

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Report for the Period Ending November 2018

General Situation

Deputy Chief Officer Sarah Clark

It has been another busy quarter for officers in all aspects of the D&S IFCA day to day work. I-VMS and increased reporting on VMS units has allowed for close observation of the mobile fishing fleet within the District. This monitoring has been put into good use with the opening of the scallop fishing season on 1st October 2018. Scrutiny of this activity both within closed areas and outside curfew hours has been part of the day to day operation.

Enforcement patrols have focussed on investigating the illegal targeting of bass by anglers and netting within estuaries. Amendments to the Council Regulation regarding fishing opportunities for bass has meant that from the 1st October 2018 recreational fishers can retain one bass per fisher per day when fishing with the D&S IFCA's district.

D&S IFCA's website has developed further this quarter and is now operational including the on-line permit shop. The greater use of the website is a fundamental part of D&S IFCA's communication strategy for both external stakeholders and its own members. The new website acts as the central hub for D&S IFCA promotional work and news items. It also importantly contains the resource library that hosts D&S IFCA's publications and displays as wealth of essential information such as legislation, policy and research outputs.

Officers produced the D&S IFCA's Quadrennial Report to Defra in September 2018 to inform the Report to Parliament on the Conduct and Operation of IFCAs for the 2014 to 2018 period. Further metrics have been provided to Defra for the life span of the IFCA, which included information on the annual budgets, income, expenditure, staffing levels, MPA work, research and compliance inspections and investigations. The progress of the D&S IFCA's Annual Plan for 2018/2019 was reviewed this quarter to highlight what has been completed and how on target Officers are with other tasks and actions.

The Live Wrasse Fishery in the Plymouth Sound has been monitored all season and the data collected, both from the fishers and on-board observer surveys, have been analysed and compared to the 2017 data set to assess the fishery, landings and catches per unit effort and investigate the effectiveness of the management measures in place.

On 15th November at Plymouth Magistrates' Courts, after three days of trial, the master and owner of the fishing vessel Stella Maris of Newquay PH97 were found guilty on all 16 counts of using bottom towed gear inside the Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SCI. The prosecution relied entirely on circumstantial evidence including Vessel Monitoring System data, similar to that used in the previous Gloucester Crown Court case. The master and owner were both fined £16,000 and order to pay £6,000 costs and £100 victim surcharge – total fines were £44,200. In addition, following conviction in relation to the D&S IFCA case, the master was fined £1,650 and order to pay £4,500 cost for offences including using bottom towed gear from the fishing vessel Kingfisher BM518 in another part of the same SCI that had been brought by Cornwall IFCA. Sentencing in the Cornwall IFCA case had been deferred until the D&S IFCA case had concluded. The master had lodged an appeal against the conviction in

the Cornwall IFCA case but after the D&S IFCA trial this appeal was withdrawn. Officers have since been informed that the defence in the D&S IFCA case have appealed their convictions, a Crown Court date for the appeal has not yet been set.

Environment Overview (Sep – Nov)

Deputy Chief Officer Sarah Clark

The Autumn has been very productive with a great deal of survey work being undertaken to fulfil much of the team's research programme, before the winter weather makes some of this work prohibitive. The Live Wrasse fishery has dominated much of the team's work in particularly in October and November where Sarah Curtin and Libby West spent most of their time analysing this year landings and on-board observer survey data to assess the fishery and compare it with the 2017 data. Other finfish surveys have progressed well and the use of the ARIS camera in the turbid water of the Severn Estuary proved very successful.

D&S IFCA has raised the profile of the spiny lobster this quarter. Officers have gone out to commercial fishers to engage with them and to seek their thoughts and proposals for the future management of this species.

Officer inputted into the D&S IFCA's Quadrennial Report which was completed and sent to Defra in September 2014. Other metrics have been provided to Defra to aid production of the Report to Parliament on the Conduct and Operation of IFCAs 2014-2018. DCO Clark reviewed the progress of the 2018/2019 Annual Plan which will be reported to Authority members.

Finfish Research and Management

Wrasse

Onboard observer surveys for the Live Wrasse Fishery have continued this quarter. Survey opportunities have been limited because very few of the fishermen have been active in D&S IFCA's District area within the Plymouth Sound. Analysis of the Live Wrasse Fishery data collected from on-board observer surveys and landings forms has been completed to assess changes in catch and landings between 2017 and 2018. A report has been produced for the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee meeting in which the results, main findings and conclusions have been presented and discussed.

A meeting with a PhD student looking at the Live Wrasse Fishery was held to obtain an update regarding progress and specifically what aspects of the fishery will be investigated. A report on 'Wrasse Research being undertaken in the South West' has been produced and has been submitted to the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee.

Bass

Two days were spent on the RIB in the River Dart, and the mouth of the Dart Estuary, putting out acoustic receivers as part of the I-Bass project. This was the first time Environment Officer Lauren Parkhouse used her Commercial Endorsement to skipper an IFCA vessel.





A new Cefas-led project held a meeting and workshop in Plymouth in September. D&S IFCA presented on its bass workplan and Thomas Stamp presented on the progress of the PhD. The meeting aimed to capture local knowledge on seabass and seabass fisheries using an interactive online questionnaire. There were some teething problems with the technology, but a good discussion was had. Attendees included commercial fishermen, recreational anglers, managers and scientists. Cefas is currently preparing to release 100 Data Storage Tags from the D&S IFCA District (50 in South Devon, 50 in North Devon) as part of the project.

Over the summer huge progress has been made by Plymouth University on the bass PhD. A supervisory meeting at the Marine Institute was held where Thomas Stamp

showcased the first results from the Taw-Torridge acoustic receiver array. Plans for publication of the first data, results from the managed realignment sampling were discussed and the last parts of practical work were planned.

Pioneer Programme Projects



The Pioneer programme has continued to be busy this quarter. A meeting of the Marine Working Group was held in Ilfracombe. The Fisheries Research and Management Plans project and the Bristol Channel Herring Project were presented, and help was given to facilitation of an afternoon workshop on threats to Natural Capital. The following day IFCA officers met with WWF staff to discuss possible opportunities for partnership working in North Devon.

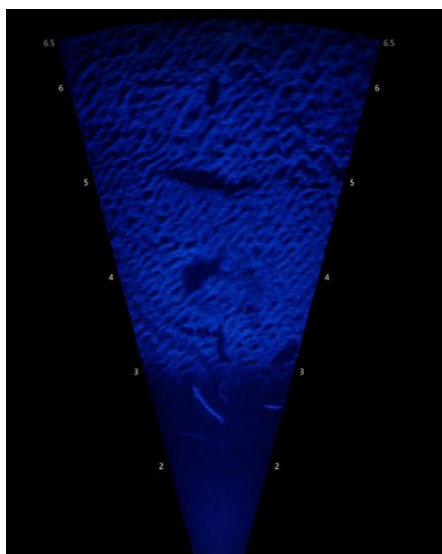
Officers attended a meeting with Taw-Torridge fishermen, organised by the Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE), in Appledore to discuss the possible projects they could be involved in within the Pioneer programme. The fishermen expressed their concern about the Netting Permit Byelaw restrictions in the Taw-Torridge and said that they would write to the IFCA to outline their concerns.

Progress on the development of the fisheries projects, designed by D&S IFCA, but being led and co-ordinated by BLUE and the Pioneer has been relatively slow, so a teleconference was held to discuss progress and next steps.

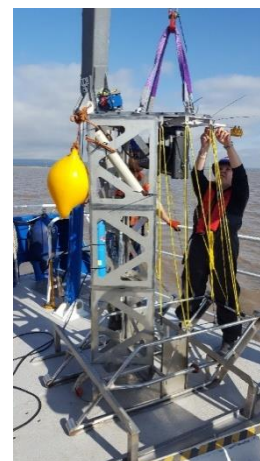
The Bristol Channel Herring project has advanced, with Swansea University and BLUE taking genetic samples and biological data from herring caught by fishermen at Minehead and Clovelly. The work by Swansea University will be combined with data collected under the SEACAMS project to elucidate whether herring in the Bristol Channel constitute a separate spawning stock.

The Marine Pioneer Steering Group was attended, and updates were given from all Steering Group members.

Severn Fish Survey Work



Survey work for a partnership project with Swansea University, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Natural England (NE) took place in September (Swansea Bay) and October (Severn Estuary). The ARIS sonar was trialled as a baited camera, first in Swansea Bay and then in the Severn Estuary. Early results look promising with the camera clearly capturing schooling fish and dogfish in water too turbid for traditional cameras. Additional work with NRW and NE used the camera to map *Sabellaria* – a reef-building worm- that is a protected habitat in the Severn Estuary European Marine Site and



may be an important habitat for fish. This work will help improve knowledge of fish ecology in the Bristol Channel, essential for an Ecosystem Approach to management as described in D&S IFCA's Annual Plan.

Intertidal flatfish surveys were carried out at Weston-Super-Mare and Burnham on the Severn Estuary in September, October and November. This is carried out using a 1.5m Riley push net to sample species found in the intertidal, particularly looking at juvenile sole and other flat fish species. This work is being carried out with Ben Ciotti at Plymouth University to look at flatfish distribution and dynamics in the Severn Estuary. The data from the 6 months of this project are being worked up by an undergraduate at Plymouth University.

The IFCA has joined the steering group of a Defra Impact and Evidence Group project to review the methodologies to assess early life stages of fish. This project has implications for large scale infrastructure developments in coastal areas, especially those that abstract large quantities of water such as nuclear power stations.

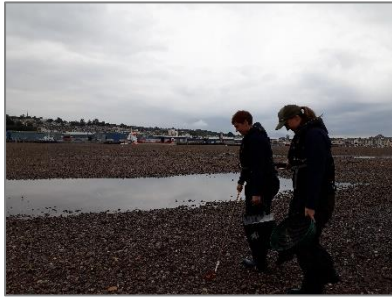
Shellfish Research and Management

Cockles

During the spring tides of the last couple of months Devon & Severn IFCA Officers have been undertaking stock assessments on the cockle beds on the Exe and Teign estuaries. The purpose of the surveys is to estimate the density and biomass of cockles on each bed. The data collected are still being analysed and reports will be produced over the winter. This information will help inform the future management of the cockle beds within this part of the Devon & Severn IFCA district. Devon & Severn IFCA's Annual Plan identifies a review of management of hand working fishing activities as a core work-stream. The data from these surveys will be used, in conjunction with other inter-tidal stock assessments and hand-gathering activity studies, to inform the IFCA's future management of identified hand working fishing methods.



Mussels



On the 11th and 12th September, over the spring tide, stock assessment surveys were carried out on the public mussel beds on the Teign, downstream of the Shaldon bridge, to define where the mussel beds are and accurately map the overall extent of each of the mussel beds. Devon and Severn IFCA has analysed the data collected for each of the beds to estimate the

density of mussels on the beds and the total stock of marketable mussels. This information will help inform future management of the mussel beds on the Teign and the potential development of shellfisheries in this part of the Devon and Severn IFCA District. A supplementary report on the mussel stocks of the Exe and Teign Estuaries was produced for the Byelaw & Permitting Sub-Committee. The report highlighted the decline in mussel stocks on both estuaries over the last six years and the Sub-Committee will consider whether additional management should be introduced to protect the stocks. This may involve a Temporary Closure of the beds under D&S IFCA Byelaw 9.



Whelk

D&S IFCA circulated new Potting Permit Conditions on 13th August 2018. These amended conditions specify that the Minimum Conservation Size (MCRS) for whelk will increase to 55mm (length of shell) on 1st November 2018. There will be a further increase to 65mm in November 2020. Along with issuing new Potting Permit Conditions, D&S IFCA also issued a guidance note to the industry to provide some background information about this change. The guidance note also helps to explain the relationship between whelk shell height and width to assist fishers in choosing what riddle size to use to help sort their catch whilst at sea. D&S IFCA conducted extensive research in 2015 and 2016 to determine the size of sexual maturity of the whelk. The findings from this research formed part of the evidence base that was used during the recent review of Potting Permit Conditions.

Crawfish



The crawfish or European spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*) is reported to be having a comeback in recent years. Divers and commercial fishermen have reported an increase in

sightings of juvenile crawfish of different age classes, which may indicate a recovery of the species. In the next few years these juveniles are likely to enter the fishery and be of a landable size (110mm in D&S IFCA's District). Many fishermen have raised concerns that an emerging fishery may be over exploited leading to a boom and bust scenario and a repeat of the decline of the fishery that was seen in the 1970s. Therefore, the DCO has contacted all Permit Holders from commercial fishing sectors for their input and ideas to help design the management measures they feel are appropriate and viable to ensure the longevity of the fishery and sustainability of the stock in the D&S IFCA District. Any thoughts on what may have led to the recovery of the species will also provide a basis to help decide management measures. Monitoring of crawfish sightings is on-going and input from the commercial sector will help provide important information on the species and its management, as outlined in the D&S IFCA's Annual Plan. It has provided the industry with an opportunity to have their say and lead the development of management measures, which may include restrictions relating to the four categories of management that already exist in permit conditions – those being gear restrictions; spatial restrictions; time/seasonal restrictions and catch/landing restrictions.

D&S IFCA Officers hosted surgery sessions at its offices in Brixham where officers' time was allocated to meet and chat with permit holders about their thoughts. The four sessions were:

- **Thursday 1st November 2018** - 4pm to 8pm
- **Saturday 10th November 2018** - 9am to 12pm
- **Wednesday 14th November 2018** - 4pm to 8pm
- **Monday 19th November 2018** - 4pm to 8pm

Several members of the industry came to the offices or phoned in and the IFCA is still open to receive any other suggestions by 30th November 2018.

Marine Protected Areas

Several screening assessments for Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ have been completed and will be sent to NE for formal advice. Others are in draft format and will be completed shortly. Assessments for feature/gear interactions in the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ are being carried out and will be sent to NE once completed.



Work is being carried out to complete various monitoring and control plans (M&CPs) for the Lundy SAC and Torbay MCZ. HRA and MCZ assessments are also being amended for these sites to incorporate the M&CPs.

Over the summer and early autumn research was undertaken investigate if there is any impact of setting cuttlefish pots on seagrass. A report is being produced which will inform the assessment of the gear/feature interaction within the Torbay MCZ.

Five bait digging effort surveys have been completed on the Exe Estuary. These observation surveys are focussed on the "Duck Pond" area of the estuary, where there is intertidal seagrass. The focus is to determine if, and to what extent, digging occurs on the seagrass (as

has been reported in the past), to inform the development of a hand-working byelaw. Analysis of all D&S IFCA's data on bait digging effort in EMS has begun. This information will be used to inform HRAs on bait digging activities, which will be carried out over the winter months.

Work has continued with the development of the Monitoring and Control Plans (MCPs) for shad in Plymouth Sound and the Severn Estuary. Officers are in conversation with vessel owners about conducting observations on fishing vessels. Work on the development of information to inform stakeholders about legal obligations relating to shad has also been prepared as part of the MCPs.

D&S IFCA has assisted with several data requests from the Severn Estuary Partnership and Natural England relating to assessing possible impacts of recreational sea angling and other shore-based activities in the Severn Estuary.

Severn Estuary & Bristol Channel Research, Advocacy & Governance

Hinkley

Technical discussions for Hinkley Point C have taken considerable time again this quarter. At the time of writing, a public announcement of the cause of the additional work is expected. A meeting was held for interested Authority members to discuss the IFCA's position, role and recent input and plan for future consultation responses.

Aggregate dredging

D&S IFCA has been in conversation with developers, consultants and Natural England regarding a scoping report for an application for changing licence conditions for aggregate dredging activities in the Severn Estuary.

The Severn Estuary Forum, held in Newport this year was attended. Ben Ciotti from Plymouth University gave a talk on the importance of nursery habitat and the early life history stages of fish, including the recent sole survey work with D&S IFCA.

Aquaculture

D&S IFCA has been approached by an individual wishing to develop a seaweed farm in Start Bay in the southern part of D&S IFCA District. Many discussions were had to ascertain as much information on the proposal as possible and encourage the developer to consult with the fishing industry that operate in that area. Beshlie Pool of the South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen's Association set up a meeting with commercial fishermen and D&S IFCA. The developer presented the project and an in-depth discussion was had on its feasibility, its longevity, size and position. The developer was applying for EMFF funding to progress the project.

A EUROHAB Project meeting was attended in November to discuss progress of the project. Presentations were given by all partners to discuss the project progress and highlight development of the Harmful Algal Bloom alert system and other project work.

Dispensations

Numerous dispensation requests have been processed this quarter for organisations and individuals wishing to undertake scientific research within the D&S IFCA district.

Policy development

D&S IFCA officers met with the MMO in Brixham to discuss the IFCA's work relating to the Ecosystem Approach. Following this meeting IFCA officers were invited to a Defra task group working on the Ecosystem Approach. A face-to face meeting in London was attended.

Meetings

The Inshore MPAG telecom was attended. The progress of the current surveys being carried out by the EA and NE in MPAs was discussed. The Tranche 2 MCZ work for this district has been postponed until the new year due to weather. A telecom was held between the MMO, Defra and NE to discuss the progress of the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ assessments due to the site being a cross boundary site.

D&S IFCA joined a multi-agency oil spill incident management exercise which was run by Teignmouth Harbour.

A workshop to feed into the South West Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan was attended. The workshop allowed stakeholders to comment on key INNS for the region and how management should be prioritised.

DCO Clark has attended several meetings this quarter including one with Jonathan Harvey of the Environment Agency, who is leading on its Plastic and Sustainability Project. Anonymised data on ports, number of vessels and their fishing activity were provided to him. The first meeting of the Relevant Public Authorities Marine Plan Decision Makers Group was attended (via teleconference) to discuss the Welsh National Marine Plan and its future statutory considerations. An introduction to the plan was provided and discussions were had on implementation on the plan and what opportunities could be identified to share information, experience and evidence to help support decision making.

Two Byelaw and Permitting Sub-committee meetings were attended, and the Environment Team members presented the analysis of wrasse data to the committee at the November meeting.

Communication and Engagement

The development of the research / environment part of the IFCA website has been discussed and information to populate this section is being compiled. All reports produced by the Environment team that have been completed can be found within the resource library.

Training

The Boat Masters fire safety course as part of the sea survival certification was completed this quarter. The DCO also updated her Sea Survival training. All IFCA officers participated in a team-building day.

General

This has been another busy quarter for D&S IFCA Enforcement Team. Whilst the weather has not been as clement as over the summer, many patrols and inspections have taken place. Joint working has been an important factor in these patrols as has been the intelligence received and targeting of illegal netting within the District's estuaries.

The opening of the scallop fishing season has seen numerous scallop dredging vessels out in force and has led to patrols to monitor compliance with the daily curfew and closed areas.

On the 28th of September 2018 Council Regulation (EU) 2018/1308 was published, amending Regulation (EU) 2018/120 as regard the fishing opportunities for European seabass with the result that from the 1st October 2018 recreational fishers can retain 1 bass (above the MCRS of 42cm) per fisher, per day when fishing within the ICES divisions 4b,4c, 6a to 7k (which include waters within the D&S IFCA District).

Enforcement Work

This quarter 28 patrols have taken place which have consisted of 16 sea patrols, 4 market inspections and 8 shore patrols. The quarter started with an early joint patrol with the MMO in Torquay investigating bass angling activity. Throughout this quarter multiple patrols around South Devon including the IPA, Teignmouth, Lyme Bay, Exmouth and Torquay for illegal netting, potting and mobile gear fishing were undertaken. This included a joint patrol with Environment Health and other agencies on the Exe and Teign estuaries looking at the hand gathering activity that had been reported on many occasions.



A shore patrol was conducted in North Devon to engage with an elderly fisherman affected by the Netting Permit Byelaw. Officers delivered information and spent time to explain what the fisherman could and couldn't do. This resulted in the cessation of the illegal netting activity he had been undertaking.

During September several late evening and night patrols looking for fishers illegally targeting bass were conducted. Three consecutive late patrols around the Exe Estuary targeting recreational anglers on the shore and at sea were undertaken. Officers worked jointly with Dewnans Security of the Salcombe Estuary and the Police to undertake night patrols targeting illegal fishing activity.

Further joint patrols were undertaken in October including evening and late patrols around the Plymouth Estuaries and Bass Nursery areas. One such patrol involved working with Cornwall IFCA, the Police and the EA.

Another patrol was undertaken around Plymouth and the Eddystone working with the MMO to target illegal bass retention. The main priority of the sea patrol was to focus on the areas near the Eddystone Lighthouse, which is a popular place to target and catch bass. It has been reported that recreational anglers were retaining bass in this area, which at the time was prohibited. Whilst in the area officers also inspected several charter and commercial vessels. The regulations for bass such as the recreational bag limit and the MCRS are not byelaws but D&S IFCA does assist the MMO to enforce the legislation. No bass infringements were detected on that day.



On 1st October 2018 the commercial scallop fishery within the district reopened. Under the D&S IFCA Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw (At Sea) Permit Conditions and the D&S IFCA Diving Permit Byelaw Permit Conditions, each year a closed season for commercial Scallop fishing between July and September comes into place. This prohibits the removal of Scallops from a fishery within the D&S IFCA District to allow the stocks to recover after spawning.

Whilst the commercial fishery for Scallops is now open, permit conditions are in place for fishers targeting Scallops. These conditions include but are not limited to, the authorisation to use Scallop dredge gear and commercially dive for Scallops within the district between 0700 hours (local time) and 1900 hours (local time) and from the 28th August 2018, the requirement for all mobile fishing vessels between 6.99 metres and 15.25 metres in length to carry a fully functioning I-VMS unit onboard. All fishers, including recreational fishers, are also not authorised to remove any Scallop from the fishery that measures less than 100 millimetres measured across the broadest part of the shell. With the opening of the fishery day and night patrols were undertaken to monitor the scallop curfew. Reactive patrols to reports of scalloping activity within the closed areas of the IPA were also responded to.

Brixham Market inspections have taken place this quarter. On one occasions a quantity of undersize lobsters was located and is currently under investigation. The master/owner has been interviews and a file prepared for review

A great deal of case work preparation was undertaken this quarter together with undertaking numerous interviews for various cases. Case files have been submitted for review and several were finalised with Official Written Warnings and Fixed Administrative Penalties.

The increase in MRCS for Whelk to 55mm came into force on 1st November and compliance monitoring this measure will take place.

Investigations (Selected)

Offence Date	Offence	Location	Outcome
16/08/2018	Netting without a permit	Off Teignmouth	Official Written Warning
26/07/2018	Fishing without a mobile gear permit or licence	Bideford	Ongoing
06/09/2018	Recreational potter working too many pots	Torbay	Ongoing
07/09/2018	Lobster less than MCRS	Torbay	Ongoing
09/10/2018	Failing to comply with potting permit	Torbay	Ongoing
19/10/2018	Dredging within a restricted area	IPA	Ongoing
07/10/2018	Dredging within a restricted area	IPA	Ongoing
02/11/2018	Dredging within a restricted area	IPA	Ongoing
07/11/2018	Netting without a permit	Torbay	Ongoing
22/11/2018	Fishing without a Mobile Gear permit	IPA	Ongoing

IFCO Kelly Hobson spent the day with Offshore Shellfish Ltd on board their vessel Hollie Mae. This was in preparation for assisting Torbay Environmental Health Officers with the monthly mussel sampling that needs to be undertaken to ensure compliance with Shellfish Hygiene Regulations. Officers will witness the taking of water and mussel samples from the three Offshore mussel sites off Beer in Lyme Bay.

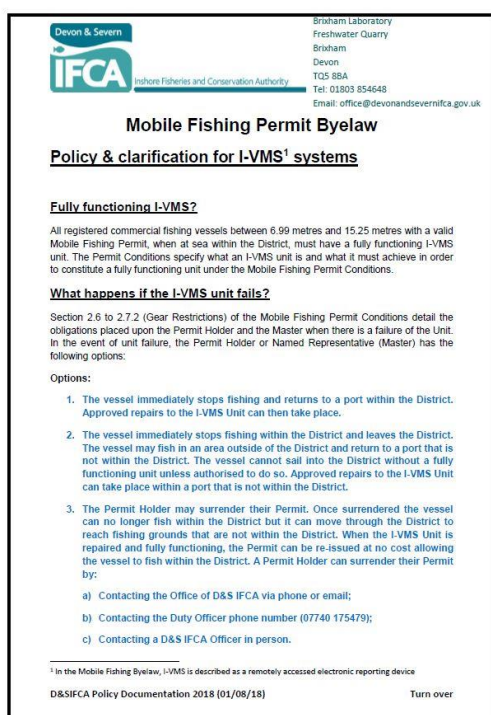
Training

IFCO Adam Walter completed his Yachtmaster Theory Course in Plymouth as well as completing his Professional Practises and Responsibilities (PPR) course with the view of getting my Advanced Powerboat Commercial Endorsement. Adam successfully completed his Advanced Powerboat Course and has applied for the Advanced Powerboat Commercial Endorsement. This means that all Enforcement Team officers have reached this level of competency and can skipper the Authority's vessels.

Officers have undergone internal training on the QGIS system to prepare charts as evidence in prosecutions cases. Further training in trailer manoeuvring has been undertaken by IFCO Kelly Hobson in preparation for her test.

Projects

From 28th August all mobile gear operators (145 vessels) in the Authority's District are required to report live their vessels position at least every 10 minutes to the Devon and Severn



IFCA whilst within the District. D&S IFCA Officers have produced a IVMS Policy and Clarification Document which has been sent to all Mobile Fishing Permit holders and is available on D&S IFCA website. Officers have worked hard to ensure that the IVMS units on board the mobile gear vessels are operating correctly. There has been a large percentage of compliance with only minor exceptions of faulty units not reporting. These issues have now been resolved.

Work has been progressing on the build of the new 7.8m patrol vessel. More visits have been made to the factory to see the build develop further. The expected completion and delivery is between 10th and 15th December 2018. The wheelhouse has been constructed and the vessel is currently being powder-coated. The next steps in bringing it closer to completion will be the fitting of the tubing. IFCO Dan Cresswell has been dealing with import documentation

for the FLIR, which will allow Rib Craft to fit the FLIR to the vessel, whilst giving assurance that this will not be deployed on a military vessel.

Environment Work

Enforcement Officers joined up with the Environment Team on several occasions this quarter to assist with survey work. Part of this involved skippering the RIB to facilitate the placing of acoustic receivers in the Dart Estuary to monitor the movement of tagged bass as part of the I-BASS Project with PhD student Tom Stamp. Officers also assisted the environment team with cockle surveys on the Exe Estuary and Teign Estuary which involved sampling, measuring, weighing and aging the cockles from different locations on the beds at Exmouth.

IT & Website

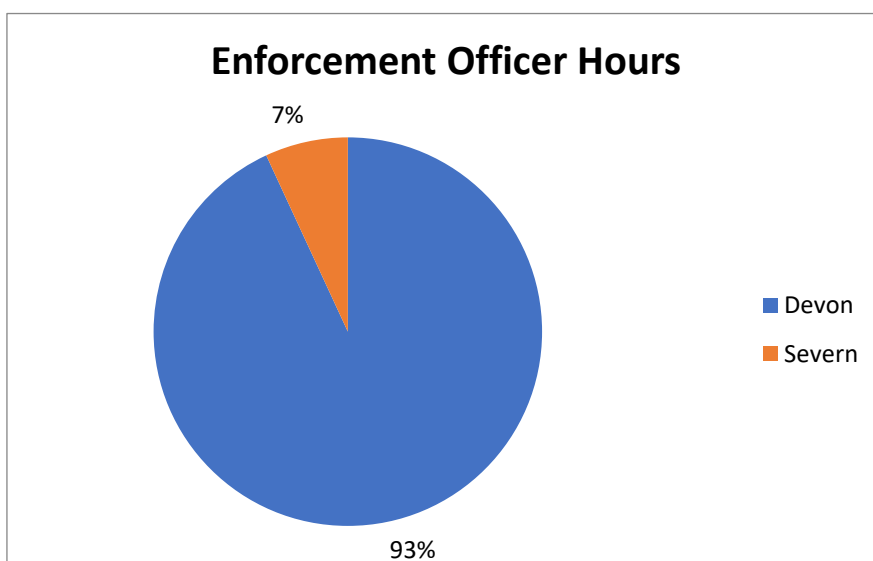
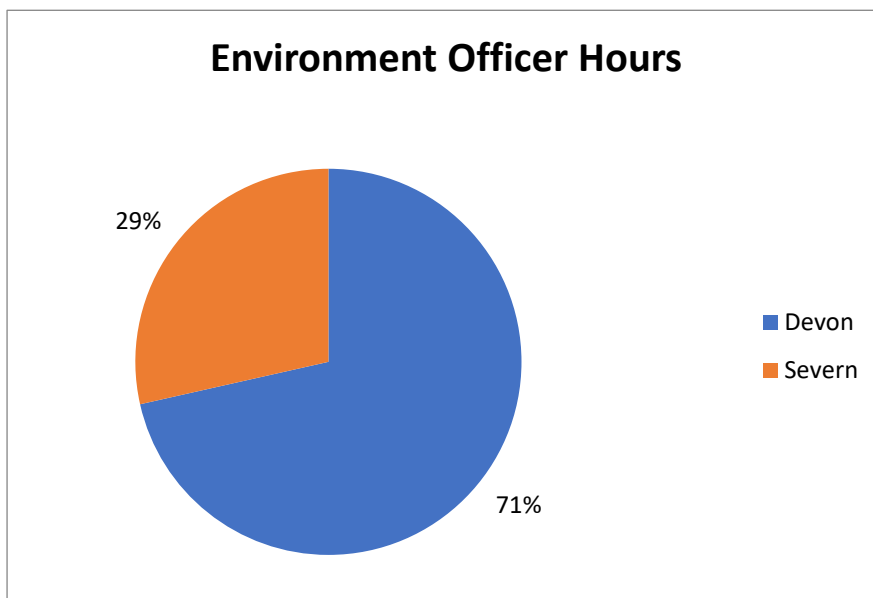
IFCO Dan Cresswell has been working on the new website to input information and liaison with the website designers to get the permit payment system fully operational. The Monitoring

Control Surveillance System has been regularly updated with enforcement and prosecution data. Following the server update and system changes there have been a few technical errors which have since resolved, although there remain some issues with the VPN and remote working which is being worked on.

Maintenance

The Enforcer RIB is booked in for its annual engine service with no expected issues. The electrician, who undertakes work within the console to correct any arising issues, has mentioned that this vessel may need to be rewired in the short term.

Officer Hours Split between Devon and the Severn Area– Environment and Enforcement Teams



The key work streams for this period have included the following:

- Reviewing progress of the 2018/19 Annual Plan
- Developing strategy for on-going Byelaw Review work
- Creation of officer papers for Authority meetings
- Creation of officer papers for Sub-Committee meetings
- Delivery of internally generated communications & news items
- Publication & website management
- Policy work – Further Development of internal D&S IFCA working practices and systems

Byelaw working

The last Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee meeting was on 11th Oct 2018. As well as compilation of detailed minutes, a significant amount of other work has already been completed or will now need to be completed as a direct result of that meeting.

A revised timetable to begin work reviewing management of Hand Working Fishing Activities has now been established. Much of this work is dependent on establishing a suitable quantity of “foundation” information which can then be fully considered by the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee. Foundation information includes completion of many HRA and MCZ assessments by the Environment team who are currently stretched in terms of staff numbers. Many of these assessments have been completed but some need further data to produce the level of assessment necessary. These data are currently being analysed and new and updated assessments will be produced over the next few months. In addition to the environmental assessments, an officer review of current management measures including both voluntary and legacy measures will add to the base information. A new strategy to include a prolonged awareness/engagement period with stakeholders will now be developed. The overall task of reviewing management has been divided into three clearly defined stages as follows:

- **the use of crab tiles**
- **bait digging**
- **a mixture of methods that have been labelled as hand gathering.**

Information relating to each category will be presented to members at quarterly Sub-Committee meetings in 2019 and options for management (including the use of legislation) are expected to be discussed in depth late in 2019.

Shorter term key tasks for the Byelaw & Permitting Sub-Committee are as follows:

1. To make potential changes to the existing Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw (and possibly permit conditions) as part of the 5-year review of the Byelaw.
2. To replace the Emergency Application Byelaw with a permanent replacement
3. To prepare amended Diving Permit Conditions for the three-year review of permit conditions

Members have (subject to agreement of Terms of Reference) established a Byelaw Technical Working Group to draft wording for new Byelaws and/or permit conditions. A large quantity of information and discussion papers have been prepared for this working group with the first

meeting scheduled for 26th November 2018. All work conducted by this working group will be reported back to members for consideration and any decision making.

The next meeting of the Byelaw & Permitting Sub-Committee will be on 20th November 2018. Officer papers have been prepared. The agenda includes the formal review of the Live Wrasse Fishery and the potential use of legacy byelaw (9) Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds to recognise mussel stock depletion in both the Teign and Exe Estuaries. The Environment team created large and detailed data analysis report for the Wrasse Fishery in preparation for the formal review. This report, a mussel supplementary report and all other officer papers are all posted on the open display “meeting” page of the website.

The Permitting Byelaw model adopted by the Authority is starting to generate more interest on a wider scale. The Welsh government are considering the use of Permit Byelaws and D&S IFCA has been in contact with North Western IFCA who have also requested some information and advice on structuring their own Byelaws and developing a review process to amend permit conditions.

Consultation and Documentation

All Byelaw and Permit Condition drafting will be subjected to consultation. Work will be needed to prepare consultation information and at its conclusion the findings will be summarised in reports. Documenting the rationale and evidence base for potential change and the decision-making process is vital. Transparency with information has become a key objective for D&S IFCA. The website will be used to publish the relevant documentation including Byelaw Development Reports.

Publications

A combined report (The Development of the Netting Permit Byelaw – September 2018) has now been produced. This report is an amalgamation of other stand-alone documents which included Impact Assessments, an Objection Response Report and a Report on Access for Netting within Estuaries. This large reference document was created to capture all the relevant information (and annexes) in one report. It is intended to satisfy the expectations of members who raised concern that the final Impact Assessment for the Netting Permit Byelaw did not fully reflect the extent of the work that was conducted over a two-year period. Initiatives of this kind are becoming more useful to inform stakeholders (and any readership) of any work that has been undertaken.

Focus on the Website & Communication work

The new D&S IFCA website is now operational including the on-line permit shop. The greater use of the website is a fundamental part of D&S IFCA’s communication strategy for both external stakeholders and its own members. The new website acts as the central hub for D&S IFCA promotional work and news items.

The publications output of D&S IFCA has increased dramatically in the last six months. The website’s Resource Library is an integral part of an overall strategy to display essential information such as legislation, but also to demonstrate D&S IFCA’s commitment to transparency with various information.

This new facility will continue to expand over time and provides multiple benefits to the organisation. Divided into 8 sections, it is effectively an interactive publication scheme. Not only can the achievements of D&S IFCA be clearly demonstrated, but the volume of freely accessible information will ultimately reduce officer time managing Freedom of Information Requests.

D&S IFCA has aims to be more self-sufficient managing its own communications with additional professional support set aside for specific communications campaigns or “crisis” work. Officers have been encouraged to continue with a new system of creating their own news stories that can appear in both blog and “active” PDF format. Not only do internally generated news stories contain accurate information, but they also provide an insight into officer working whilst also being easier to quality assure. Internally generated stories can be released at appropriate and relevant stages or formulated to either be pro-active or reactive. The stable file structuring within the website allows for links to be used to other information, therefore providing depth to the news items whilst also maintaining controlled over their publication shelf life. Selected news items can also be used to create a quarterly newsletter. News items can be shared on Facebook or highlighted using twitter. A lot of work has been done improving the presentation of items on the site via the use of thumbnail images. Several display pages are still being developed which will enhance the presentation of the site still further.

Policy/Data Protection

The most essential elements to comply with GDPR are now in place. This includes the D&S IFCA Privacy Policy and adaption to the privacy notices on application forms used to acquire permits for different fishing activities. Internal systems for handling and processing information, including personal data are developing well and are at a level where external Data Protection support or advice can be effectively used by D&S IFCA for further improvements to the current internal systems.