

**NWIFCA Meeting:
9th December 2021: 11:00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
9**

**HEAD OF ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT –
1ST AUGUST 2021 – 31ST OCTOBER 2021**

Purpose: For information.

Recommendations:

1. That the report is received

Introduction

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

Patch	Summary Points
Haverigg Point – Burghmarsh Point – IFCO Thinnesen & Thompson	<p><u>TRAWLING</u> - Some activity from local and visiting vessels targeting prawns (nephrops) from grounds, southwest of St Bees Head. Reports were of 40 - 70 stones of prawns for larger vessels and 20 - 50 stones of prawns for smaller vessels, being caught in the early part of the quarter, in daylight hours. It is reported that the vessels were towing morning hauls then evening tows for nephrops, then some vessels would target fish during the afternoon hauls.</p> <p>Some vessels from Maryport and Whitehaven have been selling direct to the public on the quayside, both fish and nephrops.</p> <p>By late October all but one vessel from Maryport, had changed their gear over to fish for King scallops, ready for the Manx fishery opening on 1st November, and Cardigan Bay fishery also.</p> <p>42 single rigged vessels were monitored on Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) throughout the quarter.</p> <p>A new addition to the Maryport fleet was purchased. The vessel is a single rigged trawler, called “Charisma” MT15, we wish her fair sailing and good catches.</p> <p><u>POTTING</u> - Activity on VMS over the quarter showed whelking vessels out of Whitehaven, Fleetwood and Maryport frequently seen, with around 100 sightings of vessels engaged in whelk potting outside of the district. When weather permitted, vessels from Whitehaven were seen fishing in an area known locally as the “Three Corners”, where the median lines from the Isle of Man, Scotland and England meet, and west of Lune Deeps.</p> <p>Commercial inshore potting vessels were inspected during the quarter.</p> <p><u>ANGLING</u> - Throughout the quarter – number of anglers were seen on the piers, beaches and 16 angling vessels seen from piers and beaches throughout the district. Bass were being caught from nearly all areas at the beginning of the quarter, where “schoolies” were the norm, but to the end of August and mid to end of September, larger bass were seen, with one person catching a 17lb fish, which apparently was released in good faith as the fish was a female.</p> <p>Officers posted bass regulation notices around the district to remind fishers of 2021 bass Regulations.</p> <p>Some educational words were given to the odd angler, some Intel led patrols were</p>

	<p>carried out mostly on beaches to the south of Whitehaven i.e., Eskmeals and Silecroft areas. All fishers that were inspected were compliant with bass regulations and fish sizes.</p> <p>The number of recreational anglers sighted and inspected, on beaches, piers and vessels can be found in the appendix.</p> <p>Notices were also posted reminding fishers of the CSFC byelaw 9 restrictions on size of thornback rays, which remains 45cm from wing tip to wing tip.</p> <p>Some fish size charts and byelaw booklets were handed out to fishers that requested them.</p> <p><u>BEACH NETS AND LONG LINES</u> – no beach nets were seen on any beach during the quarter. On a couple of occasions, officers came across beach longliners mostly set at Nethertown and Beckfoot flats, all of which were aware of fish sizes and bass regulations. No fish were seen at times of inspections, although, reports from one of the fishermen said that he had two bass the day before, at Beckfoot, and all over 42cm. One person at Nethertown caught the odd turbot and thornback rays.</p> <p><u>OFFENCES DETECTED</u> Two offences were detected throughout the quarter, for infringements against Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee byelaws which are still in force. These were as follows:</p> <p>Byelaw 4 (a) – marking and sighting of fixed nets, traps, pots & lines – which was dealt with through education and by means of an advisory letter. Byelaw 25 – requirement for escape gaps in pots, creels and traps – two offences detected where one had no escape gap in the pot, and the other which did have an escape gap, it was however obstructed. These infringements were dealt with by means of an official warning letter.</p> <p><u>OTHER DUTIES</u> - Other duties throughout the quarter were VMS satellite surveillance work. Details of all patrols carried out on shore this quarter can be found in the appendix.</p>
<p>Haverigg Point – Arnside – IFCO Dixon</p>	<p><u>Mussels</u> -</p> <p>2 mussel dredgers worked the South America area during early August. Hand gathering activity decreased during the quarter, from approximately 10 at the start of the quarter, to only 1 or 2 occasionally at the end of the period, reasons being given that the seed mussel on the 'island' on Foulney was covering the large mussels and making gathering difficult. During the quarter I began the classification process sampling from the Duddon mussel bed which has again developed, although much of the stock was still below mls at the end of the reporting period.</p> <p><u>Cockles</u> – No activity reported throughout the reporting period.</p> <p><u>Shrimps</u> – another poor year, activity increased during the last month of the reporting period, although catches were still reported to be below expectations, and the size of the shrimps still fairly small.</p> <p><u>Netting</u> – Very few beach observed, due to the Bass restrictions, occasional nets were observed in the Leven estuary, set for pot bait. Licensed and authorised vessels launching from Walney/Barrow reported catches of Sole, Mullet and Bass.</p> <p><u>Angling</u> – again very popular during this quarter, with an increasing number of Bass being present in the Leven estuary, and along the coast road, and Walney island. Increasing numbers of Thornback rays were reported this year.</p> <p><u>Potting</u> – 1 vessel worked inside the district, from Walney channel, landing lobster, crab and whelks occasionally, 1 other vessel sighted very occasionally from Barrow, and another larger vessel from North of my area occasionally sighted towards the outer limits</p>

<p>Arnside – Lytham IFCO Graham & Burdekin</p>	<p>of the district. 2 vessels from Barrow continue to work pots outside of the district.</p> <p><u>Cockles</u></p> <p>In the area covering Arnside to Lytham St Annes the main fishery has been on Pilling Sands with between 10 and 20 fishers per day. The fishery was difficult at first due to the amount of fine sediment on the shore but winter weather has washed this away and allowed for a modest consistent fishery.</p> <p><u>Angling</u></p> <p>Anglers and rod and line commercial fishermen within the area saw good Bass landings in the beginning of the quarter reducing swiftly as the Autumn set in as per usual for the area. There have been landings of cod and plaice by anglers with no fish being of the larger end of the size spectrum observed by officers or anecdotally by anglers.</p> <p><u>Mussels</u></p> <p>Mussel beds on the Wyre returned as a B classification sparking some interest but no commercial activity has taken place yet.</p> <p><u>Bait digging</u></p> <p>Commercial bait digging continues throughout the area from Fleetwood to Lytham and a small amount on Pilling sands.</p>
<p>Dee- Southport – IFCO Brownrigg, Taylor</p>	<p><u>GENERAL</u></p> <p>With the gradual ease of covid restrictions a certain sense of normality has returned to the Southern area. Regular routine shore patrols, inter tidal ATV work along with premises inspections have all taken place during this quarter. The Emergency Byelaw remains in place banning the gathering of all bi valve mollusc.</p> <p>From the 1st September, Byelaw 13a was also brought in as part of the fisheries management plan and NWIFCA signage still remains in place along the coastline highlighting this. Officers have continued to provide out of area support during the cockle and mussel surveys and MSH sample collections. Officers have also used this period to continue to take some well-earned annual leave and carry out officer personal development.</p> <p><u>SPECIFIC</u></p> <p><u>HAND GATHERING BI VALVE</u></p> <p>Despite both byelaws being in place officers were still active in carrying out enforcement action against persons attempting to gather bi valve mollusc. During this quarter some 220 inspections have taken place.</p> <p>While carrying out sample collection duties at Piling, officers carried out enforcement inspections on 11 x B3 permit holders who were active on the bed. We are pleased to say that no undersize or B3 permit infringements were recorded.</p> <p>To date, officers have not observed any form of mussel gathering on Caldy Blacks or West Kirby mussel beds. Officers will continue to monitor activities along the north Wirral coastline and Dee estuary as part of Operations Wistful and Notorious.</p> <p><u>RECREATIONAL NETTING</u></p> <p>Netting activity along the north Wirral and Sefton coastlines has remained active</p>

throughout this quarter. To date, some 35 inspections have taken place along both coastlines; with again the north Wirral coastline remaining the most popular.

Modest catches by purse seiner, trammel and demersal nets continue to be recorded with: sole, plaice, flounder and mullet all being observed. In accordance with NWSFC Byelaw 10 and 19 netters have been routinely inspected both on the beach and on landing. All netters have been compliant with no undersize to be found on landing.

During my last report I highlighted the frustrations from the general public; in particular social media, which was portraying incorrect information regarding netting activities within the area.

Matters came to a head when a member of the general public tried to impersonate an IFCO (By means of showing some form identification) and attempt to inspect a local netter while out netting on the beach. This issue has been reported to HoE for attention.

The issue further developed when officers encountered Sea Shepherd and North Wales Hunt Saboteurs (NWHS) active along the coastline carrying out 'inspections' against local netters.

Officers have effectively engaged with both organisations and the general public by continuing to offer advice and guidance.

Among their many actions, Sea Shepherd is a direct action group designed to impede what it believes is illegal or unregulated activities; NWHS were present in offering support. Netters now have the contact details of both officers and are actively encouraged to get in touch, if and when, the needs arise.

Observations suggest both Sea Shepherd and other direct action groups intend to return from April 22 or when netting activity increases within the area.

Netting activity on Taylor's Bank, Formby and on Southport beach has continued to take place. To date, 10 set nets continue to be actively worked and inspected by area officers. All nets remain compliant with NWIFCA/NWSFC Byelaws.

RECREATIONAL ROD ANGLING

SHORE

Rod angling has continued to take place within the area. Covid compliant, officers have carried sighted and inspected some 217 shore anglers. Kings parade, New Brighton. The promenades along Wallasey front, in particular, Seacombe and Magazine promenades, and along Otterspool promenade remain the most popular. Officers have also noted North Bank, New Brighton at low water to be a popular location.

I am pleased to say that during our many inspections officers found no minimum landing size issues. During our inspections officers have inspected anglers from the following fishing clubs: Wallasey Sea Angling Club, Mersey Pirates and Phoenix.

BOAT ANGLING

Officers have continued to observe the 20+ trailers and vehicles parked up along the beach at New Brighton slipway. Officers have struggled to effectively observe and enforce this area due to the issues along the north Wirral coastline.

From observations I have to report the demise of the charter boat fleet within the area. The 9 active charter boats have now dropped in activity to 1. Factors such as covid, the steep rise in berthing costs within Liverpool Marina, the delay in opening of the lock

gates and other ongoing issues have seen the charter boat fleet almost cease in activity.

Reports also suggest that illegal fishing in the Bass nursery within the Dee estuary took place. At present officers have no evidence to support this report but will continue to investigate this claim.

BAIT DIGGING

Bait digging both by spade and pump has continued to take place along the coastline with the pump method remaining as the most popular form of collection. Mockbeggar Wharf and the beach area adjacent to derby pool and gunsight car parks have continued to be the most popular area of beach fished.

General Update

- Head of Enforcement has continued to engage with review group meetings during the quarter.
- North West Marine enforcement group has been started to assist joint working in the NW between, MMO, Lancashire Constabulary and NWIFCA. Initially started to discuss marine wildlife disturbance in relation to a national strategy from Operation Seabird. With little information surrounding marine wildlife disturbance in the North West, the group holding monthly meetings is discussing other enforcement priorities.
- Continued development of the Oceanmind UK MPA project. West of Walney MCZ has been selected to trial novel enforcement tools with expected project outcomes in the spring. This will then inform MPA enforcement in British overseas Territory's.
- HoE attended NW Shellfish Liaison Group meeting in September.
- HoE has completed revisions of NWIFCA Byelaw 1 and NWIFCA Byelaw 2 which have been resubmitted to the MMO.
- Continued drafting of NWIFCA Netting Byelaw by HoE.

Training - Accreditation

Head of Enforcement has passed unit one of the IQA assessment process and is progressing with unit two of the qualification. Alongside this HoE is working with the MMO training team to begin working as a quality assurer to assess IFCOs/MEOs who are progressing through the accreditation scheme.

IFCO Thinnesen has passed Units one and two of the National accreditation scheme for fishery officers.

Byelaw 3 reporting

August to October 2021					
Byelaw 3 Returns	Activity	Cockles			Mussels
		Flookburgh	Newbiggin	Pilling	Foulney
Amount Removed (kg)	Aug-21	0	0	0	29463
	Sep-21	0	0	16626	15030
	Oct-21	0	0	38294	4390
Attendance	Aug-21	0	0	0	52
	Sep-21	0	0	125	27
	Oct-21	0	0	251	10
Hours	Aug-21	0	0	0	144
	Sep-21	0	0	593	72
	Oct-21	0	0	1162	20
No. Inspected Fishing	Aug-21	0	0	0	5
	Sep-21	0	0	37	14
	Oct-21	0	0	28	0
No. MLS Inspections	Aug-21	0	0	0	8
	Sep-21	0	0	0	26
	Oct-21	0	0	1	0
Days Covered by IFCO's	Aug-21	0	0	0	1
	Sep-21	0	0	4	3
	Oct-21	0	0	3	0

During August no cockle beds were open due to the closed season, Byelaw 3 permit holders continued to fish the Foulney mussel bed and Heysham Flat Seed Mussel Fishery opened on 18th August. This fishery has not been accessed throughout the period of reporting. The authorisation remains in Place

The Pilling cockle bed opened on the 13th September and has been fished consistently ever since by, 10-20 Byelaw 3 permit holders.

Sanctions, Infringements and Court Activity

A total of 28 sanctions were applied during the quarter. The table below summarises these;

Sanctions	Comments
Verbal	24- Issued for breaches of North Wirral Emergency Byelaw
Advisory Letters	One For Failing to comply with gear marking
Official warning letters	One for a single escape gap offence. Two issued for minor

	vessel incursions into the District.
Home office Cautions	0
FAPs	0
Permit suspension	0
Prosecutions pending	Two pending court date
Prosecutions	0

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*	70	70	44	112	
ATV patrols	11	11	9	10	
ATV patrol hrs	14.67	13.16	13.5	23.25	
ATV kms covered	156.5	118	53	286	
Inspections under taken	171	38	80	497	

*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)
Protector Bravo	2	5.00	48	0	0	3	10
Totals for	2	5.00	48	0	0	3	

the quarter							10
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Annex B

Patrol Date	Patrol Time	Distance (nm)	Area Covered	Risk/ Purpose	Sectors Covered	No. Boardings	No. Closings	No. Sightings	No. Inspections
<u>Protector Bravo</u>									
03/08/21	1.75	12	W of Whitehaven, Selker, Parton	Potting, netting & bass activity		0	0	1	6
04/08/21	3.25	36	W of Whitehaven, Flimby, Maryport	Inspections of static gear, and potting activity		0	0	2	4
2	5.00	48				0	0	3	10