

## **Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

### **Quarterly Report for the Period Ending August 2015**

#### **General Situation**

**Chief Officer T Robbins**

This quarter has seen a continued increase in the workload for all the officers. Following the change of approach to management of fisheries within Marine Protected Areas (MPA) by Defra there has been a marked increase in the amount of work required from the IFCAs. The whole team have had to work towards ensuring that all of the MPA within the district are in appropriate management by the end of 2016.

The environment officers are spending most of their time working on Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA) which are used to inform management measures required for all the sites. The senior management team are working on the review of byelaws to ensure that the sites will be properly protected for the future.

The enforcement officers are ensuring that the two new byelaws recently introduced are being adhered to and where appropriate are taking enforcement action to prosecute failures to comply with the legislation. Regular meetings are held with Defra to report on the work being undertaken and to assess whether the 2016 deadline will be met. It is felt that the D&SIFCA will achieve what is required by the date set.

Survey work has continued all summer with the Authority's survey vessel working on multiple tasks, filming has continued of the MPA in Bigbury Bay, the final summer of filming for Sarah Gal's PhD was completed around Salcombe and Plymouth.

Additional environment work saw officers monitoring crawfish around Lundy, a masters' student from Plymouth University undertook some filming work on gill nets to assess possible impacts in MPA features. In addition stock assessment work is being undertaken working aboard shellfish boats in the district recording catches and discards. Work has also started on the North Devon Skate (Ray) Pilot Project which will tag rays caught off the north Devon coast to see how they migrate in and out of the Bristol Channel.

Defra have recognised the strain that has been placed on the IFCAs by this work and have provided additional funding which is being used by D&SIFCA to employ a research officer on a twelve month contract to help complete the HRA as well as working on some of the sites where additional data is required in order to make decisions on management. Funding has also been made available to undertake some additional project work identified by the environment team that will help to fill in knowledge gaps.

New management measures have been introduced to protect bass stocks at an EU level with the introduction of monthly catch limits for commercial vessels and a three bass per day limit for recreational anglers. Also from 1<sup>st</sup> September a new minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) of 42cm was introduced to help protect juvenile bass and enable them to spawn at least once before they can be landed. Officers have been checking that fishermen are aware of the new rules and have found a high level of awareness amongst both commercial fishermen and recreational sea anglers. The change in landing size is likely to have the biggest impact on fishing activity. Officers have been handing out flyers as well as producing a sticker showing the new MCRS to help get the message across. The stickers are now being adopted by other IFCAs and have the backing of Defra and the MMO.

The Chief Officers met for a two day meeting to discuss the letter from Defra asking the IFCAs and the MMO to look at working more closely together to enable better protection of coastal waters through more efficient use of resources. Following early meetings with the MMO and a team from the IFCAs the Chief Officer's Group decided upon areas where joint working could be enhanced and where additional resources may be required to enable better working in the future. One of the bigger projects identified would be for a more integrated national intelligence system capable of enabling better communication of intelligence to the appropriate enforcement function. This would require a joint application for funding from the IFCAs and the MMO. Areas such as more common enforcement and sharing of office space and transport are also being discussed for improvements in the short term. Many of the areas being discussed are already undertaken in the SW but are less widely used for the rest of the country.

The other item under discussion for the Chief Officers was the review of the High Level Objectives (HLO) which were issued as guidance to the new IFCAs in 2011 by the Minister. These now need to be updated and given relevance following five years where the work and expectations of delivery for the IFCAs has changed considerably. The Chief Officers working with the Defra Sponsorship Team have come up with an updated version of the HLO which it is hoped will be adopted by all IFCAs before they are presented to the Minister for consideration at the end of the year.

The application for funding from the European Fisheries Fund has now been accepted by the MMO and it is hoped that this funding along with funding from an environmental research fund will finally enable the D&SIFCA to have all mobile fishing vessels working within the district to be fitted with an inshore vessel monitoring system (black box recorder). This will enable the enforcement officers to monitor activity within the district and more accurately target patrols to ensure better protection of our coastal waters. This is seen as a vital piece of the final jigsaw which will allow a more flexible and adaptive management scheme for the whole district. Working in partnership with Common Seas it is hoped to have all the units fitted to over 120 fishing vessels by the end of 2015.

The enforcement team has been particularly stretched recently following the resignation of two officers. On 17<sup>th</sup> August Laura Bullock and Gavin Mayhew joined the team and have settled in very well, they are currently receiving initial training and undergoing their safety certificates prior to starting to go to sea on enforcement patrols.

We have been lucky to have Becky Stanley working with us as an intern for three months over the summer. Becky was able to go to sea on the survey vessel as well as helping with data entry. She has now left to go to Bournemouth University to study a Masters project in GIS, so it is hoped she will come back next summer and do some more work with us. On 24<sup>th</sup> August, Steph Davies joined the D&SIFCA as a Research Officer. Steph is being funded through the money from Defra to help with delivery of the MPA work. Steph was a student at Plymouth University and has worked on filming in Lyme Bay and so already has experience in some of the work required of her during her twelve months with us.

Following this meeting we will lose the experience and support of Aidan Winder. Aidan works as the officer support to Devon CC members and has been the coastal officer with DCC and as such brings a great deal of knowledge to his dealing with the D&SIFCA. We wish Aidan every success for the future.

It was with great sadness that two fishermen drowned when the fishing vessel JMT sank off the Eddystone early in the quarter. It is a reminder of the dangers of the environment in which fishermen and our officers work.

With the summer fisheries finally picking up pace so did the Authority's enforcement activity. Bass Nursery Areas and shellfish related enforcement dominated the work of the enforcement team. The arrival of the summer species was not reflected in the seasonal weather and many planned enforcement activities were disrupted or cancelled as a result.

Unfortunately continuing mechanical problems with the EA's vessel, *Proteus* meant that officers were reliant on the Authority's own RIB, *Enforcer* to carry out enforcement work at sea. One of the enforcement officers continued to assist the environment team by skippering the research vessel *Black Jack*. Acting as skipper meant that the research vessel could also act in an enforcement role if required and was tasked to investigate suspicious towed gear activity during the quarter.

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015 the newly appointed enforcement officers started work for the Authority and immediately had a positive impact not only by doubling the team but also bringing new skills and plenty of enthusiasm.

### **Byelaw Review**

Officers joined colleagues from SIFCA, CIFCA, MMO and the EA at the South West Byelaw Working Group meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss how each IFCA is progressing through their review of inherited byelaws and how each organisation is looking to deal with new fisheries management challenges. Among the topics covered in the latter category were future bass management, netting management in estuaries and introduction of IVMS.

Officers have prepared publicity material and uploaded information on to the Authority's website in anticipation of the netting management review launch on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. CIFCA have been working on two new netting byelaws for some time and Cornwall's Byelaw Working Group have prepared drafts of the byelaws for consideration by the full CIFCA at their meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Officers understand that the draft byelaws would significantly restrict the types of netting that could be practiced with the Cornish estuaries.

### **Permit Condition Reviews**

The data gathering phase of the size increase of female edible crab to 150mm review was completed at the end of August. The full report is dealt with in Agenda Item 6.

Officers and the members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-committee are fully aware of the need to consult with the mobile fishing permit holders regarding the multi-rig trawling and scalloping proposals that were received from fishermen. Officers propose to start the consultation process in the next quarter.

### **Training**

One enforcement officer and skipper of the Authority's research vessel attended a two day training course, run by CIFCA, on the use of an underwater camera and sidescan sonar systems. Mandatory training courses for the new officers have been planned for early September.

All officers were involved with the recent 360 staff appraisal process. This will help inform the staff structure review and personal development programme.

## **Working together**

Officers have supported the EA's monthly water sampling programme by taking EA staff to sea on Proteus when EA qualified helmsman were not available. The nature of the sampling work meant that Bass Nursery Areas and Marine Protected Areas were monitored during these trips. A number of joint patrols were planned with the MMO but due to breakdowns and poor weather only one patrol of the Eddystone and Plymouth area was undertaken.

## **Enforcement**

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015 the case against LR Shields and SSR Trawler Ltd was heard in Torquay Magistrates' Court. Both skipper and owners pleaded guilty to all eight charges, namely;

1. Between the 11th day of December 2014 and 16th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) failed to transmit the electronic logbook data in accordance with Article 14 and 15 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and Article 47 of Commission Implementing Regulations (EC) No 404/2011.

Contrary to, Section 30(1) and 30(1b) Fisheries Act 1981.

2. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) failed to transmit the electronic logbook data in accordance with Article 14 and 15 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and Article 47 of Commission Implementing Regulations (EC) No 404/2011.

Contrary to, Section 30(1a) and 30(1b) Fisheries Act 1981.

3. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) failed to maintain in operation an Automatic Identification System as required by Article 10 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

Contrary to, Section 30(1) and 30(1b) Fisheries Act 1981.

4. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) dredged for shellfish in a prohibited area.

Contrary to Article 2 of the Lyme Bay Designated Area (Fishing Restrictions) Order 2008 and Section 11 of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967.

5. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) breached additional condition 1 as read with additional condition 2 of licence No 717/11/3/12359 dated 04.12.13. in that you deployed fishing gear in the Lyme and Torbay Site of Community importance (SCI).

Contrary to section 4 of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967.

6. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) within the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation district operated the vessel using mobile fishing gear.

Contrary to Paragraph 2 of the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Mobile Fishing Bye-law and section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

7. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) within the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation district used a vessel exceeding 12 metres in overall length for fishing for or taking Sea Fish

Contrary to Paragraph 3 of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, vessels used in fishing byelaw 2012 and section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

8. Between the 16th day of December 2014 and 19th day of December 2014 being the master/owner of the British registered fishing boat Harm Johannes (PLN BM 51) within the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation district operated the vessel using Bottom Towed Fishing Gear.

Contrary to Paragraph 2 of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Mobile Fishing Bye-law and section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

The Master was fined (including costs) a total of £2,520 and the owner was fined (including costs) a total of £9,750. All the Authority's cost in this case were recovered. This case was taken by the Authority but represents the successful conclusion to a joint operation involving the MMO and SIFCA.

Two further multiple offence investigations have been completed and court proceedings have been initiated. One case was adjourned until 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and the first hearing of the other case has been scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Other on-going investigations include three Bass Nursery Area offences, one demersal towed gear offence, one scallop diving offence and an undersize edible crab offence. All current investigations are listed in the table below

### Investigations

| Offence Date        | Investigation complete | Prosecuting Authority | Offence                                     | Location                 | Outcome/ Current Status                             |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| 28/11/14 – 01/12/14 | Yes                    | D&SIFCA               | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area. | South of Start Point     | Case adjourned until 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 |
| 15/12/14            | Yes                    | D&SIFCA               | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area. | South of Start Point     | Case adjourned until 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 |
| 17-18/12/14         | Yes                    | D&SIFCA               | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area. | Lyme Bay                 | Master and Owner fined total of £12,270             |
| 08/02/15            | Yes                    | D&SIFCA               | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area. | Northeast of Start Point | Case listed for 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2015      |
| 09/02/15            | Yes                    | D&SIFCA               | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area. | Northeast of Start Point | Case listed for 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2015      |

|          |     |         |  |                     |                                    |
|----------|-----|---------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 16/03/15 | Yes | D&SIFCA | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area.                                    | South of Salcombe   | Case listed for 17th November 2015 |
| 28/06/15 | Yes | D&SIFCA | Fishing for bass in a Bass Nursery Area, retaining undersize bass.             | Exe estuary         | £500 FAP offered                   |
| 29/06/15 | No  | D&SIFCA | Using demersal towed gear in a closed area.                                    | Start Bay           | On-going                           |
| 22/07/15 | No  | D&SIFCA | Removing undersize edible crab otherwise in accordance with the potting permit | East of Start Point | On-going                           |
| 25/08/15 | No  | D&SIFCA | Fishing for scallop otherwise in accordance with the diving permit             | Lyme Bay            | On-going                           |
| 31/08/15 | No  | D&SIFCA | Fishing for bass in a Bass Nursery Area  | Exe estuary         | On-going                           |
| 31/08/15 | No  | D&SIFCA | Fishing for bass in a Bass Nursery Area  | Teign estuary       | On-going                           |

## Warnings

In addition a number of notices were placed in pots informing the fisher that the pot did not comply with the gear marking requirements set out in the potting permit conditions. Four advisory letters were issued for the offences of landing 3 undersize ling, one undersize bass, one undersize ling and using a pot without an escape gap fitted.

## Summary Table: Enforcement Officers' activities undertaken this quarter that fulfill Devon and Severn IFCA Success Criteria.

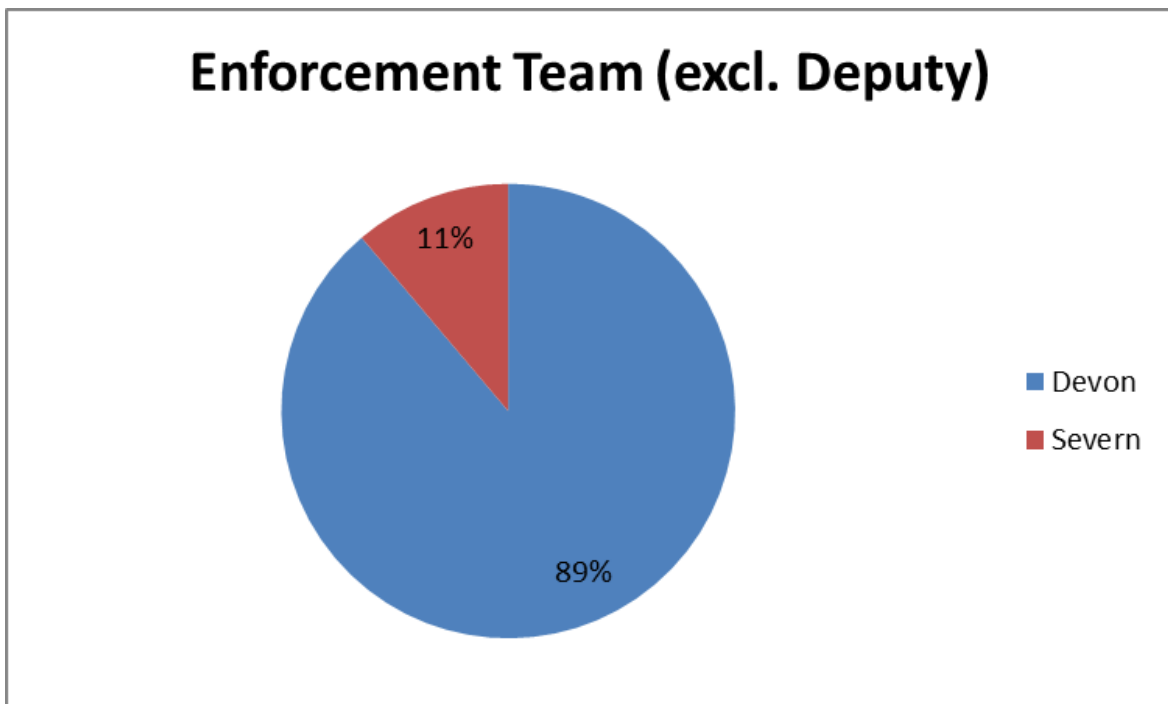
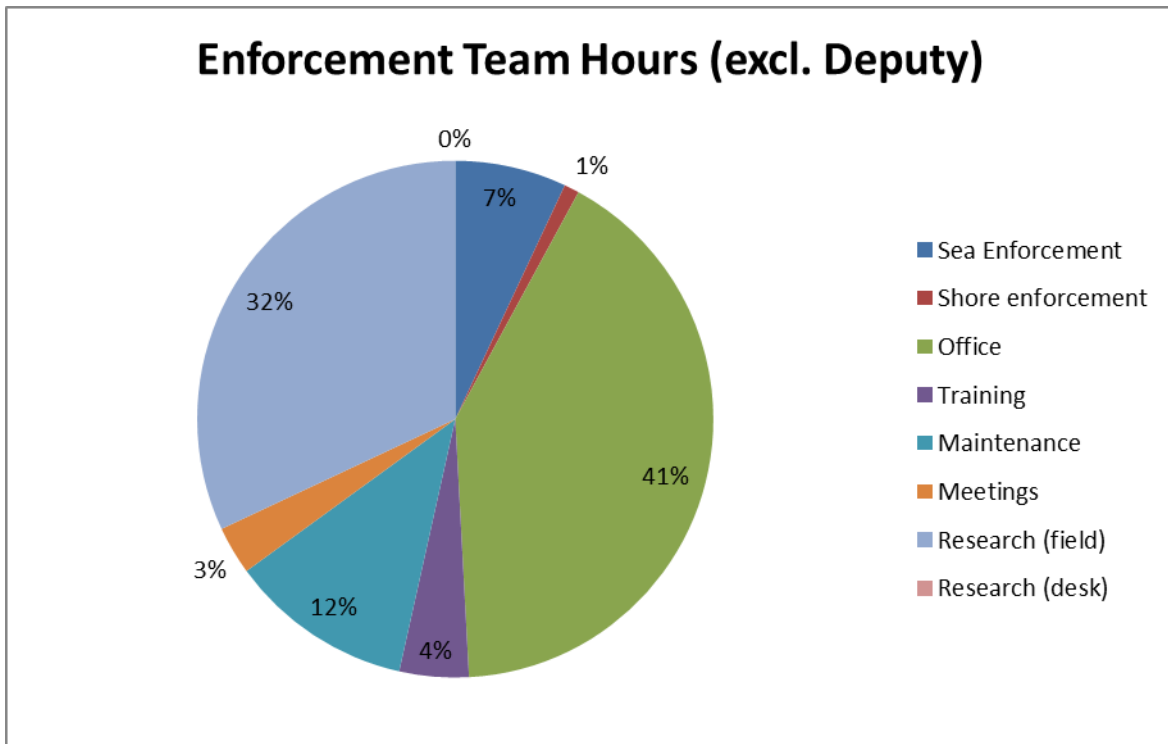
| Success Criterion (SC)   | Activities undertaken   |
|--|---|
| <b>SC1:</b> IFCAs have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected  | <p>Production of Jun to Aug quarterly reports. Enforcement officers provide crewing and enforcement coaching to research staff.</p> <p>Enforcement officers are encouraged to participate in a full range of duties.</p> <p>360 staff appraisals completed. Monthly staff meetings. Clarification on working hours policy provided.</p> |
| <b>SC2</b> Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries | <p>Potting Permit Byelaw and Diving Permit Byelaw confirmed. Crab and Lobster catch data obtained from at sea surveys and</p>   |

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| resources within the District.  | landing inspections. Development of permit schemes to gather better evidence.  |
| <b>SC3</b> A fair and appropriate enforcement regime is in place              | <p>An enforcement risk register is part of the Enforcement Plan 2015-2016.</p> <p>A summary of enforcement actions available to deal with illegal activity is part of the Enforcement Plan 2015-2016.</p> <p>A code of practice adopted with CIFCA to ensure consistent approach in the enforcement actions taken by each Authority.</p> <p>Officers have conducted targeted enforcement operations through a risk based approach.</p>   |
| <b>SC4</b> IFCAs work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders. | <p>Officers have attended estuary partnership meetings – Avon and Kingsbridge &amp; Salcombe to discuss enforcement concerns.</p> <p>Engage with permit holders on the review of the increase in female edible crab.</p> <p>Respond to legislation queries via telephone and website.</p> <p>Provide legislation information on website.</p> <p>Deal with legislation queries.</p>   |
| <b>SC5</b> IFCAs make best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.       | <p>Officers' enforcement activities are guided by the targeted enforcement plan referring to received information (SARs and NIRs)</p> <p>Patrol vessels task and review logs maintained.</p> <p>Officers use information on illegal activity to inform and develop enforcement plans</p> <p>EA emergency hotline operatives aware of D&amp;SIFCA</p> <p>D&amp;SIFCA introduced out of hours contact number 07740 175479 to report suspicious activity.</p> <p>D&amp;SIFCA secured finance to fully fund purchase and instalment of IVMS units on all</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | towed gear vessels operating in D&SIFCA District.   |
| <b>SC7:</b> IFCA's are recognised and heard | <p>IFCOs attend all meetings within District in uniform.</p> <p>Authority's vehicles are badged and byelaw review notices displayed</p> <p>Website redeveloped.</p> <p>Job description developed for communication officer post</p> |



Summary of Enforcement Officers' duties carried out during the quarter.



Between June and August the work load for the Environment team has continued unabated even with the addition of a summer intern, Becky Stanley. There has been a huge amount of survey work undertaken ranging from underwater filming to crustacean stock assessment and Angling Zone surveys. Running in parallel to these surveys, ongoing desktop work to prepare and complete Habitats Regulations Assessments for activities occurring in the MPA was undertaken.

Interviews for a one year Research Officer took place in August and have led to the recruitment of Stephanie Davies who commenced employment on 24<sup>th</sup> August. She has already fitted in well within the team and has started work on the MPA assessments. She has also been a real asset in the preparation display material for the upcoming Fish Stock Festival to be held in Brixham on 5th September.

**Recreational Sea Angling**

Angling Zone surveys have continued this month, with land based surveys at both Hallsands and Beesands as well as boat surveys of the site, although in the latter part of the quarter the boat surveys suffered due to adverse weather conditions. Monthly activity recording forms have been disseminated and are being returned by commercial fishermen using the site. This data is being input and mapped with the assistance of an intern and will be used to inform future management decisions for the Skerries Bank Angling Zone.

An Angling Trust Family Fishing event was attended at Bitterwell Lake, North Somerset. Information on the IFCA's work with the RSA sector was disseminated and information on the bass bag limit and upcoming change in minimum size was discussed. It was also a good opportunity to discuss and plan further RSA development work for the Severn Estuary with potential partnership working for next year discussed.

**MPA Management**

Further Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA) have been undertaken this quarter, with more assessments being completed for the Exe Estuary and Lundy EMS. Completed HRA have been sent to Natural England for their sign off. Further HRA for activities in the Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC, Plymouth Sound and Estuaries and Severn EMS have been worked on this quarter. A two-day workshop was held by Natural England in Norwich, where staff from all IFCAs and NE regional staff discussed how the new Conservation Advice packages fit into the ongoing HRA process. Any strategic issues encountered so far could be talked through with the group to ensure that issues are being dealt with consistently around the country. A report entitled 'Fisheries Activities Occurring in the Severn Estuary European Marine Site' which will form the basis HRA in the Severn EMS was completed. Severn EMS HRA are underway, with fish traps and potting being the first activities to be put through Test of Likely Significant Effect.

The informal netting survey of the Severn has continued this quarter with the IFCA being contacted by a number of individuals engaged in netting activities. It is anticipated that there may be an increase in netting in the Severn Estuary this year due to the large number of cod and bass present over the last 18 months. Therefore the netting survey will continue and the Fisheries Occurring report will remain a 'live' document. Information gained will inform both Habitat Regulations Assessments for the Severn Estuary EMS and the netting byelaw review.

Extra HRAs have also been completed to assess numerous derogation requests from Cefas, and the Marine Biological Association to undertake survey work including the use of towed gear within European Marine Sites.

The Cefas report for the Skerries Bank MCZ has now been released by Defra and the IFCA is awaiting the data GIS layers so that activities occurring within the site can be digitally

overlaid on top of the habitat layers and assessments can be carried out on the interactions of these activities on the habitats of conservation importance and whether management needs to be reviewed within the site.

## **Projects / Surveys**

### **North Devon Skate (Ray) Pilot Project**

The focus of this project this quarter has been preparatory work for tagging rays in the field. A personal licence training course was undertaken by the DCO and SEO in order to undertake this work. A meeting of the South West branch of the NFFO was attended and a short presentation was given on this project and D&S IFCA future involvement with the Shark ByWatch UK 2 project. A meeting was held with D&S IFCA officers and Welsh Government fisheries staff in order to discuss ray management in the Bristol Channel and the possible formation of the Bristol Channel Ray Management Forum. Informal conversations with Morrisons Ltd and Youngs Seafood have also been taking place regarding the support of sustainable ray fisheries in North Devon.

### **Shark ByWatch UK 2**

The aim of the workshop held in the last quarter as part of the FLAG-MMO-IFCA funded North Devon Skate (Ray) Pilot Project was to seek opportunities for longer term funding and encourage existing projects focused on rays to include North Devon as a case study area. Following on from this Shark ByWatch UK 2 has included North Devon as a case study area and the IFCA has become a partner in the project. The IFCA's contribution to the project has commenced, including collation of existing mapping data and the planning and implementation of a sidescan sonar survey of important ray habitat. Time has been spent preparing match-fund budgets and planning survey work.

### **European sea bass *Dicentrarchus labrax* developments**

Further desk-based research on European sea bass has continued this quarter and a number of research themes and potential partners for a PhD have been identified. Liaison with other IFCAs and organisations regarding their approach to bass management has continued. A short literature review on the importance of the Inner Severn Estuary was prepared for inclusion in the IFCA's response to the Defra request for information relating to the current performance of bass nursery areas.

At every event and forum meeting attending by the Environment Team officers updates were given on the new bass regulations.

### **Tidal Lagoons**

The Senior Environment Officer has drafted a Tidal Lagoon briefing paper for the Authority which highlights the potential impacts of Tidal Lagoons on the fish and recreational and commercial fisheries of the Severn Estuary and the possible wider effects on the Bristol Channel. An initial walkover survey to plan intertidal fish sampling by environmental consultants working on behalf of Tidal Lagoon Power was attended which provided a good opportunity to discuss the best survey methods and the current knowledge gaps relating to intertidal habitat use by marine fish in the Severn Estuary.

## **On-board surveys**

### ***Filming***

The final year of underwater filming within the Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC was completed as part of Sarah Gall's PhD work which is funded by the IFCA. This footage will now be analysed by Sarah to look at the impacts of different gears on the reef. The results from the impact of potting will be used to inform the HRAs.

During this quarter areas of the Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC were ground-truthed using the flying array camera system in order to verify the presence of reef to inform mobile gear management, and for conditional assessments of the site. These areas included the 'Pinnacles' south of the Rutts and the Bigbury Bay reefs. This data will be analysed and may inform changes to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw conditions. The data collected for the Prongs area has been analysed and a report is being prepared to send to Natural England to discuss any potential changes to the reef feature extent in this part of the site.

### ***Stock Assessments***

On-board surveys of catches of potting vessels within the district have taken place this quarter. These surveys were being carried out to measure the number, size and sex of all the crab and lobster catches on board vessels surveyed. Boats from Plymouth, Salcombe, Axmouth and Ilfracombe have been surveyed. The data collected from these vessels will be used as evidence to inform the IFCA's recent consultation on the increase in hen crab minimum conservation reference size to 150mm. The catch per unit effort data collected on board vessels will also help inform Cefas stock assessment alongside landings per unit effort from shore surveys. These surveys are following Cefas protocol so that data can feed into the annual stock assessments to ensure best evidence to predict stock sizes.

### ***Netting Impacts***

The MSC student from Plymouth University trialled the methodology of putting cameras (go-pros) on nets to investigate the impact of nets on the features of the Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC. Vessels from Salcombe and Plymouth were chartered for this work to be undertaken. Footage has been collected and is currently being analysed by the student. Cameras were put on the lead lines and top lines to film the nets interaction with the seabed and the species entering the nets. The go-pros worked successfully in depths up to 40m.

### ***Palinurus elephas in Lundy MCZ***

The Crawfish or Spiny Lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) is the only feature of conservation importance in the Lundy MCZ. Working with fishermen from Ilfracombe who suggested getting involved in the monitoring of this species, a project involving the use of large funnel inkwell pots set around Lundy Island to catch crawfish and tagging of those crawfish caught. A trip out with the fisherman in July was used to train the crew in the tagging methodology and also to gather information on the day's catch and catch per unit effort. The fishermen are now equipped with tags and will tag, measure, sex and record information about any crawfish caught. This is a really useful collaboration of managers and fishermen in monitoring and research in MPA.

### **Waddeton Fishery Order**

Reports of oyster mortalities on the River Dart are being investigated by Cefas. The Waddeton Fishery Order has been placed under an Initial Designation, meaning that no shellfish can be moved off the site except for depuration, until tests have been concluded to determine the cause of mortalities. The results from the tests received to date indicate that the oysters do not have the Oyster Herpes 1 Micro Variant virus but confirmation of this is

still being awaited. The Biosecurity Measures Plan for the Fishery Order was updated ahead of Cefas annual inspection of the site. The inspection went well, Cefas confirming that the shellfishery was being well managed as required.

### **Meetings & Outreach**

Libby Ross, SEO, attended a meeting of the Institute of Fisheries Management Estuarine and Marine Committee. Bass management was a major discussion point, as was the continued reporting of commercial catches of twaite and allis shad in the UK, despite their protected status.

Environment Officers attended the SeaTorbay working group where sea grass in Torbay and management of activities were discussed. Both the Exe Estuary Management Group and the newly formed Exe Habitats Regulations Mitigation Group were attended, where updates were given on the IFCA's work on the Exe Estuary. The latter group was set up to look at ways to mitigate issues which may arise from new developments around the Exe catchment, and the IFCA is likely to have only a limited involvement with this group. The Devon Area Estuary Officers Group held a meeting at the Seaton Wetlands reserve. Members attended from all major estuary partnerships, as well as the EA and Natural England, to discuss and update on any issues occurring on Devon's estuaries and MPAs.

Several teleconferences regarding MPAs have been joined, including the monthly Fisheries in MPA calls which involve all IFCAs, the MMO and Natural England. Also, two local teleconferences for MCZs in the D&S IFCA District were held with Natural England.

The IFCA ran a stand at the Spirit of the Exe Estuary festival. The stand was well received and attracted a lot of interest, especially from local anglers concerned about the changes in bass management. It also highlighted the IFCA's work as part of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

The DCO attended meetings this quarter in relation to MPA management and assessment of activities. Meetings have also taken place with industry members. A meeting was held with the Lundy Manager and Natural England to discuss joint working with the Lundy warden to help with monitoring of activities around the Island. Several teleconferences were held to discuss a planned survey between Cefas, D&S IFCA and Natural England to undertake underwater filming of the reef features in the Torbay Part of the Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC to feed into the 6 year conditional assessment. An IFCA Technical Advisory Group meeting was also attended and this gave an important opportunity to share progress on the technical and research work the IFCA are undertaking.

### **Training**

Some external and in house training has taken place this quarter though most of which has been very specific to current projects taking place. As part of the penultimate piece of training required for IFCOs to tag fish with data storage tags a Personal Licence training course was attended by Mat Mander and Libby Ross at the Cefas laboratory in Lowestoft. This included practicing the insertion of the tags in ray cadavers. Personal licenses were awarded to these officers.

One of the Environment Officers spent two days with Cornwall IFCA on their research vessel in August. During the first day there was a demonstration, from a survey equipment supply company, of a multibeam system that could potentially be used by the IFCAs in future survey works if there was funding available for the joint purchase of such equipment. The second day was spent learning how to use the SeaSpyder camera system which is joint-owned by all IFCAs. This system will be used during an upcoming survey with Cefas planned for October.

In-house training was provided to officers to be able to carry out basic updates to the IFCA's website. This allows for the continued updating of new information on the website.

The Team and all officers were involved in the recent 360° staff appraisal process which will form the basis of staff personal development programmes.

## Enforcement

Several RIB and shore patrols were undertaken by members of the Environment team alongside Enforcement Officers. One RIB patrol was carried out along the South Devon Coast, following reports of trawlers in the Skerries Angling Zone. Pots were also checked to ensure they comply with the Potting Permit Byelaw. Another patrol was combined with an angling survey, again checking pots for compliance. A RIB patrol in the Lyme Bay area found a commercial diver fishing for scallops without a permit in the closed season. Other patrols undertaken with the enforcement officers have led to pots and nets being seized and a trawler operating without a mobile fishing permit byelaw. Reports of illegal shore-set and boat-set fixed nets in the Kingston Seymour (North Somerset) and Aust (South Gloucestershire) area were received. Following on from these reports a meeting was held with Authority member John May and a local RSA representative to distribute information on the IFCA byelaws in the Severn Estuary. Additionally, a number of sites within the Severn were visited to determine the likelihood of those areas being used by boats engaged in illegal netting. Following on from this work three days of dedicated enforcement work were planned for the end of August to target the illegal netting in this area but the bad weather curtailed these trips.

| <b>Success Criterion (SC)</b>   | <b>Activities undertaken</b>  |
|---|---|
| SC1: IFCA's have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of quarterly reports.</li> <li>• On-going meetings with all environment staff on the progress of research projects</li> <li>• Website training allows several officers to update IFCA communications</li> </ul>   |
| SC2 Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within the District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underwater video footage.</li> <li>• Whelk project has been extended for a further year to ensure best evidence to inform byelaws</li> <li>• Shellfish catches and landing surveys continued to inform byelaw consultation</li> <li>• Netting survey within the Severn EMS will inform byelaw review</li> </ul>  |
| SC3: A fair and appropriate enforcement regime is in place  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many stakeholder meetings especially with members of the fishing industry and anglers were undertaken to inform the Byelaw review process, EMS and MCZ work, and New Bass regulations</li> <li>• Several enforcement patrols were undertaken</li> </ul>  |
| SC4: IFCA work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority Officers met, engaged and worked with members of SD&amp;CSA, NE, EA, and with fishers around the district</li> <li>• Many recreational Sea angling meetings and events were attended and presentations given.</li> <li>• Survey work planned in partnership with other IFCA's, NE, and Cefas</li> <li>• A stand was manned at Spirit of the Exe Estuary Festival</li> <li>• Telecoms have been attended to discuss EMS and MCZ work.</li> <li>• Responded to research and environment enquiries via telephone, e-mail and attended telecoms.</li> <li>• Officers attended EMS working and management group meetings.</li> <li>• Officers attended several meetings and a workshop on developing projects on skate and ray management in the district.</li> <li>• On-board shellfish surveys in partnership with fishers</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local partnership meetings and fora were attended.</li> <li>• IFM meeting was attended.</li> </ul>   |
| SC5: IFCAs make best use of evidence to deliver their objectives                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bait Collection surveys were completed in the EMS in the district to inform HRA.</li> <li>• Underwater filming to ground truth MPA habitats</li> <li>• HRAs undertaken for amber gear feature interactions using available data and fishing activity reports completed.</li> <li>• Meetings with PhD and MSC students to look at impacts of fishing activities (potting and netting) in EMS have taken place.</li> <li>• On board and shore catch and landings surveys of shellfish continued to support byelaw review and stock assessments.</li> <li>• Project based training undertaken.</li> <li>• Data from Angling Zone surveys have been GIS mapped.</li> </ul>             |
| SC6:IFCAs support and promote the sustainable management of the marine environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed shore and boat monitoring of the Angling Zones has commenced.</li> <li>• HRA were undertaken this quarter on activities in MPA</li> <li>• Workshop attended to discuss new NE conservation advice packages</li> <li>• Meetings held with Natural England on MCZ in the district.</li> <li>• Bass management papers, fliers and information produced</li> <li>• Meetings with angling clubs, angling representatives and the Angling Trust to discuss its development and management.</li> <li>• Management of the Waddeton Regulating order</li> <li>• Meetings with supermarkets and processors took place regarding sustainable ray fisheries in North Devon</li> </ul> |
| SC7: IFCAs are recognised and heard  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage is being developed to provide information of angling areas and species and other relevant RSA info.</li> <li>• EnvO sits on TAG. The D&amp;SIFCA is the TAG netting champion collating evidence on this gear type &amp; its impacts.</li> <li>• EnvO presented the work of the IFCA at angling club meetings</li> <li>• EnvO and DCO attended national meetings of SAGB</li> <li>• DCO presented on Environmental legislation and matters to IFCO national training course</li> </ul>  |

## Summary of Environment Officers' duties carried out during the quarter

