

Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Report for the Period Ending November 2017

General Situation

Chief Officer T Robbins

On 26th October all IFCAs were written to by Defra to re-affirm Defra's request that the IFCAs and the MMO continue to look at options for closer working between the two organisations to assist with a more coherent and cost effective delivery of coastal management. The letter is currently on the member's area of the D&SIFCA website. The IFCAs and the MMO were asked in 2015 to start this closer cooperation and this has resulted in a much better working in several identified areas such as enforcement planning, training and joint working. The initial letter also led to a working group being set up to oversee some of this work. This group was disbanded earlier this year but to replace it regular meetings have been established between the AIFCA, which includes the Chairs and Chiefs of all the IFCAs, and the MMO Board and Directors. There have been two of these meetings to date and the last meeting was on the 8th November. There is good support from all parties for the meetings and a better understanding of how the two organisations are able to integrate some areas of working is being developed. The new closer working will assist Defra as it reviews possible changes in coastal management post EU Exit.

A new Statutory Instrument (SI) is expected soon to replace the national powers lost by IFCA enforcement officers after a previous SI was accidentally revoked as part of the Governments attempt to remove 'Red Tape' two years ago. It is currently planned that the new SI and therefore national warrants will be issued to the IFCAs by February 2018.

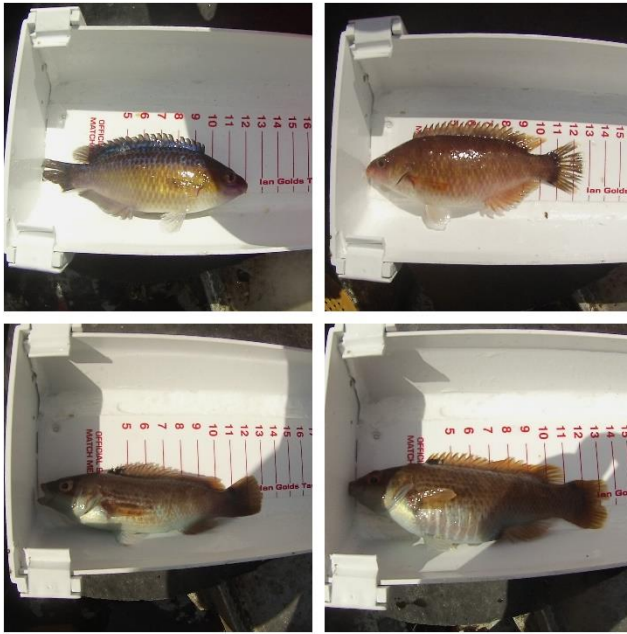
The D&SIFCA working with project manager Jo Royle, at Common Seas, have successfully received a grant from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to allow for the fitting of inshore vessel monitoring systems (iVMS)(black box recorder) to all towed gear vessels between 7m and 12m, with a permit to fish within the D&SIFCA district. This will, when delivered be the culmination of work that started in 2011 following a commitment by the Authority to move to a more cost effective method of vessel control and enforcement. The requirement to have the iVMS fitted will be a permit condition and as such the Byelaw and Permitting Sub Committee are undertaking a consultation with permit holders on the conditions that will be required by the IFCA from all towed gear vessels.

Officers have been assessing the most appropriate replacement RIB to assist the enforcement team over the next few years. The report is included in the main Authority papers. A further EMFF grant will be applied for to help defer some of the costs associated with a new vessel build.

Surveys and Research

Wrasse:

On board surveys of the live wrasse fishery, taking place within the Plymouth Sound have continued this quarter. These surveys are to gather information about how the fishery works



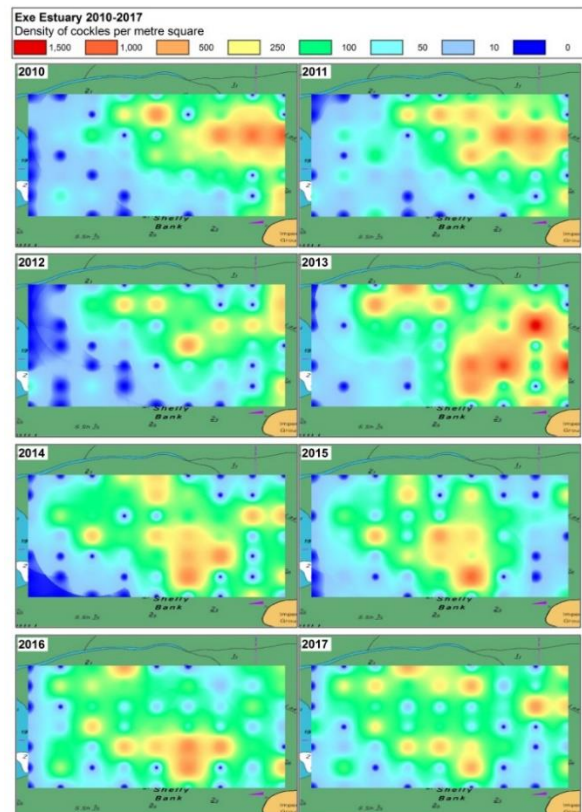
and in-depth data on wrasse including the catch composition, size distribution and breeding season. Data from observer surveys and landings data was analysed and IFAC Officer Steph Davies and Libby Ross produced a scientific report which was presented to the Byelaw Subcommittee in November. As a result of the wrasse research some suggestions to changes in the management measures for the wrasse fishery were discussed and recommendations will be put before the main authority in December.

Research into the need for and design of a pot saturation experiment to assist analysis of the wrasse fishery data was also undertaken. A pot saturation experiment is being considered because there is an

Figure 1: Rock cock and goldsinny wrasse being measured

underlying assumption that trends in catch per unit effort (CPUE) are a true reflection of trends in abundance but the relationship between the two is not always straight forward. A literature review has been completed and discussions with Exeter University have started to consider the complex logistical design of such an experiment. A number of methodological trials are needed in order to fully plan the experiment. It was also decided that the experiment could be optimised with consideration of the patterns of CPUE in 2017 so has been delayed until 2018.

Meetings have been attended with two Members of Parliament to discuss the wrasse fishery within the district, IFCA management measures and the research being undertaken.



Cockles:

The annual cockle survey on the Exe estuary was conducted in November. The area covered by this survey was extended to include Shelly Bank where hand gathering of cockles has occurred in the past. Data collected are currently being analysed and the stock will be assessed in terms of abundance, density and spread across the beds and compared with previous years surveys. The results of these data can feed into bird food availability models for the Exe estuary.

Figure 2: Changes in cockle density- Cockle Sands Exe Estuary

Seagrass:

The biennial seagrass survey was carried out in Torbay. A drop-down camera was used to carry out transects on the known seagrass beds to determine density of the seagrass, and any changes in the extent. There had been reports of previously unknown beds in Torbay, these areas were also surveyed. Analysis of the result so this survey is currently being analysed and maps of the extent of the beds are being created in Map Info. The results will feed into the management of the MCZ, as the outer limits of the seagrass beds determine the closing line to towed gear fishing.



Figure 3 Sea grass in Torbay MCZ

Torbay MCZ Otter Trawl Impact Study:



Figure 5 Mud habitat in Torbay MCZ

Defra and Natural England provided £40,000 for the IFCA to carry out research to investigate the impact of light otter trawls, used to target cuttlefish in the spring, on the mud feature of the Torbay MCZ. Survey planning was undertaken to identify survey areas and ensure that sampling level was sufficient to for robust analysis. Before and after impact survey work was carried out



Figure 4: Grab Sampling with Ocean Ecology Ltd

which involved taking sediment samples, using Ocean Ecology Ltd vessel and grab equipment, and in-house underwater filming of the MCZ benthic habitat. A Torbay cuttle fisherman was also involved in the survey and planned trawls tows were undertaken to mimic the fishing effort during the fishery season. SeaFish Authority was also involved in the survey work undertaking a two-day sea trial to evaluate the area of impact of the single trawl and trawl doors used by the fisherman on the mud habitat in the MCZ. All data collected is currently being analysed by IFCA Environments officers, Ocean Ecology and SeaFish.

Hand gathering and Bait Digging Surveys:

Torbay hand gathering and bait digging surveys were finished this quarter. They were being carried out to provide more information on the level of effort occurring in Torbay MCZ which will feed into the relevant MCZ assessments for this site. Bait collection surveys finished this quarter on the Tamar, at Ernesettle. This was to gather more information on the level of effort to feed into the HRA and MCZ assessments for the site. Analysis of bait digging data has continued and will form the basis of HRAs late in 2017 and early 2018 which will help inform the development of the hand gathering permit byelaw.



Figure 6 Bait Digging Goodrington Sands Torbay MCZ

Tranche 2 MCZ:

Two Tranche 2 MCZs lie within the North Devon part of the IFCA district. Data gathering is on-going to have the best evidence to inform management. A questionnaire and gridded maps were developed and sent out to all fishers known to carry out potting, netting and towed gear activities in north Devon to get a better understanding of the level and location of effort within the MCZs. This information will feed into the MCZ assessments to determine what management, if any will need to be put in place. A teleconference was held with MMO and Cornwall IFCA to discuss management options for Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ.

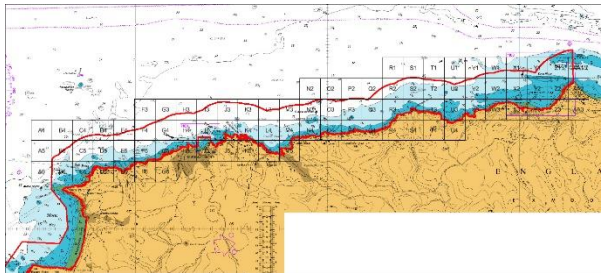


Figure 7 Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ grid for fishers to show areas worked.

Whelks:



Figure 8: Measuring the height of a whelk

In 2015 and 2016 Environment Officer Kat Stephenson undertook detailed research to investigate the size of sexual maturity of whelks to determine whether the EU MCRS of 45mm is appropriate within the D&S IFCA district to ensure sustainability of the stock and fishery. Results from this work have been used to develop recommendations for consultation on introducing changes in management of the whelk fishery. The Byelaw and Permitting sub-committee agreed that suggestions for future management should go out to consultation.

Finfish:

Supervisory duties for the D& IFCA bass PhD have continued this quarter. The direction of the D&S IFCA work plan on bass is dependent on the success of a Cefas project which would be focused on regional bass management & the scientific baselines required to underpin this.

An additional meeting was attended in Bideford between the North Devon Fishermen's Association and The Shark Trust to discuss the 'Sustainable Sourcing Guides' being developed by The Shark Trust for the Bristol Channel.

D&S IFCA input into the Environment Agency consultation on increased protection for salmon in England. Work on the development of a monitoring and control plan for shad in the Severn Estuary and Plymouth Sound and Estuaries EMSs has continued. Discussions with enforcement team about the best way to monitor bycatch in landings has been discussed.



Figure 9: Twaite (above) and Allis Shad

Projects

Marine Pioneer:

The North Devon Marine Pioneer has progressed this quarter with several meetings attended by officers. One such meeting was held in Clovelly with local fishermen and lead organisations of the Pioneer project. Two work areas for D&S IFCA were discussed, these being the development of fisheries (finfish & shellfish) research and management plans and a project

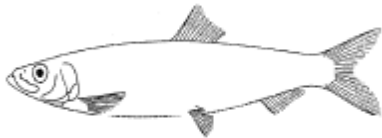


Figure 10: A herring

focussed on the ecology and fisheries of herring in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary. Desk-based research into both these strands of work is in the early stages. It is envisaged that the fisheries research and management plans would focus on the Marine Pioneer area and Bristol Channel in the first instance, before being extended to cover the whole D&S IFCA district. D&S IFCA officers were also shadowed by a PhD

student from the University of Surrey who will be developing a project looking at the Pioneer Projects and marine planning and governance.

FishTrail:

This quarter has seen the conclusion of the FishTrail project. A large amount of time has been spent on financial reporting for this project, supported by Mitchell and Devon County Council. All the videos and 'Anglers Tale's' are now on the FishTrail website, here: <http://fishtrail.org/video-grid-gallery/>

EUROHAB:

D&S IFCA is part of an Interreg Project on harmful algal blooms. The project involves several partners including Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Ifremer, EA and University of Southampton and will develop a web-based detection system for harmful algal blooms and water quality associated with eutrophication that will be used by key end-users to monitor, protect and better manage fisheries, aquaculture and the tourism industry in the France- Channel-England area. The Kick off meeting ifor the project took place in Plymouth in Novemrber.

Project UK:

D&S IFCA sits on the steering groups for the Marine Stewardship Council's Project UK South West crab and Lobster Fisheries Improvement Plan (FIP) and the Scallop and Monkfish FIP. Information on the bycatch of the crustacean fisheries in the IFCA district was shared with the project partners and the development of a harvest strategy was discussed. Project Partners include SeaFish, SW IFCA's Defra, Ocean Fish, Lyons Seafoods, MacDuff shellfish, Cornish Crab Company, Cefas, FalFish, South Devon ad Channel Shellfishermen's Association, Direct Seafood, Tesco and Morrisons

Meetings, Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement

- The **Hinkley Point C** Marine Technical forum met for two days in Bristol and on-site at Hinkley Point. Changes in the fish protection measures were the focus for a major discussion on the first day. The second day focussed on mitigation measures in the inshore environment.
- The **Severn Estuary Forum** was attended this quarter. Presentations on Steart Managed realignment, Hinkley Point C and Climatic changes to wave and swell patterns in the Severn Estuary were particularly useful.
- A management group meeting of the **Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities** (ASERA) was attended where the updated management scheme for the Severn Estuary was discussed. The ASERA AGM was also attended. ASERA continues to support the management of recreational activities in the Severn Estuary, including bait digging and recreational sea angling.
- A meeting of the **Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group** was attended. It was agreed that D&S IFCA would assist in the updating of the current Shoreline Environmental Sensitivity Manual to incorporate knowledge of important habitats for fish.
- D&S IFCA input a response to the consultation for the change of boundary for the proposed **Pembrokeshire Wave Hub** area.
- Officers attend an **IFCA and Cefas collaboration day** in Weymouth. This meeting was followed by a day focussed on **invasive species** in the marine environment, also led by Cefas.
- A meeting was held in Taunton with researchers Emma Bean and Tom Appleby from the University of West of England and IFCA officers. Emma is conducting PhD research into **the public right to fish** and will be using the IFCA netting permit byelaw process and possibly the hand gathering permit byelaw as part of her research.
- Following an invitation from the Welsh branch of the Institute of Fisheries Management, a presentation on **fisheries management in the Severn Estuary** was given to the group in Cardiff.

- Environment Officer Lauren Parkhouse has been the secretariat for the IFCA **Technical Advisory Group** for the past eighteen months. A TAG meeting in London was attended
- Matt Witt from Exeter University undertook training of Environment officers in **survey design**, which will aid the design of future surveys such as the wrasse pot saturation study.
- The bi-annual **Lundy Advisory Group** meeting was attended in Ifracombe, and the **Lundy Management Forum** was attended in Croyde. Current and future projects for the MPA and Lundy Island were discussed at this meeting with a number of different stakeholders.
- The Waddeton Biosecurity Report was updated and a meeting held with Cefas for the annual Compliance Visit for the **Waddeton Regulating Order**.
- **Dispensation** requests were dealt with and dispensations were issued for survey work within the District.
- **Estuary Partnership** meetings were attended including the Exe Estuary Officers Working Group and the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF), and updates were given on enforcement work, byelaw progress and wrasse fishery. Additionally, a teleconference was held regarding bait collection with Plymouth City Council Natural Infrastructure Officer and Cornwall IFCA.
- A meeting organised by Luke Pollard MP to discuss the possibility of a **National Marine Park in the Plymouth Sound** was attended. This was an initial thoughts' meeting and was attended by interested stakeholders including fishing industry representatives, EA, Blue Marine Foundation, Plymouth University, Plymouth City Council, PML and Sutton Harbour Master.
- **Fishing Gear Impact** workshop at Bangor university was attended to discuss the use of a tool developed to assess the impact of different fishing gears on coarse, sand and mud habitats. The second day was used to train attendees in the use of the tool using R statistics.

Enforcement Overview

DCO (Enforcement) M Mander

The autumn was dominated by the highly profitable (multi million pound) towed gear fishery for cuttle fish. The fishing took place mainly between the 6 and 12 nautical mile limits in Lyme Bay. The fishery attracted towed gear boats from as far away as Scotland and Northern Ireland and these vessels joined the local fleets from Plymouth and Brixham. There were concerns voiced by some fishermen and regulators that the autumn fishery would have negative effects on future fisheries. The cuttlefish hadn't been caught in such volumes previously at this time of the year and the individual cuttle were reported to be roughly half the size of the catches taken from the winter fishery.

By the end of the reporting period the cuttlefish had moved further offshore and were being targeted by the large beamer fleet. The otter trawlers switched to targeting squid further inshore, working grounds bisecting the 6 nautical mile boundary. Some of the trawlers were reporting large bycatches of bass. Currently EU regulations mean that a significant amount of this bass has to be discarded. This is not an ideal situation.

One solution could be the introduction of real time closures. Real time closures have been used to support the recovery of the cod fisheries by closing areas with high abundance of cod encouraging trawlers to fish where bycatches of cod are likely to be lower. Given the reported perilous state of bass it would seem that the introduction of real time closures would support the other restrictions already in place to support the recovery of the stock.

The enforcement officers welcomed Adam Walters to their team on 2nd October. Adam had previously worked for Plymouth Aquarium and is a graduate with a degree in Marine Biology. Adam is also a special constable. By the end of the reporting period Adam had passed all his mandatory safety training and had joined the other officers on sea patrols and assisted in boardings.

On 30th October enforcement officers travelled to Portland to complete the familiarisation and handover process for Southern IFCA's 7.8 metre RIB patrol vessel. The vessel was towed back to Brixham and has already been put to good use. Officers have been quick to praise the vessel's sea keeping capabilities compared with the Authority's own 6.4m RIB.

Byelaw Review

A full update is provided under Agenda item 5a. The key milestone to report was confirmation from the MMO that on 21st November the Authority's Netting Permit Byelaw had been sent to Defra, with MMO's recommendation that the Byelaw is confirmed by the Secretary of State.

IVMS

Members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee agreed to the introduction of inshore vessel monitoring systems (IVMS) on all vessels from 7 metres to 11.99 metres in overall length that operate in the Authority's district by using a mobile fishing gear permit.

The decision will see the introduction of IVMS) on 7m to 11.99m mobile fishing vessels for the first time in England.

The difference between VMS units fitted on 12 metre and over vessels and the IVMS units be fitted to 7m to 11.99m vessels is that the IVMS unit only transmits the data over the mobile

phone network. Under EU legislation 12 metre and over vessels have to transmit via satellites but are capable of switching to mobile phone networks if required.

The DCO chaired a national VMS policy meeting on 15th November to discuss matters including the drafting of a Statutory Instrument to introduce IVMS on all licensed vessels below 12m in length and set transmission rates for positional data and management of vessels with non functioning units on all British registered vessels. It is expected that the Authority's approach to these issues will be in line with the national policy.

The IVMS project now splits in to two. Common seas' officers will facilitate the purchase and installation of IVMS units on board the relevant mobile gear vessels in the district. This process is likely to take about three months to complete and will start by the individual permit holders notifying Common Seas with their preferred choice of unit (units are available from three manufacturers).

The second part of the process will be to consult on the proposed permit conditions that will introduce the requirement for IVMS and set transmission rates for all mobile gear vessels 7 metres to 15.24 metres (maximum size of vessel allowed in district) and management of non-functioning units.

It is important that agreement is reached on the national approach to allow the Authority's consultation on permit conditions to begin. Both parts of the project should have a similar completion time to minimise the gap between units being fitted and the permit conditions being agreed.

Training

Adam Walters successfully passed all the mandatory safety training required prior to going to sea. Officer Kelly Hobson commenced her coastal skipper Yachtmaster's theory in preparation for taking the advanced powerboat certificate.

Working together

Authority's enforcement officers have continued to work alongside Marine Enforcement Officers from the Marine Management Organisation during the quarter. A number of joint patrols from Plymouth have been conducted during the quarter looking at inshore and estuary netting boats. Shore patrols have been conducted on the River Teign and boardings of towed gear vessels in Lyme bay have also been undertaken.

The latest update from Defra is that the new Statutory Instrument to reintroduce the ability to enforce EU legislation, including the 2018 Bass Regulations will be in place by February 2018. It is envisaged that all enforcement officers will have new warrants issued to reflect the additional powers at the same time.

Enforcement

The cases that are listed to be heard at Plymouth Crown Court were adjourned until the week commencing the 19th February 2018. It is expected that the cases will last at least two weeks. A further case from 2016, involving a Plymouth based trawler was set for trial in March 2018 at Plymouth Magistrates' court, a pre trial hearing to confirm the date will be held on 27th November 2017.

Six men from three, Plymouth based, potting vessels have been prosecuted for offences relating to catching and keeping undersized shellfish and berried lobsters in the Devon & Severn IFCA district. All six men pleaded guilty to the offences when they appeared at Newton Abbot Magistrates' Court during October, which resulted in total fines and costs of £24,057.

On the 9th May, Enforcement Officers from the IFCA conducted an inspection of a potting vessel returning to Plymouth and found that the master had retained eight lobsters and seventeen spider crabs below the minimum conservation reference size. There was no potting permit in place allowing the vessel to fish commercially for shellfish with pots in the Devon & Severn IFCA district. The master was fined £2,629 while the owner was fined £4,179.

On the 25th May, Enforcement Officers from the IFCA conducted an inspection of another potting vessel returning to Plymouth and found that the master had 166 edible crabs that were below the minimum conservation reference size. The master was fined £1,190 while the owner was fined £6,335.

On the 31st May another inspection was carried out in Plymouth Sound and officers found that the master had retained two lobsters that were carrying eggs, one lobster below the minimum conservation reference size and 48 edible crabs and lobsters that were also below the minimum conservation reference size. The master of the vessel was fined 5,762 and owner fined £3,962.

Further cases have been resolved during the quarter. The outcome of the investigations has varied from written warnings for minor breaches through to Financial Administrative Penalties (FAPs) being offered and accepted.

Investigations (selected)

Offence Date	Investigation complete	Prosecuting Authority	Offence	Location	Outcome/ Current Status
16-23/12/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	South of Salcombe	Listed for trial at Plymouth Crown Court on 19/02/18
01 -19/02/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	South of Salcombe	Listed for trial at Plymouth Crown Court on 19/02/18
06/09/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Towing in Start Point to Plymouth Sound SCI	Bigbury Bay	Master owner entered not guilty pleas to 16 charges, case adjourned. Trial in March 2018
08 & 15/11/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Use of fixed net	Bigbury Bay	Guilty plea entered to both charges at Torquay Magistrates' Court on 19/06/17 Fined £4,750

09/05/17	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize spider crab and lobster	Plymouth	Newton Abbot Magistrates' Court 30/10/17 The master was fined £2,629 while the owner was fined £4,179.
25/05/17	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize edible crab	Plymouth	Newton Abbot Magistrates' Court 23/10/17 The master was fined £1,190 while the owner was fined £6,335.
31/05/17	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize edible crab and lobster and berried lobster	Plymouth	Newton Abbot Magistrates' Court 23/10/17 The master of the vessel was fined 5,762 and owner fined £3,962.
07/06/17	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize edible crab and lobsters	Tor Bay	FAP £500 accepted
12/07/17	Yes	D&SIFCA	Removal of scallop during closed season	Plymouth	Summons issued
02/09/17	No	MMO	Recreational fishers retaining too many bass	Teignmouth	Investigation ongoing
22/09/17	No	D&SIFCA	Recreational potter using too many pots	Tor Bay	Investigation ongoing.
22/09/17	No	D&SIFCA	Recreational potter using too many pots	Tor Bay	Investigation ongoing.
08/11/17	No	D&SIFCA	Use of scallop dive vessel with no permit	Tor Bay	Investigation ongoing.