

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:
11th March 2016: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
6**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT REPORT ON THE FISHERIES
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST NOVEMBER 2015 to 31ST JANUARY 2016**

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

Recommendation: that the report is received

Introduction

1. Full details of fishing activities within the District are as usual provided in officers' reports. In summary:
 - All boat based fisheries were hampered by the inclement weather
 - All inter-tidal fisheries were hampered by inclement weather, very high river levels and associated classification issues in some cases
 - The Heysham (seed) authorisation was removed by the TSB on the 6th November due to the possibility of the seed mussel present remaining to MLS size
 - The authorisation at Lytham (seed) remained in place but this fishery was hampered by high *e. coli* readings (54,000 in 100g) which led to the bed losing its classification
 - Opening of beaches for netting under Byelaw 10
2. A full report on mussel fishing activity in the District is supplied in Annex A.

General Update

3. The intel management project is progressing well and the senior project board have verbally agreed to run the project out nationally
4. All IFCOs have begun assisting with informal consultation on the new Byelaw 11
5. Three IFCOs (Brownrigg, Sparks and Walters) are soon to be taken through stage 1 of the pilot scheme of the new national accreditation scheme for enforcement officers which is being run through Skills for Justice
6. IFCO Brown sadly departed the IFCA on the 26th February and the IFCA will have to try move forward without his very significant skill and experience. Steve has been a highly valued member of the enforcement team and an invaluable source of advice for the obscure inter-tidal netting queries that his boss has been bamboozled by.
7. IFCO Walters will be taking the lead in that part of the District moving forward.

Enforcement

8. The low level of sanctions taken during the quarter reflects both good compliance and the low level of activity during the quarter:

Sanction	Comments
1 advisory letter	For an alleged breach of Cumbria byelaw 10 – net being placed on the beach on the 26 th Nov (beaches are only open from the 1 st Dec 31 st May)

Court Proceedings

9. Only one case saw court activity during the quarter:
- Brian Faulkner appeal of sentence being heard at Liverpool Crown Court – expected conclusion to this case is late April

Legislative Issues

Bass

10. Significant changes to Bass management were brought in with the 2016 TAC and Quota EU regulations (article 10 of 72/ 2016). The regulation is prohibitive with derogations contained within the regulation. In summary:

	Chronology	Regulation
Commercial	1 st Jan - 31 st March	Prohibited to fish for, retain, tranship or land Bass*
	1 st April – 30 th June	Vessels using hook and lines and fixed gillnets have a quota of 1300kg per month
	1 st July – 31 st Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessels using hook and lines and fixed gillnets have a quota of 1300kg per month • Vessels using any other gear type (inc. drift nets) have a quota of 1000kg per month
Recreational	1 st Jan – 30 th June	Recreational fisheries (inc. from a vessel): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch/release only
	1 st July – 31 st Dec	Recreational fisheries (inc. from a vessel): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Bass per individual per day

*except for 1% bycatch when using demersal trawls or seines

11. As previously reported the MLS for Bass has been increased and the educational approach to the new MLS ended on the 31st October 2015. The 1989 undersized Bass order (SI 1285 of 1989) has been revoked so enforcement of Bass MLS is through EU legislation and Byelaws.

Landing Obligations

12. The landing obligations in the form of discard plans have started to have an impact on the fisheries within the District.
13. Some summary points on the implementation of landing obligations are given below:
- A North Western Waters Group (NWW) has been established to form the discard plans for the larger area including the IFCAs district
 - A regional approach is being taken by the NWW so species discard plans are being formed for area VIIa specifically
 - The “end point” is that by 2019 all TAC species must be subject to landing obligations and a discard plan
 - A phased approach to this is being taken to avoid a “big bang” in 2019
14. Relevant points to the landing obligations and discard plans are as follows:
- All species subject to a TAC must be recorded, landed and counted against Quota

- Quota species will be subject to a Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) – not an Minimum Landing Size (MLS)
- Fish below the MCRS must be **landed**, **cannot** enter the human food chain and must be stowed **separately**

15. Exemptions can also be factored into discard plans for specific species:

- *De minimis* exemptions when it is shown that increasing gear selectivity is very difficult or a landing obligations would result in the disproportionate handling of unwanted catches
- Survivability exemptions where there is strong scientific evidence of the high survivability of a species

16. Extensive amendments to EU legislation (particularly 850/98) have been made to adjust MLS to MCRS and to address conflict with catch composition regulations. Amendments to the IFCAs byelaw by the Secretary of State have been previously reported.

17. The 2016 discard plans relevant to the IFCAs District are given in Annex B of this report.

MCZ Designations

18. As part of the tranche 2 stage two new MCZs have been designated within the District, details are summarised below:

MCZ	West of Walney	Allonby Bay
Site details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off shore site straddling the 6nm and 12nm limits 388km² • Co-located with Walney Windfarm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-tidal site • From Dubmill point to Maryport (40mk²)
Feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtidal sand • Mud and sea-pen • Burrowing megafauna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low – high energy rock habitats • Biogenic reefs • Mixed sediments • Blue mussel beds • Honeycomb
Conservation objective	Recover conservation objective	Maintain in favourable condition
Lead	MMO due to it being a cross boundary site	NWIFCA as it's an inter-tidal site

Annex A

Bed	Amount fished (kg)	Effort (No. of people and days effort)
Heysham flat	38,320	1 people, totalling 9 days effort
Foulney	12,580	2 people, totalling 17 days effort
Hollow/Box 1	2,800	1 people, totalling 7 days effort
Seafield slip		n/a
Ribble training walls	1,850	2 people, totalling 6 days effort
Total fished	55,550	62 days effort

Annex B

Spp*	Gear	Landing Obligation	Exemptions
Nephrops	Trawls, seines, pots, traps and creels	If ref year >30% Nephrops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landing obligation applies 	<i>De minimis</i> exemptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can discard 7% for year 1 – 2016 Can discard 7% for year 2 - 2017 Can discard - 6% for year 3 – 2018 Survivability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creel caught exempt
Haddock	Trawls and seines	If ref year >10% of Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Saithe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landing obligations will apply to Haddock 	None
Hake	OTB and others	Not of great relevance to the district	None

*Only when relevant to area VIIA

Master of the "Solway Protector" - H Thinnesen

PRIORITIES, PATROLS, BOARDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

- Patrol district for large vessel infringement of byelaws
- Record data of nets and pots within district
- Inspect lobster/brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels
- Inspect gill nets for compliance with EU legislation
- Input enforcement information and vessel activities into MCSS (Monitor and control surveillance system)
- Record data of nets
- Inspect nets for compliance with Byelaw 10 (3)
- Inspect vessels for compliance with EU fishing gear legislation
- Record all vessel sightings data
- Maintain service and repair patrol vessels
- Inspect and carry out checks with hobby fishermen/vessels - Byelaw 26
- Patrol throughout District for detection of fishery limit line offences

Fishing activities have again been monitored throughout the District in both the "Solway Protector" and "Protector Bravo".

The weather conditions have been atrocious this quarter, and this along with crew's annual leave, sickness absence, the Christmas holidays, general maintenance and repairs has resulted in quite a number of patrol days at sea being lost.

Patrols, boardings and inspections of vessels gear at sea using both patrol vessels can be found in Appendices 'A' to 'C'. Compliance with byelaws and other EU legislation has on the whole been good.

TRAWLING, POTTING, NETTING & BOAT ANGLING

Trawling has again been very poor this quarter with catches of prawns (Nephrops) from the local fleet being low. The beginning of January saw some moderate fish landings, with one vessel landing 180 boxes of mixed fish into Whitehaven, of which 80% was Thornback Ray. Weather conditions soon closed in, and vessels got a day or two fishing out of this at best.

Once again Spotted Dogfish are the predominant species throughout the District, and local vessels have found a small market for this species in supplying the whelk boats as pot bait. The value on these landings is quite low with only moderate to small returns back to the boat.

Again the weather has halted netting at sea this quarter, with no reports of any landings being made. Most of the potting fleet have had their gear ashore for quite some time now, with only the larger operators deciding to fish throughout the winter months. Poor returns have been reported back to enforcement officers.

Reports from boat anglers have been a bit more positive, with landings of sized cod and whiting in the northern part of the District being quite buoyant, which was mainly close inshore and around St Bees Head when weather permitted.

Much to the annoyance of our local angling community, spotted dogfish once again are in abundance throughout the District.

MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS & SERVICING OF PATROL VESSELS

- Repairs to the shore power supply new changeover switch was installed
- New alternator fitted on the main generator (starter and rotor failure)

- Battery charger removed, repaired and refitted
- Repair wiring and replace switches on main fuse board
- Replace fuel lines to generator
- Carry out PAT testing on electrical equipment
- Trouble shoot and repair Simrad CR54 chart plotter
- Repair wiring and replace fuel pump on generator set
- Fit new pipes and hoses to starboard bilge pump system
- Repair exhaust leak on starboard main engine
- Main engines and gearboxes serviced, oil and filters changed, all manufacturers recommended services for warranties have been carried out on both main engines
- All monthly safety checks and maintenance schedules are up to date

“PROTECTOR BRAVO”

Again “Protector Bravo” continues to give a valued service and an 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:

- Remove and repair pot/net hauler engine (starter problem)
- Two new batteries fitted on starting banks

WEATHER

The weather conditions this quarter have been very destructive with strong to gale force winds throughout most of the reporting period.

November gave us mainly north west and south westerly wind directions, with sea conditions mainly force six to seven. December gave us a lot of south easterly conditions again with very strong winds for most of the time.

The beginning of January saw the best conditions when we encountered, calm, and at times foggy conditions. However this only lasted four to five days before the weather closed in again. These very poor weather conditions have lasted up until time of writing this report where we are now encountering some strong south through to west gale force conditions.

H THINNESEN
5th February 2016

" Solway Protector "
DURATION OF PATROLS AND SIGHTINGS

Date	Area Patrolled	Sightings	Sea time
20/01/2016	Whitehaven/North Walney/Maryport/Whitehaven	14	9.50

" Protector Bravo "
PATROL STATISTICS

	1/11/2015 - 31/1/2016		1/8/2015 - 31/10/2015	
Number of patrols and passages	1	patrols	10	patrols
Seatime	9.50		61.49	
Average length of patrol	9.50		6.15	
Total distance covered	80	miles	484	miles
Average distance per patrol	80	miles	48	miles
Fuel used	132	gallons	1336	gallons
Average fuel used per patrol	132	gallons	134	gallons
<u>Total identified sightings:</u>	14	vessels	80	vessels
Local	14	vessels	79	vessels
Visiting	0	vessels	1	vessels
<u>Types of fishing vessels sighted:</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>	<u>< 45'</u>	<u>> 45'</u>
Trawlers	3	0	25	0
Shrimpers	0	0	3	0
Gill netters	2	0	0	0
Potting Boats	2	0	12	0
Scallop Dredgers	0	0	0	1
Anglers	7	0	39	0
<u>Total:</u>	14	0	79	1

Protector Bravo - 7m Osprey Viper RIB

Appendix 'C'

Operating base: Whitehaven

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

2015/2016				
Date	TOTAL	03/11/2015	04/11/2015	06/01/2016
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		AF HT		AF HT
Area patrolled & comments:		Whitehaven to Maryport	Whitehaven, Sellafield & Lowca	Whitehaven to Maryport
Number of hours patrolled	11:00	04:10	02:50	04:00
Number of miles patrolled	83	26.7	31.2	25.1
No of patrols days:	3	1	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	3	0	0	3
Vessels checked	3	0	0	3
Pots Checked	47	18	5	24
Nets Checked	3	2	0	1
No: of crabs measured	17	0	0	17
Boardings and inspections undertaken while on RIB patrol:				
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	3			3
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	0			
ZONE 6 - Seascale to Kirksanton	0			
Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel boarded:				
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	20			17 crab 2 lobster 1 cod
Recreational Angling vessel	7			7 whiting
Gear inspected per type of fishing vessel boarded:				
Licensed Netting Vessels	2	2		
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	16	16		
Lobster & crab potter (IFCO permitted)	2	2		
Closings of vessels at sea:				
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	6	4	2	
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	3		3	
ZONE 6 - Seascale to Kirksanton	0			
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL WHEN CLOSING UNDERTAKEN:				
Trawler (single rigged)	2		2	
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	2		2	
Lobster & crab potter (IFCO permitted)	2	2		
Recreational Angling vessel	3	2	1	
Sightings of vessels at sea:				
ZONE 4 - Siddick to Harrington	3	1	2	
ZONE 5 - Parton to Sellafield	6	2	4	
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL SIGHTED:				
Trawler (single rigged)	3	1	2	
Lobster & crab potter (MMO licensed)	2		2	
Scallop dredger	1	1		
Recreational Angling vessel	1		1	

GENERAL

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

- Prawns trawlers have not been as active this quarter with poor landings of prawns. The odd one or two have had some good catches of Thorn-backed rays, with one vessel having a 12 box haul.
- Shrimp fishing from boats in the district have seen patchy landings this quarter, with reports ranging from 10 kilos to 70 kilos being caught over one tide.
- Licenced potters have been active during the first half of November, with inspections seeing 10 - 35 kilos of Lobsters and 15 - 400 kilos of Brown Crab. However, by end of November nearly all vessels had brought their gear ashore.
- The whelk boats are making regular landings into Whitehaven of around 8 - 10 tonnes each landing.
- Anglers fishing from piers and beaches are catching mostly Codlings, with some Plaice being caught as well. Codlings are still being caught in the dark hours with some landings being in double figures, anything from 5 - 17 keepers for a tide when fishermen were inspected. Reports are that codlings are all around the 6lb mark with some even heavier. This seems to be the norm for this time of year.
- One person was cautioned for a suspected byelaw 10(4) infringement, and investigations are ongoing.

All in all, a moderate quarter for the vessels and fishermen with scallop fishing being the mainstay of the species landed into ports

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.

With the lack of Nephrops on the ground, most of the trawlers have been targeting Huss dogfish which have very little value but seem to be in abundance. These are caught to supply the whelk boats for bait.

Some good catches of Thorn-backed ray were seen, with one vessel having a 12 box haul.

As the end of November and beginning of December came in, so did the storms which put a stop to all fishing activities.

Some boats managed to get to sea in the middle of January but caught very little, with 5 boxes of Huss and half a box of Plaice being talked about.

Visiting vessels at the start of the quarter reported moderate fishing outside of the six mile limit but was short lived. Reports of 150 stone of Prawns and 90 boxes of Thorn-backed ray being caught. Some of these vessels were multi rigged vessels, and to date, no multi rigged vessels has been seen by officers inside of the six mile limit.

SHRIMP VESSELS – SILLOTH

Shrimp vessels this quarter have not been as active as they would normally be, but when they did put to sea the catches have been between 10 - 70 kilos for a tide, when weather has permitted.

KING SCALLOPS & QUEEN SCALLOPS

Vessels from Whitehaven and Maryport along with vessels from Scotland have been regularly landing scallops from the IOM fishery. Landings of up to 4 tonnes per day have been recorded, with prices starting at £70.00 per bag. As December came in the storms arrived putting a premature stop to all fishing activities, and only a couple of days fishing had taken place. At the start of January the weather eased off and some vessels continued fishing scallops in IOM waters, and landings of 60 bags for a day has been reported.

POTTING

Over the quarter vessels have mostly been bringing their gear ashore, but some vessels left gear out to take advantage of the mild weather. As December came in and the storms, vessels brought all their gear in when there was a break in the weather.

Three whelk boats landing into Whitehaven on a regular basis have seen landings ranging from 5 - 10 tonnes, with prices around £635 per tonne.

Another *Homarus Americanus* was caught within the district, which was a female, with a size of 108.9 mm carapace length, and a weight of 1029g. This is the second Canadian lobster caught by the same vessel within a radius of 4 miles from the last one, near to Lune Deep.

OFFSHORE NETTING

Little activity has been seen by this sector due to poor weather and the large amount seals on the grounds.

BEACH NETTING

Early reports in December and January saw some Codlings being caught along with a few Thorn-back rays. No Bass has been reported caught or inspected by officers.

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 17 Codlings being kept, all around the 6 – 10lb mark. One exception to this was of a Cod being caught over 20lb in weight at an undisclosed place.

Some Plaice caught above 27cm are a bit thin and have raw in them, of which most are returned.

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.

BAIT DIGGING

Very little bait gathering has been seen this quarter. Fifteen diggers have been seen by officers but only had a small amount in their buckets, 50-100 for own use.

INTERTIDAL ACTIVITY

No reports on intertidal fishing.

OTHER DUTIES

Other duties carried out this quarter have been to support enforcement operations with the EA.

ENFORCEMENT & EDUCATION

At the end of November before byelaw 10 was lifted a person was cautioned for a breach of byelaw 10(4) on suspicion of illegal fishing with a fixed engine, investigations are ongoing.

Officer Statistics for the period 1st November 2015 – 31st January 2016

Shore Patrols	42
Fishing Locations visited	277
Quad Patrols	3
Locations by quad	16
Anglers seen	254
Bait Diggers seen	15
Inspections all	129
Beach nets inspected	3
Days assisting other areas of district	0
All vessels sighted in ports	4381

NORTH MORECAMBE BAY

HAVERIGG POINT TO ARNSIDE

IFCO, I. Dixon

GENERAL

This reporting period has been dominated by adverse storm force weather patterns which have had a noticeable effect on all fishing activities in the area. Although it has been mild for the time of year, prolonged periods of strong gales and record high levels of rainfall have had a major impact on fishermen's ability to work. This period of the year is traditionally a quiet one in my reporting area but the shorter than usual nature of my report reflects the lack of activity.

TRAWLING

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

SHRIMPING

Shrimp fishermen were observed working from Flookburgh until late November, helped by the mild weather conditions. Reports suggest that this season has been one of the better ones in recent years.

POTTING

During the quarter the only licensed potting vessel working within the NW IFCA district from Barrow has brought in the pots for the winter, and reported a relatively poor season. Another licensed vessel from Barrow continues to work pots outside the IFCA district on a relatively small scale part time basis.

COCKLES

During the last quarter I have received several reports from Flookburgh based fishermen suggesting that cockle stocks in the Leven estuary are increasing, large amounts of cockle spat have been observed as far up the estuary as the Leven viaduct. Regular patrols of the cockle beds have been undertaken both during daylight and darkness as the cockle prices increased in the run up to Christmas and several requests were made for the IFCA to open the cockle beds for a short period to take advantage of the traditional rise in prices, enquirants were told that the cockle beds remained closed until surveys indicated stock levels would be sustainable and in line with conservation regulations. No reports of illegal cockling have been received.

MUSSELS

During the quarter mussel fishing activity has continued at a low level compared with the last couple of years. A group of 3 local Byelaw 3 holders have gathered size mussels from the Foulney area to fulfil small orders. During January activity increased with up to 10 gatherers observed working on Foulney, with up to 500kg per gatherer being removed on suitable tides.

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.

The mussel bed known as Hard Acre in the Duddon estuary has not been surveyed as extensively as IFCA Officers would like due to adverse weather conditions and suitable spring tide low water periods being in darkness.

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

WINKLES

From late November up until Christmas a small group of fishermen were observed gathering winkles in Walney channel, although the quality of the winkles were not particularly good and effort declined.

NETTING

Netting activity, both from vessels and ashore, has been virtually non-existent this quarter, due to the adverse weather conditions. One licensed netting vessel was observed in early January to the west of Walney but reports suggested the catch was poor, consisting mainly of dogfish.

ANGLING

Angling activity decreased slightly during the quarter, with anglers targeting cod instead of Bass as is usual at this period of the year. Reports suggested that good numbers of codling were present, with good numbers of codling, Whiting and Pollack being caught from Barrow Docks, and larger cod being caught from the Irish sea in front of Walney. Angling from vessels decreased significantly mainly due to the adverse conditions, occasional angling vessels were seen on known cod marks. Anglers were observed at Greenodd, Priory Point, Newbiggin and Walney channel, where catches consisted mainly of Plaice and Flounder, with cod also being caught in Walney channel.

SOUTH MORECAMBE BAY

ARNSIDE TO KNOTT END

IFCO, J. Moulton

During the last quarter, fishing across the area has been severely hampered by bad weather. During the period I have conducted 37 shore patrols and 5 quad bike patrols across the District from South to North with patrols and sampling for local authorities, visiting a total of 338 locations.

I have also been developing the Intelligence management programme within NWIFCA and alongside the nationwide programme being piloted by the MMO.

SHRIMPS

Both Shrimp boats which are moored at the Stone Jetty in Morecambe have remained tied up throughout the quarter due to the continued bad weather which has hit the coastline. During storm Desmond due to the rapid rise of the River Lune "Peggy 2", an unlicensed shrimp boat, sadly broke free of her moorings and was badly damaged beyond repair and now lies opposite Snatchems in the river.

No recreational shrimp boats have been to sea and there have been no sightings of Tractor units from either side of Morecambe Bay

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.

During the last quarter a slight improvement in stocks of immature cockles was recorded; in the spring it is the intention to check if the juvenile cockles have survived the succession of winter storms. All beds in my area remain closed.

MUSSELS

During this last quarter only a small amount of size mussel was gathered during January from the end of Heysham Flat. This was due to a limited number of tides allowing access. This did result in an incident with other local authorities and the Coastguard who misunderstood the situation at the time, contrary to reports in the media this was a legitimate activity. The Visitor newspaper was contacted to correct their article.

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

DRIFT STAKE AND SET NETS

The commercial netting boats have all remained on shore during the winter as is expected with the exception of one which is moored near the Stone Jetty.

Stake nets have been tied up for the entire quarter.

Very little setting of long lines has occurred with fisherman complaining of the number of dogfish caught. When lines have been set there have been occasional catches of Codling.

Whitebait filter nets have reported good landings when fished over rising tides.

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. Effort has remained high with catches being very poor. Dinghy boats have launched from Heysham during rare periods of good weather and mostly fished in the Gunnel.

GENERAL

This reporting quarter will be remembered by many for its particularly heavy rainfall that resulted in severe flooding inland particularly over the Christmas period. Along the coast onshore winds have been predominant however the first snows did not fall until mid-January. The prevailing weather conditions have seriously disrupted fishing activity.

TRAWLING

The Fleetwood inshore trawlers made an occasional trip during November but have been kept in port during December and January. Owners have got on with their winter maintenance programmes.

POTS

The Fleetwood potting boats have brought their pots in for the winter.

SHRIMPING

Some commercial shrimping took place in November from both Lytham and along the Sefton Coast. Modest catches were made, similarly the push netter along the Fylde Coast gathered catches that were sufficient for domestic needs.

Once the rains started so much debris was either disturbed or washed down the rivers that shrimping both commercial and domestic became impractical. Those that ventured out reported that shrimps were still present in places but that it was impossible to work for the amount of leaves and weed in the water.

WHELKS

Three whelk potters have occasionally landed their catches at Fleetwood during the quarter.

COCKLES

A patch of 0-1 group cockle has shown up at the top of the Penfold North cockle bed. It is not clear whether these cockles are "washdowns" or a late spat fall but they are in a very exposed position. On a visit to the area most were found to have already succumbed to either the weather or opportunist bird predation. The area will be monitored but since our visit the bed has been exposed to northerly winds. There is little chance of any significant number of these cockles surviving to maturity.

MUSSELS

The promising Lytham seed mussel fishery has been a considerable disappointment, proving to be both peripheral and ephemeral. Firstly heavy rains prevented access the bed often failed to uncover even on the better ebbs due to the amount of fresh set coming down the river. Neither is it surprising under the circumstances that there were some very poor MSH test sample results. The MSH sample results improved dramatically after the worst of the rains had passed. Strangely the more seaward "Ribble Walls" sample sight was not as badly affected. When access to the bed at Lytham became possible it was found that most of the upper part of the seed mussel bed had been scoured out, it is thought that small amounts of seed mussel remain further down the bed.

Very limited gathering of size mussel from the Ribble Walls has taken place during suitable conditions.

NETS – LINES

A few trial nets have been set off Formby but in general the prevailing conditions have prevented both beach and drift netting activity.

Lines set on the North Wharf off Fleetwood have produced some respectable catches mostly of codling.

ANGLING

Shore angling has remained popular despite the poor conditions the Fylde Coast being the most popular venue. Catches have mostly been of Flounder in daylight and a few Cod have been taken on the dark tides. Reports have been received of an occasional Thornback Ray being taken along with a few whittings.

Some good sport has been had when the weather has permitted the charter, beach launched and sea kayaks to venture out again catches have been primarily of codling and flounder.

AND FINALLY

After 29 years' service with the Committee/Authority I will be retiring voluntarily next month so this will be my last quarterly report. I hope that my reports have been of interest to the reader. Regular patrols have been undertaken both ashore and on intertidal areas, with little fishing activity to be observed emphasis has been on training the next generation of IFCO's. Amongst the more pleasurable tasks given to me before I leave has been to compile a history of the former LSFC, L&WjSFC and NW&NWSFC patrol vessels; hopefully this will be of interest to both Members and Staff or anyone taken to study our history in the future.

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, sampling and survey work throughout our area and the NWIFCA District. Despite the poor weather routine seaborne patrols on the River Mersey, Liverpool Bay and Dee Estuary with "Bay Protector" the Southern Area's patrol vessel have been undertaken.

SPECIFIC

COCKLES

Wirral North cockle bed remains closed, and will continue to do so throughout 2016. Beach closure notices to cockling remain in place and will do for the foreseeable future. The bed will continue to be monitored by both NWIFCA and Mersey Port Health Authority 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 patchy and made up largely of dead shell, to that end 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. In the meantime all shellfish within the Mersey estuary remain classified as prohibited and are unable to be gathered.

SHORE ANGLING

Overall very little recreational angling has been observed throughout this quarter. Otterspool Promenade has been the most popular with up to 68 anglers observed during a weekend patrol. Jobs Quay, Egremont Parade and New Brighton (Perch Rock and Kings Parade) have also been popular areas during this period. Routine patrols continue to observe areas at Crosby Promenade, the River Alt, Alexandria Wall in the Port of Liverpool and Brunswick, Albert and Kings Dock; to date all these areas have had very little or no activity observed during this last quarter.

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 – 150 worms gathered per individual.

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL BOAT ANGLING

Eight charter and up to eleven recreational fishing vessels work locally out of Liverpool Marina and from moorings off Bromborough, 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 are now based within Liverpool Marina and will fish the Cod fishery until March 2016. Good relationships remain ongoing and advice and guidance is routinely provided, along with inspection of fishing gear and equipment when requested has continued. Several boats from Wirral Small Boats Club have been active within the river Mersey over the weekends. Cod, Whiting, Dab and Thornback Ray have been observed during inspections.

SEA PATROLS

Despite the poor weather over the last quarter “Bay Protector” has managed to be active on the River Mersey and along the north Wirral coastline. Boardings, closings and inspections have routinely taken place on charter/recreational angling boats and local private unregistered fishing vessels, predominantly from Wirral Small Boats Club. To date, some six hours at sea and seventy two miles have been covered during the quarter. “Bay Protector” will shortly undertake her 100 hour service and inspection.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Daily shore patrols along the River Mersey, north Wirral coastline, the Dee Estuary and up to Southport remain ongoing. Officer support has been offered to other areas in the form of Shore/ATV patrols and sample work. Both officers attended the Dee Estuary Sea Fisheries Liaison Group in January. Finally; assistance to the GLA, MPHA, NRW and Merseyside Police has remained ongoing, and will continue to do so.

Bay Protector - 7m Humber RIB			
Operating base: Liverpool			
Area of operation: Ribble and Dee Estuaries			
		January 2016	
Date	TOTAL	6	16
IFCOs undertaking the patrol:		AB/PC	AB/PC/AD
Area patrolled & comments:		Dee Estuary, Liverpool Bay and River Mersey. One charter vessel with 9 anglers on board in transit, and another with 8 anglers on board again in transit. Two vessels were sighted moored up at Bromborough slipway.	River Mersey and Liverpool Bay. One vessel was observed with 11 anglers on board, and two 5lb Cod inspected. Another two vessels were seen with 9 anglers on board. Various other vessels were seen with only a couple of anglers on board.
Boardings and inspections undertaken while			
Number of hours patrolled	06:00	03:00	03:00
Number of miles patrolled	72	43	29
No of patrols days:	2	1	1
Boardings undertaken at sea	13	6	7
Vessels checked	13	6	7
Fish Size Checked	4	2	2
Zones where boardings/inspections undertaken:			
Mersey	13	6	7
Catch (species, fish size etc.), checked per type of vessel inspected/boarded:			
Trawler (single rigged)	4		4
Shrimp beam trawler	9	6	3
Sightings of vessels at sea (not recorded as closing, boarding or inspection):			
River Mersey	2	2	
TYPE OF FISHING VESSEL SIGHTED (not recorded as closing, boarding or inspection):			
Unlicensed Netting Vessels	2	2	

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

1ST NOVEMBER 2015 TO 31ST JANUARY 2016

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 6

3.2 Number of patrols at sea 2

3.3 Number of nautical miles of patrol 72

3.4 Number of closings 0

3.5 Number of inspections 13

3.6 Number of boardings 13

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. ENFORCEMENT ON LAND

4.1 Number of inspections 366

4.2	Number of ATV patrols	21
4.3	Number of hours ATV patrols	28.5
4.4	ATV km covered	363.80
4.5	Number of infringements detected	0
4.6	Number of:-	
4.6.1	Prosecutions	0
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	1
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.