

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting: 27th June 2024 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10**

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
Haverigg Point – Burghmarsh Point – IFCO Thinnesen, Thinnesen	<p>Trawling – Local vessels have been targeting Nephrops and bait fish (plaice & dogfish) for potting. They have been fishing outside the NWIFCA district. On the vessel monitoring system 32 vessels have been seen fishing outside the district, 20 being local vessel sightings and 12 from ports outside the North West.</p> <p>Vessels landing into Cumbria have landed to co-ops and sold to the public.</p> <p>Small landings of Plaice and thornback ray have been reported.</p> <p>Potting – Whelk activity has been monitored inside and outside of the NWIFCA District with vessels from Fleetwood, Whitehaven and Maryport. Grounds across the Irish sea in Welsh English and Scottish waters are being accessed by whelk potting vessels.</p> <p>Some local vessels are targeting lobster and brown crab from pots under the NWIFCA Byelaw 4 potting permit. These vessels targeted areas north and south of Whitehaven. Mixed reports were gathered from fishers, of varying quantities of lobster and crab being caught.</p> <p>Creel pots for shrimps have been used, with mixed results.</p> <p>Seven sightings on VMS with lobster boats, 40 sightings on VMS with whelkers, most of which were outside of the district.</p> <p>Angling - Angling activity on beaches and piers was evident at all areas in numbers, from February to the end of April 2024. Catches varied from small dabs, whiting, plaice, dog fish and thornback rays. Some codlings were caught in dark hours which is normal for the time of year leading, into the spring. Five night patrols were carried out.</p> <p>Beach Nets – Four nets were inspected on beaches over the quarter.</p> <p>VMS satellite surveillance work was undertaken with 88 vessels monitored.</p>

	<p>Crewing and being Deputy Master O/B NWP.</p> <p>ATV Patrol – ATV patrols were carried out around Nethertown and Braystones, mostly to familiarise and train the new staff on quad bike operations.</p> <p>Details of all patrols carried out on shore this quarter can be found in the patrol statistics.</p>
<p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – IFCO Dixon</p>	<p>Mussels</p> <p>Activity was at the usual low level of up to eight byelaw 3 permit holders gathering size mussels from Foulney for depuration locally or small relaying orders elsewhere in the UK. Relaying orders were disrupted for several weeks in the reporting period when the mussels on the lays were spawning, so no orders were required at that time.</p> <p>Officers continue to undertake mussel sampling from Foulney for the local Authority Environmental Health Department.</p> <p>Cockles</p> <p>Several cockle stock surveys were undertaken during the quarter on Flookburgh, Leven and Aldingham/Newbiggin beds as a part of the trial surveys for a potential July fishery opening.</p> <p>Several cockle prospecting requests were received and IFCO's observed and communicated to some fishermen and buyers who came to Flookburgh to check the cockle stock situation.</p> <p>Officers continue to undertake cockle samples from two sites near Flookburgh and one site at Newbiggin for the Local Authority.</p> <p>Shrimping</p> <p>Shrimping activity increased during the mid to late part of the reporting period, but this was still at a low level compared to several years ago with only three shrimp tractors being observed, in the Leven estuary and Kent channel, catches were enough to fulfil small orders locally.</p> <p>Netting</p> <p>Netting activity was almost none existent during the quarter, with only one beach net set for Flatfish observed in the Leven estuary near the end of the reporting period, and Licensed vessels from the Barrow area began to fish with fixed nets in the outer areas of Morecambe Bay and in the Irish Sea west of Walney, although this activity was only observed right at the end of the reporting period with reported catches being low, I expect this activity to increase during the coming reporting period.</p> <p>Potting</p> <p>Potting was again at a low level during the quarter, with one vessel from Barrow observed very occasionally prospecting for lobsters and Crab for local sales, and potting for Nephrops outside the district. Activity increased gradually</p>

	<p>towards the end of April, with some local vessels beginning to work pots for lobster outside the district.</p> <p>No whelk potting has been observed during the reporting period.</p> <p>Long lines</p> <p>No long line activity was observed this reporting period.</p> <p>Angling</p> <p>Activity increased during the quarter, as is usually the case when the first Bass of the season are reported. Popular areas towards the later reporting period were the Irish sea coast of Walney and the Coast Road.</p> <p>Reports of anglers seeing an increasing variety of species continue, with a John Dory being recorded caught by an angler.</p> <p>1 Commercial angling vessel was observed targeting Bass during the later part of the reporting period when conditions were favourable.</p> <p>Recreational angling vessel activity increased as the weather conditions became more favourable during April.</p> <p>Bait Collection</p> <p>Occasional sightings of 2-3 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>Crab tile fishermen were observed during the mid to late reporting period in the Roa island area, with inspections undertaken to check for the presence of undersize edible crab, none were observed.</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>During the quarter IFCO's worked with Environment Agency Officers taking part in a national Elver enforcement operation, IFCO's assisted with the use of the Authority's enforcement drone.</p>
<p>Arnside – Lytham</p> <p>IFCO Graham & Edwards</p>	<p>This has been a quiet quarter with fishing starting to increasing towards the end. General inspections occurred throughout the district.</p> <p>During this quarter officers have assisted in other areas such as the Penfold Cockle Fishery in Southport and the Science department on Foulhaze Cockle bed.</p> <p>When not assisting in other areas, officers continue with routine inspections of the coastline and individual responsibilities of Intel and communications.</p> <p>Sampling</p>

	<p>IFCOS Graham and Edwards have continued to carry out regular sampling of mussels and cockles for the councils.</p> <p>Recreational Angling</p> <p>There was very little angling occurring earlier on in the quarter, with most occurring on Heysham North Wall or Morecambe Promenade.</p> <p>Angling picked up as the weather improved.</p> <p>An increase in bait collection was observed.</p> <p>Heysham Bass Nursery</p> <p>IFCOS's patrol area saw the removal of fishing line, packets of lures, and pieces of metal that were clearly used to run fishing line.</p> <p>Patrols were increased due to these findings.</p> <p>Bass Fishing</p> <p>Bass fishing activity increased towards the end of the quarter.</p> <p>Commercial Fishing</p> <p>Low levels of commercial activity were noted in Morecambe and Fleetwood towards the end of the quarter.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Officers completed RYA First Aid Training.</p> <p>Public Engagement</p> <p>IFCO Edwards organized a set of consultation events regarding the new netting byelaw across the district.</p>
<p>Dee-Southport – IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor</p>	<p>General</p> <p>During this quarter, officers focused their efforts on overseeing the enforcement of the Penfold cockle fishery in Southport until its seasonal closure at the end of April. Afterward, they concentrated their efforts on illegal shellfish gathering activities along the north Wirral coastline. Byelaw 2 – North Wirral Foreshore Bivalve Molluscs remains in effect to enforce this matter.</p> <p>When not enforcing Byelaw 2, officers continued to monitor the mussel beds on the Dee estuary, as well as rod angling and netting activities along both the north Wirral and Sefton coastlines.</p> <p>Officers continued to collect monthly MSH samples on behalf of West Lancashire Council and Mersey Port Health Authority, a task that remains ongoing. As part</p>

	<p>of their professional development, officers attended a one-day RYA first aid and firefighting course.</p> <p>In addition to their enforcement duties, officers provided boat crew support to the science department during a recent inspection of the Foulnaze cockle bed with stakeholders. They have also participated in the NWIFCA netting consultation in New Brighton with stakeholders and members of the public.</p> <p>Specific</p> <p>Hand Gathering Bi Valve</p> <p>Leading up to the seasonal closure at the end of April, officers observed and inspected 110 B3 permit gatherers working the fishery. During this period, no enforcement issues were noted or recorded. Seasonal closure notices have been posted to indicate that the fishery is now closed.</p> <p>RECREATIONAL ROD ANGLING</p> <p>Shore</p> <p>Forty-nine inspections of shore anglers were conducted this quarter, with the promenades of Wallasey front remaining active. The most popular areas include the promenades of Wallasey front, King's Parade, New Brighton, and the promenade to Otterspool. Catch recordings continue to be minimal due to a positive catch and release approach by anglers.</p> <p>Netting</p> <p>Netting activities have continued throughout this quarter, with set nets being observed and inspected along the Sefton and north Wirral coastlines. During inspections, officers recorded catches of sole, plaice, thornback ray, and mullet. All nets were found to be compliant.</p>
<p><u>North</u> <u>Western</u> <u>Protector</u></p> <p>Master Hugh Thinnesen</p>	<p>As can be expected at this time of year, the weather was mainly poor resulting in a number of patrol days at sea being lost.</p> <p>It has again been reported that fuel prices are continuing to have a significant impact on the fishing industry, with some vessels deciding to remain in port. This along with gear and bait costs, are squeezing profit margins for a number of vessels to the limit.</p> <p>Fishing activity in the district amongst the local fleet has on the whole been low key, with only a couple of light landings of Nephrops (prawns) and Thornback Ray being made into Whitehaven.</p> <p>A number of visiting scallop vessels have been making regular visits into Whitehaven during the reporting period, with good landings of scallops being reported back to officers.</p>

Whelk vessels continue to make regular landings into Whitehaven.

The patrol boat crew along with science officers carried out tests on our underwater equipment. I am pleased to report that no faults were reported, and the equipment was working fine.

Priorities/Patrols/Boardings/inspections statistics:

- 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 NWIFCA byelaw 4. The old NW&NW byelaw 26 & 27 and the old CSFC byelaw 10.
- Patrol throughout the district for detection of fishery limit line offences.
- Byelaw 20 compliance.
- Patrols inside Allonby HPMA.
- Patrol inside of Voluntary Code of Practice around St Bees Head.

Patrols boardings and inspections of vessels at sea, along with static gear inspections logged from North Western Protector and Protector Charlie can be found in the appendices to the Head of Enforcement's report.

Compliance on the whole has been good with only 1 verbal warning issued for marking static gear with regards to the potting byelaw no. 4.

All vessel maintenance and service schedules on Northwestern Protector and Protector Charlie are all up to date.

Training

During the reporting period the following training took place.

- In February five staff attended the IFCA officer training course in Torquay, all passing the course required to become warranted officers.
- One officer attended an ATV training course and a trailer towing course.

- Six members of staff completed their level 2 food hygiene training for compliancy with the incoming workboat code 3 regulation.
- 5 staff attended a firefighting course and 12 completed the RYA certificate in First Aid in April.
- Three members of the team passed a vessel stability course during the reporting period.

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.

Joint Working

During this period joint working took place with colleagues from the environment agency. This did include the deployment of the NWIFCA enforcement team drone. Flying at night tested both the pilots and the drone capabilities.

Meetings

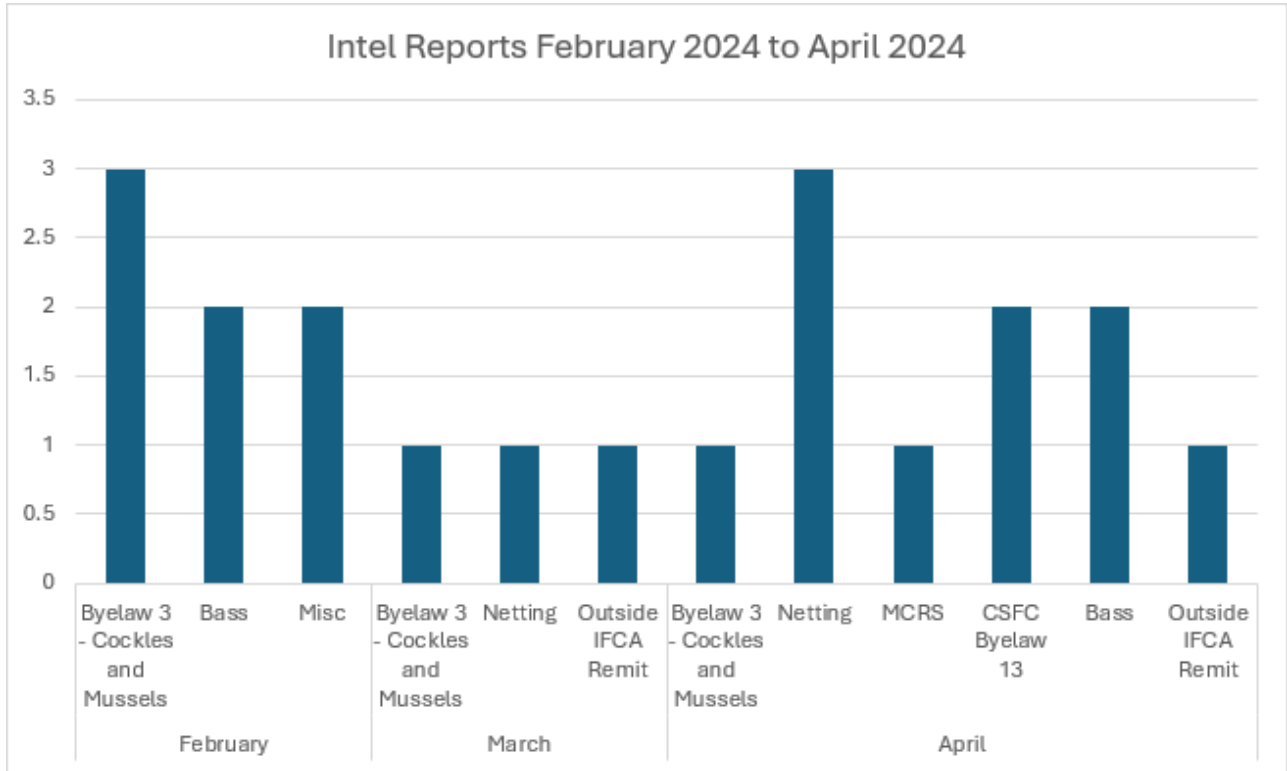
Head of Enforcement has continued to attend regular meetings of NWIFCA committees and groups. In February head of Enforcement was invited to and subsequently attended the Environment Agency enforcement conference. This was a great opportunity to develop joint working and meet other agencies and learn from each other in how different agencies operate.

Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity

During the reporting period only one sanction was applied, a formal caution was issued for a breach of the NWIFCA potting permit byelaw. Investigation costs of £3662 were applied and paid by the recipient. The caution serves as a formal record of the offence.

Intelligence Reporting

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.



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*	93	68	11		49
ATV patrols	4	22	6		19
ATV patrol hrs	13	34.34	16		36.5
ATV kms covered	163.8	388.1	69		371
Inspections under taken	170	25	13		177

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

Annex A

Vessel	No of patrol (days)	Patrol time (hrs)	Distance patrolled (nm)	Boarding's	Closings	Sightings	Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
North Western Protector	17	120.08	1105	1	35	56	588
Protector Gamma	1	3.5	8	0	0	0	0
Totals for the quarter	18	123.58	1113	1	35	56	588

Annex B

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections (inc. gear inspections)
<u>North Western Protector</u>									
06/02/24	8.00	75	Prawn Pitch - Selker - Scallop Bank	Trawling	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA	0	0	1	0
07/02/24	6.42	34	Prawn Pitch - Sellafield	Trawling and potting	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	4	8	28
08/02/24	5.08	46	Whitehaven to Silloth	Trawling, recreational angling, potting and netting activities	Allonby Bay HPMA/ MCZ	0	0	1	36
13/02/24	6.83	70	Harrington - Workington - Maryport - Silloth	Potting, recreational angling and netting	Solway Firth EMS	0	0	1	30
14/02/24	6.75	75	Prawn pitch - North Walney - Workington - Harrington - Parton	Trawling, recreational angling, potting and netting	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA	0	0	1	40
16/02/24	9.50	98	Prawn pitch - Lune deep	Potting, whelking, angling and netting	Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC	0	0	3	55
05/03/24	9.83	90	Lune Deep - Walney - Selker - Caulderton - St Bees - Saltom Bay	Potting, angling & netting	Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC	0	3	3	35

					Cumbria Coast MCZ				
06/03/24	11.00	70	Prawn pitch - Selker - Seascale - Drigg - Barn Scar - St Bees - Saltom	Trawling, potting netting and angling activities	Drigg Coast SAC	0	3	4	40
07/03/24	2.50	20	Patrol / Side scan testing			0	3	3	25
11/03/24	5.50	45	Prawn Pitch - Scallop Bank - Harrington - Parton	Trawling, potting, netting & angling	Solway Firth SPA	0	3	3	14
12/03/24	6.75	60	Workington - Maryport – HMPA (Allonby Bay) - Corner buoy	Potting, netting and angling	Allonby Bay HPMA	0	2	3	40
27/03/24	1.58	12	Carry out sea trials check for oil leaks on steering ram			0	0	0	0
03/04/24	11.83	130	Prawn Pitch- Walney - Lune deep - Lytham	Potting, angling and netting	Lune Deep SAC	1	4	5	40
04/04/24	10.50	90	Parton - Workington - Maryport - HPMA - St Bees Voluntary Code of Practice (VCP) area - Caulderton - Selker - Black leg rock - Silecroft	Netting, potting and angling	Allonby Bay HPMA, Cumbria Coast MCZ, Drigg Coast SAC	0	3	4	60
23/04/24	6.25	70	St Bees VCP - Prawn pitch - Selker	Trawling, potting, netting and angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	6	6	47

24/04/24	5.83	60	St Bees head Prawn Pitch	Trawling, potting, netting and angling	Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	4	4	50
25/04/24	5.92	60	Parton - Workington - Maryport - HPMA – St Bees VCP area	Trawling, potting, netting and angling	Allonby Bay HPMA, Cumbria Coast MCZ	0	0	6	48
17	120.08	1105				1	35	56	588

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boarding	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
<u>Protector Gamma</u>									
20/03/24	3.5	8	Ribble Training Walls	To drop off/collect Science staff carrying out survey of Foulhaze		0	0	0	0
1	3.5	8				0	0	0	0