

SEA ANGLING UPDATE

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Sea Angling Newsletter

No. 2 January 2014

*There are **884,000**
sea anglers in Eng-
land, equating to
2% of all adults and
recreational sea
anglers spent
£1.23 billion
in 2012*

Sea Angling 2012

Sea Angling 2012 Ministerial Launch

The results of the Sea Angling 2012 project are in! They were presented at an official ministerial launch at Westminster on November the 27th. A quick reminder: Sea Angling 2012 was a project which aimed to better understand recreational sea angling in the UK including participation levels, catch rates and economic importance.

It included shore-based and private boat inter-views, led by IFCAs throughout England, a survey of the charter boat sector run by the Marine Management Organisation and various online and telephone surveys. The whole project was overseen by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas). Key results are found throughout this issue.



Portishead boat owners locking in after another successful day on the Severn

If you fancy delving deep into the details, the project report is available online at:

<http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/seaangling/finalreport.htm>

Photo: Bill Griffiths

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Anglers at the Weston-Super-Mare SAA RNLI Open line the beach at dusk



A Flounder is measured at the Weston Super Mare SAA RNLI Open before being returned (Left). The report estimated the landings of cod by recreational anglers, such as these two, caught by John from Portishead Boat Owners (Right).
Photo courtesy of R.Igglesden

IFCA elsewhere

The IFCA environment team have been very busy with lots of other survey work this Autumn and Winter.

We have continued our project looking at the feasibility of a new stock assessment method for scallop beds; worked with Cefas on a project mapping biogenic reef in Torbay; mussel surveys were carried out on the Exe and Taw-Torridge estuaries; the Exe cockle bed stock assessment was completed; video surveys of the Start Point to Plymouth and Eddystone SAC were conducted to map the exact locations of rocky reefs.

All of this data helps us monitor and manage our various Marine Protected Areas, and ensure that shellfish stocks in the district are sustainably exploited and informs the IFCA's bylaw making process.

What about the fish?!

The fisheries findings of Sea Angling 2012

- ⇒ Shore anglers in England caught between 4.4 and 6.4 million fish in 2012
- ⇒ Private boat owners caught between 2.6- 4.8 million fish
- ⇒ Mackerel were the most commonly caught species followed by whiting, bass, dogfish and cod.
- ⇒ 75% of all fish caught from shore were released, 50% from private boats
- ⇒ Shore anglers returned 82% of all bass and 56% of all cod caught.
- ⇒ Private boat anglers returned 57% of all bass and 27% of all cod caught.
- ⇒ Lower return rates from boats probably reflect the generally larger size of fish caught

Annual catches of bass from shore, private charter boats are in the region of 380-690t, of which 230-440t is retained. Annual catches of cod from all forms of recreational angling are about 480-870t, of which 430-820t are kept.

The report concludes that shore angling of bass and cod in England are not insignificant but are probably a small component of the fishing mortality on stocks. However, better information is needed to accurately assess the relative impacts of private boat and charter boat angling as they are likely to be higher than shore angling at least on bass & cod.



IFCA research assistant Lauren and the camera frame used to film scallops beds (Above). Cockles are sorted into size groups as part

How Important is RSA to England's Economy?

The economic findings of Sea Angling 2012

- Direct spend by sea anglers in England in 2012 equated to **£831 million**
- When indirect spend is incorporated this figure rises to **£2.1 billion**
- RSA directly supports **10,400 fulltime jobs**
- With indirect factors taken into account RSA supports **23,600 fulltime jobs**
- The average angler spends **£1394 per year**
- **£761** of this is trip-related so things like fuel, parking, food, accommodation and bait.
- The remaining **£633** of this is spent on 'major items' such as buying or replacing rods & reels, clothing or boat equipment

Sea angling and quality of life

The social findings of Sea Angling 2012

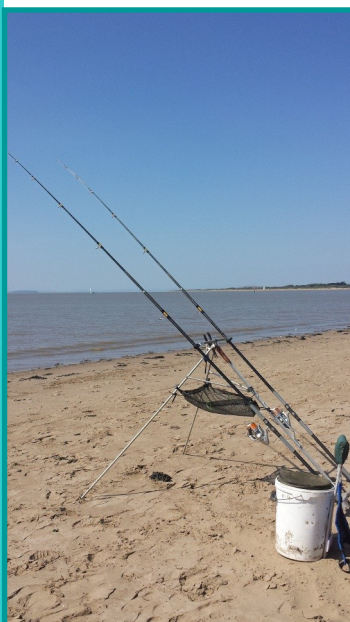
It will be no surprise to sea anglers that 70% of those interviewed during the project said that sea angling was important to their quality of life. It was also highlighted as one of the main ways sea anglers experience nature and relax. Other benefits which were identified were physical exercise and an opportunity to socialise with people.

The report also identified six areas of wider societal benefit brought about by sea angling:

1. Sport and physical activity
2. Health and well being
3. Environmental access and improvement
4. Urban community benefit
5. Rural community benefit
6. Young people

The average angler is male and in the 46-55 age range, with an overall average age of 51. Only 2% of anglers are female, although this rises to 6% when you include women who are accompanying men on trips. Most people are classed as 'rare' anglers – getting out fishing only around 3 times every 3 months. Interestingly, membership rates of sea angling clubs are very low with fewer than 5% being members of a local club and less than 3% belonging to a national angling organisation.

Anglers believed that the best way of improving participation in sea angling would be to improve fish stocks – probably not a huge surprise to anyone!



Booking in to the BCFA Open Match at Minehead last year—angling provides a way for people to socialise: another benefit of RSA recognized by Sea Angling 2012

Turning words in actions

D&S IFCA RSA Strategy

The Devon and Severn IFCA intends to turn the results of Sea Angling 2012 into something meaningful for anglers in our district. It is currently looking for opportunities in which we can manage our district to benefit anglers. A task group has been set up comprised of IFCA officers and appointed members of the IFCA who have an interest in angling in order to develop sea angling opportunities within the D&S district.

An RSA Strategy will be published which will outline the IFCA's commitment to angling in the district and two key projects are in the pipeline—details in future newsletters. The IFCA is also looking at whether it can improve access to harbours or marinas where fishing is currently not allowed by joint working with harbour authorities and angling clubs. Get in touch if you would like to suggest a location: e.ross@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk



Thanks!

- ◇ *BCFSA & Weston SAA for allowing the IFCA to attend their competitions.*
- ◇ *Portishead boat owners for a great meeting and for being so enthusiastic about angling matters in the Severn.*
- ◇ *Minehead charter boat operators for taking the time to talk to us & the Harbour Café for hosting us*
- ◇ *John May for all his hard work supporting and promoting the work of the IFCA throughout the RSA sector*

The John May Blog

It has now been a year since I started working with DSIFCA. My motive for joining was to support the management of the sea from which I have taken so much enjoyment through out 50 years of recreational sport fishing. Initially I thought it was slow but it soon developed into a steep learning curve that continues. I must say that I have a great deal of respect for the DSIFCA team and the enormity of their task.

I have during this time met and spoken with political, commercial, environmental and wildlife interests as well as other recreational users of the sea have become more appreciative of their views.

RSAs overwhelming "want" is for more and bigger fish to be left in the sea. [2012 SURVEY]. No-one can deny the dwindling fish stocks and our reliance on mother nature to provide the occasional good spawning year for some to claim current activities are "sustainable". RSAs are fully supportive of adopting realistic minimum sizes and close seasons to enable the procreation process to increase stocks. There is no place for portion size in sustainability.

I have fished in the States and New Zealand where these sorts of measures have been taken to preserve or rebuild stocks and the benefits to all are there to be seen. I am greatly encouraged by the current published support being given to RSAs from all quarters and look forward to the measures particularly "on our patch" that surely must follow.



Byelaw review update

Byelaw News Flash!

The Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw was confirmed by the Secretary of State on 17th December 2013. The new Byelaw establishes the management approach that the Authority wishes to apply to other fishing activities in the future. The Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw allows the Authority to manage fishing activity by varying the conditions of the permits issued under the Byelaw. This allows the Authority to adopt an adaptive, flexible approach to management which would not be possible under a traditional byelaw. The new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw prohibits bottom towed gear in approximately 35% of the Authority's district.

The Potting and Shellfish Byelaw has been made by the Authority and is currently with the Marine Management Organisations for final Quality Assurance checks. The Authority intends to introduce the Byelaw at the end of March 2014. This date may change if the checking process takes longer than expected. The Authority recognises that the new Byelaw, if confirmed, would need to be widely publicised to enable those affected to obtain a permit prior to the Byelaw coming into force.

Both of the Byelaws are available to be viewed on the Authority's website, www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk

Contact Us

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

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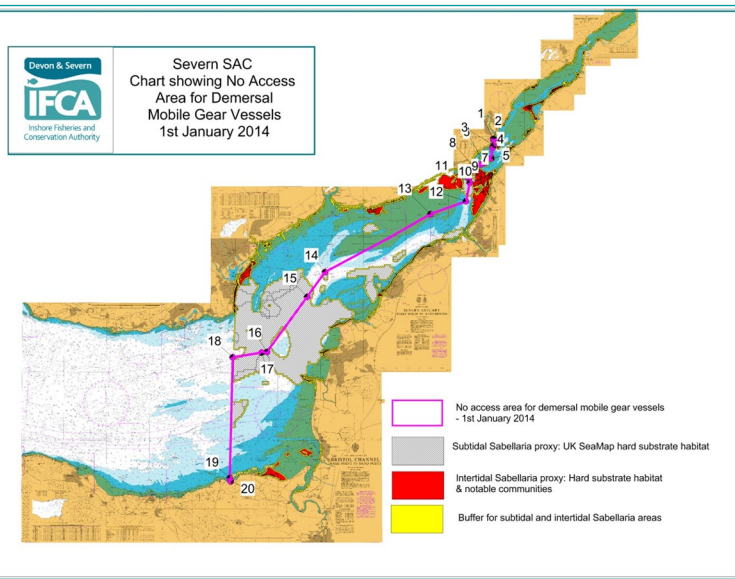
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The new mobile fishing permit byelaw places further restrictions on the use of demersal towed gear in European Marine Sites throughout the D&S IFCA's district. This includes a ban on all demersal towed gear (e.g. trawling and dredging for shellfish) throughout the English side of the Severn as shown by the pink line above.