

# SEA ANGLING UPDATE

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Sea Angling Newsletter

No. 1 September 2013

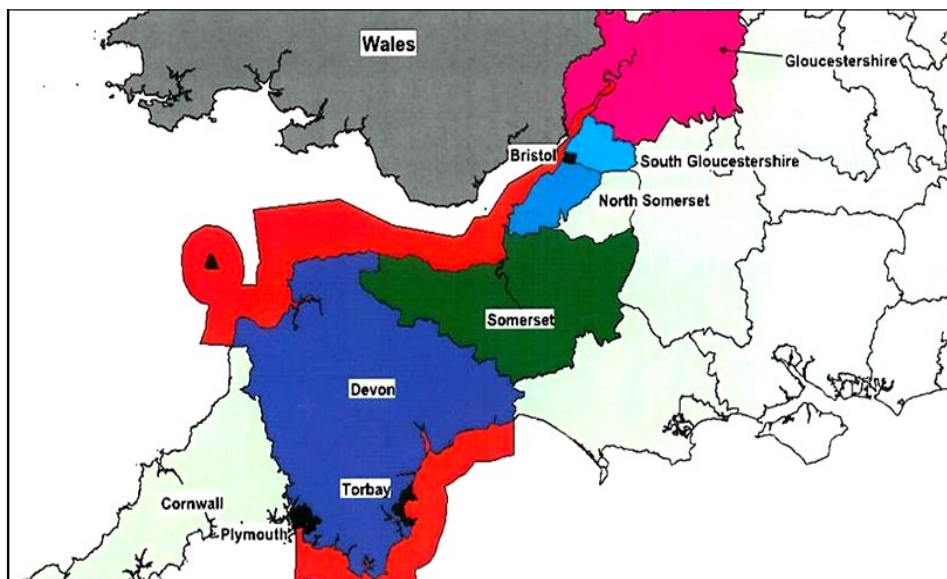
## Who are the Devon & Severn IFCA?

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA) was formed in 2011 as part of reforms brought about by the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009). IFCAs are the statutory bodies tasked with managing fishing activities out to the six mile limit. Devon and Severn is one of ten IFCAs around England's coast with a shared vision:

***“Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.”***

The Devon & Severn IFCA consists of two teams—enforcement and environment. There are three environment officers, one of whom is dedicated to the Severn part of the district and five enforcement officers, plus Chief Officer, Tim Robbins, and our office manager Hazel. The main enforcement vessel, Drumbeat of Devon is based in Brixham but a 6.5m RIB and a new 8m research catamaran are both capable of operating on both coasts.

*The purpose of this newsletter is to keep sea anglers in the D&S IFCA district up-to-date with the work of the IFCA*



The Devon and Severn IFCA district

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A calm night at Clevedon on an IFCA sea angling survey

## Angling Surveys in the Severn

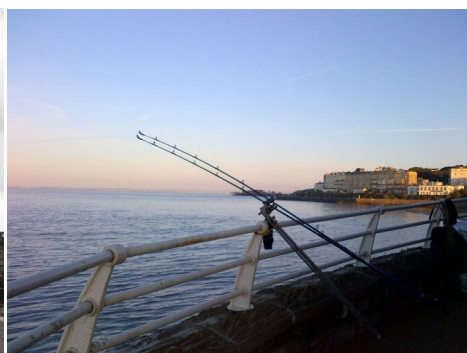
As well as creating IFCAs the 2009 Marine Bill determined that recreational activities, such as sea angling must be included in future decisions about managing the marine environment. Very little data on sea angling in the UK existed to aid IFCAs in their management so interview-based surveys were designed to help gather the much-needed information.

### Sea Angling 2012

Interviews between February 2012 and February 2013 were part of a national government-led survey. This project looked at shore, private boat and charter boat based angling. The results of this survey are expected this Autumn and will be reported in future issues.

### Recreational Sea Angling 2013

Based on reports of 2012 being a terrible year for sea fishing in the Severn, and in recognition of the importance of angling in the Severn area D&S IFCA decided to continue running angling surveys in this part of the district into 2013 & 2014. Whilst currently focused on shore-based angling, we hope to be able to work with Charter Boats in the near future to better grasp their importance in the Severn.



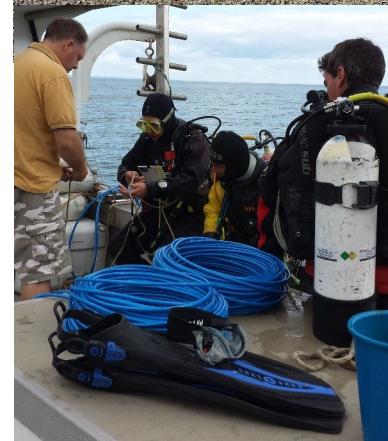
Angling surveys aim to provide baseline data about levels of catch and the socio-economic importance of sea angling. They are now in their second year in the Severn.

## A summer of survey work

When chatting to anglers we often get asked what other environmental survey work we do in the district. The answer is lots!

Over the last few months the environment team have been: Surveying mussel beds in the Exe and Taw-Torridge; fine tuning boat-towed camera systems for filming sea-grass and other sensitive under water habitats; developing a video technique for assessing scallop beds; carrying out bait digging interviews and finally; continuing lugworm density surveys!

Much of this work is to inform the management of Marine Protected Areas . More on that in the next issue....



Top: Mussel survey on the Exe; Bottom: Divers verify results of photographic estimates of Scallop density



# Netting in the Severn

The placing of fixed nets to catch a variety of fish species is a common occurrence throughout the Severn.

The only Severn-specific byelaw the IFCA currently has addresses fixed netting. North of a line drawn due east from the lighthouse on Flatholm Island across to Sand Bay the use of fixed nets (referred to in the byelaw as a fixed engine) is illegal.

The IFCA have responded to a number of reports of illegal fixed nets in the Clevedon, New Passage and Littleton areas.

Also see the back page for information on upcoming netting work by the Environment Agency.

***If you are concerned about a fixed-net that you think may be illegal then contact us, do NOT remove the net yourself.***

**01803 854 648**

Everyone that catches shellfish or uses pots in the Devon and Severn IFCA District will be affected by this new byelaw.

The first two new byelaws will cover potting & shellfish and mobile gear activity

## Byelaw review progress

All IFCAs are tasked with reviewing the byelaws that they inherited when they were formed from Sea Fisheries Committees. D&S IFCAs new byelaws follow a permit approach with key aspects of management contained in the conditions attached to the issued permits.

The main benefit of the new approach is to introduce flexibility in the way that the Authority manages marine fisheries and conservation. Through a clearly set out process changes to the management can be achieved by amending the permit conditions rather than revoking and remaking the byelaw – a timely and costly exercise. The first two new byelaws are the Potting and Shellfish Permit Byelaw and the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw.

The formal consultation on the two new proposed byelaws closed on the 30 August 2013. The next stage is for the Authority to consider making changes to the draft byelaws based on the consultation responses received. The proposed byelaws will then be sent to Defra seeking confirmation of the byelaws from the Minister in October 2013. It is likely that the byelaws will come into force during the early part of 2014.

The Potting and Shellfish Permit Byelaw will introduce a limit on the number of lobster, crab and scallop that leisure fishers are able to retain. It will also introduce a limit on the number of pots that leisure fishers can use. For more information please see the contact details on the back page of the newsletter.

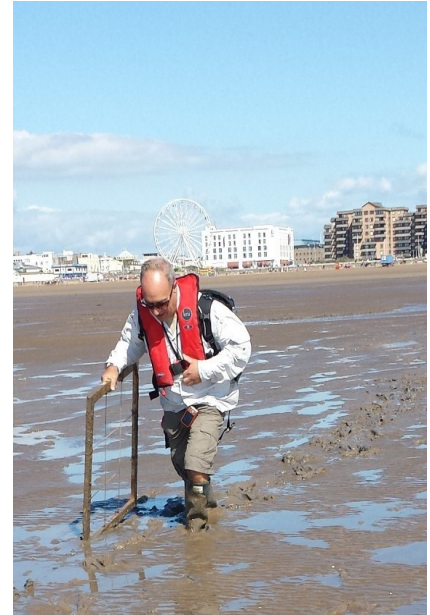


# Bait digging & density research

Along with sea angling, bait digging is a recreational activity which now falls directly within the IFCA's remit. Previously there has been no data collection on bait digging activities in the Severn. The IFCA is conducting two types of survey to help inform management and development of these activities.

Firstly an interview based survey, following a similar format to the angling interviews is currently in its second year. This aims to utilize the knowledge of local bait diggers in terms of long-term trends in bait location and abundance as well as providing a broad picture of the key locations and levels of bait digging activities. These are also occurring in key parts of Devon, such as the Exe estuary.

We are also carrying out lugworm density surveys within the Severn European Marine Site to gain baseline data on the distribution and density of adult and juvenile lugworm beds. The plan is to repeat them annually to monitor their health and detect any long-term trends or sudden changes. Crab-tile surveys also take place every 4 years throughout estuaries in the district.



Bait survey work includes bait digging survey (top left) and lugworm density surveys (bottom left and right).

## Thank you.

*Thanks to all the angling clubs in the Severn which have recently allowed the IFCA to attend to chat to their members. Thanks also to Veals & Steve Ace for allowing us to attend their league at Littleton. If you would like us to attend a meeting with your club then please contact Libby Ross on:*

*[e.ross@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](mailto:e.ross@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk)*

## ! Environment Agency netting notice !

Twice a year the Environment Agency deploy a number of Fyke nets to sample the small fishes of the estuary. Nets are set for a maximum of two tides before being recovered and the vast majority of individuals are returned alive.

The survey provides vital information on how juvenile fish are using the estuary and acts as a yearly 'health check' where potential changes can be picked up on by the long-term data set being built up. IFCA officer Libby Ross will be assisting with the majority of the nettings to help the EA officers in their work and to observe the catch. *The nets will be deployed at key locations in late September and early October and have dispensation from the IFCA to be used.*



**Environment Agency Fyke nets used to scientifically sample juvenile fish will be deployed in late September and October.**

Photo: Geoff Way



# John May: Angling representative on the D&S IFCA

As well as its employees, an IFCA has a committee consisting of individuals appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for their knowledge or expertise in a number of fields that will assist the IFCA in its inclusive management of inshore fisheries. Additionally there will be a representative each from the MMO itself, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Members also come from each of the sponsoring local authorities.

In 2012 John May was appointed to the D&S IFCA committee to represent recreational sea anglers throughout the district. For those that do not know John, he is a well known and respected angler from the Severn region. He has 50 years boat and shore experience of both the Bristol Channel and the South coast. John is the president of Burnham Boat Owners Sea Angling Association and Vice President of Weston-Super-Mare SAA. He is also a keen supporter of the Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers and the Angling Trust.

John has been instrumental in setting up meetings between IFCA officers and angling clubs in the Severn and is happy to speak to clubs to give unbiased views and advice. In interim, if you would like to contact John, get in touch with the IFCA. The next newsletter will have details of how you can contact him directly with any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding inshore fisheries management and sea angling.

## Contact Us

*Please get in touch if you have any questions or comments or want to know more about any of the issues covered in this newsletter.*

**Address:**

Devon and Severn IFCA  
Old Foundry Court  
60A Fore Street  
Brixham  
TQ5 8DZ

**Tel:**

01803 854 648

**Email:**

[office@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](mailto:office@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk)

**Website:**

[www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk](http://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk)

**Twitter:**

@DevonSevernIFCA