lakeland District Council

MUSSELS

During this quarter the majority of my time has been spent monitoring mussel gathering activity. Since the Duddon Mussel bed was reclassified to a B in February the numbers of gatherers increased to a maximum of 22, although usually it was gathered by around 15 people. The quality and size of the mussels from the Hard Acre bed in the Duddon are still very good with the average size at 70mm and a very good meat yield. The Duddon mussel bed was surveyed in late April and continues to look commercially viable. A small area of very small seed mussel was reported in late April which will be monitored regularly, no seed mussel was observed at all on the Duddon last year.

Several gatherers worked the area between Foulney mussel bed and the Oyster farm using graders on a few occasions during the quarter.

Foulney area was surveyed during late April.

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

NETTING

No netting activity from vessels was observed or reported during the quarter.

Early in the reporting quarter 2 beach nets were inspected, both of which were set by licensed Potting Vessel owners to catch Flounders for bait, but very little was caught and the nets removed. Later in the quarter the same fishermen were observed netting for pot bait and catches of Flounder were enough for their needs. 1 other beach net was also checked at Newbiggin which was set for pot bait to be sold, catches consisted of mainly Flounder and several Plaice but they did not appear to be in good condition this early in the season.

One beach net was checked and the catch inspected in central Morecambe Bay while on an ATV patrol, the bulk of the catch was Flounder, with several Plaice, 1 cod and 1 Bass, the first one I had seen or heard of this season.

Reports were received of a beach net set off Earnse Bay in Walney, by a local fishmonger, catches of Turbot were reported. I checked the area following the reports but the net had been removed following conflicts and vandalism, which were reported in the local newspaper.

ANGLING

Angling effort decreased this quarter as is usually the case at this time of year, when there are less of the target species close to shore. Walney Channel continued to produce encouraging numbers of codling which was an increase on previous years. Towards the end of the reporting period Flounder and Plaice numbers increased and this prompted an increase in angler numbers, Walney Channel reported to be fishing well for Plaice.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

SENIOR IFCO, S. J. WAITE

TRAWLING

This fishery continues to be extremely low key. I have continued to see no improvement in activity taking 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.

SHRIMPS

During this last quarter effort in the inshore shrimp fishery picked up with both commercial inshore boats operating from their moorings at the Stone Jetty. Throughout this seasonal fishery effort has proved very difficult with fishermen complaining about the amount of small shrimps being landed. During this last quarter, effort in the part time inshore shrimp fishery, working on a hobby basis, came to a close. In addition, I have continued to observe no activity by fishermen working tractor and tra la la units on the south side of Morecambe Bay. There has been no observed activity from fishermen using push nets throughout my area.

COCKLES

As with the last quarter, I have received no reports of cockles being removed by either commercial gatherers or from members of the public removing cockles for private consumption. This is due to the almost non-existence of both mature and undersize cockles throughout my area. During this last quarter, I have seen no improvement in stocks of either mature or immature cockles as mentioned in previous reports and I see no improvement in this fishery in the foreseeable future. All beds in my area remain closed.

MUSSELS

During this last quarter I have observed and received no reports of mature mussels being gathered from any of the recognised skears in my area, although fishermen from the North side of Morecambe Bay have shown an interest in occasionally removing mature mussels from one skear on the south side of Morecambe Bay. During this last quarter I have continued to check the Battery area on almost every occasion. During this last quarter I have also continued to collect shellfish for Wyre District Council.

DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS

This quarter saw two netting boats move back to moorings at the Stone Jetty, Morecambe. 17 Whitebait nets set in the Lune Estuary have continued to be fished this last quarter. Whitebait has been improved since the last quarter with all landed being destined for Blackpool Zoo for feed.

Stake and set nets have again proved low-key with only two nets being re-set. During this last quarter I have observed little activity from anglers setting lines.

DINGHY AND SHORE ANGLING

During this last quarter effort from dinghy anglers fell away with very little activity taking place. Fishermen associated with angling for Bass have informed me that landings this year are down on the previous year. During this last quarter shore anglers continued to fish over high and low water tides at the top end of Morecambe Bay, the Stone Jetty at Morecambe, Heysham North Wall, Heysham and Knott End although effort has proved poor throughout this last quarter.

CENTRAL AREA

RIVER WYRE TO RIVER ALT

SENIOR IFCO, S. Brown

GENERAL

There has been little opportunity for commercial fishing activity throughout the winter period, most fishermen have laid up their boats; some have found temporary employment elsewhere. During the more settled periods shore angling has been popular. Towards the end of the reporting period there was a general improvement in both the shrimp and trawl fisheries.

TRAWLING

The remaining Fleetwood inshore trawlers have worked sporadically throughout the season. Catches have comprised mostly of plaice, thornback ray and flounder taken from "Below Shell Wharf" and out to the "Point of the Bank". Fishermen report poor fish prices and few if any trips have been viable.

Some small inshore trawlers have experimented with single beam trawls possibly as a move to pre-empt changes to the pressure stock licence regime. The method is unlikely to become popular as there is little sole quota available.

SHRIMPING

Fishing for shrimps has started at Lytham and Southport. Catches observed have varied considerably; marketing is likely to become a problem. One well known Lytham merchant has reported that he is still trying to clear stock bought in during last year's glut.

COCKLE/MUSSELS

Our own observations and the reports of fishermen suggest that virtually no cockle stocks remain about the Ribble estuary or off the Fylde Coast. Over winter siltation particularly in the Penfold Channel area has altered the geography of the area considerably; many of the traditional beds may well be too badly built up for a future settlement to be successful, new sheltered areas are starting to appear further down the channels.

The Ribble Walls mussel fishery has provided some welcome winter employment for local fishermen who report that new settlement is occurring on areas previously worked. This is excellent news demonstrating that with careful husbandry a fishery that was choked with elderly and stunted mussel can recover to a more healthy and viable condition.

NETTING

I have observed very little shore netting activity. Reports from fishermen on the Fylde and Sefton coasts suggest that when the weather has been favourable catches have been very poor and nets have been fouled by debris brought down the rivers.

The Lytham drift netters have made a few trial trips, catches have been very poor consisting of the occasional cod, a few plaice and flounder. Very few Bass have been taken rendering the fishery unviable at the time of writing.

ANGLING

The Fylde Coast angling fishery has been popular throughout the winter season. Catches of cod and flounder have been taken from the R Wyre and Blackpool sea walls. Sea defence works have prevented fishing at Anchorsholme and Rossall, both popular venues. Catches of plaice have been reported from the eastern end of the Marine Beach and Black Scar.

Preston Docks "Bullnose" has produced catches of flounder, shore anglers have also occasionally been sighted at low water marks along the Sefton Coast.

Charter and beach launched boat anglers have been restricted by the weather but during calm periods some good sport has been reported from the Fylde Coast.

SOUTHERN AREA

MERSEY, WIRRAL AND DEE

IFCO, A. Brownrigg

GENERAL

During this quarter both IFC Officer Capper and I have continued to undertake activities such as enforcement work, sample work and attendance at stakeholder meetings throughout our area.

SPECIFIC

TRAWLING

Four commercial shrimp beam trawlers have been observed moored off Thurstaston slipway however; due to poor weather both officers and RIB have been unable to board and inspect the vessels.

POTTING

Seven pot markers have been observed in Liverpool Bay. All markers were marked up and will be monitored by NWIFCA staff during the next quarter.

COCKLES

Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to do so throughout 2015. Beach closure notices to cockling remain in place and will do for the foreseeable future. The bed will continue to be monitored by both the enforcement and science staff of NWIFCA.

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 patchy and made up largely of dead shell. Sampling continues to take place at Mersey mussel North and South with Mersey Port Health Authority. In the meantime all shellfish within the Mersey estuary remain classified as prohibited and are unable to be gathered.

RAZOR CLAM

107 Oriental gatherers were observed harvesting Razor Clam on Leasowe/Moreton beach during the low tides in April. Although thought to be mainly for personal consumption, several observations suggest that some are being sold commercially. 65 inspections were carried out with up to 183kg Razor Clams and 5kg of Otter Clam being noted. Further inspections will be carried out during the next quarter.

NETS

Presently, there are four set nets in the area of East Hoyle Bank. All nets identified are owned by one local fisherman all of which are correctly marked in accordance with NWIFCA Byelaws.

SHORE ANGLING

After a quiet start to the quarter recreational angling has improved. 90 anglers have been observed along both sides of the river Mersey and along the north Wirral coastline of which 40 Byelaw 19 inspections were carried out. It was pleasing to say that no undersize catch was recorded. Otterspool Promenade, Jobs Quay (Eastham Country Park), Alexander wall within the Port of Liverpool and Perch Rock has seen the most regular activity. These areas have seen between one to 25 anglers fishing at any one time where Dab, Flounder, Cod and Plaice have been observed being landed.

BAIT DIGGERS & CRABBERS

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 locations. Numbers routinely remain between 0 – 3 bait diggers have been recorded daily with anywhere between 30 – 80 worms gathered. The area has three main crab tile points three situated in the river Mersey and one along the north Wirral coastline. Made up of plastic piping and old tyres it is not uncommon to see up to 100 'crab tiles' situated in one area. Crabbers are routinely observed over a low water gathering.

RECREATIONAL & COMMERCIAL BOAT ANGLING

Weather permitting, the area's commercial and recreational fishing vessels have been active along the river Mersey and local area. The Cod fishery has been eventful with reports of good catches being made. Presently the area has eight commercial angling vessels and several recreational angling vessels working from Liverpool Marina and moorings at Bromborough, New Brighton and Meols.

“BAY PROTECTOR”

High winds and generally poor weather throughout the last quarter along with issues with the vessels depth sounder have restricted any seaborne patrolling throughout the area. Over high water one three hour patrol was undertaken in April prior to the boat being trailered and taken back to Humber for warranty repairs.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, north Wirral coastline and both sides of the Dee Estuary remain on going. As part of our continued professional development both officers attended byelaw and statement writing training under the direction of the Head of Enforcement. Both enforcement officers attended the Dee Estuary Sea Fisheries Liaison Group meeting at the Theatre Clwyd, Mold. Along with IFC Moulton both officers delivered a presentation for small boats surveyors'. Finally, both officers and 'Bay Protector' featured in an eight page article in Powerboat & RIB magazine, highlighting the tasks and issues of patrolling the Southern Area district utilising the area's RIB.

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

1st FEBRUARY TO 30TH APRIL 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 14.75

3.2 Number of patrols at sea 2

3.3 Number of nautical miles of patrol 116

3.4 Number of closings 0

3.5 Number of inspections 7

3.6 Number of boardings 0

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	817
4.2	Number of ATV patrols	31
4.3	Number of hours ATV patrols	46.39
4.4	ATV km covered	525
4.5	Number of infringements detected	1
4.6	Number of:-	
4.6.1	Prosecutions	0
4.6.2	Home Office Cautions	0
4.6.3	Prosecutions pending	0
4.6.4	Fixed Admin Penalty	0
4.6.5	Cautions issued	1
4.6.6	Official Warning Letter	0
4.6.7	Advisory Warning Letter	0
4.6.8	Verbal warnings	0

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.