

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting: 26th September 2024 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10**

HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT – 1ST MAY – 31ST JULY

Purpose: For information.

Recommendations:

1. That the report is received

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

Patch	Summary Points
Haverigg Point – Burghmarsh Point – Deputy Master Thinnesen, IFCOs Webber, Schweizer, Haille and Taylor	<p><u>Trawling</u> - Activity was observed from local trawlers targeting prawns (<i>Nephrops</i>) and bait fish (plaice/dogfish) from grounds southwest of St Bees- 6 to 13 nautical miles.</p> <p>Individual vessels were monitored at sea on VMS and AIS - fishing inside the 6 nautical mile limit, during the quarter, with only moderate reports of prawns being caught on the prawn grounds, 320 to 380 kilos for a 24-hour period.</p> <p>The number of large Irish vessels visiting has been low key this year. Information from industry is this is down to visa issues preventing foreign crew from working inside the 12-mile limit line.</p> <p>Fuel prices are continuing to have a significant impact on the fishing industry with vessels deciding to remain in port. This along with gear and bait costs continuing to rise is squeezing profit margins for several vessels.</p> <p><u>Potting</u> - Activity on VMS and AIS over the quarter showed vessels fishing for whelks out of Whitehaven & Fleetwood with vessels engaged in whelk potting outside of the district. Whelk vessels continue to make regular landings into Whitehaven.</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 Isle of Man.</p> <p>Vessels targeting lobster and brown crab continued to fish pots. These vessels targeted areas North and South of Whitehaven, again mixed reports from fishers of good quantities of lobsters and crab being caught.</p> <p>Creel pots for shrimps have again been used with mixed results.</p> <p>A vessel operator has rigged their vessel up with jigging equipment in order to target the line caught mackerel industry. Early indications were positive.</p> <p><u>Angling</u> – Angling activity on boats, beaches and piers was evident in all areas in June and July; with mackerel returning to the Cumbrian coast, however bass has been a poor show so far this year.</p>

	<p><u>Beach nets</u> – No nets seen or reported on any beaches over the quarter with CSFC byelaw 10 being in force.</p> <p><u>ATV Patrol</u> - ATV patrols were carried out with some officers assisting in other areas of the NWIFCA district.</p> <p>Details of all patrols carried out on shore this quarter can be found in the appendices.</p>
<p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – SIFCO Dixon & IFCO Love</p>	<p><u>Mussels</u> - Activity was at the usual low level of up to 10 byelaw 3 permit holders gathering size mussels from Foulney for depuration locally or small relaying orders elsewhere in the UK. Byelaw 3 permit holders from outside the district came to Foulney on a set of high spring tides with a view to gathering large mussels for an order, however there were not sufficient mussels of the quality they required. A lack of high spring tides this reporting period has had an impact on the amount of mussel gathering.</p> <p>No mussel spat or seed has been observed on Foulney in any significant numbers during this reporting period.</p> <p>The South America mussel bed area was accessed using NWIFCA RIB Protector Gamma, and surveyed by IFCO's and Science Officers, the Mussel present was mostly above minimum landing size, some Byelaw 3 permit holders planned to try and access the area with a view to gathering size mussels.</p> <p>Officers continue to undertake mussel sampling from Foulney for the local Authority Environmental Health Department.</p> <p><u>Cockles</u></p> <p>Several cockle stock surveys were undertaken again during the quarter on Flookburgh, Leven and Aldingham/Newbiggin beds due to the stock assessment from the early surveys indicating that there were not enough size cockles to open the beds early in July.</p> <p>Officers continue to undertake cockle samples from two sites near Flookburgh and one site at Newbiggin for the Local Authority.</p> <p><u>Shrimping</u></p> <p>Shrimping activity continued to be at a very low level due to low numbers of suitable sized shrimp being available in the Bay. One shrimp fisherman was observed occasionally fishing in the Leven estuary. No shrimping activity was observed from Flookburgh, although reports were received of one shrimp fisherman going out shrimping occasionally to fulfil a small local order.</p> <p><u>Netting</u></p> <p>Netting activity increased from the previous reporting period, although activity was still at a low level, compared to previous years. Observations were made of vessels netting for pot bait, to coincide with the busier summer potting season, mainly targeting flounders, with a bycatch of sole and plaice. Occasional sightings and reports of vessels fixed netting revealed that bass numbers were looking promising early in the reporting period, but effort and activity decreased during the quarter due to catches not being as good as expected. Large numbers of smooth hounds present in Morecambe Bay meant that net fishermen decided to reduce activity until the Smooth hounds have moved on.</p>

	<p>One recreational byelaw 26 permitted beach net was observed and inspected near Ulverston; no issues were reported. Two byelaw 26 beach nets were observed and inspected in the Leven estuary from Flookburgh, again, no issues.</p> <p>No flue netting was observed after the season opened in July, due to no suitable location being available due to the changing course of the Leven channel.</p> <p><u>Potting</u></p> <p>Potting activity increased as is expected during the Summer Months, although only 1 licensed vessel was active potting for lobster and crab within the District from Barrow, 1 vessel that would usually be active was undergoing maintenance works. 4 licensed vessels continue to work pots outside the district targeting lobster or <i>Nephrops</i>.</p> <p>One licensed vessel from Barrow pots for whelk occasionally.</p> <p><u>Long lines</u></p> <p>One recreational long line was observed near Newbiggin.</p> <p><u>Angling</u></p> <p>Activity increased during the quarter, as is usually the case during the Summer when more target species are available. Vessel angling seemed lower in numbers than previous years.</p> <p>Recreational angling for specimen tope has become more popular.</p> <p>Bass angling was popular on the west coast of Walney, Foulney and the Coast Road.</p> <p>Several licensed vessels were observed targeting Bass using rod and line.</p> <p><u>Bait Collection.</u></p> <p>Occasional sightings of two to three commercial bait diggers in the Duddon estuary.</p> <p>Sightings also recorded of Black lug commercial bait pumping on the Irish sea coast of North Walney.</p> <p>Peeler crab tiling decreased during the quarter, as is usually the case.</p>
<p>Arnside – Lytham</p> <p>IFCO Graham & Edwards</p>	<p><u>General</u></p> <p>Patrols during this quarter have focused on netting activity and angling, particularly on the Fylde coastline.</p> <p>IFCO Graham attended several working group meetings, included one in person regarding the roll out of the new intelligence system Clue which has now gone live. The new system will make it easier to analyse and develop intelligence received.</p> <p>The quarter has a heavy shellfish sampling burden due to Pilling, Knott Spit and Sea Centre requiring weekly sampling during June and two samples a month from July until September. Sampling of the mussels on the Ribble training walls has continued as normal.</p> <p>Area officers attended the Catchwise event at Blackpool Sealife Centre on the evening of 18th June. The project splits the coastline into statistical areas and looks to assess angler numbers</p>

	<p>and catches via volunteers and paid staff. This approach is aimed at negating biases that may occur with self-reported data, such as only keener anglers being involved. The meeting also presented an opportunity to meet members of the angling community.</p> <p>Area officers also completed the following mandatory training in the period: Firefighting, Equality and Diversity and CLUE Introduction training.</p> <p>Comms – New staff profile page is now live. History page is in the process of being updated as is the gallery page. Flexible permit conditions have been published and communicated on the website and our socials.</p> <p><u>Angling</u></p> <p>Beach angling continues from North Pier to Fleetwood on the Fylde coast. Gynn Wall has continued to be popular with over 40 anglers at high water in good weather. Halfmoon Bay has seen heavy angling during the quarter for specimen fishing for smooth hound and Tope. Towards the end of the quarter, catches of Bass have been better on marks south of Fleetwood with reports of poorer catches within Morecambe Bay.</p> <p>Patrols took place over the May bank holiday weekend at Heysham Bass Nursery Area and at other known marks. No compliance issues were found during these patrols</p> <p><u>Bass</u></p> <p>Commercial fishers have complained about a lack of Bass within Morecambe Bay over the past two years and have reported poor catches.</p> <p><u>Cockles and Mussels</u></p> <p>No commercial gathering has occurred due to cockle beds being closed and better mussel stocks being available elsewhere in the district. IFCO Graham has assisted on Lytham and Middleton surveys with the science team.</p> <p><u>Netting</u></p> <p>Low level shore netting was observed at Pilling. Low levels of commercial netting has been observed in the Ribble and infrequent recreational netting has occurred on the Fylde coast.</p> <p><u>Drone</u></p> <p>IFCO Dixon and IFCO Graham carried out the first operational drone patrols took place in June, looking at commercial mussel fishing activity at Foulney.</p>
Dee- Southport – IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor	<p><u>General</u></p> <p>This quarter has saw the continued enforcement of Byelaw 2 - North Wirral Foreshore Bivalve Molluscs along the north Wirral coastline. Despite the closure being in place low-level illegal gathering has still been recorded.</p> <p>Regular shore patrols and inter tidal ATV work has continued to take place. As predicted, with the warmer and better weather conditions officers have noted a slight rise in general fishing activity within the area. That said, recreational angling activity as a whole has been low.</p>

Officers have continued to provide out of area support to enforcement and science in the form of survey work. Sample work on behalf of West Lancashire Council and Mersey Port Health Authority has continued.

As part of their continued professional development, both officers have successfully attended a one-day Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Unconscious Bias course. Officers have also attended the online joint MMO intelligence training sessions in readiness for the introduction of the new Clue intelligence system.

Bay Protector, the area's fishery patrol vessel successfully went through her 5-year coding requirement and is now compliant for going to sea.

As part of the ongoing H&S review, the Liverpool office has had its fire and security alarms updated.

Specific

Hand Gathering Bi Valve

Despite Byelaw 2 being actively enforced low level illegal gathering still continues to take place along the north Wirral coastline. Both cockles and otter clam remain to be targeted throughout. Offence Detection Reports have been completed and sent to the HoE for review.

Regular weekly vehicle patrols continue to patrol the Dee estuary coastline. Both Caldy Blacks and West Kirby mussel beds continue to be monitored for gathering activity with low level musseling activity being recorded.

Recreational Rod Angling

Shore

Eighty-one inspections of shore/beach anglers have taken place during this quarter, the promenades of Wallasey front continuing to remain active. In particular, Seacombe promenade has been recorded as the most popular along with the beach area surrounding Perch Rock. Whiting, plaice, flounder, dab and sole have been recorded.

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

Beach Netting

A reduction in the usual seasonal netting activity has been noted during this quarter.

Officers continue to observe nets along both the north Wirral and Sefton coastlines with very little catch being recorded.

Officers have also recorded in an increase in purse seiner beach activity within the Leasowe Bay area. Overall catches of plaice, sole, smooth hound and thornback ray have been recorded.

Bait Digging

Bait digging remains to be active along both coastlines, the Mockbeggar Wharf area along the north Wirral coastline continues to be the most popular. Some twenty - two inspections have been undertaken with both the pump and spade methods being used.

Recreational Boat Angling

	<p>Recreational angling craft have continued to be sighted around the Liverpool Bay and river Mersey and Dee estuary areas. Catch size have been minimum with bass, mackerel and plaice being recorded during routine inspections.</p> <p><u>Bay Protector</u></p> <p>Bay Protector has recently been active within the area carrying out boarding and closings within the area – a detailed report will be published in the next quarterly report.</p>
<p><u>North Western Protector</u></p> <p>Master Hugh Thinnesen</p>	<p>The weather over the reporting period has been up and down, this along with staff training, crew's leave has resulted in some patrol days at sea being lost.</p> <p>The patrol boat crew along with science officers and Natural England staff, carried out a potting survey both inside and outside of the Allonby Bay HPMA. This work involved setting and retrieving 60 lobster/crab pots from North Western Protector in targeted areas in the Solway Firth. I am pleased to report the survey went well with another survey planned for late August and September.</p> <p>During the quarter we carried out a mussel survey in the upper Solway Firth. This work involved deploying NWIFCA seabed mapping side scan equipment, followed up by deploying the Hamon grab equipment to ground truth areas identified.</p> <p>On the whole compliance has been good with only one verbal warning issued with regards to a very slightly berried Lobster.</p> <p>Priorities/Patrols/Boardings/inspections statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrol district for large vessel infringement of byelaws. • Record data of nets and pots in district. • Inspect lobster/brown crab pots and carry out checks on potting vessels. • Inspect gill nets for compliance with legislation. • Record data of nets. • Inspect vessels for compliance with fishing gear legislation. • Maintain service and repair patrol boats. • Inspect and carry out checks with hobby fishermen vessels NW-IFCA byelaw 4. • Patrol throughout the district for detection of fishery limit line offences. • Byelaw 20 compliance. • Patrols in HPMA (Highly protected marine area). • Patrols in VCP (Voluntary code of practice area). <p>Patrols, boardings, closings and inspections of vessels at sea, along with static gear inspections from Northwestern Protector / Protector Charlie details of which can be found in the Appendices to this report.</p>

	<p>Compliance overall has been good with only 1 verbal warning issued with regards to a berried Lobster.</p> <p>All vessel maintenance and service schedules on North Western Protector and Protector Charlie are all up to date.</p> <p>All maintenance and services are all up to date.</p>
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General Update

Training

During the reporting period the following training took place.

- Four staff members completed the crane & loader training, slinger signaller training and tests.
- All staff completed Equality, Inclusion and Diversity training in June.
- One staff member international computer driving licence course.
- Five members of staff completed their VHF radio course.
- Five staff passed their PPR course.
- Two applications for commercial endorsement were successful.
- All 12 members of the enforcement team completed training in the CLUE intel database.
- Five Powerboat level 2 course completed.
- Firefighting course at Blackpool Nautical College, eight staff.
- Two Emergency First Aid at work certificates passed.
- One Day Skipper theory course passed
- One approved engine course completed.

Health & Safety

During this period officers have been working on reviewing and updating operational policies and procedures where required.

Byelaw Update – Netting Byelaw

During this period a significant amount of work has taken place with re drafting and developing the proposed new netting byelaw. For further information please see the following agenda item and attached copy of the byelaw.

CLUE Intelligence database

Historically intelligence records have been locally stored as well as fed into the central intelligence hub managed by the MMO. During this quarter a new system has been procured and adopted by IFCA called CLUE. The system standardises and modernise intelligence reporting through a secure online portal easing the sharing between partner agencies and making information more searchable and easily developing links between compliance risks allowing more effective enforcement planning.

Intelligence Reporting

The following table demonstrate the information reports submitted for this reporting quarter.

<u>Intelligence Reports</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>IFCOS</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>46</u>

Officers continue to conduct risk based and intel led patrols across the district, taskings are based upon seasonal, operational and priority areas allowing the strategic deployment of resources where required.

Moving forwards offences are no longer recorded on the UK Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System (MCSS) but documented as outcomes against incidents on the CLUE Database.

Permit Database

This quarter saw the introduction of the new permit system which has been developed over the last couple of years with contracted developers. This is a system which has been introduced with five other IFCA's. The system assists with issuing permits, gives stakeholders a portal to submit returns, view their data and can issue administrative reminders for returns. Currently both Byelaw 4 and Byelaw 3 permits are issued and managed through the system.

There are still some teething issues surrounding the system, but officers are working with developers to rectify this. At the time of writing the admin team conducted a visit to the Flookburgh fishery to assist Byelaw 3 permit holders in completing their returns and help resolve any issues.

Specific Fishery Reporting

Figure 1 below shows the landings data for cockles and mussels fished under NWIFCA Byelaw 3, Throughout this reporting period there have been returns for cockles due to closed season. Figure two demonstrates that the primary fishery for mussels has been the Foulney bed in North Morecambe Bay, but that other smaller fisheries remain active and provide sustainable local beds for permit holders to access. Further Details can be found at the bottom of this report.

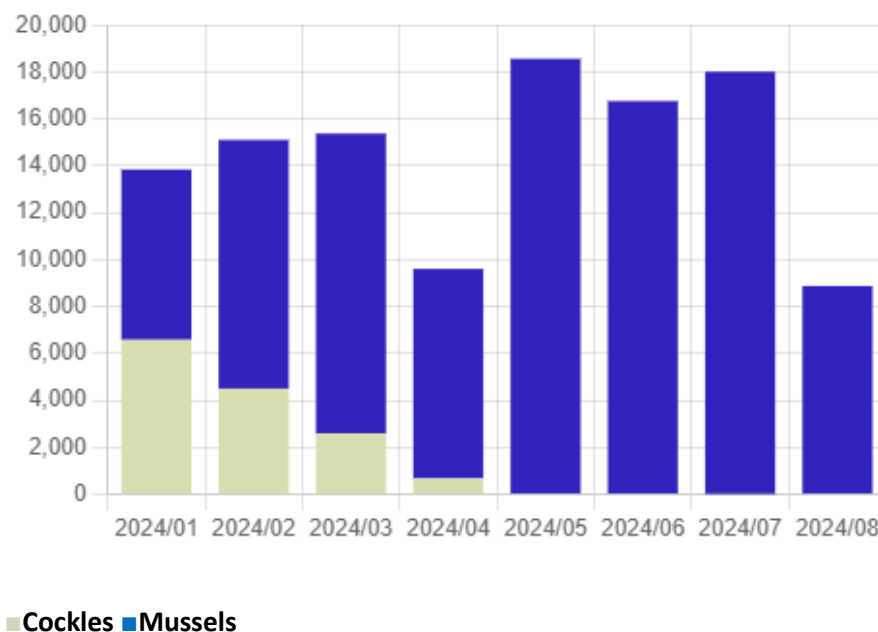


Fig 1. Byelaw returns cockles and mussels

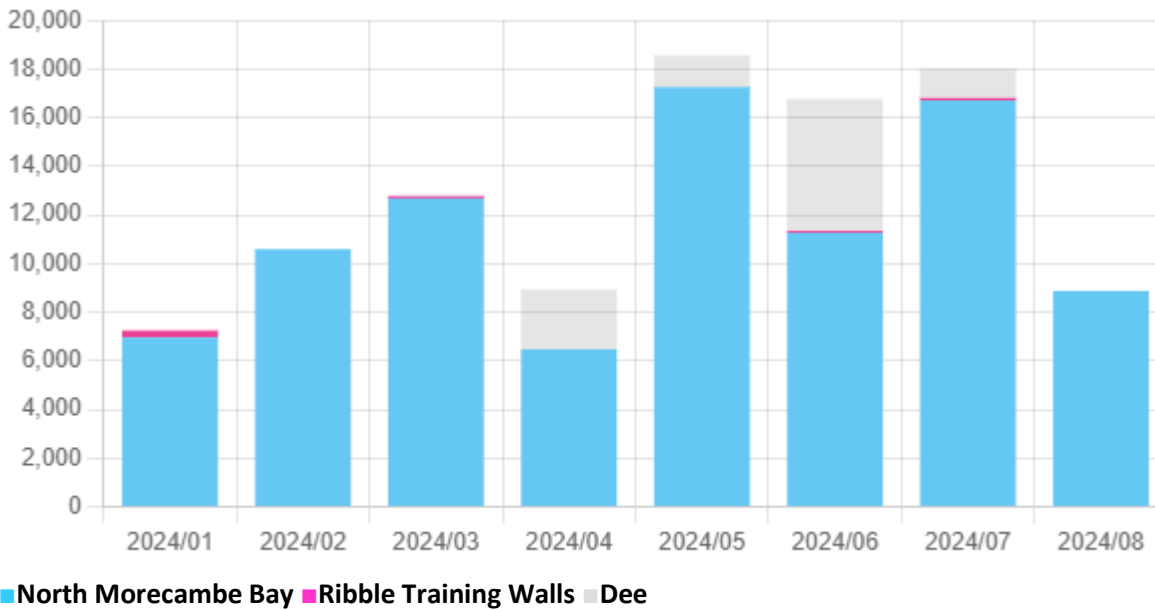


Fig 2. Byelaw 3 mussel beds fished

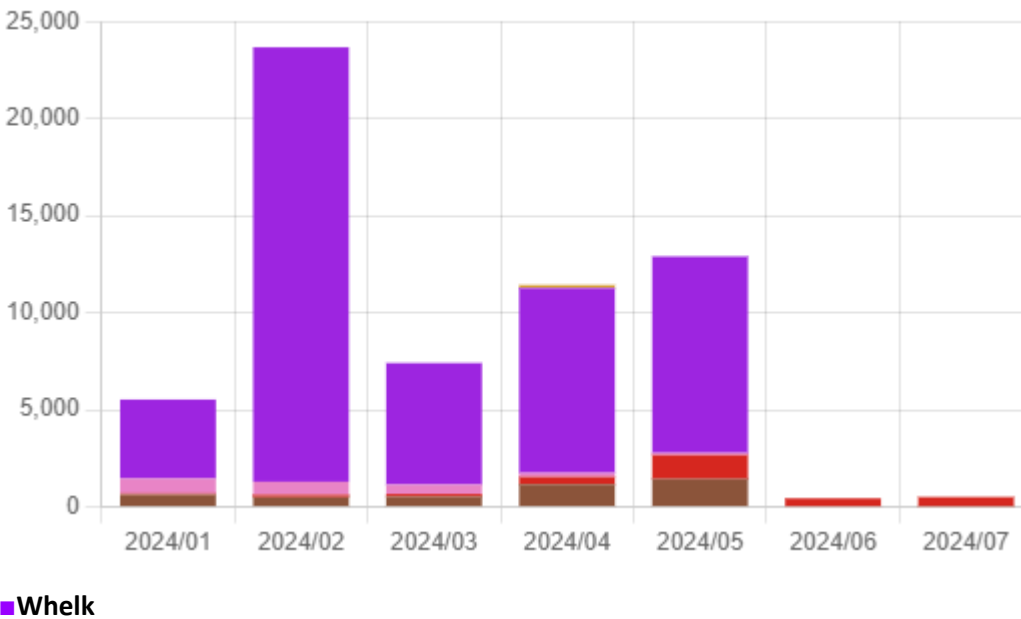


Fig 3. Total Byelaw 4 total returns reported

From the Byelaw 4 returns shown in figure 3 it is possible to see that through the winter and spring months whelks were the predominant fishery. If the Whelk landings are removed from the chart as shown in Fig 4, the breadth of crustaceans now targeted in the district can be seen. Whelk landings have dropped from inside the district with the vessels fishing further offshore outside of the six nautical mile limit of the District. As shown in the figure below, the predominant crustacean landed from within the district was Lobster.

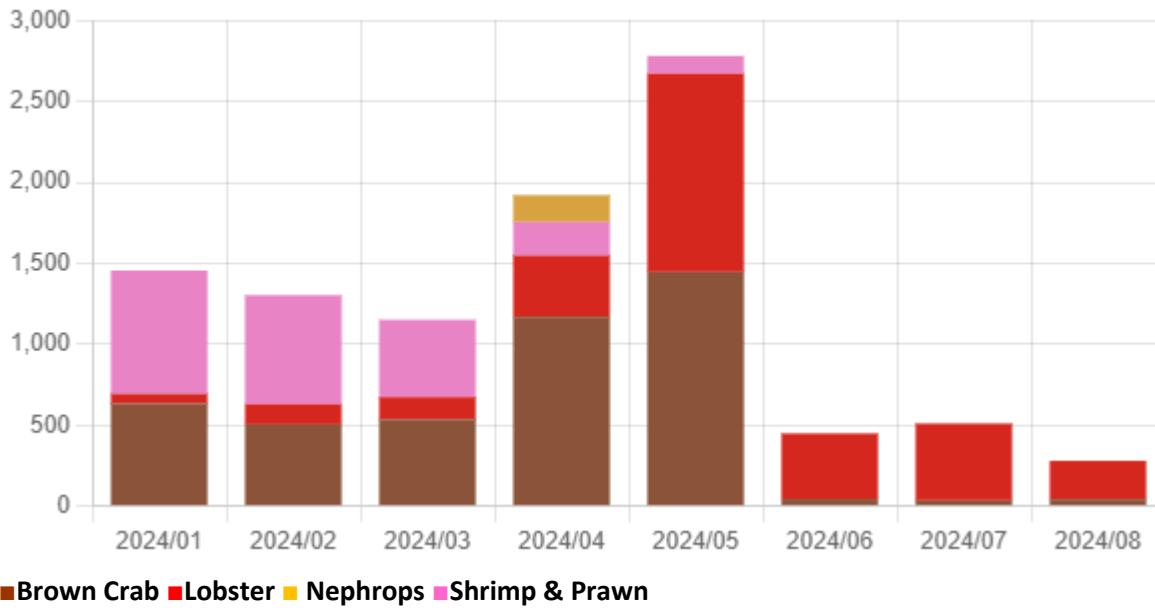


Fig 4. Byelaw 4 returns for crustaceans

Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity

Only three offences were reported during the quarter for breaches of NWIFCA Byelaw 2. Due to the small amounts of shellfish involved the issues were resolved by means of a Verbal Warning by the officer. Repeat offences have not been detected.

Shore Based Activity Report

Number of:	Haverigg Point – Burgh Marsh Point	Haverigg Point – Arnside	Arnside – River Alt	Mersey, Wirral & Dee
Shore patrols by all NWIFCA officers*	74	63	33	75
ATV patrols	8	27	18	16
ATV patrol hrs	24.35	40.99	37.48	39.75
ATV kms covered	192	464.8	358.03	362
Inspections under taken	109	40	18	137

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

Annex A

Annex A

Vessel	No of patrol (days)	Patrol time (hrs)	Distance patrolled (nm)	Boarding's	Closings	Sightings	Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
North Western Protector / Protector Charlie	20	168.17	1221	4	14	137	557
Protector Gamma	2	9	70	0	0	0	0
Totals for the quarter	22	177.17	1291	4	14	137	557

Annex B

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boardings	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
<u>North Western Protector</u>									
01.05.24	13.58	140	Prawn Pitch/ Selker/ W of Walney/ Lune Deep/ Shell Flats/ St Bees Head	Potting, trawling, whelking, angling	EMS Walney Channel to Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	14	56

02.05.24	11.50	70	Prawn Pitch/ Selker/ Haverigg Point/ Harrington to Maryport	Potting, trawling, angling	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	0	7	0
09.05.24	12.00	84	Prawn Pitch/ Selker/ Duddon Estuary	Potting, trawling, angling	Duddon Estuary SPA	1	0	6	43
10.05.24	13.67	62	Prawn Pitch/ St Bees Head	Trawling, netting	Cumbria Coast MCZ	3	0	21	47
15.05.24	1.17	6	Fishery patrol/ side scan & grab survey/ engine failure			0	0	1	0
16.05.24	1.33	6	Engine Trial			0	0	3	0
17.05.24	8.08	70	Prawn Pitch/ Selker/ Sellafield/ St Bees Head and crew training	Potting, trawling, angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	3	10	40
30.05.24	10.50	83	Prawn Pitch/ Walney/ Haverigg/ Selker/ Seascale/ Caulderton	Trawling, potting, angling	Drigg Coast SAC, W of Walney MCZ	0	2	2	47
31.05.24	9.83	70	Prawn Pitch/ Walney/ Haverigg/ Selker/ Seascale/ Caulderton	Trawling, potting, angling	Drigg Coast SAC, W of Walney MCZ	0	3	3	38
11.06.24	5.25	45	Fishery Patrol/ Potting Survey	Potting, netting,	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	0	9	15

12.06.24	4.92	54	St Bees Head/ Prawn Pitch and Scallop Bank	Potting, angling, netting & dredging	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	6	26
13.06.24	7.67	45	Fishery Patrol/ Potting Survey	Potting, netting,	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	0	0	25
15.06.24	11.17	54	Fishery Patrol/ Potting Survey	Potting, netting	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	0	7	0
19.06.24	17.58	70	Fishery Patrol/ Potting Survey	Potting, netting, angling	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	0	0	0
08.07.24	4.67	46	Prawn Pitch/ Selker/ Caulderton/ St Bees Head to Workington	Potting, netting, trawling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	13	47
09.07.24	6.08	60	Parton to Maryport/ St Bees Head to Sellafield	Potting, netting, angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	1	40
23.07.24	7	53	Prawn Pitch/ St Bees Head to Workington	Potting, netting, angling, trawling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	1	7	40
24.07.24	6.25	55	Prawn Pitch/ St Bees Head to Allonby	Potting, netting, angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ, Allonby Bay HPMA	0	1	7	20

25.07.24	8.67	75	St Bees Head/ Prawn Pitch/ Scallop Bank/ Workington	Potting, trawling, angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	1	2	32
31.07.24	7.25	73	St Bees Head/ Prawn Pitch	Potting, netting, angling, trawling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	3	18	41
21	168.17	1221				4	14	137	557

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
<u>Protector Gamma</u>									
13.06.24	3	35	South America Mussel Bed	General patrol no enforcement		0	0	0	0
24.07.24	6	35	South America Mussel Bed	Survey		0	0	0	0
2	9	70				0	0	0	0

Byelaw 3 Reporting

Activity		West Kirby Mussel Bed			North Morecambe Bay incl. Foulney Mussel Beds			Leasow Cockle Bed			Pilling Cockle Bed			Ribble Training Walls Mussel Bed		
		Cockle (<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>)	Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	Seed Mussel	Cockle (<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>)	Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	Seed Mussel	Cockle (<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>)	Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	Seed Mussel	Cockle (<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>)	Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	Seed Mussel	Cockle (<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>)	Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	Seed Mussel
Amount removed (kg)	July 2024		15600		22835		1			1				100		
Amount removed (kg)	June 2024		12109		12203									80		
Amount removed (kg)	May 2024		9100		28365											
Activity		West Kirby Mussel Bed			North Morecambe Bay incl. Foulney Mussel Beds			Leasow Cockle Bed			Pilling Cockle Bed			Ribble Training Walls Mussel Bed		
Attendance	July 2024		13		42		1			1				1		
Attendance	June 2024		10		26									1		
Attendance	May 2024		7		45											
Activity		West Kirby Mussel Bed			North Morecambe Bay incl. Foulney Mussel Beds			Leasow Cockle Bed			Pilling Cockle Bed			Ribble Training Walls Mussel Bed		
Hours	July 2024		78		109		2			2				4		
Hours	June 2024		60		74									4		
Hours	May 2024		42		112											