

Results:

Leasowe and Pilling cockle
bed surveys and
recommendations



Background

TSB August 13th 2024

LEASOWE COCKLE BED

Resolution: Approve Leasowe Cockle Bed is open 1st October 2024 under paragraph 3 of Byelaw 3, *subject to additional survey*

Justification:

1. July surveys identified 799 tonnes of size on Leasowe, below the minimum size threshold of 800 tonnes needed for bird food resourcing
2. The proportion of size to undersize was low – but much of the undersize was in the 20-25mm category – that would likely grow to size; and
3. Leasowe cockle is known to grow fast – therefore, may have sufficient biomass in excess of 800 tonnes of size by October.

Background

TSB August 13th 2024

PILLING COCKLE BED

Resolution: Approve Pilling Cockle Bed is open from 1st October 2024, under paragraph 15 of Byelaw 3, *subject to additional inspection*

Justification:

1. The greatest areas of biomass on the bed had a high proportion of undersize to size cockle.
2. The cockle would potentially grow on during the late summer months to reach a more favourable size:undersize composition

Leasowe results

TSB August 13th 2024

PILLING COCKLE BED

Resolution: Approve Pilling Cockle Bed is open from 1st October 2024, under paragraph 15 of Byelaw 3, *subject to additional inspection*

Justification:

1. The greatest areas of biomass on the bed had a high proportion of undersize to size cockle.
2. The cockle would potentially grow on during the late summer months to reach a more favourable size:undersize composition

Leasowe results

Full re-survey on 17th September 2024

Biomass

	Area (ha)	Size Cockle (tonnes) ¹	Undersize Cockle (tonnes) ²
Leasowe	256	1370	350

5-15 Class (tonnes)	15-20 Class (tonnes)	20-25 Class (tonnes)	25-35 Class (tonnes)	>35 Class (tonnes)
3	6	264	1418	29

Leasowe results

Full re-survey on 17th September 2024

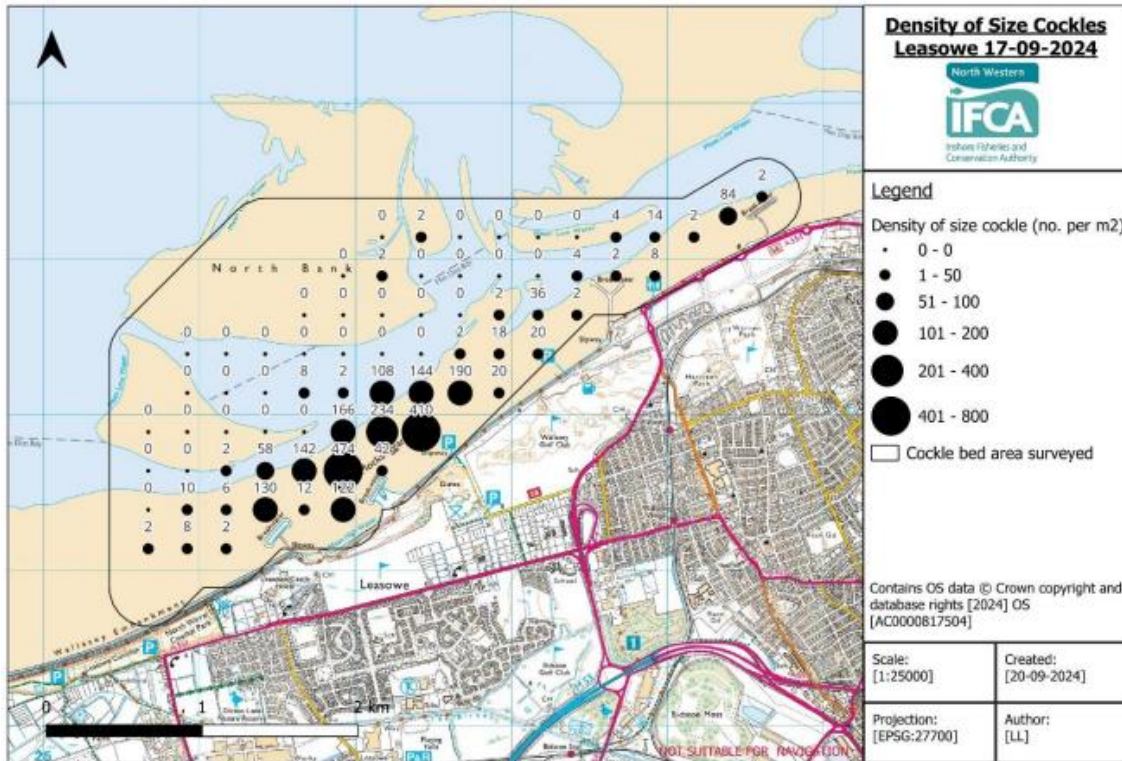


Figure 2: Density of size cockle per m² at Leasowe September 2024

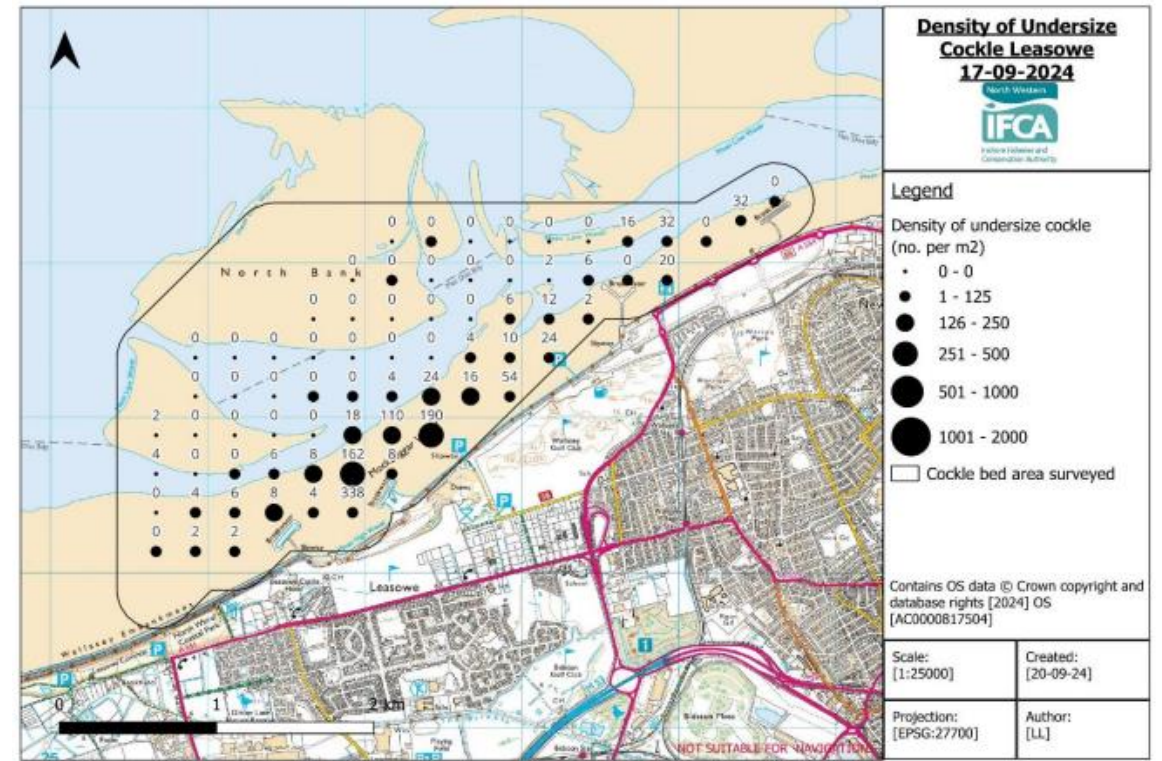


Figure 3: Density of undersize cockle per m² at Leasowe September 2024

Leasowe results

Full re-survey on 17th September 2024

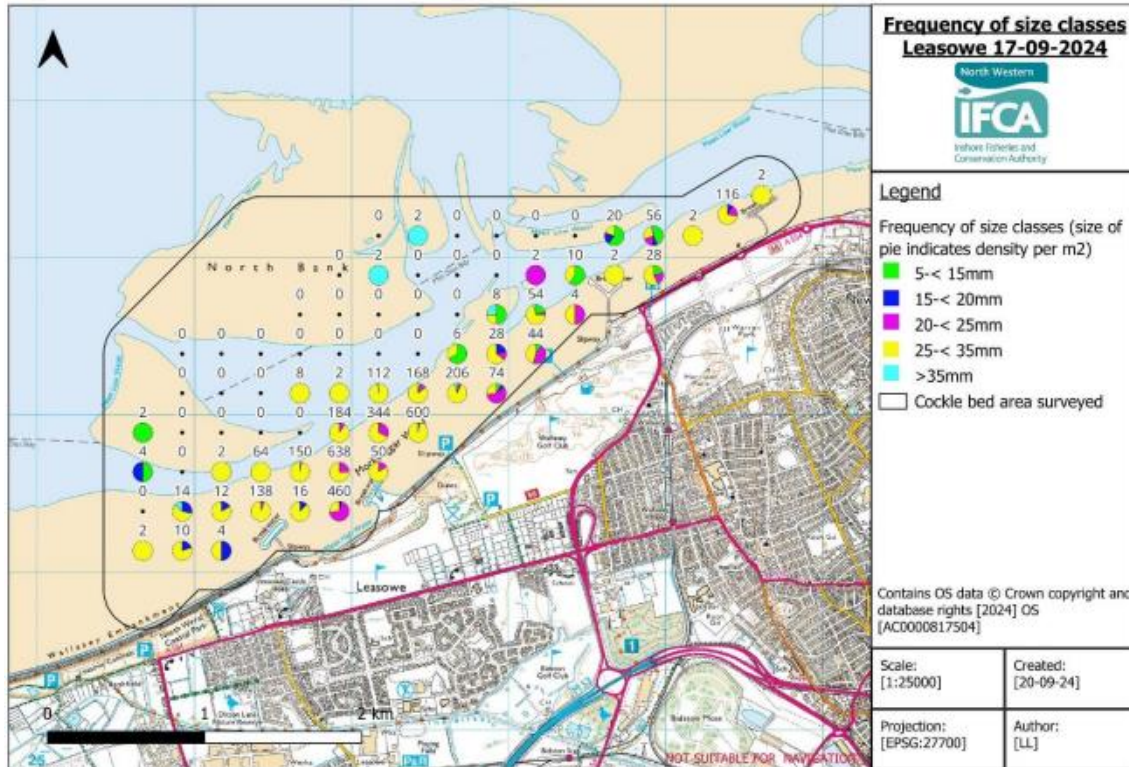


Figure 4: Frequency of size classes of cockle per m² at Leasowe September 2024

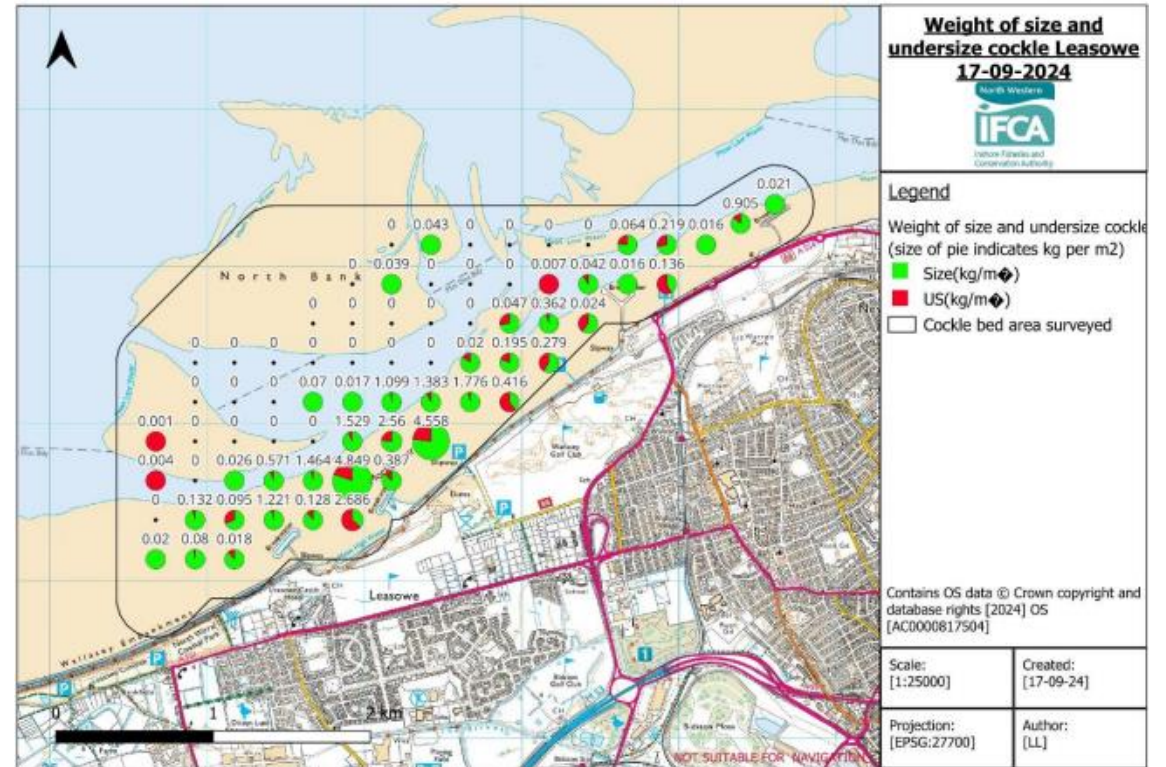


Figure 5: Weight of size and undersize cockle kg/m² at Leasowe September 2024

Leasowe recommendation

With 1370 tonnes of size cockle, the fishery can be opened with a 570 tonne TAC.

However, as the previous resolution stated the fishery be opened October 1st – this falls on a Tuesday and may be more pragmatic to allow the fishery to open on the Monday 30th September.

Recommendation:

Leasowe cockle fishery be opened as of September 30th 2024 under byelaw 3.

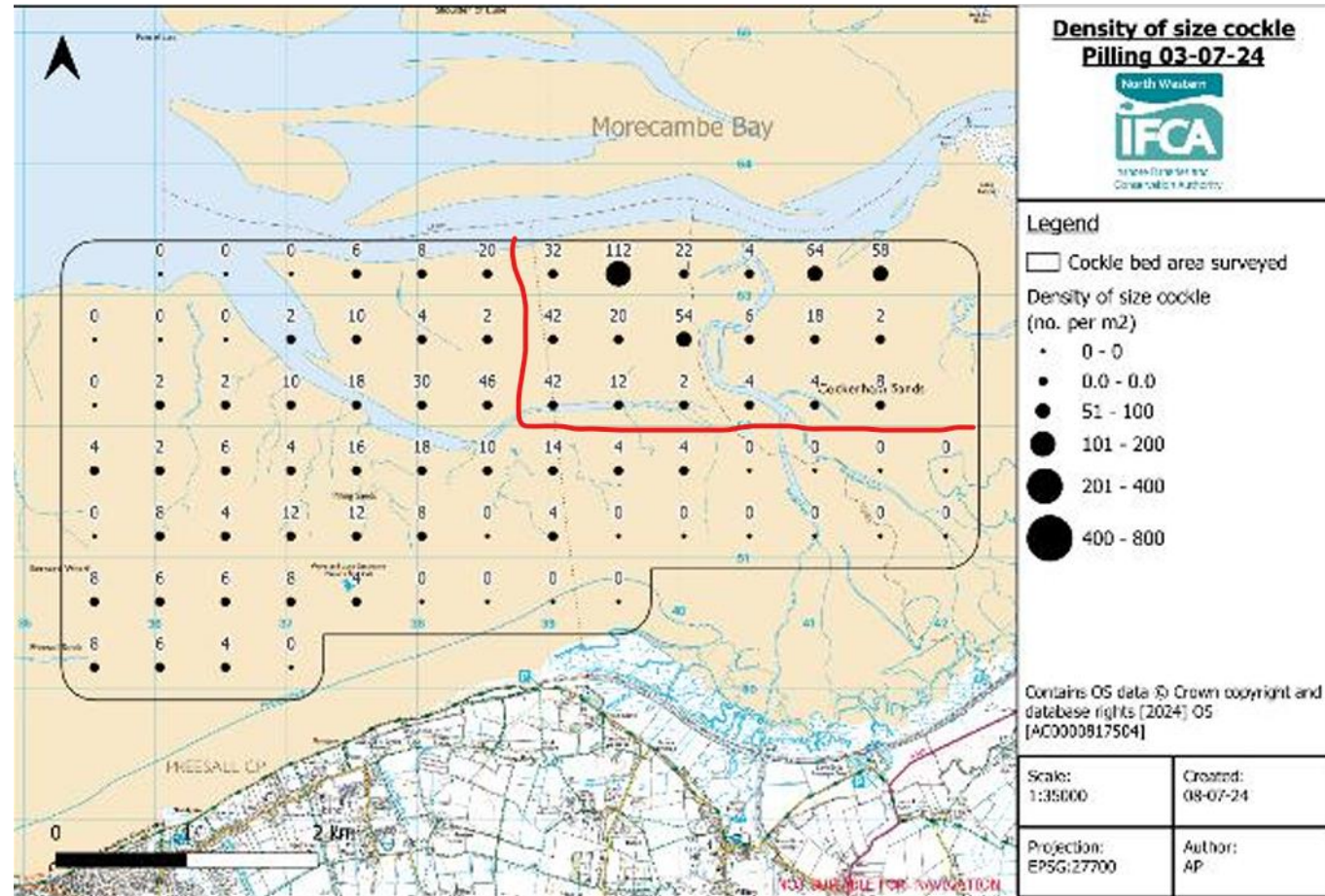
Pilling results

A section of Pilling was re-surveyed on September 13th

The location of the 18 points that were re-surveyed is highlighted by the red line

These sites were chosen as they hold the bulk of the cockle biomass, are densely populated, but also had a highly mixed composition of size:undersize cockles in the July survey.

The recommendation at the August 13th TSB to allow more time for cockle to grow, was partly based on the concern that this area would be targeted – impacting juvenile stocks and raising compliance concerns



Pilling results

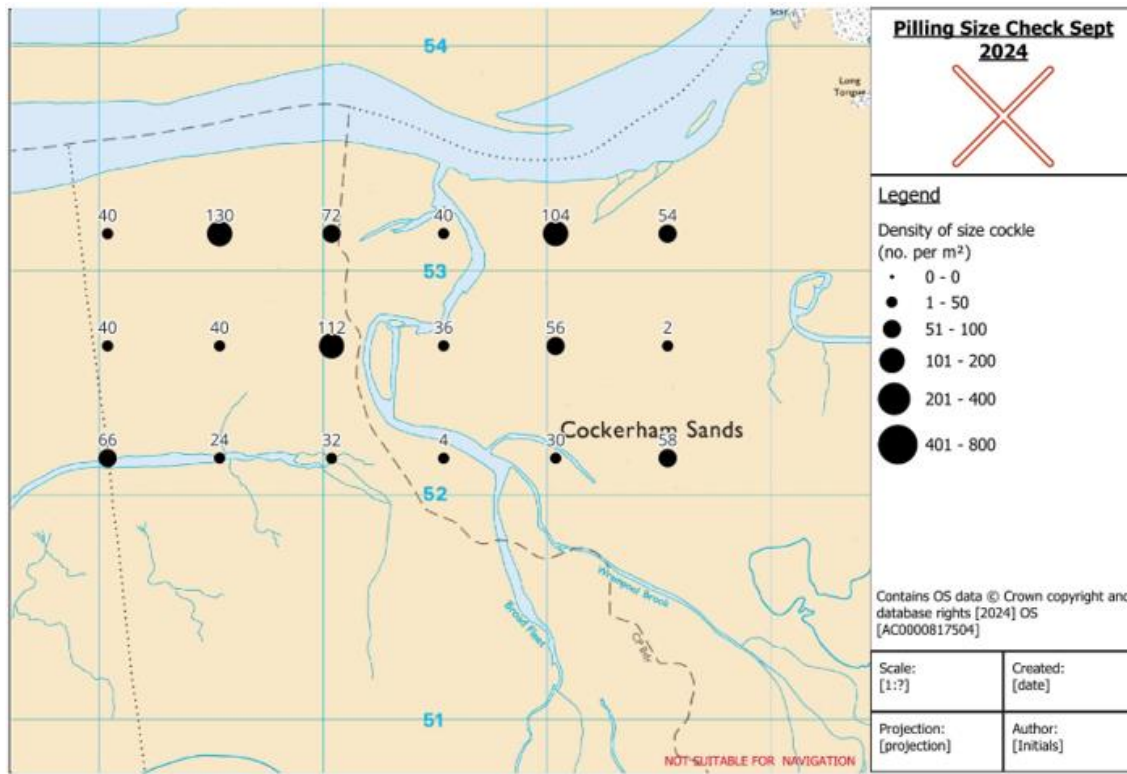
There was no significant change in the majority of the sample points – with the ratio of size to undersize cockles still low:

	Date	Size	Undersize	Total
Number (n)	Jul 24	506	1348	1854
	Sep 24	940	1780	2720
Percentage (%)	Jul 24	27	73	-
	Sep 24	35	65	-

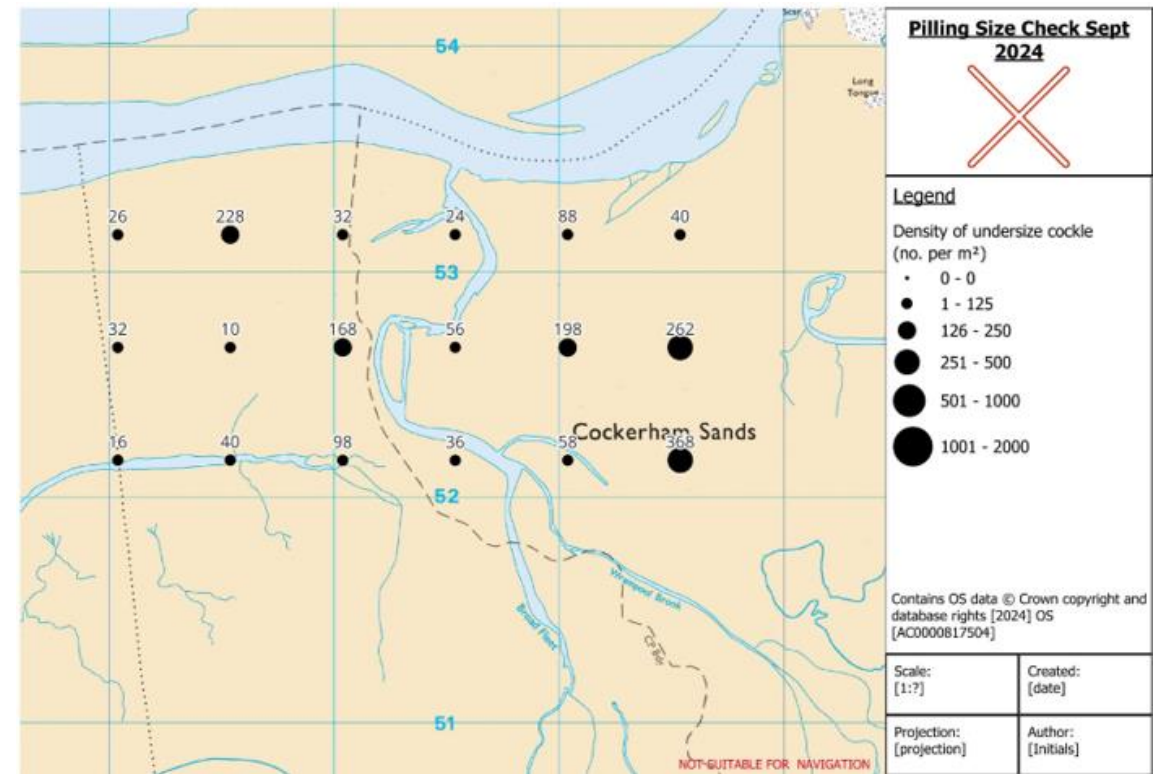
The size:undersize ratio of cockle is 35:65, which although has increased since July, is still relatively low.

Pilling results

Numbers of size and undersize cockle from the September inspection



Number of size cockle



Number of undersize cockle

Pilling recommendation

Due to the little change in growth of cockle on the Pilling cockle bed, there is still a significant number of undersize to size cockle on the main area of Pilling.

This raises concerns over the disturbance to juvenile stocks and removal of undersize cockle.

Previous fisheries have not been recommended opened under similar circumstances, and cockles have been provided the time to grow-on.

Recommendation:

Pilling cockle bed remains closed as of October 1st 2024 under byelaw 3.