

Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Report for the Period Ending February 2016

General Situation

Chief Officer T Robbins

Following a letter from the Minister, George Eustice, to David Morris, MP, 4th December 2015 it is now confirmed that the IFCAs will continue to receive New Burdens funding until 2020. This is in recognition of the work that the IFCAs have delivered on behalf of Defra and in delivering protection to the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) within the district following the change of approach to management of fisheries activities within European Marine Sites (EMS). The IFCAs are also at the forefront of delivering management for the national network of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ). This national role coupled with the IFCAs ability to work on a very local level is seen as a very important delivery mechanism and this work has now been supported for a further five years.

The weather this quarter has provided very difficult conditions for all those involved with coastal communities. There has been widespread damage around the coast to infrastructure and disruption to people's lives. The fishing fleet have been confined to port for more days than they have fished but when the boats have got to sea the prices for their fish increased. This winter has not seen the gales and massive ground swells and so it is anticipated that many of the coastal habitats will not be as damaged as they were two winters ago.

January saw big changes to fisheries management with the introduction of the Demersal Landing Obligation (DLO) and changes to the protection of the bass stocks. The changes to discards and the reduction in bass landings has had some impact but the weather restricting fishing opportunities means that these changes have not yet been fully tested. Other species have been banned as well including small eyed ray. This is an important fishery for the north Devon trawler fleet, when added to the closure of the ray fishery last year and a poor squid fishery has resulted in the closure of the fish market at Bideford. The amount of fish being landed by the boats, that still fish from the local ports, has meant that there are not enough landing fees to cover the rental costs for the market from the local council. This will further challenge the viability of the towed gear fishery in north Devon and the Bristol Channel.

The work between the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the IFCAs towards greater partnership working has continued throughout the quarter, a project board has been set up to keep an overview of the various work streams and to ensure that the delivery targets are met. The focus of partnership working has revolved around assessing the possibility of sharing office space, hot desking and shared meeting venues. The other strand of work revolves around monthly planning meetings to help address common enforcement pressures whilst developing work plans that ensure increased joint working patrols and collaboration on shore based enforcement activity. Following on from the Comprehensive Spending Review in the Autumn the whole of the Defra Marine Function is being reviewed, the IFCAs will form part of this review as one of the Arm's Length Bodies. The work with the MMO and IFCA will form part of the submission to the review by the two organisations. The Chief Officers' Group will also be meeting to try and develop a position for the IFCAs to the Defra Marine Review ready for when questions will come from the group and how the IFCAs can work to deliver local and national coastal management. The position statement can be used by the Association of IFCAs to ensure that the IFCAs work is recognised, that there are areas of work that the IFCAs can undertake but also there are areas which would require additional resources before the IFCAs would consider additional work.

During January Tom Stamp was appointed by D&SIFCA and Plymouth University to undertake a PhD Research Project to look at bass within the district. Tom will be looking at the use by juvenile bass of bass nursery areas, coastal netting and how coastal realignment can be used to benefit bass and small fish nursery habitats. This research will take the next

three years during which time Tom will report to the Authority on his progress and will also work with a management group set up of local commercial and recreational bass fishermen.

All officers have been kept busy over the past quarter on a multitude of projects that the IFCA is currently involved with. The team working on the new netting byelaw have been kept very busy, they designed the consultation documents and then published them. They have spent a large amount of time answering questions about the consultation and then also compiling the responses ready for the Byelaw and Permitting Sub Committee and ultimately for the full Authority to have as much information as possible prior to making a decision on the new netting byelaw. This has fallen mainly to the enforcement team to undertake this work as well as their usual duties out on the coast. The environment officers have been assisting with the compilation of the data sets for the netting byelaw.

The environment officers have spent most of their time in working through the huge amount of Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA) which are still in progress. The whole process is expected to be finished by the end of 2016 in line with national deadlines. A great deal of work has been completed and submitted to Natural England (NE) for approval. At present it is anticipated that the D&SIFCA will complete the work to the deadline. Some research work was carried out over the past quarter on the scallop fishery in Salcombe and the whelk maturity work was completed.

The three new members of staff have now been with the Authority for six months and have all successfully completed their probationary periods.

Laura Bullock and Gavin Mayhew have recently undertaken their first fishery officer training course, both passed with flying colours and have now been issued with their full IFCA warrants. For the first time in two years there is now the full complement of enforcement officers for the D&SIFCA. Both officers are fitting in well and with some additional training over the summer will be fully qualified.

Steph Davies is the new research officer whose post is paid for by Defra to help with the delivery of the HRA process and also to help undertake research work to gather data to help inform management of the MPA network locally. Steph's post is funded for twelve months and she has proved to be a very good appointment delivering a very high standard of work consistently.

Enforcement Overview

Deputy Chief Officer (Enforcement) M Mander

During December it became apparent to officers that there was little likelihood that the Environment Agency's vessel *Proteus* would return to service. Traditionally the period around Christmas into the New Year is a time when there is a heightened risk that illegal towed gear activity will occur in the Marine Protected Areas. Officers took the decision to hire in a similarly sized, 12 metre in length, enclosed wheelhouse RIB from a company based in the Solent during this period. In January 2016 officers were formally notified that the Environment Agency had reached a decision to sell *Proteus*. The use of the hired RIB provides an opportunity to understand the benefits and disadvantages of the hull design but more importantly the use of unleaded petrol fuelled outboard engines as it was clear that the Authority needed to look for a long term solution to fulfil its sea based enforcement role.

The officers put the hired RIB to good use and offences were detected during the patrols and a number of investigations are active as a result. The Authority's own RIB was used to undertake patrols in the Plymouth estuaries. Shore patrols were undertaken on both of the south and north coasts. Landings were monitored on the south coast ports and stake net areas were visited on the Somerset coast. In addition, shore based enforcement plans to identify possible illegal netting activity were conducted on both coasts.

The much anticipated new European Bass management measures were formally introduced at the end of January 2016. The measures revised the catching opportunities for both commercial and recreational fishers. A comprehensive summary of the measures can be

found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bass-fishing-catch-limits-closures-and-minimum-size>

The review of the netting management measures provides the Authority with the opportunity to identify where it may be able to support the recovery of bass stocks at a local level and to seek to balance the interests of both sectors.

Byelaw Review

The second phase of pre-consultation for the review of netting management within the district ended on 22nd February 2016. There had been a significant response with 330 on line responses, over 40 questionnaires returned by post and a number of emails relating to the review that were responded to. The detail in the responses was generally disappointing. Officers amended the questionnaire after reading the initial responses and listening to feedback during the first week of consultation. The revised questionnaire did improve the level of detail that was provided but not markedly. Officers from both the enforcement team and the environment teams contributed to the collation and review of the information obtained from many sources including the commercial landing figures for ports within the district in the period 2011 and 2015. The pre-consultation phase has placed a significant strain on officer time. Since 1st November 2015 two enforcement officers have spent a combined total of 560 hours on the review.

Officers have prepared a netting management report for the Members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee to consider at their meeting to be held on 7th March 2016. A verbal report will be provided to the full Authority at the meeting on 17th March 2016. Officers met with Authority Vice Chair and Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee Member, Mike Williams, and the Authority's prosecuting solicitor, Fred Howell on two occasions to draft the proposed Netting Permit Byelaw. By the end of the second full day a draft byelaw was created and forwarded to the MMO. The level of work required to consider all the information and to prepare the Impact Assessment to accompany the proposed Netting Permit Byelaw forced Officers to accept that it would not be possible to present the necessary information at the March Quarterly meeting and to ask the Authority to formally make the Netting Permit Byelaw. The decision to delay the making of the byelaw until the June Quarterly meeting will not jeopardise the Authority's commitment to bring in the Byelaw in to force before the end of 2016. The delay will also bring the process back in line with Cornwall IFCA that has also taken the decision to delay making their netting byelaws.

IVMS

Unfortunately the IVMS project was suspended at the end of December 2015. Meetings with both MMO and the suppliers of the IVMS units were held to look for a way forward before the European Fisheries Fund grant deadline was reached on 31st December 2015. It was apparent to all concerned that to progress the project a IVMS unit needed to meet the standards set by the National Type Approval programme.

Officers submitted a report to the MMO in order to notify them of the reason for the unavoidable and unforeseen delay in the IVMS project and to submit a claim against the awarded funding for monies already spent. This included the costs for the purchase and installation of the first 30 IVMS units.

Officers are confident that that project will qualify for further European money through the newly launched European Maritime Fisheries Fund. A further testing window to allow companies to submit further units for testing was reported to be opening before the end of February.

The importance of the vessel monitoring data to both inform enforcement planning and assist in the detection of offences was again demonstrated during the reporting period with

six towed gear vessels under investigation for fishing in areas closed to demersal fishing gear.

Training

The new officers have successfully completed their six months' probation period. Both officers have been active members of the enforcement team, assisting warranted officers from the start. Both officers completed the five day Police and Criminal Evidence Act training course for IFCA officers at the end of January. The trainers' reports for both officers were very complementary and both officers were issued with their IFCO and limited Marine Enforcement Officer powers.

Both these officers are awaiting confirmation of their advanced powerboat training. As highlighted above the use of vessel track data is being more commonplace and is likely still to increase in the future. This data needs to be handled sensitively and presented accurately for evidential purposes. The Authority holds the necessary expertise in this field within the environment team but there is a need to develop these skills within the enforcement team. Specialised training is being sought through Southampton University.

Working together

Officers have continued to work with colleagues from the MMO, the Environment Agency and the police as well as the warranted IFCO warranted officers from Salcombe Security Limited. Following a further review of the Environment Agency's staff structure one of its officers, Jeremy Boyd, formally seconded to the IFCA on a part-time basis, took early retirement. Jeremy Boyd will be a significant loss to the Authority and officers have formally thanked him for his efforts whilst carrying an IFCA warrant. His commitment to deliver the Authority's enforcement role in North Devon alongside his colleague Paul Carter has meant that the Authority has achieved a level of monitoring and enforcement in North Devon that had not been achieved before.

Officers have worked alongside MMO officers on a number of the cases that are summarised below. Officers have also carried out shore inspections with the MMO. As ever the joint work allows the two organisations to work closely together and provides opportunities to learn how different organisations and individual officers approach fisheries enforcement work.

The latest case involving the suspected use of an illegal fixed net demonstrates the multiagency approach. Two IFCA officers responded to a call to the Duty Phone at 0400hrs on 14 February 2016 and were supported by local police officers and officers from Salcombe Security during an enforcement operation in Salcombe that resulted in a net being seized. The investigation is ongoing.

Enforcement

The Authority is currently investigating 10 commercial vessels for various breaches of European, National and local legislation. Six of the cases relate to demersal towed gear vessels fishing in areas where such fishing activity is prohibited. The complexity and significance of many of the cases places a further significant pressure on officers' time.

Unfortunately after reviewing the evidence in two other cases relating to recreational bass fishing offences, the Authority's prosecuting solicitor advised that the evidential test had not been satisfied. Officers have reviewed the cases and identified areas where changes in the enforcement plans should be made.

Investigations

Offence Date	Investigation complete	Prosecuting Authority	Offence	Location	Outcome/ Current Status
31/08/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Fishing for bass in a Bass Nursery Area	Teign estuary	No further action
19/09/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining more than 3 bass per recreational fisher	Torquay	No further action.
03/12/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	Torbay	Master and Owner offered £1000 FAP
03-13/12/15	No	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging within the Lyme Bay to Torbay SAC and contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	Lyme Bay	On going
16-23/12/15	No	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	South of Salcombe	On going
15/01/16	No	D&SIFCA	Landing of undersize bass	Brixham Market	On going
15/01/16	No	D7SIFCA	Landing of undersize lobsters	Brixham Market	On going
21-25/01/16	No	D&SIFCA	Beam trawling contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw and Vessel Size Byelaw	South of Salcombe	On going
01 -19/02/16	No	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	South of Salcombe	On going
10/02/16	No	MMO	Fishing commercial from an unlicensed powered vessel and retaining prohibited species (Small eyed Ray)	Lyme Bay	On going
11/02/16	No	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	Lyme Bay	On going
14/02/16	No	D&SIFCA	Fishing with a fixed net contrary to Fixed Engine Byelaw	Salcombe	On going

Warnings

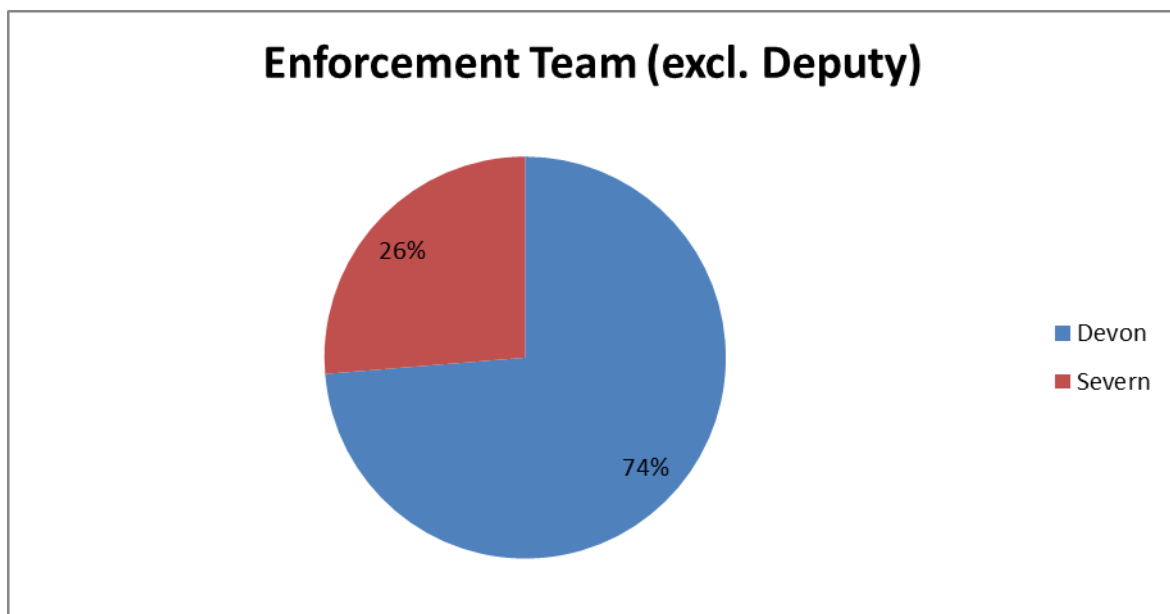
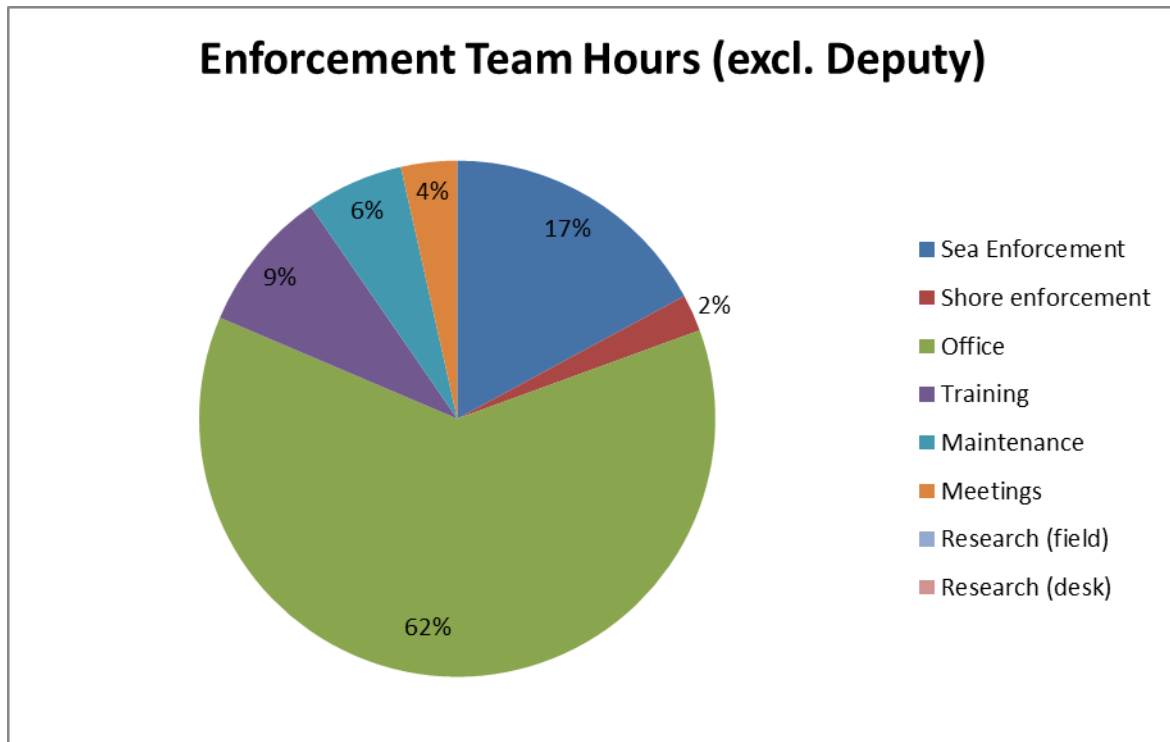
Warnings were issued to the owners of four commercial vessels for fishing without a valid permit issued under the Mobile Gear and Potting Permit Byelaws. When notified by officers the masters ceased fishing and returned to port to obtain a valid permit. No other offences were identified during the boardings.

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

Success Criterion (SC)	Activities undertaken
SC1: IFCA's have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected	<p>Production of Dec to Feb 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>Clarification on working hours policy provided.</p>
SC2 Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within the District.	<p>Pre-consultation on the review of the inherited netting byelaws undertaken.</p>
SC3 A fair and appropriate enforcement regime is in place	<p>An enforcement risk register is part of the Enforcement Plan 2016-2017.</p> <p>A summary of enforcement actions available to deal with illegal activity is part of the Enforcement Plan 2016-2017.</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> <p>Two new officers have been issued with enforcement warrants after successfully completing required training elements.</p>
SC4 IFCA's work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders.	<p>Officers have attended estuary partnership meetings – Exe and Yealm to discuss enforcement concerns.</p> <p>Responded to netting byelaw review questions</p> <p>Provide legislation information on website.</p>

<p>SC5 IFCAs make best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.</p>	<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&SIFCA</p> <p>D&SIFCA introduced out of hours contact number 07740 175479 to report suspicious activity.</p>
<p>SC7: IFCAs are recognised and heard</p>	<p>IFCOs attend all meetings within District in uniform.</p> <p>Multi media approach to current netting byelaw review</p>

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



Acronyms used:

- MPA= Marine Protected Area*
- HRA = Habitat Regulation Assessment*
- EMS = European Marine Site*
- SAC= Special Area of Conservation*
- SPA = Special Protection Area*
- MCZ= Marine Conservation Zone*
- NE=Natural England*

The start of 2016 has seen much progress in the development of HRA for commercial fishing activities that are currently taking place in the MPA in the district. All members of the Environment team have been working hard to progress this important work stream and the IFCA is on target to complete all the necessary assessments by the end of 2016 and have the appropriate management in place. The poor weather conditions has seen few days where coastal or estuarine survey work could take place but the officers have managed to undertake some filming work in the Salcombe estuary. Much of the work has been desk based and apart from the constant stream of HRA work the winter months have provided the opportunity to input crustacean catches and landing; analyse the last few whelk samples and undertake fishing effort surveys and recreational sea angling zone surveys. The Environment team has also been working on gathering evidence and analysing data for the netting byelaw review which has included review of literature on netting impacts on salmon stocks; bass catches by gear types and netting survey responses.

Marine Protected Area Management

The winter months have provided the opportunity for the Environment team to focus on HRA to fulfil the requirement to assess and bring in management of commercial fishing activities within the MPA in the district by the end of 2016. In the Severn Estuary EMS there has been a focus on stake netting. The finished HRA ready to be reviewed by Natural England for Severn Estuary SAC include seven gear group types, Severn Estuary SPA five gear group types, and for Plymouth Sound and Estuaries EMS, six gear group types. A meeting was held at the NE offices in Exeter to discuss HRA for birds in the district's SPA and the use of The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) low tide counts data. Further work on assessments for the SPA is being progressed. Two teleconferences have also been conducted with Natural England to discuss progress, in particular in relation to in-combination assessments, and feedback on the HRAs. HRA work was continued for the Lundy SAC and the Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC, with a number being sent to NE for formal advice. Formal advice has been received by NE on several activities occurring within the Lundy SAC. This has led to several discussions with NE regional team members to ensure the most relevant and up to date information is submitted with any assessment done. The rest are in the process of Test of Likely Significant Effect and possible Appropriate Assessment. With the delivery of the new conservation advice packages from Natural England, the new sub-features and conservation objects have been integrated into the remaining HRA to be completed for all sites.

Additional HRA have also been carried out to assess numerous derogation requests the IFCA has received for undertaking survey work within European Marine Sites. Input was provided for the review of the Exe Estuary SPA Management Plan and the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Estuaries Management Plan, and the creation of the South Devon Catchments Action Plan. The IFCA will provide information on fishing activities and the management of fishing activities that is in place within these areas

Environment officers have started to draft a consultation response for the proposed Bristol Channel SAC which is being considered for the conservation of harbour porpoises. Parts of the North Devon coast as well as the Lundy SAC currently fall inside the proposed new area.

Recreational Sea Angling

Monitoring of the Skerries Angling Zone has continued this quarter. The majority of the surveys have been shore based, due to bad weather, with Hallsands and Beesands visited five and seven times, respectively. Three boat based surveys was undertaken from the angling charter vessel, with two others cancelled due to bad weather. Surveys take place both during the week and at weekends, and at different times of the day, to ensure that all opportunities to speak to anglers are met.

Angling Zone surveys have now started at Burnham, Berrow and Brean, with a planned survey effort of one survey per week. The focus of these surveys deviates slightly from those on the Skerries Bank in that the main emphasis will be spreading awareness of the zone amongst local and visiting anglers. The survey will also take the format of a short questionnaire/interview aimed at understanding the angler's activities and their perceptions of the new voluntary code.

Libby Ross, Senior Environment Officer, has spent time this quarter on the preliminary planning and administration phase of a partnership project called 'FishTrail', led by Westcountry Rivers Trust which D&SIFCA is a partner in. The project has partners in Ireland, Belgium and Denmark will and is looking to: - i. create a network of fishing sites across Europe; ii. record five videos (with multi-lingual subtitle options) per partner promoting the local fishing sites in the trail and iii. produce a collection of *Anglers tales* where they record their experiences on the fishing trail in words, pictures and sound. The key priorities of the project are sustainable development of resources and the responsible use of natural resources, which will be the focus of the videos produced by the IFCA.

Estuarine Shellfisheries

There have been prolonged and heavy mortalities of oysters on the Dart. Whilst Cefas scientists have investigated the cause and found no notifiable diseases present the shellfishermen working within and outside of the Waddeton Regulating Order on the Dart are finding it difficult to maintain and sustain their fisheries. One fisherman has discussed the possibility of placing oysters in bags on strings of rope subtidally outside of the estuary within Start Bay. This is currently being discussed with Natural England as there is concern on the spread of pacific oysters into the nearby Marine Protected Areas. There have been several requests to increase aquaculture in the district in particular scallop lines in Torbay and a trial rope collector for mussel spat in Labrador Bay.

A meeting hosted by the Food Standards Agency was attended to discuss the cause of the high *E.Coli* results found in many samples of shellfish from the South West last year. A discussion was had on the efficacy of the current testing methodology and proposal to improve the current system.

Projects / Surveys

The IFCA has continued with a variety of different organisations regarding the potential to be involved in new projects. One is an Interreg Va project on harmful algal blooms, EUROHAB, and the effect on inshore bivalves and developing an algal bloom and water quality alert system in the English Channel early detection system working with Cefas, Ifremer and Plymouth Marine Laboratory. A workshop is planned for March / April to discuss this project. The other is looking to bring partner organisations together on research and management of the spiny lobster, *Palinurus elephas*. A workshop was held in January with Ifremer, Cefas, MBA, IoS IFCA, CIFCA and D&S IFCA to discuss the way forward. The IFCA is looking to be

involved in some of the population and tagging work which will help with our monitoring the recovery of crawfish in Lundy and Skerries Bank MPA.

Skates and rays

Work on elasmobranchs this quarter has been largely desk-based with project reporting and the final administration and finance aspects of both the North Devon Ray Pilot Project and the Shark ByWatch UK 2 project. A wrap-up meeting for the latter project was attended in London in December to hear summaries of the work undertaken so far and to discuss whether there was a need to apply for funding for a third iteration of the project. The IFCA presented the North Devon ray fishery as case study and outlined the work that had been done so far, and what still needed to be done. Unfortunately at the same meeting an announcement was made that at the December council, small-eyed ray had been designated as a prohibited species, despite scientific advice simply calling for a reduction in catch. D&SIFCA provided literature review documents describing the fishery in North Devon which were written as part of the North Devon Ray Pilot Project process to Defra and it is hoped an attempt will be made to reconsider the small-eyed ray decision. A number of industry and government representatives have now contacted the IFCA who are interested in developing a Fisheries Improvement Plan for rays in the Bristol Channel. The IFCA is awaiting a decision on the small-eyed ray situation before it pursues this concept further.

European sea bass *Dicentrarchus labrax* developments

The IFCA's work plan for the future management of Bass has developed this quarter. Following the decision to appoint a PhD candidate with Plymouth University, D&SIFCA has been involved in the recruitment process, culminating in shortlisting and interviews in December 2015. Four strong candidates were interviewed and the position offered and accepted. Following the interviews D&SIFCA officers and Dr Emma Sheehan from Plymouth University met with Cefas scientists to discuss joint interests in bass research and to identify possible areas of partnership work. A presentation on D&SIFCA's planned work relating to European sea bass was given to the IFCA Technical Advisory Group in January in order to identify possible additional project partners in other IFCAs. A meeting was held in February to develop ideas for an EMFF partnership project which would help to fund the PhD research.

Salcombe Estuary Filming

D&S IFCA permits a restricted king scallop (*Pecten maximus*) dredge fishery in Salcombe Estuary under the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw. The fishery is open from 15th December to 15th March each year and operates in a restricted area between lines drawn from Woodville Rocks to Ager Point at the southern end, and Snapes Point to Scoble Point at the northern end. The flexible conditions of the permit, which include spatial restrictions as well as gear restrictions such as the use of no-toothed hand hauled dredge, are to be reviewed at least every three years. This provides the IFCA with the opportunity to take on feedback from the industry and review the permit condition including the area the scallop fishery operates in.

Over the last few years the IFCA has received requests from the scallop fishers, both verbally and in writing, to open an area known as 'The Bag' to the fishery. To look into whether this could happen in the future, underwater filming work was carried out this quarter in The Bag area to identify and assess the habitats and their condition. Salcombe Estuary is a SSSI, so there would need to be certainty that none of the designated features would be at risk if the fishery area was changed. D&S IFCA also needed to ascertain if scallop stocks in The Bag would be sufficient to support the fishery. The survey was carried out aboard the charter vessel Anglo Dawn, using the drop-down dive camera. The data has yet to be analysed.

Start Bay Whelks

Following the completion of the Size of Maturity (SOM) project for whelks in the Ilfracombe and Exmouth fisheries, an extension of the project was conducted for the whelk stocks in Start Bay. This extension was proposed by one of the fishers who catches whelk in Start Bay, as he believed the previous study was not representative of the stocks in the area he works. Two samples of whelks from Start Bay were provided for analysis. These samples have now been processed and estimates of SOM (shell height) have been calculated; 57.8mm for females, 64.4mm for males. SOM has not yet been calculated for shell width. These SOM shell heights are smaller than those for Exmouth and Ilfracombe, suggesting that the whelks in Start Bay may be a separate stock.

Torbay MCZ

There has been some scalloping activity in the access areas of the Torbay part of the Torbay and Lyme Bay SAC. Activity in these areas has not been seen for several years. One of the designated features of the Torbay MCZ is subtidal mud. A Masters student from Plymouth University will be working with the IFCA and undertaking a research project on the impact of this recent scalloping on the mud habitat by comparing the areas closed to demersal gear within those that are still open. This will help decide the appropriate management for fishing activities in the whole of the MPA.

Severn Estuary Netting Survey

A number of joint enforcement–research shore visits have taken place throughout the Severn Estuary this quarter. These have been to familiarise newer members of the enforcement team with the area, check areas where illegal netting has been reported and to carry out netting surveys in areas where netting legitimately occurs. Focus areas have so far included Minehead, Burnham and Clevedon. A series of visits to the upper Severn are planned for the next quarter.

Netting Byelaw Review

Support has been given to the byelaw review process with the environment team helping to collate and review available evidence on the potential socio economic and environmental costs and benefits of various netting scenarios. Landings data from the MMO for the past five years within the district is currently being assessed to inform the pre-consultation of the netting permit byelaw. Economic value and weight have been calculated for each gear type per port, and economic value for gill and entangling nets per boat, per port for all species, bass and mullet. The 2014 district wide netting survey results have also been analysed to support the development of the netting byelaw.

Shellfish Stock Assessments

In order to help inform Cefas' shellfish stock assessments, data collected on board fishing vessels and from landings of crabs and lobsters last year has been entered into excel spreadsheet and will be passed on to Cefas. A scientific survey of edible crab landings from each string hauled on board a fishing vessel from Dartmouth was carried out between 14th October and 2nd November 2015 and data input is currently underway.

Meetings & Outreach

Several teleconferences regarding MPA have been attended, including the monthly Management of Fisheries in EMS which involves all IFCA, the MMO and Natural England.

A meeting was held with a PhD student from the University of Brighton to discuss with him how we interact with fishermen as stakeholders, joint working with fishermen to carry out surveys and enforcement and using their local knowledge. An update on the D&S IFCA's netting byelaw consultation and the new EU bass regulations was given at the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF).

IFCA officers met with fishermen in Minehead to discuss issues surrounding the movement of a substantial build-up of pebbles at the entrance of Minehead harbour. Whilst all harbour users agree the need to move the pebbles, stake-net fishermen are concerned that depositing the pebbles across Minehead foreshore will affect the fishing of historic herring nets. A letter describing the fishing activities in the vicinity of the stakes and highlighting the possibility that the herring spawn in the area was supplied to Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council, in order to help inform the decision on a suitable deposition site for the shingle.

Libby Ross, as current Chair of the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) attended a meeting with the ASERA officer and Welsh Government to discuss the current membership, funding and work plan of ASERA. This was to help inform the current Welsh Government review of management of Welsh marine protected areas. The biological and political complexities of such a large cross-border European Marine Site with multiple conservation designations and large development projects was highlighted by ASERA. A meeting was also held with the Somerset, Avon and Wiltshire Natural England team manager regarding funding for ASERA and the working relationship between the two organisations. Once again, the complex nature of the Severn was highlighted and a way forward identified.

Both the Sea Torbay Conservation Group and Steering Group were attended to discuss the ongoing management of marine activities within Torbay, and to provide updates on current IFCA work. The Community Seagrass Initiative (CSI) held an evening meeting in January to present the results of their work in 2015, with a large focus on Torbay.

A consultation morning on the Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme was held in Dawlish. The IFCA were present at this event to comment on any aspects of the Scheme which may have an impact on the fisheries of the Exe Estuary. The Exe Estuary Winter Forum was attended, to discuss the Exe Estuary Local Fisheries Group and recreational activities on the Estuary. DCO Mat Mander also gave a presentation on the changes to the EU bass regulations.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) came to the IFCA to discuss the "MPA Reality Tracker". The IFCA made several suggestions to improve the accuracy of this tool. A representative from Sea Search was also present at this meeting to look into the possibility of collecting data for D&S IFCA within the MPAs in our District.

The annual two-day IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) conference was held in January in Pool, hosted by Southern IFCA. Members of all IFCA's Environment/Research teams discussed a variety of project work, such as stock assessments for various commercial species and survey methodology for gear impact studies. Representatives were also present from Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Cefas, as well as guest speakers.

The DCO gave talks to Plymouth Dive club, at the IFCO training course, at a project meeting relating to Crawfish and at the Defra Implementation Group meeting. A meeting was held with a company wishing to place artificial reef systems within Torbay. Currently discussion are being held with Natural England regarding their proposal.

A PhD progress meeting was attended by the DCO with the Chief Officer, where the PhD student, Sarah Gall, gave an update on the final stages of work being undertaken. Part of the PhD research looked at the management of MPA and the impacts of different gear types in the D&S IFCA district. Some of the work by Sarah has been presented and a paper has

been produced. It is hoped that the final reports will soon be available and will help with the HRA that are taking place currently.

Training

A four day course focusing on advancing project management skills was attended at the Marine Institute in Plymouth by Libby Ross. The 'Challenges of Science Leadership' course, led by the Barefoot Thinking Company was an extremely rewarding experience as well as an excellent networking opportunity with colleagues from the Plymouth Marine Institute, the MBA, the Crown Estate, Wessex Water, Cefas and Plymouth Marine Lab. A course on acceptable behaviour in the workplace was also attended by all IFCA officers. Kat Gray and Steph Davies attended in-house training given by DCO Mat Mander at Brixham Market to refresh fish identification skills. A one day Conflict Resolution Training course was attended and passed by all.

Enforcement work

Fish ID training was carried out on Brixham market and enforcement was carried out alongside. There were a number of undersized bass and lobster found on the market. Statements were written and the case has now been handed over to the enforcement team. GIS work has been undertaken on many occasions to plot fishing activity from tracking systems against closures in the district and habitat type. These have been used to inform the enforcement work of the IFCA. One early morning weekend enforcement patrol was undertaken on the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary. This resulted in an illegally placed net being seized. This patrol was a joint patrol with the Police and Salcombe Securities.

Time has been spent getting all the IFCA's spatial restriction areas into a suitable GIS format that can be used by a charting software company to produce software that can allow all the charts to be converted into a format that can be read, from a USB pen, by the four main plotters used by fishermen. This project has been developed working with the enforcement team to allow mobile gear fishermen full access to digital charts so removing any error of transposing lat and long positions manually on to their ships' plotters.

Success Criterion (SC)	Activities undertaken
SC1: IFCA's have sound governance and staff are motivated and respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of quarterly reports. • On-going meetings with all environment staff on the progress of research projects • Training was given to develop project management skills, conflict resolution and acceptable behaviour in the work place. • Fish ID in house training was undertaken
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"> • Fish catches and landings data were analysed to inform netting byelaw consultation • Netting survey within the Severn EMS will inform byelaw review • Analysis of district wide netting survey to inform netting byelaw development • Filming in Salcombe Estuary was undertaken to review the Salcombe Scallop fishery permit conditions. • Final analysis of whelk size of sexual maturity data to inform any review of potting permit conditions,
SC3: A fair and appropriate enforcement regime is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholder meetings especially with members of the fishing industry and anglers were undertaken to inform the Byelaw review process, EMS and MCZ work,

	<p>and New Bass regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several enforcement patrols were undertaken in both the Devon and Severn areas – onshore and on patrol vessels. • Statements and GIS charts were produced to support case files for prosecutions.
<p>SC4: IFCA work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority Officers met, engaged and worked with members of SD&CSA, NE, EA, and with fishers around the district • Recreational Sea angling meetings were attended. • An evening meeting was attended on the Community Seagrass Initiative • Consultation meetings were attended e.g. Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme • IFCA TAG was attended by Environment Officers • Survey work planned in partnership with other IFCAs, NE, and Cefas • Telecoms have been attended to discuss EMS and MCZ work. • Responded to research and environment enquiries via telephone, e-mail and attended telecoms. • Officers attended EMS working and management group meetings. • Local partnership meetings and fora were attended. • Severn Estuary Netting survey undertaken with local stakeholders • ASERA meetings chaired and partnership working discussed. • Meetings with NE to discuss HRAs, SPA and bird count data. • Officers reviewed the Marine Conservation Society MPA Reality Checker
<p>SC5: IFCAs make best use of evidence to deliver their objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRAs undertaken for amber gear feature interactions using available data and fishing activity reports completed. • Meetings with PhD and MSC students to look at impacts of fishing activities (potting and netting) in EMS have taken place. • Data from Angling Zone surveys have been GIS mapped. • Analysis of shellfish stock assessment data • Input of scientific survey of crab catches from fishing vessels. • Available evidence reviewed to support netting byelaw development. • Economical and landings data of netting to support netting byelaw review
<p>SC6:IFCAs support and promote the sustainable management of the marine environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed shore and boat monitoring of the Angling Zones has commenced. • HRA were undertaken this quarter on activities in MPA • HRA undertaken for derogation requests • Meetings with NE attended to discuss new conservation advice packages • Meetings held with Natural England on MCZ in the district. • Meetings held with NE to discuss use of Wetland Bird survey data in SPA assessments • Bass management papers produced and presentations given to stakeholder Fora

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with angling clubs and angling representatives to discuss its development and management. • Management of the Waddeton Regulating order • New project development – Harmful algae alert system and Spiny lobster management. Meeting and workshops attended. • Development of PhD on Bass programme with Plymouth University • Planning and development of 'FishTrail' project with Westcountry Rivers Trust • Input given to review Management Plans for Devon Estuaries • Officer undertook an underwater filming survey In Salcombe estuary to inform future management of fisheries in the estuary • Analysis of whelk samples taken from Start Bay to inform the future management of the stock in this part of the district • Aquaculture developments have been discussed with fishers and relevant organisations • Bass PhD development and selection of candidate. Discussions of planned work and funding opportunities were held.
SC7: IFCAS are recognised and heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENV Officer sits on TAG. • SEO chaired ASERA meetings and AGM • DCO gave a talk on Environmental legislation and management to IFCO training course • DCO gave presentation to Defra and the Implementation group on HRA progress • Presentations given at fora and stakeholder meetings including TAG.

Summary of Environment Officers' duties carried out during the quarter

