

Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Report for the Period Ending November 2016

General Situation

Chief Officer T Robbins

This has been a very busy year for the Devon & Severn IFCA, the members of the Authority and the officers working for the Authority.

As we move through the autumn and into the winter months there seems to be no let-up in the amount of work being covered by the team and the great variety of topics and work areas that need to be addressed. As can be seen by the reports from the two deputy chief officers their teams have been delivering a huge workload in the past quarter. All of this ensures that the D&SIFCA continue to lead the way in most aspects of the national IFCA group but also that the coastal waters around the district remain protected from harmful activity and will be protected for years to come by the new and innovative management being introduced by this IFCA.

The new proposed netting byelaw has taken up a huge amount of officer time in terms of running the consultation, replying to information requests, answering consultation comments and preparing papers for the Authority. In the twelve months that the work on the byelaw has been taking place it is difficult to say that the D&SIFCA has not tried everything to engage with those likely to be impacted by the byelaw, listen to their views and try to incorporate this into the byelaw whilst still balancing the needs of all those involved in the fishery and protecting the fishery at the same time. The IFCA has gone far beyond the statutory requirement with regard to consultation and advertising. This has been a very costly exercise for the Authority in terms of budget and officer hours.

The D&SIFCA is now able to offer online payment for our permits through a secure section of our website. The work has been carried out by a local company, Cloudberry Digital Ltd, and has already been used by members of the industry. It is hoped to reduce some of the administrative burden on the office manager as well as making it easier for members of the industry and recreational permit holders to ensure they have the correct permits for fishing in the district. We are the first IFCA to introduce this system.

Bass management continues to be a concern at an EU level as well as nationally. The D&SIFCA has set up a small working group to look at the issue and to work with other IFCAs to try and find a solution to some of the issues through local management measures. The D&SIFCA group have met once and discussed a possible course of action as well as feeding the views from the district into a national meeting which discussed the possible new management measures for bass in 2017 and the review of bass nursery areas. Management measures being discussed for 2017 include retention of a small bycatch limit for towed gear vessels, but no bycatch for netting vessels. Bass are unlikely to become a quota species due to the inequity around the possible division of the quota between EU members. There is also a proposal from the EU for a 10 bass per month catch limit for recreational sea anglers. This is seen by most enforcement agencies as nearly impossible to police. The bass nursery area review is nearing completion and it is hoped to get Ministerial endorsement at the end of the year and a full public consultation starting early in 2017. There are likely to be some new sites proposed as well as a change in management for all areas. The bass PhD jointly sponsored by the IFCA has made a good start to the first year and an application to EMFF for a large grant will help to develop some innovative science to enable managers to better understand how bass use bass nursery areas and to help better inform where closing lines should be set within estuary mouths to protect juvenile and spawning stocks.

The Chief Officers' Group (COG) met in October, closer working was at the top of the agenda whether between IFCA's or with other partner organisations. The issue of cross warranting with the MMO was discussed along with the proposal for a new Statutory Instrument to replace the lost SI and with the loss to IFCA officers of some of their enforcement powers. There was agreement for the COG that a new SI was the preferred course of action and work has been underway with Defra to draft this as soon as possible. The use of inshore vessel monitoring systems (iVMS) was also discussed along with the possibility of a joint bid by all IFCA's to the EMFF to have all vessels working within IFCA districts fitted with iVMS boxes. This was supported by the group but it was also recognised that D&SIFCA would run the pilot scheme for this work as the D&SIFCA was the furthest advanced and demonstrated the greatest need to have the units fitted as soon as possible. D&SIFCA officers have been working with Common Seas, who helped with our first funding grant application, to have a bid ready to go to EMFF early in January 2017. Hopefully all mobile gear vessels, with a permit to fish within the district, can be fitted with iVMS by the autumn of 2017. The vast amount of work created by the change of management to the marine protected areas around the coast were also discussed and the possibility of all the IFCA's being able to meet the end of 2016 deadline for having management in place for the European Marine Sites and Tranche One Marine Conservation Zones. It was generally felt that the IFCA's would all be able to deliver the work as required to prevent infraction of Defra and possibly the IFCA's by the agreed date. Some small areas may not be completed but would be finalised very early in 2017.

It was felt by the COG that the IFCA's needed to do more to publicise all the work they had undertaken on the MPA network and also to look at future plans for the IFCA's post 2016 and with the current financial conditions that we all work under. It is proposed to try and convene an IFCA futures workshop in the spring of 2017.

The Marine Pioneer Project discussed at the last D&SIFCA meeting seems to have been assigned to the North Devon Biosphere to coordinate, therefore relieving the D&SIFCA of direct management of the project. The D&SIFCA will still operate as a partner to the project but will not manage the project officer or need to seek external funding for the post.

There is a developing fishery for wrasse in the SW, the wrasse are being captured live for transport to Scotland where they are used by salmon farms to help clean the cages of marine growth. The fishery takes large amounts of all wrasse species and as yet it is impossible to say what impact the fishery will have on the local ecosystem. Precautionary measures are being explored by the three SW IFCA to harmonise our approach to this. Whilst every effort must be made to protect the fish from over fishing and damage to the ecosystem, a balance also needs to be found to allow for a commercial fishery operated in a sustainable level.

The work of the environment team is increasingly being recognised nationally and slightly further afield for their innovative approach to research and gathering data as well as their expertise in developing management protocols. Lauren Parkhouse has recently given two presentations, firstly to a SW scallop workshop on the work she has undertaken on scallop stock assessments using underwater cameras which was well received. She has now been asked to publish her work in an international journal. Lauren then presented to the Institute of Fisheries Management on the use of drones for surveying crab tiles in dangerous locations on estuaries. This is the first time this new technology has been used for this work and the results were of great interest to those attending the meeting.

To finish on a further item of good news, Environment Officer Katherine Stephenson is expecting her first child next year. She will start her maternity leave in March. I am sure members will all wish her and Tom the very best for their new family.

It has been another very busy quarter for the enforcement team both on and off the water. The amount of work required to support the byelaw making process meant that two officers were not available to join their colleagues on enforcement patrols for long periods. Despite this further investigations have been started into a range of suspected illegal activities and existing cases have been taken forward to completion or preparation for court proceedings to commence.

The autumn weather was generally benign. This allowed fishing vessels more time to get to sea and for the enforcement team the opportunity to continue to use the Authority's RIB *Enforcer*. Officers have been looking for vessels that the Authority may be able to charter as the weather finally deteriorates during the winter. One vessel was chartered and used for patrol work during the quarter and has some potential for further use. Officers have sought vessel specifications from a number of Rigid Inflatable Boat manufacturers in preparation for the submission of a bid to European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for a new 12m, enclosed wheelhouse RIB.

October saw the restart of the scallop fishery and a significant number of vessels both local and visiting took part. The Baie de la Seine scallop fishery, located on the French Channel Coast also opened and this added to the number of vessels operating from ports on the South Coast of the Authority's district. The fishery on the scallop beds in Lyme bay started well but the level of effort soon reduced stocks to the point that vessels moved up to Cardigan Bay in Wales to await the start of the scallop fishery there. Vessels that made the journey to Wales were soon on their way back after reporting poor catches.

The lack of scallops had led to vessels that normally continue to scallop dredge, outside the Authority's district, during the summer months switching to fish trawls. The lack of opportunities may have been a factor in the cases of two vessels that are currently being investigated for fishing for scallops during the summer closure. The lack of scallops has led some fishermen to reopen the debate on whether the summer closure should be extended to reduce the pressure on the beds. Previously the Authority had consulted with the mobile fishing permit holders on whether to reduce the number of dredges from a maximum of twelve to eight. A number of skippers did relay in conversation with officers that there seemed to be a lot of smaller scallops on the ground so the prospects for the fishery may improve.

The current assessment of bass stocks and its future management has been discussed at European level and at a local level. The European Commission have set out its proposal for the management of the bass fisheries for 2017. The proposals reflect the continuing worry from the scientists that the stocks are modelled to remain at below the minimum acceptable (safe) limit if further action is not taken. The new proposals would see no permitted catches of bass from fixed and drift net fisheries and restrictions remaining in place for the recreational sector. The proposals have received criticism for not allowing some bycatch from nets as this will lead to bass being discarded and for the recreational limits, 10 bass per angler per month being unenforceable. Bass management has also been identified as one of the factors to be taken in to account during the Netting Permit Byelaw development.

The number of new cases under investigation during the reporting period was 15. Since December 2015 the total number of investigations now stands at 59. It is important to note that not all of these have been taken forward from the initial evidence gathering stage for example, unmarked and seized pots and nets or reported pot losses resulting from illegal towed gear activity. However the number of investigations represents a significant workload for the officers to undertake in addition to their other work streams. The complexity of some cases and the required evidence gathering also adds to the work required to complete some of the case files.

Byelaw Review

The public consultation on the Netting Permit Byelaw closed on 22nd September. A total of 329 responses had been received by the closing date. Members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee have considered the responses and made a number of management recommendations. Agenda item 7 provides a full report.

In October, working with Cloudberry Digital, officers launched the online service for permits issued under the Authority's permit byelaws. To date a total of 10 permits have been issued through the on line service.

IVMS

As expected, it was announced that a third manufacturer's unit had passed the national testing programme.

Through discussions with the MMO it was confirmed that the current VMS units, a mandatory requirement for all over 12 metre fishing vessels, were compatible with the requirements of the IVMS units. The officers have reflected this fact in the preparation of the bid to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. It is calculated that a total of 87 towed gear vessels would require an IVMS unit. Cornwall IFCA has indicated that it would be supportive of a combined bid to include any towed gear vessels that operate in Cornwall IFCA's district that don't also operate in this Authority's district.

In addition to the local initiatives, national discussions have been held to consider the potential for the roll out of the IVMS to all vessels fishing in English waters.

As reported previously, officers have been working on the delivery of a mechanism that would provide the ability to download all of the closed areas on to a memory stick that can be issued, free of charge, to the towed gear sector. Initial testing of the memory sticks on board one of the local trawlers proved problematic and discussions are now ongoing with the software developer to resolve the identified issues.

Training

No formal training was undertaken this quarter. In house coaching of the mapping software programme QGIS was delivered by one of the trained officers to another member of the enforcement team. Three of the enforcement officers have completed their Performance Assessment and Personal Development meetings. These meetings were a good opportunity to review the individual officer's workload and to identify future training needs.

Working together

Officers have conducted an interview of the owner of a local fishing vessel in connection with an investigation being carried out by Eastern IFCA. The DCO (Environment) also prepared charts, showing the tracks of a towed gear vessel, for a case undertaken by Isles of Scilly's IFCA. This latter case has now been heard and D&SIFCA's costs were met in full through the fines imposed on the master and owner.

The cross warranting issues are still to be resolved so the Authority's enforcement officers have continued to work alongside Marine Enforcement Officers from the Marine Management Organisation during the quarter. It is hoped that an Order made under the European Communities Act 1972 will reinstate the officers' powers to investigate European legislation by the end of January 2017.

Officers have been in discussion with the company that has taken over from Salcombe Security Ltd. Training of the company's officers has taken place and it is hoped that the

contract will soon be in place and warrants issued to reinstate the regular fisheries enforcement patrols in the Salcombe and Kingsbridge area.

Enforcement

Two cases have been heard in Torquay Magistrates' Court during the reporting period. The Master and Owner of the fishing vessel J SEA E333 admitted one charge of using too many dredges inside the Authority's district but pleaded not guilty to the remaining seven charges. The trial in this case is listed for 8th and 9th December 2016 at Plymouth Magistrates' Court.

The Master and Owner of the fishing vessel STEPHANIE M177, pleaded guilty to a total of six charges. The case included charges of fishing with a vessel of 23.98m (overall length) contrary to the Vessel Size Byelaw (limits access to vessels to less than 15.24m¹) and towing in prohibited areas under the general fishing licence conditions managed by the MMO. In this case the Master was fined a total of £4,022.68 and the Owner was fined £3,782.68. All of the prosecution's costs were recovered in this case. The first hearing of three further cases are listed for 24th November 2016 and one further case for 30th January 2017.

On reviewing the case of retaining berried lobsters on board a fishing vessel operating south of Lundy, North Devon, the Authority's prosecuting solicitor advised that there were technical difficulties with the case and recommended that no further action be taken. The solicitor provided a summary of the issues and recommended that these issues were considered by the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee in the first instance.

Two Financial Administrative Penalties for £250 were accepted and paid. One case involved the removal of seven lobsters from a fishery by three recreational potting permit holders operating a vessel from Sidmouth, South Devon. Under the permit conditions the permit holders were only able to land a total of six lobsters on that day. The second case involved a commercial vessel where the escape gaps were fitted incorrectly to the pots and an undersize lobster was retained on board.

Among the new case files listed below, there are five new towed gear investigations underway, an investigation into the suspected illegal use of fixed nets on two separate occasions, a BNA infringement and retention of undersize crab. In addition, following an investigation into the suspected towing in the no trawling area of Start Bay officers have provided information to the MMO regarding the suspected illegal tampering of a VMS unit.

Investigations (selected)

Offence Date	Investigation complete	Prosecuting Authority	Offence	Location	Outcome/ Current Status
03-13/12/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging within the Lyme Bay to Torbay SAC and contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	Lyme Bay	Pleaded guilty to one charge and not guilty to remaining seven charges. Trial 8 th -9 th December 2016 Plymouth Magistrates' Court
16-23/12/15	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the	South of	First hearing Torquay

¹ FV STEPHANIE M177 is not listed on the derogation list for vessel over 15.24m in overall length that qualify for dispensation under the Vessel Size Byelaw.

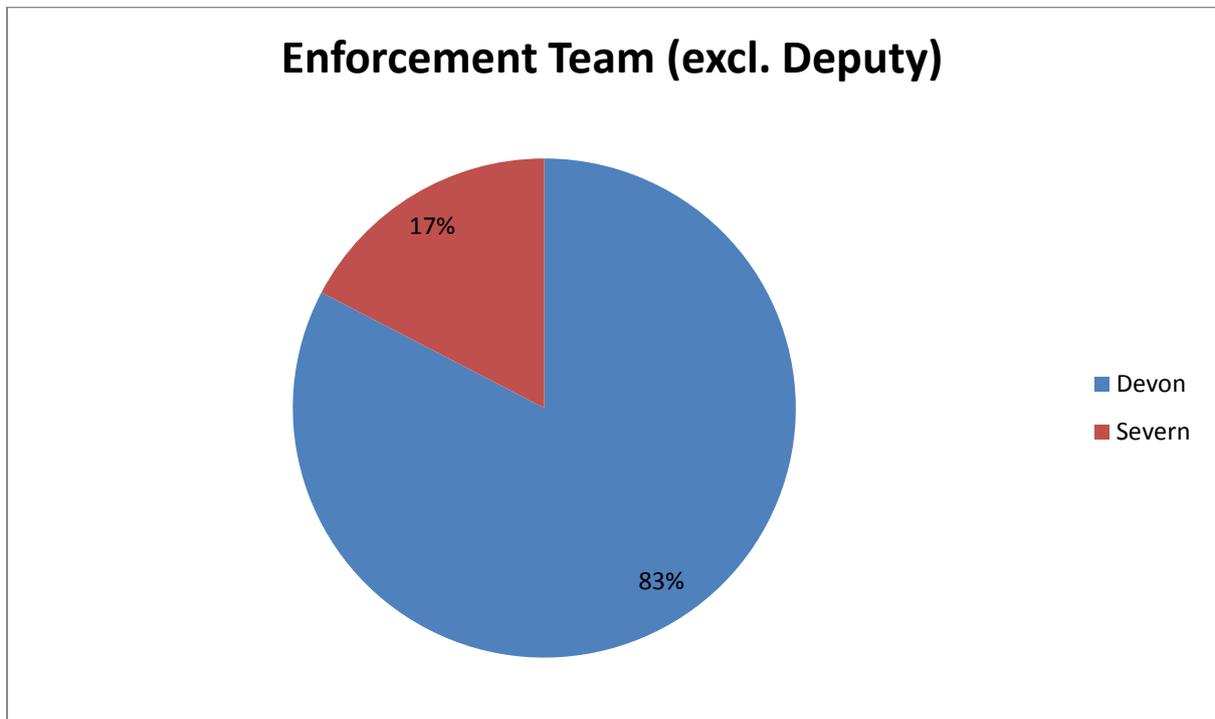
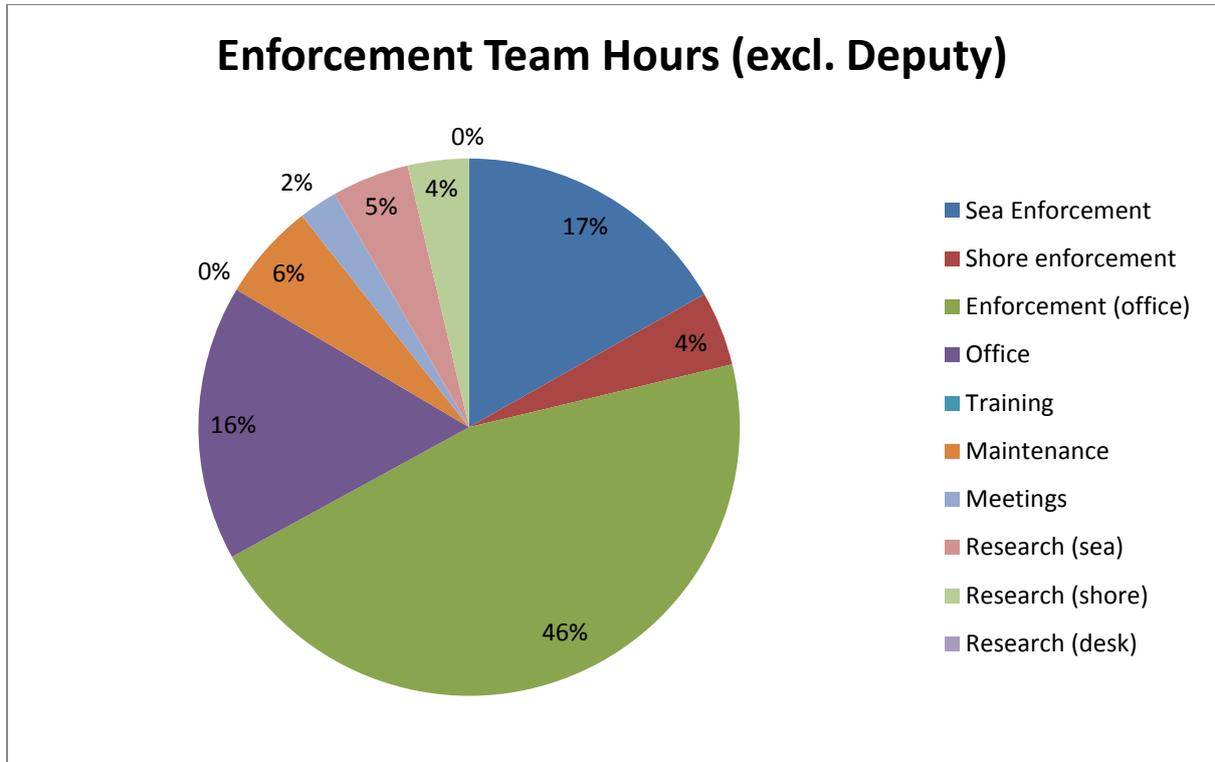
			Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	Salcombe	Magistrates' Court 24/11/16
21-25/01/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Beam trawling contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw and Vessel Size Byelaw	South of Salcombe	Case heard on 20/10/16 Torquay Magistrates' Court Master and Owner fined a total of £7,805.36
01 -19/02/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging contrary to the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw	South of Salcombe	First hearing Torquay Magistrates' Court 24/11/16
14/02/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Fishing with a fixed net contrary to Fixed Engine Byelaw	Salcombe	First hearing Torquay Magistrates' Court 24/11/16
06/06/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining on board berried lobsters	South of Lundy	Case completed. No Further Action
14/06/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize female edible crab	Dartmouth	£500 FAP offered, not paid First hearing Torquay Magistrates' Court 30/01/17
05/07/16	No	D&SIFCA	Scalloping in closed season contrary to Mobile fishing permit Byelaw	East of Lundy	On going
07/0716*	Yes	D&SIFCA	Exceeding recreational bag limit of lobsters contrary to Potting Permit Byelaw	Sidmouth	FAP £250 accepted and paid
08/07/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	No escape gaps/undersize lobster contrary to potting permit byelaw	Torbay	FAP £250 accepted and paid
12/07/16*	Yes	D&SIFCA	Exceeding recreational number of pots contrary to potting permit byelaw	Torbay	Official written warning issued and two parlour pots forfeited
15/07/16	Yes	D&SIFCA	Potting with no permit	Lyme Bay	Official written warning to be issued
20/0716	Yes	D&SIFCA	No escape gap fitted to pots	Torbay	

			contrary to potting permit byelaw		FAP £250 offered
29/07/16	No	MMO	Failure to maintain operational VMS unit on board	Start Bay	On going.
14/08/16	No	D&SIFCA	Scalloping in closed season contrary to Mobile fishing permit Byelaw	Lyme Bay	On going
06/09/16	No	D&SIFCA	Towing in Start Point to Plymouth Sound SCI	Bigbury Bay	On going
29/09/16	No	D&SIFCA	Fishing for bass (recreational anglers) in BNA	Teign	On going
20/10/16	No	D&SIFCA	Scallop dredging between 1900hrs and 0700hrs	Start Bay	On going
25/10/16	No	D&SIFCA	Retaining undersize edible crab	Beer	On going
08 & 15/11/16	No	D&SIFCA	Use of fixed net	Bigbury Bay	On going
12/11/16	No	D&SIFCA	Towing in Start Point to Plymouth Sound SCI	SW of Bolt Tail	On going
15/11/16	No	D&SIFCA	Towing in IPA and no trawling area	Start Bay	On going
16/11/16	No	D&SIFCA	Use of excessive dredges/dredging between 1900hrs and 0700hrs	Lyme Bay	On going

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

Success Criterion (SC)	Activities undertaken
<p>SC1: IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D&SIFCA is building on its own database through the introduction of permit byelaws. • Public consultation on Netting Permit Byelaw including roadshow events at 10 sites in the district • On line purchase of permits launched • Detailed minutes of the Byelaw and Sub-committee meetings made publicly available. • Officers attended various stakeholder engagement events including Fishstock
<p>SC2 IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All investigations follow the Enforcement procedures for infringements of fisheries legislation adopted by CIFCA and D&SIFCA • Case file review undertaken
<p>SC3 IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environment protection within their districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from the pre-consultation, and public consultation used in Netting Permit Byelaw development
<p>SC4 IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QGIS mapping training • Appropriate behaviour training • Powerboat commercial endorsement training • Quarterly reports produced • Performance Assessment and Personal Training meeting conducted
<p>SC5 IFCAs make best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers' enforcement activities are guided by the targeted enforcement plan referring to received information (SARs and NIRs) • Patrol vessels task and review logs maintained. • Officers use information on illegal activity to inform and develop enforcement plans • EA emergency hotline operatives and Police aware of D&SIFCA • D&SIFCA introduced out of hours contact number 07740 175479 to report suspicious activity.

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*
- DCO = Deputy Chief Officer (Environment)*
- MCRS = Minimum Conservation Reference Size (aka Minimum Landing Size)*
- SOM=Size of Sexual Maturity*
- MMO= Marine management Organisation*
- SI= Statutory Instrument*
- SCI= Site of Community Importance*
- EMFF=European Maritime & Fisheries Fund*

This quarter has been, once again, an extremely busy one. The Environment Team have worked hard and all the EMS HRAs have been completed and sent to NE for formal advice. Most have received the advice from NE confirming that the assessments and conclusions made by the IFCA are correct. A summary report will be provided to IFCA members separately. Many shore and boat surveys have taken place this quarter and there has been a significant increase in finfish research although shellfish surveys have been important and widespread through the quarter.

One of the IFCA's Environment Officers, Katherine Stephenson, is expecting a baby at the end of March 2017. She will be leaving for maternity leave at the beginning of that month. Stephanie Davies, our Defra funded Research Assistant, has agreed to cover her maternity leave period. A risk assessment has been undertaken for Katherine to ensure that the IFCA complies with the law and that the work she is undertaking is appropriate and safe for her as an expectant mother.

Marine Protected Areas

The majority of HRAs have been formally signed off by Natural England. Informal advice has been received for the Severn Estuary SAC shad and lamprey vs. static nets and Severn Estuary SAC fish assemblage vs. static nets HRAs with minor amendments to be made. These three HRAs were sent to NE for formal advice in November. A shad awareness and bycatch reporting scheme will be set up in the Severn EMS to satisfy the outcomes of the netting HRAs in relation to Thwaite shad bycatch. Amendments were made to the cuttletraps and fish traps HRAs, for Plymouth Sound and Estuaries EMS, due to an emerging wrasse fishery, and these were sent to NE in November. The last two HRAs for demersal gear on the sand feature of the Lundy SAC were completed and sent off to Natural England. Only bait digging and crab tiling HRAs remain to be completed. These are progressing and will meet the 2018 deadline set nationally for these activities. For the Exe SPA and Plymouth Sound EMS most HRAs have now been signed off by Natural England, with only hand-gathering on the Exe still outstanding.

A meeting was held with Natural England to discuss the progress of the HRAs and any issues with those that have not yet been signed off. Extra HRAs have also been carried out to assess numerous derogation requests the IFCA has received for undertaking survey work within European Marine Sites.

Work has begun on a HRA for Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SCI to allow a demersal fishing vessel access into an area south of Salcombe, known as Zone 2 of the Inshore Potting Agreement area. The northern part of Zone 2 was closed under the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw as the feature maps provided by NE show the presence of areas of reef. One area, known to the IFCA as 'The Prongs' has been described by many members of the industry as sand banks. The Environment Team has undertaken a large number of video tows in this area to ground truth and verify the habitat across 'The Prongs'. From the video evidence, the habitat has been found to be largely sand banks. This HRA will be completed shortly and will be sent to NE for formal advice. Any opening of the northern part of Zone 2 of the IPA, to demersal fishing vessels for part of the year, will only take place when the IFCA has secured iVMS for all its towed gear vessels.

Some of the completed MCZ assessments for Tranche 1 have been sent formally to Natural England, with the remaining ready to be reviewed and sent. Only towed gear assessments for Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ and bait digging assessments for Torbay MCZ and Tamar Estuary MCZ remain to be completed. The assessment for scallop dredging and otter trawling on the mud feature of the Torbay MCZ has been completed, but is yet to be sent to NE. Proposed management changes in this area will be presented to the Authority at the December quarterly.

Tranche 2 MCZ matrices for Bideford to Foreland Point and Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZs were completed. Work has also begun on a fishing activities report for Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ. A visit to the Waddeton Order (Regulating Order held by D&S IFCA) on Dart Estuary with Natural England took place to meet the pacific oyster fishermen who hold plots within the Order. The possibility of the site becoming a Tranche 3 MCZ, what that might mean to the shellfishermen and how they see the fishery fitting in with the consultation process was discussed

Fin Fish

European sea bass

European sea bass, known mainly as bass, have been a major work stream for the Senior Environment Officer, Libby Ross, this quarter, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Officers attended a Cefas-led C-Bass project meeting in Lowestoft with Thomas Stamp and Emma Sheehan from Plymouth University to update the group on the D&S IFCA-Plymouth University research. The meeting also formed the basis for a gap analysis of bass-related research. A telecon was held between IFCA officers and MMO appointees to develop the ideas discussed at the last quarterly meeting relating to regional management of bass. Attendance at the Defra meeting on Bass Nursery Areas was planned via telecon.

Survey work led by Thomas Stamp at Steart Marsh managed realignment in Somerset started this quarter. Originally planned for early summer, the work was delayed by the length of time it took to gain dispensation from the MMO to keep some juvenile bass for further laboratory analysis. Whilst the survey did not go entirely to plan, due to even stronger tidal flows and higher sediment loads than expected, by spending the tide testing a variety of sites and strategies lessons were learned which can be used to improve the survey for the next planned survey in 2017. Early results were extremely interesting, with fish certainly using the site: Common and sand gobies were unsurprisingly the most common species; juvenile whiting, mullet, bass, clupeids (probably herring and sprat) and European eels were all present as well as adult mullet and European eels. Libby also spent time on general PhD supervisory duties, including meetings and helping to develop the static netting study element of the PhD.

Sharks, skates and rays

D&S IFCA officers met with Cefas scientists to start the analysis of the data retrieved from the 11 returned (out of 50 released) Data Storage Tags released on thornback and blonde rays during the D&S IFCA led North Devon Ray Pilot Project. The data is being analysed as

part of the 'ASSIST: Discard survival of skate and ray' project, led by Cefas. In the short term, the data from the tags will feed into an analysis of behaviour and survival of rays released from towed gear. These data will help to inform decisions on whether they should be exempt from the Landings Obligation. A Cefas-led paper will be presented to Defra in December and it is envisaged that a paper will be published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2017. Crucially, Cefas will also provide the geographically estimated tracks of the rays, which will start to answer some of the IFCA's research questions relating to ray ecology in the Bristol Channel.

Both days of the European Elasmobranch Association conference, held at Bristol Aquarium, were attended by members of the Environment Team. On the first day there was a strong focus on management-relevant science, which made it a very valuable day. Work on spurdog, smoothhound and rays presented at the conference were of direct interest to the IFCA. On the second day the talks were focused on survey methods for elasmobranches, some of which could be relevant to IFCA work.

Migratory Fish

Defra invited D&S IFCA to be a member of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Research and Development Liaison Group (SaFFiR&D). A meeting was attended in London where Defra family organisations and a wider stakeholder group discussed current research on migratory species. A number of organisations are working on, or are interested in, sea trout and shad migration and inshore movements. D&S IFCA discussed possible relevant components of the bass PhD and possible partnership working to help address some of the research gaps. A follow-up telecon was held with Ramus Loridsen of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust who are developing a large Interreg project which will focus on estuary and inshore movements of sea trout around Poole Harbour. A number of potential options for working together were discussed, pending the results of the EMFF bid submitted by Plymouth University to acoustically track bass in estuaries and inshore waters.

Wrasse

Cornwall IFCA and Southern IFCA have been in discussions with members of the team regarding an emerging wrasse fishery in the South west. Several boats have been operating out of Plymouth using wrasse pots/traps given to them by Scottish salmon farm businesses to catch all species of wrasse, keep them alive to be transported to the salmon farms and then used as cleaner fish. Because of this new fishery, a literature review on the five wrasse species found in the District and existing information on the impacts of the fishery were summarised in a report. There are many unknowns about the impact of large-scale removal of these fish species from inshore ecosystems along the south coast. The IFCA has been informed that several more vessels will be operating out of Brixham next year from the start of the season in March. Environment Officer, Steph Davies, spent a day on board Tiger Lily with Cornwall IFCA near Falmouth. This was to trail a wrasse survey using two strings of 10 wrasse pots. Pots were baited in the morning and left to soak until dusk. Wrasse species were identified and measured and by-catch recorded for each pot. A survey proposal is currently being prepared to monitor the fishery in 2017. Discussions are on-going with the two adjacent IFCAs regarding the possible management measures that may be needed to ensure the sustainability of the fishery and protect the populations of these fish species in our districts. A separate report regarding this and potential future management options will be provided to the Authority at the December meeting.

Shellfish

Shore Crabs

Crab tile surveys were undertaken this quarter, with one day on River Plym and River Avon, and five days on the River Tamar all by foot. A boat survey was carried out in the Salcombe estuary and a drone was used to survey the Exe. More surveys are planned for the spring tides in November, including Dart Estuary, Teign Estuary and Axe Estuary. Crab tile survey

data from the River Tamar was entered in MapInfo for use in the Tamar Estuary MCZ. These surveys will help assess changes in effort in the estuaries in Devon and inform HRA bait collection assessments.

Cockles

The annual Exe Estuary cockle survey was carried out in October. Officers from both the environment and enforcement teams took part, as well as the Exe Estuary site lead from Natural England. The 2016 cockle data has been inputted into excel ready for analysis and a methodology document written for use with future surveys.

Crawfish

A trial survey for tagging crawfish was undertaken around Lundy Island on board the Ilfracombe and North Devon Sub Aqua Club dive boat, Neptune. Unfortunately no crawfish were seen by divers due to bad visibility. However, the divers were keen to be involved in a survey again next year. This survey will look to tag crawfish gathered by divers from within the Lundy MCZ and then record data on their size, sex, location and where they were captured. These surveys together with the tagging being undertaken by lobster fisherman, Geoff Huelin, will help to inform the IFCA about the populations of crawfish within the MCZ, as it is a recover feature of the MCZ.

Whelks

The reports on the Whelk Size of Maturity (SOM) Project were completed earlier this year. IFCA officers met with Coombe Fish in North Devon who raised concerns about the possible impact of increasing the MCRS of whelks to the industry and processors. The IFCA presented the work done so far and it was agreed that the IFCA would look to gather any further information on areas worked by the fishing industry that has not yet been covered by earlier survey work. This will ensure that all exploited stocks of whelk in the IFCA district have been included in the SOM study. Following this meeting survey forms were sent out to all whelk fishers to gather more information on where they fish and the effort of the fishery. From the responses, one area has been identified that would not be represented by the previous samples. Therefore, two new samples will be collected from this area and analysed for SOM.

Scallops

Officers have been in discussions with Jim Portus, SWFPO and a scallop fisherman to investigate the most appropriate method for carrying out scallop stock assessments. The IFCA vessel Black Jack will undertake underwater filming of an area within the Lyme Bay SI but outside the SAC to estimate the scallop population, which will be followed by a stock assessment using scallop dredgers to collect both adult and juvenile scallops. Dispensations are being sought from the MMO to allow this survey to take place. Scallop stocks will be assessed and compared using these two methodologies.

Footage from a drop down dive camera survey in January, in an area known as The Bag in Salcombe was analysed this quarter. Each tow video was initially watched at double speed and split into segments where the habitat changed. Each segment was then watched at half speed, all species seen were recorded, and a EUNIS classification was assigned to the segment. The EUNIS habitats were mapped and included in a report for the Salcombe scallop fishery. This will help to inform any potentially changes in management of the Salcombe scallop fishery that have been proposed by local fisherman engaged in the winter fishery. The scallop fishery is a highly restricted fishery that operates between 15th December and 15th March annually. The fishermen are limited to using vessels under 7m with low horse power and use dredges that are less than 1m in width, have no teeth and are hand hauled. A Salcombe Scallop Fishery report includes a TLSE, detailing the possible impacts of opening the Bag to the winter scallop fishery. It is recommended that the area be

opened for one month only from 15th January to 15th February on a trial basis for 2017. After the fishery closes in March 2017 the area will be filmed again to assess any impacts of the extension to the fishery. This report has been sent to NE. Any proposed changes to the estuary mobile gear permit will be discussed with the IFCA prior to consulting with Estuary permit holders and before the proposed opening of the Bag area.

Environmental Survey Work

The biennial mapping of Torbay's seagrass beds was due to take place this year. Surveys were completed over the Broadsands-Elberry Cove bed in September. However, due to a rope being caught on the propeller of the IFCA survey vessel, followed by a period of strong easterly winds, the surveys could not be completed before the seagrass started to die back for the winter. This survey will now be postponed until 2017. It is important for the IFCA to keep the seagrass maps as up to date as possible to ensure that seagrass beds remain fully protected under the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw.

During Steph Davies' day with CIFCA an opportunity to undertake a survey on the impact of parlour pots on seagrass beds in the Fal Estuary arose. Cameras were attached to the pots by wooden poles. The angle of the cameras gave a view over the potential impact zones. From communications with CIFCA the pots had little impact on the sea grass, only a few blades got caught up on the skirt of one of the pots although no rhizomes were removed. As the pots were hauled they were seen to fly over the sea grass beds rather than being dragged through the grass causing damage. This footage and the field report that will be produced will help inform HRAs and MCZ assessments.

IFCA officers spent a day on the SV Severn Guardian working in the Severn Estuary. The jointly owned IFCA Aris sonar camera system was used to survey the Sabellaria reef in the channel. The Aris camera produces a much higher resolution image than existing alternatives (e.g. sidescan sonar) and the method proved successful for detecting and assessing subtidal Sabellaria reefs in the turbid waters of the estuary. This was partnership working with the EA, NE, D&S IFCA and Eastern IFCA.

General maintenance was carried out on Black Jack and survey equipment.

Recreational Sea Angling

The FishTrail project started in earnest with a partnership meeting in Tolmin, Slovenia. It provided an excellent opportunity to meet partners from the UK, Slovenia, Denmark, Portugal and Ireland to discuss similarities and differences in recreational fisheries management between countries, environments, fishing methods and species. The first of the four FishTrail videos which D&S IFCA are producing with Wiseman Productions and local recreational sea anglers was filmed in North Devon. The aims of the videos are to encourage good-practice and a conservation approach to angling tourists as well as promoting angling tourism. The first video focuses on flounder in the Taw-Torridge, but also covers mullet in Ilfracombe and discusses fishing off the North Devon surf beaches. The development of the UK 'Fish Planner' which will signpost visiting anglers to the relevant legislation was also completed with IFCO Laura Bullock providing much of the text.

Angling Zone surveys have continued at Burnham-on-Sea to Brean down. Anglers have been found fishing very consistently this year, with very few surveys finding no anglers. Cefas has just commenced its Angling 2017 survey. This survey is looking to engage with about 1000 anglers who will be asked to keep an online diary of their fishing trips, catches and spend. The IFCA has been provided with posters and cards with information about the project. Cefas has asked the IFCA to pass on this information to anglers in the district in the hope of their involvement in the project.

Meetings

The Plymouth dredge material disposal site steering group was attended. The meeting highlighted the lack of information regarding the under 10m fishing vessels that work in the area proposed. The annual biosecurity inspection by Cefas was carried out. Cefas were happy with the IFCA's management of the site and the Biosecurity Measures Plan.

Environment Officer, Lauren Parkhouse, attended and presented at the Institute of Fisheries Management annual conference in Norwich in October. The presentation was based on the drone work, which has been carried out to survey crab tiles in the district. This was a good opportunity to showcase the work of the IFCA to a large audience and for personal development. A two day Scallop conference was held in Brixham with presenters from the UK and American, and attendees from the industry, universities, Cefas, Seafish and the IFCA. Lauren presented the methodologies for scallop stock assessments work she carried out for my master's thesis with D&S IFCA.

An IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting was attended in London and included officers from all IFCAs, NE, Cefas and guest speakers. Topics discussed included HRAs, and research currently being planned by IFCA's and NE. Lauren represents D&S IFCA on the TAG and has taken on the role of TAG secretary at this meeting. The bi-annual Lundy Advisory Group meeting was attended in Ilfracombe. Current and future projects for the MPA and Lundy Island were discussed at this meeting with a number of different stakeholders. The Lundy Management group was attended in Exeter by DCO Sarah Clark.

D&S IFCA had a stand at the Spirit of the Exe/Exmouth Mussel Festival. This event was well attended and the IFCA received several enquiries on current angling and bass management measures. The IFCA also had a stand at FishStock with live tanks of brown crabs, lobsters, spider crabs and crawfish. It was really well attended and provided a good opportunity for IFCA officers to meet and talk to a range of stakeholders on the work the IFCA does. Environment Officer Katherine Stephenson gave an update of the IFCA's work to the Exe Estuary Officers Working Group, including survey work on the Exe and the status of the Netting Byelaw Consultation.

Members of the Environment Team attended several of the IFCA Netting Review Roadshows including Appledore, Ilfracombe, Exmouth, Brixham and Sidmouth. These events provided the IFCA with the opportunity to deal with any queries the public had on the byelaw review, the proposed new byelaw and other work load areas such as the whelk study.

An Aquaculture Workshop, organised by Seafish and the University of Plymouth, was held at Brixham Laboratories. DCO Sarah Clark and Katherine attended this workshop. Its purpose was to scope out possible uses for the spare lab space within the building. Services being considered are hatcheries (e.g. scallops or tetraploidy in *C. gigas*), more efficient testing for E. Coli, testing services for live Norovirus.

Both the SAGB's Mollusc & Crustacea Committees were attended. Katherine gave a presentation on D&S IFCA's whelk size of maturity work to the Crustacea Committee and was well received. The DCO is currently chair of the SAGB Crustacea Committee. This meeting took place at the Skipper Expo in Bournemouth. There was a very good attendance with more industry members than usual joining the meeting. The items on the agenda were very topical and included Defra's proposal to ban the landing of berried lobsters in UK waters by UK vessels; regional approach to stock management for crabs and lobsters and the issues for processors exporting to China and Hong Kong surrounding cadmium in the brown meat of edible crabs.

Members of the Environment Team continue to take part in the monthly Fisheries in EMS teleconferences, with all IFCAs, Natural England and the MMO.

The Somerset Coast Conference was attended and a presentation on the fish of the Somerset Coast & Severn Estuary was given. The Senior Environment Officer, Libby Ross, gave a presentation on behalf of the Deputy Chief Officer (Environment) at the Severn Estuary Forum in Gloucester.

The ASERA AGM was chaired by Libby Ross for the final time before handing over to the new Chair from NRW. Libby presented her chairwoman's report and IFCA progress report to the AGM. D&S IFCA completed pro-formas for all recreational fisheries related activities which they manage within the Severn EMS. A meeting was also held to discuss the ASERA officer's progress in relation to the work plan and develop the text for the Recreational Sea Angling code of conduct for the Severn Estuary EMS. A workshop to discuss the most suitable methods and input data for modelling fish movements in the Severn Estuary, hosted by Tidal Lagoon Power Cardiff was attended. There was ongoing concern from many of the government agencies (including IFCA officers) that the timeline that TLP Cardiff were trying to work to was too fast to allow the collection of meaningful data to be collected to inform the model. Despite this, a possible partnership project was identified to map recreational angler knowledge of fish distributions and seasonality in the Severn Estuary.

The DCO has given several presentations this month including a talk to North Devon Coastwise on the MPA work of the IFCA and a two hour lecture on aquaculture to MSc students at Plymouth University. A bait collection workshop was attended in Peterborough where DCO described the extensive and innovative bait collection surveys that D&S IFCA are undertaking.

Many telecons and meeting have been attended in relation to the Marine Pioneer Project as part of Defra 25 year Environment Plan. The Marine Pioneer is based around two sites, one in Suffolk in the EIFCA's district and one off the North Devon coast in the Biosphere Reserve area. Funding for the project and project officers has caused concern for both IFCAs and Defra is working with Suffolk County Council and the Biosphere Reserve to apply for funding for the project. D&S IFCA sits on the steering group of the Marine Pioneer and the DCO will give regular updates to the Authority on the progress of this project.

The UK Fisheries Ministers and Stakeholder meeting was attended in Cardiff. Quota negotiations were discussed for a broad range of species. The proposed new bass regulations for 2017 were discussed and a wide range of stakeholders, from industry member to NGOs and recreational fishers, were able to make comments to the Minister on these proposals.

Enforcement

A patrol, with members of the Enforcement Team, was carried out near Lyme Bay this quarter. Environment Officer Katherine Stephenson spent a day assisting the Enforcement Team, following reports in Hope Cove of divers taking shellfish from pots. The divers were met as they came ashore and no offences were found to have been committed. Libby Ross and IFCO Laura Bullock made visits, on a number of occasions, to the Severn Estuary enforcement hotspots in November to coincide with the start of herring and cod season in this area.

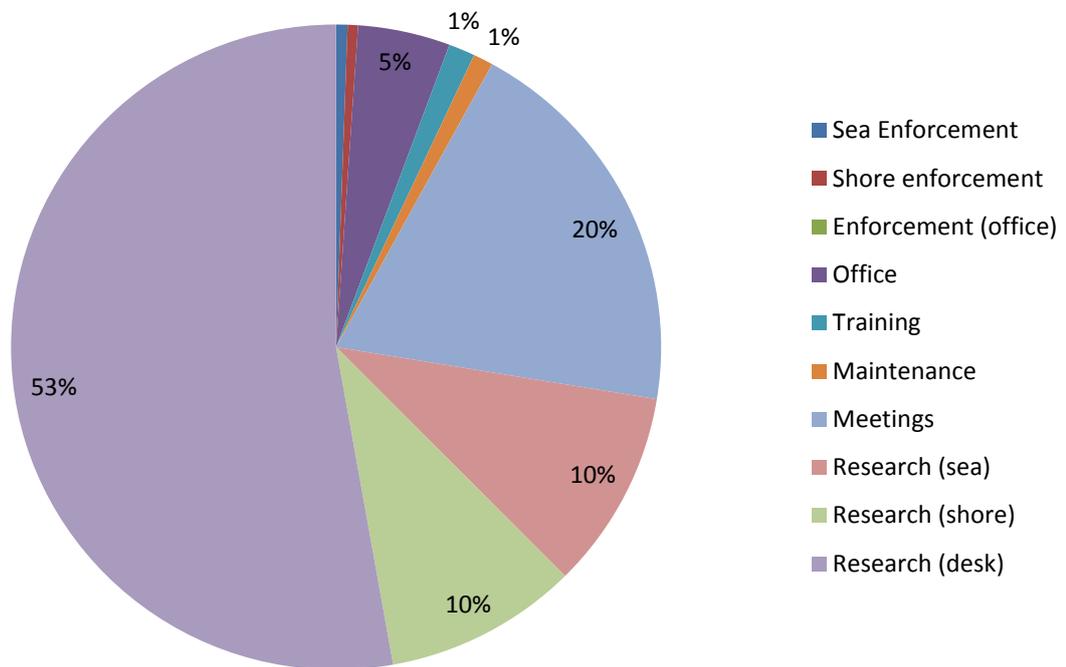
Training

Libby Ross attended a refresher course for Personal Licence (PIL) holders under the Animal Scientific Procedures Act at the Cefas laboratory in Lowestoft. This will allow IFCA officers to tag fish for scientific purposes (e.g. Data Storage Tags) as part of future Cefas projects if the necessity arises (e.g. through future iterations of the Shark By-Watch or C-BASS scheme). Due to adverse weather a patrol to Start Point was called off and instead environment Officer Lauren Parkhouse carried out boat handling training in Torbay.

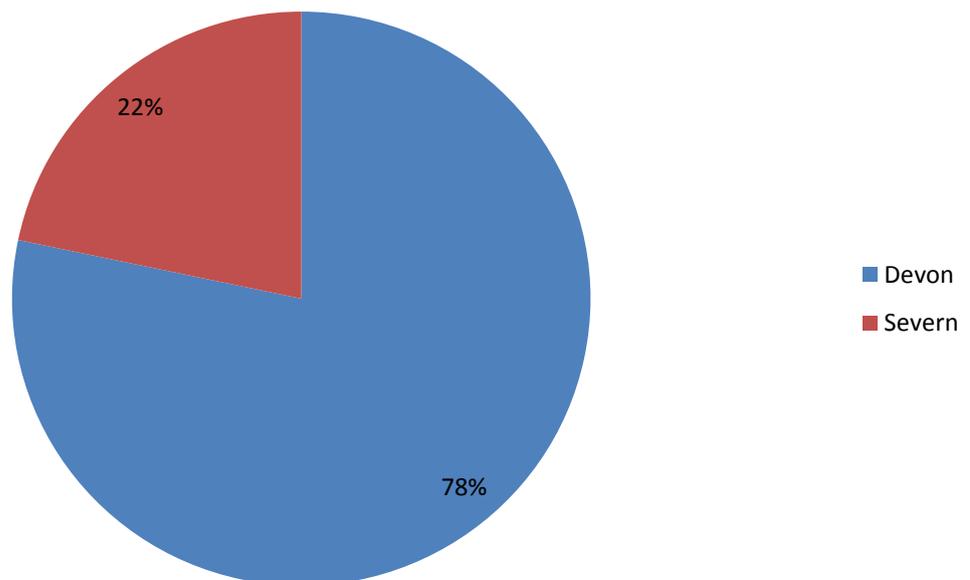
Success Criteria	
<p>SC 1: IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority Officers met, engaged and worked with members of SD&CSA, NE, EA, and with fishers around the district • Recreational Sea angling meetings were attended. • 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. • ASERA meetings were attended and partnership working discussed. • Meetings with NE to discuss HRAs. • Scallop Workshop attended and presentation given • Aquaculture Workshop was attended • IFM meeting attended and presentation given. • IFCA TAG meeting was attended. • IFCA Netting Permit Byelaw Consultation Events were attended • Attended SAGB Crustacea & mollusc committees • Env Officer is secretary of IFCA TAG. • SEO presented at Severn Estuary forum • Presentations given at fora and stakeholder meetings • Officers sit on Marine Pioneer • Officers attended the Spirit of the Exe & Fish Stock • Plymouth Dredge material disposal site steering group attended • SAGB meetings attended and chaired • Somerset Coast conference was attended • Fish modelling workshop hosted by Tidal Lagoon power was attended
<p>SC 2: IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime</p>	<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, and New Bass regulations. • Several shore and sea enforcement patrols were undertaken in the district • Statements and GIS charts were produced to support case files for prosecutions. • Patrol on Severn Estuary were carried out
<p>SC 3: IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRAs undertaken for amber gear / feature interactions in MPA. • Seagrass survey in Torbay commenced • Cockle survey on the Exe was completed • Scallop assessment survey planned • Wrasse potting survey carried out with CIFCA • Wrasse literature review undertaken • Bass studies have been undertaken • C-bass project meeting attended • European Elasmobranch Association Conference was attended • Impact of pots on sea grass survey with CIFCA • Analysis of Salcombe estuary film data and report completed & TLSE undertaken • Side scan sonar camera survey in the Severn EMS to assess

	<p>use of equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA undertaken for derogation requests • Meetings held with Natural England on EMS & MCZ in the district. • Meeting attended regarding PhD on Bass with student and supervisors • Crab tile surveys carried out on Devon estuaries to inform bait collection HRAs • Berrow Brean and Burnham Angling Zone monitoring continued.
<p>SC 4: IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of quarterly reports. • On-going meetings with all environment staff on the progress of research projects and HRA. • Pre quarterly meeting with Severn Local Authority Officers was attended. • Refresher PIL course undertaken
<p>SC 5: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R-training course allowed for sharing of assessment techniques and research interests • IFM Tagging and Telemetry workshop attended. • Underwater video survey of areas of Lyme Bay SI • Env Officer sits on TAG and inputs into SOPS and shares research outcomes • Whelk SOM study has identified possible further survey site • Crawfish monitoring survey is ongoing

Environment Team Hours (excl. Deputy)



Environment Team (excl. Deputy)



Environment Team Hours worked in Devon and the Severn Area the District