

## Devon and Severn IFCA News

### Comprehensive Review of the Live Wrasse Fishery

Devon & Severn IFCA have carried out a three-year comprehensive review of the live wrasse fishery.



A fishery for live wrasse emerged in the D&S IFCA's District in 2015, in which a small number of commercial fishers target ballan, goldsinny, corkwing and rock cook wrasse. These fish are caught for use as cleaner fish in salmon aquaculture, where they remove parasites (lice) from the salmon. The aquaculture industry views this method as more environmentally-friendly than the use of chemicals for parasite control.

#### Monitoring and managing the fishery

Since 2017, D&S IFCA has been managing the fishery under the Potting Permit Byelaw, through its Potting Permit conditions. This adaptive management includes a closed season to protect spawning individuals, voluntary closed areas and minimum and maximum landing sizes for each species, in addition to the implementation of a 'fully documented fishery'.

Data collected as part of the fully documented Live Wrasse Fishery include on-board observer surveys (carried out by D&S IFCA Officers) and landings forms submitted by fishers over a three-year period. Using this three year dataset (2017–2019), D&S IFCA has completed a comprehensive review of the fishery, which is available [here](#).

#### Outcomes of the Comprehensive Review

The results of the review suggest that the fishery, for most species, as a whole is sustainable. Catches per unit effort (CPUE) and landings per unit effort (LPUE) show how many fish are caught/landed per unit of fishing effort (e.g. per fish pot), and these measures have been relatively stable across the three years. This suggests that current management measures have been effective in preventing overexploitation and managing the fishery.

However, the results of the review also suggest that catches and landings of rock cook wrasse have declined over the last three years, especially in 2019 (based on CPUE and LPUE).

#### Implications of the Review for Future Management

The Comprehensive Review was presented to D&S IFCA's Byelaw and Permitting Sub Committee (B&PSC) in February 2020, and used as the basis for discussion regarding future management of the fishery.

The B&PSC decided that rock cook should not be landed by vessels involved in this fishery, and that any catches of rock cook, of any size, should be returned to the sea. This decision

will be subject to D&S IFCA's usual process of public consultation, which will be announced soon.

The B&PSC also recommended that the fishery should continue to be monitored as outlined in the [D&S IFCA's Policy Statement and Potting Permit Conditions for the Live Wrasse Fishery](#) (1<sup>st</sup> August 2018) with at least the current level of on-board observer effort. D&S IFCA's close monitoring of the fishery by this method has been vital in discerning trends in catches and landings, and for informing our adaptive management. In addition to this on-board data collection, fishers have volunteered to undertake sub-sampling catches once a week to provide further data to inform management of the fishery.

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