

NWIFCA Meeting: 22nd June 2023 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT – 1ST FEBRUARY – 30TH APRIL

Purpose: For information.

Recommendations:

1. **That the report is received**

Patch Summaries for the quarter are given in the table below:

| Patch | Summary Points |
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| Haverigg Point – Burghmarsh Point – IFCO Thinnesen, Thinnesen | <p>Shore and quad patrols were undertaken throughout the north of the district covering all known ports and hot spots from Port Carlisle to Haverigg Point, during the quarter.</p> <p>A summary of daily patrols carried out this quarter can be found in the Shore Based Activity report.</p> <p><u>Trawling</u> - activity was observed from local trawlers targeting prawns (nephrops) and bait fish (plaice – dogfish) from grounds, southwest of St Bees 6 to 10 nautical miles.</p> <p>Single vessels were monitored at sea on VMS inside 6 nautical miles, during the quarter, some reports of prawns being caught between 20 - 40 stones per day on the odd occasion. In April, a couple of vessels from Maryport and Whitehaven were landing to Co-ops and direct to the public in both ports.</p> <p>Vessels out of Maryport changed fishing gear as they were coming to the end of season of the Manx scallop fishery, which started in November 2022</p> <p><u>Potting</u> - Activity on VMS over the quarter showed whelking vessels out of Whitehaven, Fleetwood and Maryport frequently seen, with vessels engaged in whelk potting outside of the district.</p> <p>Vessels from Fleetwood were seen fishing North of North Wales, 6 – 10 miles off the coast, west of Formby, South and North of IOM.</p> <p>Local vessels are pioneering the grounds inside of the NWIFCA 6 mile limit, but the majority of the fishing has been carried out, outside of the district. In April most of the vessels targeting whelks in the district, started to fish their normal lobster and crab pots, thus leaving the whelks for when the season finishes.</p> <p>Vessels targeting lobster and brown crab continued to fish pots, these vessels targeted areas north and south of Whitehaven. Mixed reports from fishers are of quantities of lobsters and crab being caught.</p> <p>Creel pots for shrimps have been used in the latter part of the month, with mixed</p> |

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| | <p>results. However skippers have said that once they get familiar with the new grounds, they can target the better areas as to putting the pots on any ground.</p> <p>20 sightings on VMS with lobster boats.</p> <p>55 sightings on VMS with whelkers, most of which was outside of the district.</p> <p><u>Angling</u> - Angling activity on beaches and piers was evident at all areas, but in smaller numbers than in previous years. Reports were received of angling taking place during dark hours, mainly targeting codlings. In February and March, during daylight hours 71 anglers were seen on piers and beaches, effort is down compared to other years.</p> <p><u>Beach nets</u> – no nets were seen on any beaches over the quarter, although reports from a member of the public reported on a couple of occasions that someone was fishing nets at Seascale beach. When officers attended this area, no nets were evident.</p> <p><u>Other duties</u> - Other duties undertaken was VMS satellite surveillance work; working on board North Western Protector working alongside other crew members in preparing engine room bays; cleaning and upgrading areas ready for engines being returned. Protector Bravo was taken to Preston in order to obtain costings, of work required to keep the vessel in service.</p> <p>Protector Gamma was taken to Chorley to have two additional seats fitted as per the coding requirements.</p> <p>ATV Patrol – 1 ATV patrol was carried out with other officer from Barrow area, undertaking cockle sampling.</p> |
| <p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – IFCO Dixon</p> | <p><u>Mussels</u> - Activity increased on Foulney for two sets of spring tides during late March/mid-April due to the classification increasing to a seasonal A, meaning mussels could be exported if specific conditions were met. Up to 17 gatherers were inspected per tide. No issues with the minimum landing size or permits were observed or reported.</p> <p>Officer continues to take samples for the local authority.</p> <p>Officer assisted the Science Officers to conduct dutch wand surveys on Foulney, and conducted a recce on the South America area.</p> <p><u>Cockles</u></p> <p>No activity was observed or reported on the cockle beds in my area of responsibility.</p> <p>Officer continues to take cockle samples from Newbiggin and Flookburgh beds for local authority Environmental Health Depts.</p> <p><u>Shrimping</u></p> <p>Activity has been at a fairly low level, with sightings of tractors occasionally in the Leven channel, catches were reported to be moderate, continuing the trend of recent years.</p> |

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| | <p>Signs of low levels of shrimping activity were observed when undertaking cockle samples at Flookburgh, although no sightings of activity were made.</p> <p><u>Potting</u></p> <p>During the quarter potting activity has increased slightly towards the end of the reporting period, with 2 vessels working inside the District from Barrow, for lobster and edible crab. Two vessels continue to work outside the District.</p> <p><u>Netting</u></p> <p>During late April commercial netting vessels were occasionally observed in the outer Morecambe Bay area, and near Foulney mussel bed.</p> <p>No beach nets were observed throughout the reporting period. Reports were received of occasional beach nets being set for Plaice and Flounder in the Leven estuary.</p> <p><u>Angling</u></p> <p>Angling activity increased during the quarter as is usual for the time of year, as water temperatures warmed up and reports of Bass being present off the west coast of Walney and from the sea wall on the coast road and Foulney area.</p> |
| <p>Arnside – Lytham IFCO Graham & Edwards</p> | <p>Cockles</p> <p>All cockle beds within the patch remain closed. No reports of any gathering have been received. Monthly sampling of cockles has continued at Pilling, presently there is a limited quantity of size cockles at the sample site with most cockles being spat.</p> <p>Mussels</p> <p>Very little mussel fishing activity has occurred within the area. The mussel bed at Knott Spit has seen no activity and only limited activity has occurred on the Ribble Training Walls. With the fishery at Foulney there is no incentive to travel to the area to gather mussels. Size mussel at Heysham Flat has all but washed out with only a small amount remaining near the sample point amongst <i>Sabellaria</i>, the quantity is sufficient for sampling to continue.</p> <p>Sampling has continued at Knott Spit and Sea Centre. The March sample taken from Sea Centre returned a high result and resulted in closure until two clear samples were taken. The results from Knott Spit for March were borderline trigger level. Both mussel beds have from intermittent raised levels in hygiene samples over the past couple of years. Unrelated to hygiene results but of relevance to the fishery the Guardian revealed in late April that 800kg per annum of Poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) are being discharged into the River Wyre (https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/apr/29/pfas-forever-chemical-river-wyre-lancashire-environment-agency). Samples for PFAS have been taken on other mussel beds within the district as part of CEFAS’ chemical contaminants monitoring programme, however the beds off the River Wyre were only tested for</p> |

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| | <p>heavy metals as part of this programme.</p> <p>Sampling of Heysham Flat has been taken in house by Lancaster City Council after IFCO Graham accompanied their staff on two samples to familiarise them with the area.</p> <p>Bass</p> <p>Frequent reports of Bass being caught started earlier than in previous years. Commercial landings of Bass began in April in accordance with the regulations, however not all fishers with entitlement are currently fishing. No reports of fishing within Heysham Bass nursery area have been received and patrols have not detected any signs of activity. The prosecutions and action taken over previous years appears to have had a significant effect on regular offending. As the summer months approach patrols will be increased due to the increased risk from fishers originating from outside the area.</p> <p>Angling</p> <p>As with previous years Morecambe has proven popular for angling for smoothhounds with anglers coming from all over the north to participate, with Halfmoon Bay proving very popular. Angling over high tide at Jenny Browns point has seen an increase in activity.</p> <p>Netting</p> <p>Fixed nets have been sighted in April in the middle of the patch and commercial netting from vessels has begun in both the middle and south of the patch as the bycatch allowance for Bass came into effect.</p> |
| <p>Dee- Southport – IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor</p> | <p>General</p> <p>During this quarter officers have continued to concentrate their efforts overseeing the enforcement of the Penfold cockle fishery on Southport up to its seasonal closure at the end of April. Officers then switched their focus to any form of illegal shellfish gathering along the north Wirral coastline. Byelaw 2 – North Wirral Foreshore Bivalve Molluscs continues to remain in place enforcing this matter.</p> <p>When not enforcing Byelaw 2, officers have continued to observe for musseling gathering activity West Kirby and Caldy Blacks mussel beds on the Dee estuary, along with shore rod angling and netting activity along both the north Wirral and Sefton coastlines.</p> <p>Officers have continued to collect the monthly MSH sample collection on behalf of West Lancashire Council and Mersey Port Health Authority – this will remain an ongoing task. Assisted the MMO in premises inspections and continued to provide advice and support to Natural Resources Wales, RSPB and Sefton Council.</p> <p>As by way of engagement, the team delivered a presentation to the newly formed Merseyside Police Rural, Wildlife & Heritage department highlighting the role and</p> |

responsibilities of NWIFCA and what future assistance we can offer to them.

As part of our continued professional development, both officers attended the STCW Personal Survival Techniques (PST) course at Fleetwood Nautical College.

When not carrying out enforcement work, normal daily duties have continued, this has included the service and repair work of NWIFCA vehicles, RIB (Bay Protector) and associated equipment and taken annual leave.

Finally, the newly appointed CEO paid a visit to the area to meet up with the southern area team. During his visit he took a tour of the area to understand the geographical and operational layout and look over the present infrastructure, equipment and assets.

Hand gathering bivalve

Leading up to the seasonal closure at the end of April officers observed a total of thirty B3 permit gatherers accessing the fishery to work. During this time no enforcement issues were observed or recorded. Seasonal closure notices are now in place highlighting the fact the fishery is now closed.

Recreational rod angling

Shore -Fifty-nine inspections of shore and beach anglers have taken place during this quarter, with the promenades of Wallasey front continuing to remain active. In particular, Seacombe and Magazine promenades continue to be most popular. Catches of dab and whiting have been recorded.

Catch recordings continue to be minimum due to a positive catch and release approach by anglers.

General Update

During this quarter, Head of Enforcement continued as Acting Chief Executive until the newly appointed Chief Executive started in Mid-April. During this period as Acting Chief there was continued engagement in meetings of National Chief Officer group, DEFRA, highly protected marine area, fisheries management plan meetings and IFCA meetings. This continued the excellent engagement from NWIFCA officers in National work streams.

Funding was secured from DEFRA in relation to National workstreams albeit for the financial year passed. Preparations for our incoming CEO progressed ready for a handover.

Legislative Update - Bass

Recreational catch limits as set out changed on the 1st of April with two size (42cm) Bass being allowed to be retained by fishers per day. This applies from a boat or the shore. No Bass can be retained from fixed nets.

Training

Staff have continued to complete training during this quarter including Sea Survival, GIS training and drone training.

NWIFCA Database

Officers have continued working with C-Front to develop a new permit database. The online portal system will be available for permit holders to renew permits and submit returns data. This system will greatly enhance the ease of issuing permits and submission of required information.

North Western Protector

As Members will be aware North Western Protector was taken offline several months ago. We have encountered massive delays with regards to obtaining parts for the engines, and especially the gearboxes.

At the time of writing this report the engines remain with PME group in Plymouth. Both engines are booked in for dyno testing mid/late June at Alicat Boat Yard Great Yarmouth. Officers will be attending. We hope to have the two engines and gearboxes back with us and in the vessel during the next quarter.

In between shore patrols and other duties, crew have been busy refurbishing both engine bays. Both compartments have been industrially cleaned, pumps and hydraulic pipes replaced. Most of the insulation in both bays has also been replaced along with some rewiring. We hope to have this work complete by the 11th of June.

Officers H Thinnesen and P Greenopp visited PME group in Plymouth for one week of training on MAN engines. This training was of the highest quality and was well worth the visit. Over the week they re-built the port main engine from the crank shaft up and gained a vast amount of knowledge on the particular engine types over the course of that week.

Health & Safety

There were no incidents of accidents during the quarter with one near miss recorded due to bearings failing on a trailer.

A meeting took place with the Authority's H&S Competent (external) Advisor – Elsa Mason - with further meetings scheduled monthly between officers and Elsa, and quarterly meetings with Elsa and Senior Management Team to address recording of key performance indications; revise audits undertaken of the Authority's work spaces; risk management strategy; safety improvement plan.

Byelaw Update

There has been no further update on the progress of the NWIFCA MCRS Byelaw.

Fishery Report

This quarter saw the conclusion of the Penfold cockle fishery from Southport. The fishery operated until the closed season at the end of April. The area has been regularly patrolled and no infringements have been detected. Officers continue to collect environmental health samples on behalf of the local authorities.

A continued issue with the current database has led to HoE being unable to accurately portray the normal quarterly statistics on cockle and mussel fishing. This will be resolved shortly and also removed by the implementation of a new online system.

Byelaw 3 Reporting

February 2023 to
April 2023

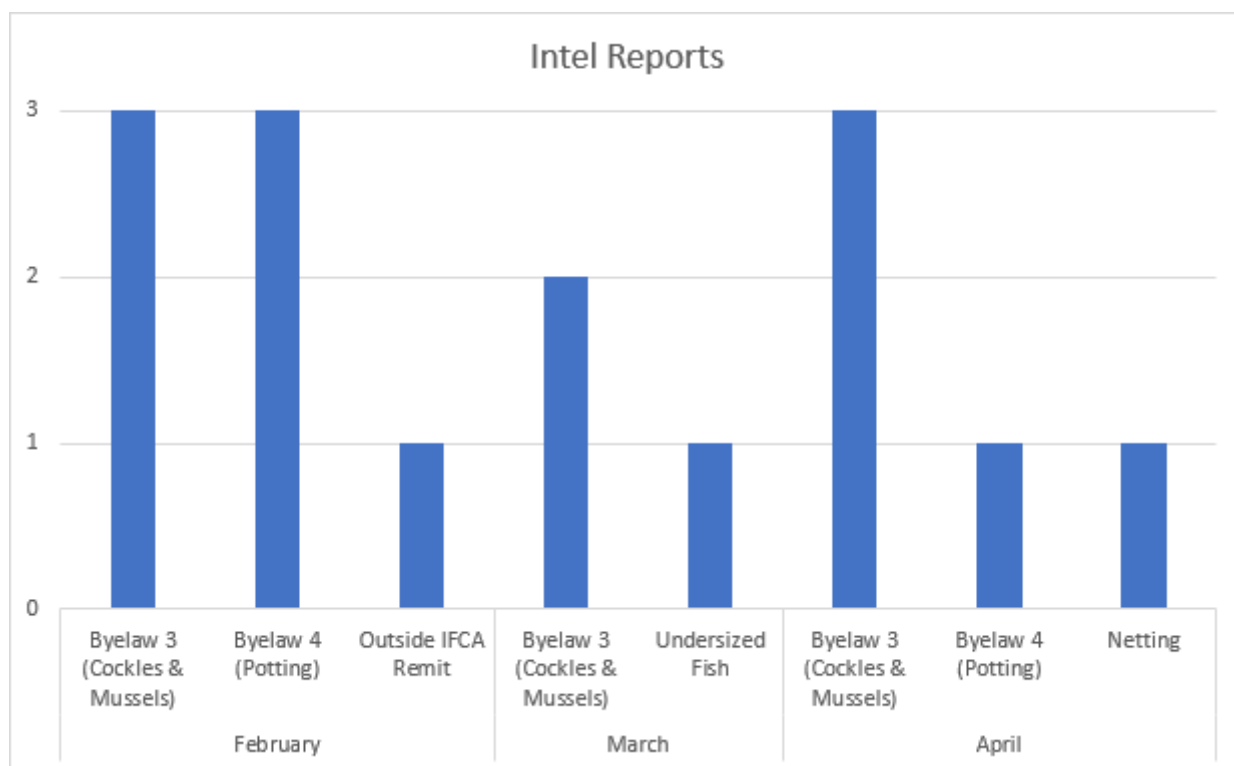
Byelaw 3 Returns

| | | Cockles | Mussels | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| | | Penfold/ Southport | Foulney | Ribble Training Walls | Black Scar |
| Activity | | | | | |
| Amount Removed (kg) | Feb-23 | | 45538 | 520 | 400 |
| | Mar-23 | 4548 | 40220 | 150 | |
| | Apr-23 | 179 | 61975 | | |
| Attendance | Feb-23 | | 61 | 4 | 2 |
| | Mar-23 | 36 | 45 | 1 | |
| | Apr-23 | 1 | 75 | | |
| Hours | Feb-23 | | 190 | 20 | 4 |
| | Mar-23 | 157 | 158 | 2 | |
| | Apr-23 | 4 | 229 | | |
| No. Inspected Fishing | Feb-23 | | 22 | | |
| | Mar-23 | | 31 | | |
| | Apr-23 | | 5 | | |
| No. MLS Inspections | Feb-23 | | 17 | | |
| | Mar-23 | | 30 | | |
| | Apr-23 | | 36 | | |
| Days Covered by IFCO's | Feb-23 | | 4 | | |
| | Mar-23 | | 3 | | |
| | Apr-23 | | 3 | | |

Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity

No Activity to report in this quarter.

Intelligence Reporting



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 by all NWIFCA officers* | 69 | 44 | 15 | 72 | |
| ATV patrols | 4 | 17 | 5 | 4 | |
| ATV patrol hrs | 4 | 21.82 | 5.5 | 13 | |
| ATV kms covered | 57.3 | 196 | 57 | 51 | |
| Inspections under taken | 94 | 104 | 6 | 95 | |

