

Seafield Slip seed mussel fishery – TSB 7th September 2022

Purpose: To inform members of the recent survey at Seafield Slip, Lytham

Recommendation: To open Seafield Slip as a Byelaw 3 hand gathered seed mussel fishery

Information

Officers were asked by members of industry to inspect Seafield Slip in Lytham for a potential hand gathered seed fishery. Officers inspected the bed on the 16th of August and completed an assessment for the proposed area and submitted this to Natural England on the 31st of August.

The area of seed mussel at Seafield Slip is approximately 1.6ha in size. It consists of a thin strip approximately 20m wide along the channel edge of the River. The mussel consisted mainly of two size classes, newly settled seed, 5-8mm in length and larger seed, 30-40mm in length. At low tide there are a number of small islands (10m²) that contain clean 30-40mm, with mussel present on a layer of mussel mud.

The site falls within the Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Area of Protection and therefore required an assessment to see if the activity would pose a 'likely significant effect' on the designated features of the site. The fishery was not deemed likely to pose a significant effect to the designated features for the following reasons:

- 1) the small scale of operation (~3 fishers);
- 2) the proximity of the fishery to a slip way and coastal path which is regularly used and, therefore, the presence of fishers will not significantly increase disturbance to birds above already present levels;
- 3) the likelihood of the resource being lost over the winter as this is commonly the case due to storms or influx of fresh water from the river system; and
- 4) due to the small size and scale of the fishery, it will likely be limited to a few tides.

Because the activity was not considered to have a likely significant effect, a full Habitats Regulation Assessment was not deemed necessary. NWIFCA are awaiting confirmation from NE that they are happy with our conclusion.

The area proposed is provided in the inspection report below.

Recommendation: To open Seafield Slip to hand gathered seed fishing to Byelaw 3 permit holder under the flexible permit conditions of Byelaw 3.

Seafield Slip (Lytham) Mussel Inspection 16-08-22

LW: 09:41 1.0m (Liverpool tides)

Information was provided by industry that Seafield slip has had a mussel settlement. Seafield Slip was last inspected in 2018 when there was a seed settlement that washed away and has previously been a seed and size mussel fishery but not since 2015/16.

The mussel is in a thin strip approximately 20m wide along the channel edge of the River Ribble, consisting of two areas totalling 750m long (Figures 1 and 2). The mussel consisted mainly of two size classes, newly settled seed, 5-8mm in length and larger seed, 30-40mm in length (Figure 3). The small seed was higher up the shore line, with a mix of 5-8mm and 30-40mm in near the channel edge. At low tide there are a number of small islands (10m²) that contain clean 30-40mm (Figures 4 and 5). There was the occasional large barnacled size mussel mixed in with the seed (Figure 6). Higher up the shore the mussel was on hard substrate with a very thin layer of settlement underneath. Towards the channel edge the mussel was on mud with some signs of scour of the mussel still under the water at low tide.



Fig 1. Map of Seafield Slip Mussel 16-08-22



Fig 2. Strip of mussel along the channel edge of the River Ribble 16-08-22



Fig 3. Mix of two different size classes of mussel, 5-8mm and 30-40mm 16-08-22



Fig 4. Area of 30-40mm mussel with very little 5-8mm seed mixed in 16-08-22



Fig 5. Clean 30-40mm mussel on small island on the channel edge 16-08-22

7th September 2022



Fig 9. Area with occasional larger old mussel mixed in 16-08-22