

Quarterly Report Summary – August to September 2020

Overview

At the start of the quarter some officers had returned to work within the Brixham laboratory but with recent changes to Covid guidance, officers, who are able to work from home, are now doing so. All officers have undertaken workstation assessments and where required further equipment has been procured. Enforcement patrols and environmental surveys have taken place this quarter with officers following new protocols and risk assessments undertaken in light of Covid restrictions. Interviews for the Permitting Officer role took place in early August and Jayne Head was selected and has been in post since 1st September 2020. Interviews also took place in September for the permanent role of Senior Environment Officer, after Dr Libby West informed the Authority of her intention to take up a role with Natural England in December. Dr James Stewart was successful and will remain with D&S IFCA after his temporary maternity cover post comes to an end.

D&S IFCA has signed a data sharing agreement with the MMO in relation to sharing and storage of intelligence on the MMO's intelligence system and access to the Monitoring Control and Surveillance system. This will have many potential benefits for the Authority. The supporting documents to this agreement were scrutinised to ensure that existing D&S IFCA policy documentation and internal processes meet the expectations of the agreement. The national IVMS project is progressing and D&S IFCA has begun talks with suppliers of REM equipment to look at further monitoring of vessels within D&S IFCA's District.

The Government's Autumn Budget has been cancelled and all IFCA's are awaiting news as to whether the three year review of funding will go ahead. D&S IFCA has provided further feedback to the ABPmer report on IFCA's. Officers have worked closely with Authority members to develop a D&S IFCA's Vision which will be presented to the Authority at the AGM in October.

Policy and Communication Work

- A report on the progress of the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw Five-Year Review was presented to the B&PSC in August and the internal drafting work of the Byelaw and associated permit conditions has progressed with some areas having been completed this quarter. This included work on the sand-eel trawling element of the permit conditions.
- A pre-consultation on the scallop closed season commenced this quarter and will help inform the Mobile Fishing and Diving Permit Byelaws.
- Work has begun on the Five-Year Review of the Diving Permit Byelaw and a four week "Have Your Say" communication initiative began on 10th September, finishing on 9th October 2020.
- Eight news items have been produced by officers between 1st August and 25th September 2020 and published on the D&S IFCA's website, one of which was a new item reminding all Potting Permit holders that the whelk MCRS will increase to 65mm on 1st November 2020. D&S IFCA's mailing list, coupled with mailchimp, was also used to provide notification of this change.
- Website pages have been updated every week. The Exemption Byelaw Display pages now includes a table of authorisations. Notice to Mariners have been displayed on the website to provide information relevant to D&S IFCA's waters.
- The website's resource library has been maintained and updated with Authority papers, Byelaw Review reports, HRA assessments and research reports.
- A final Byelaw Development Report 'Development & Management of the Live Wrasse Pot Fishery & Changes to the Potting Permit Conditions' was produced and published in August 2020. A B&PSC meeting was held on August and draft minutes have been circulated.

Finance, Administration and Permits

- ITrent HR system has been used to manage any new starters and leavers, and annual leave requests.
- Petty cash (Imprest) claims, card purchases and transfers of funds to the General Reserves account have been monitored and submitted monthly with majority of invoices processed via BACS.
- A meeting was held with Angela Stirland and Jessica Maunder from DCC Finance Team to discuss any current issues, as requested by ACO Mat Mander and DCO Sarah Clark.
- PPE stock has been replenished. Officers have been invited to identify any further office equipment required to work remotely, following homework station assessment having been undertaken.
- Officers working hours have been regularly collated and passed to ACO for review.
- A total of 94 permits were issued during August and September 2020.

Enforcement Work

- Reports of large groups hand gathering shellfish from the Teign and Exe estuaries, and fishing at Berry Head and Hopes Nose have been received. D&S IFCA officers, together with Local Authority Environmental Health Officers, Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Agency officers and Devon and Cornwall Police, have undertaken joint exercises in these locations to address any issues identified.
- A joint operation targeting netting in estuaries in North Devon, involving EA and Devon and Cornwall Police, was conducted on several days over different tidal cycles. High risk areas and several vessels of interest were identified, although no offences were identified, Local Police Officers gained detailed knowledge on D&S IFCA's Byelaws, and this joint working was positive and successful.
- Enforcement Officers have worked with the Environment team to undertake wrasse surveys this quarter, using the PV Enforcer to accompany the wrasse fishing vessels. Teams joined forces again to undertake mussel and cockle stock assessment surveys on the Teign and Exe Estuaries.
- Enforcement patrols across the district has taken place on a targeted risk basis.
- Management of patrol vessels has taken place with the PV Enforcer passing its annual survey with minimal issues. PV David Rowe is currently with Dart Haven Marina having its 200 hour engine service and some steering repair work undertaken.
- The IVMS/VMS hub has been upgraded and came back online in late September. This meant there was reduced remote monitoring of the mobile fleet over this time but has now returned to normal capacity.
- Investigations are progressing well and six are on-going since May. Intelligence reports continued to be received and appropriate action taken.

Environment Work

- The Skerries Bank Shore Angling Report, and Plaice and Ray Landings Report were completed.
- Reports are being drafted on bait digging near *Sabellaria* and High Tide Roost sites on the Severn.
- Officers continue to provide consultation responses and input into discussion for Hinkley Point C. The EA has been working on an HRA for the cooling water intake, which, as highlighted in an EA public communication, has been hindered by the time taken for EDF to provide the relevant information and data. EDF has recently submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate relating to the delayed decision from the EA. An update paper on this process will be given at the December Authority meeting.
- Responses to Marine licence Applications for North Bristol Deep dredging, a scallop ranch extension Torbay, dredging in Exmouth Marina, SW railway resilience programme, Watchet Harbour wall repairs were produced.
- Further work has been undertaken on the Mariculture Strategy, which is in its final stages.
- FRMPs are developing well and literature reviews, information on fishing effort, stock status and summaries of management measures have been completed for each species.
- Hand gathering/ bait digging surveys have taken place at Tranche 3 MCZs, in the Severn Estuary EMS, and crab tile survey data are being analysed.
- Wrasse surveys began in early August under new Covid-safe protocols using the PV RIB Enforcer alongside fishing vessels, and officers undertake measurements of fishers' catches whilst on the RIB.
- Torbay MCZ seagrass sidescan survey was carried out using CIFCA's SV Tiger Lily and a small experiment to assess the impact of cuttlefish pots on seagrass was also undertaken. Responses to a fishing activity survey in Torbay MCZ have been analysed and a Monitoring and Control Plan for Torbay MCZ has been completed.
- Crawfish tagging by fishers continued this quarter, giving a total of 100 tagged, and data have been inputted.
- Cockle annual stock assessment surveys on the Teign, Exe and Devon Avon Estuaries have taken place. The annual mussel stock assessment on the intertidal beds of the Taw Torridge Estuary was completed in September. A survey of the sub-tidal mussel resource in this estuary is planned for October.
- Data from Salcombe scallop fishery 1998-2020 are being analysed. A report was compiled on all IFCA's scallop management to inform the Project UK Channel Scallop FIP.
- Meetings attended included IFCA TAG, Hinkley C Marine Technical Forum, TECF, National Whelk Working Group, National Crab Working Group, Shellfish Industry Advisory Group Project UK Scallop, Crab and Lobster FIPs, ASERA, Defra's Blue Carbon Group, SEERF.
- Collaboration with external organisations took place, for example: Sustainable Management of UK Marine resource projects, PhD proposal on essential fish habitats in the Severn Estuary, MSc supervision on a project to analyse habitats mapping data for T2 MCZ sites in North Devon.
- Seven requests for exemptions from IFCA byelaws have been processed.
- A native oyster survey was undertaken on the Teign Estuary, within the Regulating Order area, to inform a planning application response for a development and extension onto the foreshore of an existing boatyard.
- Information has been provided to Defra to inform the development of UK Fisheries Management Plan and to help inform Defra on the IFCA's role in delivering the Fisheries Bill.