

Press Release – For immediate release 11/10/2017

Successful prosecutions against illegal fishers in the Devon & Severn IFCA area



Several owners of fishing vessels have been prosecuted and fined for illegal fishing within the D&S conservation area over the past few months. On 7th August, D&S IFCA issued a penalty fine of £500 to Mr R Mitchelmore and Mr S Mitchelmore as the respective owner and master of fishing vessel Excel. Their offence was the removal of edible crab measuring less than the minimum conservation reference size from a fishery in the district.

Mat Mander, Deputy Chief Officer at D&S IFCA, said: “Each investigation is evaluated independently and the Authority is pleased with the outcome which is proportionate to the offence committed. This offence was detected during landing operations in Kingswear, South Devon on 2nd June and illustrates that shore based inspections such as this can be very effective to monitor compliance. D&S IFCA will continue to monitor landings and conduct inspections at this port and others within the whole of the D&S IFCA District.”

Kaimoana Ltd and Mr R Adams were also fined as the respective owner and master of fishing vessel Sea Fever for removing lobster that was below reference size. “The minimum conservation reference size for lobsters is a key management measure to help support a healthy population and to allow everyone fishing either commercially or recreationally to benefit from this important inshore fishery,” Mr Mander said. This offence was detected at sea and demonstrates the value of D&S IFCA’s sea going assets and the effectiveness of officers boarding fishing vessels at sea. D&S IFCA currently utilizes a 6.4 metre RIB which can be transported, launched and used within the whole of the D&S IFCA District.

A further financial administrative penalty of £500 was issued on 27th July to Mr P Lester and Mr B Ackland as the respective owner and master of fishing vessel Guillemont for the offence of fishing with pots without escape gaps on 9th May 2017.

The Potting Permit byelaw has been in place since 15th March 2015 and prohibits the use of pots for fishing within the area unless in accordance with a permit. Permits are issued to both the commercial and recreational sector upon application and they contain several important technical requirements including restrictions on catch, bait, gear and time that ensure fair and balanced access to a sustainable shellfish fishery.

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If you would like further information, images or an interview with a D&S IFCA Officer, please contact:

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Editors Notes:

- D&S IFCA was established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries. The duties, responsibilities and powers for all IFCA's are clearly set out in this Act of Parliament.
- The D&S IFCA is the largest of ten separate IFCA districts and has two sea boundaries. The D&S IFCA District covers an area of 4522 Km²
- The D&S IFCA is funded through its constituent Local Authorities by an annual levy. That levy is supported by central Government to enable the Authority deliver on national management objectives. The Local Authorities funding the IFCA are: Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council; Somerset County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Bristol City Council.
- The D&S IFCA manages the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district and seeks to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Areas in the district are furthered.
- D&S IFCA's vision is to: "lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".