

**NORTHUMBERLAND INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
CHIEF INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION OFFICER A B BROWNE
QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING 30 JUNE 2017**

All of the Authorities IFCOs have been very busy this quarter, most splitting their time from working on shore carrying out port inspections, checking recreational fishers, anglers, visiting wholesalers, angling and dive shops, talking to fishermen and the general public, in the office catching up on paperwork or being tasked to crew either St Aidan or Bravo 1 for sea patrols. Due to Intelligence received Officers have been working earlies, lates and night shift, trying to detect any illegal activities. May I say all the Enforcement Team have been working extremely hard and deserve a pat on the back, well done and keep up the good work. The Environmental Team have also had their hands full, carrying out Escape Gap Surveys throughout April - June, Alnmouth Bi-Annual Fish Survey, Long Nanny Survey and others. They have also attended numerous events including for World Ocean Day, Blyth Maritime Festival, Puffin Festival, St Mary's Island Open Day, meetings with Newcastle University, Dove Marine and Natural England, to name a few. All IFCOs Enforcement and Environmental are 'Warranted IFCA Officers' who are cross warranted with NEIFCA, MMO, EA and Tweed Commission so are able to carry out targeted, intelligence led enforcement; as well as engaging with recreational fishers, shore gatherers, anglers and the general public.

IFCOs D.Graham's and M.Docherty's Quarterly Reports give a good overview of what has been happening throughout the Authority's District this quarter. This is the time of the year when a large majority of local fishers decide to get their boats out of the water and carry out much needed maintenance before the busy spring/summer season begins. Some of the Beach Net Fishers in the centre of the Authority's District started with their T-nets mid May catching some Sea Trout and returning any Salmon accidentally caught back to the sea. On the 1st June all 8 Drift-net fishers were at sea targeting Salmon and Sea Trout as their season is short (1st June - 31st August, weekdays only, limited hours, no overnight fishing), by all account some good landings have been seen. The Lobsters didn't crawl this quarter so most potters have only been going to sea every other day to conserve fuel and bait. Some of the local trawl fleet have made the trip up to Scotland for the summer Prawn Fishery around the Firth of Forth, however there have been reports that the trawlers which decided to stay in their home ports have been getting some good landings of prawns whilst fishing through the night.

There has been a marked increase in diving activity at all the known hot spots in the district and most divers spoken to are aware of the NIFCA Byelaws. Cleekers and Shore Gatherers are starting to be also seen throughout the Authority's District and regular checks are being made.

Miscellaneous

As mentioned in my last quarterly report there has again been quite a lot of correspondence between NIFCA, Northumberland County Council (NCC) Procurement Team and the EMFF Team at the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The NIFCA, 'RIB Sub Committee' and the Finance Officers have been busy preparing a Business Case to give to the MMO and a Cabin RIB Specification document which can hopefully be put on the NCC Portal at the end of July 2017 giving potential Boat Builders the opportunity to 'Tender'. The timeline for tenders will be 28 days hopefully starting from 1st August 2017, then after the closing date the nominated NIFCA Officers and possibly Members will go through and score all the relevant bids with advice from NCC procurement and hopefully agree a builder. It was decided that some of the Cabin RIB Sub Committee including Committee members Mr. I Thomas, Mr. A. Ritchie along with CEO M.Hardy, Deputy Chief IFCO M.Southerton and Engineer/IFCO J.Cooke to visit 'Sea Work' Boat Show, Southampton to have the opportunity to actually see, go on board and chat with various RIB Builders. The team reported back and were very positive and all agreed it was worth the trip down. If all goes well the Authority could hopefully have the new Cabin RIB by early 2018. Regular updates and reports will be circulated to all Members and Staff.

Believe it or not it has been a year since St Aidan was lifted out of the water for her 1st maintenance and paint up and 2 years since the Authority took delivery of her. On Monday 15th May 2017 St Aidan was once again (very professionally) lifted out of the water at the Royal Quays Marina, North Shields. Standing by were IFCO/Engineer Justin Cooke and IFCO Michael Docherty, tools and paint brushes in hand ready to tackle any obstacles they came across whilst carrying out the maintenance programme. Although the weather conditions weren't ideal, they battled on and kept to a very tight schedule. All work was completed on time and St Aidan was lifted back into the water on Friday 19th May having only been out for 5 days. Well done to both Officers, a great effort and a good job very well done.

On designated days in April and June IFCOs under the guidance of Environmental Officer Vicky Rae have been setting pots at various sites throughout the Authority's District. This is part of a year long Escape Gap Survey where 2 sets of 10 pots (alternative pots fitted with an Escape Gap) have been baited and set, then Officers have been hauling them on average 3 times per week, recording the catch per pot. June is the last month and then the Environment Team will analyse the results and hopefully have a report in the next month. As well as the Survey carried out by the Authority Officers, all of the Authority's Commercial Shellfish Permit holders have been offered 30 escape gaps free of charge giving them the opportunity to trial them in their own pots, some have taken up the offer and some very good feedback has been given, especially the amount of time fishers save clearing their pots.

The last Long Nanny Survey took place in April, (however a further Survey was carried out after a pollution incident in May, report to follow).

The Environment Team along with other IFCOs, members and volunteers carried out over 2 days late May the Bi-Annual AIn Fish Survey.

Once again, throughout the quarter numerous joint patrols have been carried out between NIFCA and the MMO, including Shore Patrols, Sea Patrols on-board St Aidan and RIB Patrols using Bravo 1. On the 1st day of the Drift Net Fishery an Officer from the Environment Agency accompanied IFCO Officers on a Sea Patrol using RIB Bravo 1, resulting in a number of Salmon Fishers being seen.

It was arranged 2 Marine Police Officers to go on patrol with NIFCA Officers on Friday 26th May, due to the fine weather and the fact Bravo 1 (RIB) was moored at Royal Quays a joint patrol was undertaken utilising both St Aidan and Bravo 1. Feedback from the Police after the event was, excellent day, interesting to have the opportunity to see what the NIFCA roles and duties are, definitely want to continue joint working (hopefully make it at least a monthly arrangement).

It has been a busy quarter with regards to working in partnership with other organisations, carrying out and attending events, please see below some of the activities Officers have been a part of.

1. Assist Newcastle University (their research vessel Princess Royal out of action) in monitoring and replacing Automatic Identification System, (AIS) devices attached to Dahn Markers which have a Hydro/microphone attached to the other end which is anchored to the sea bed. These have been placed in various locations around the Wind Turbine Site (off Blyth) to record Cetacean activity.
2. The NIFCA hosted the now annual visit from Trinity House Cadets, this is arranged by Elaine Young, Natural England and assisted by Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and ourselves. Between the 3 Organisations we try and give the Cadets an insight to all our daily duties, show and talk through some of the equipment we use and talk to about careers opportunities. As always, the Cadets and Officers had a great night.
3. NIFCA Officers attended the St Mary's Lighthouse Open Day, taking the Authority's Ford Ranger and a table-top display including live lobsters (which always goes down well with the public)
4. The May Bank Holiday Monday saw NIFCA Officers attend the Amble Puffin Festival, once again having a table-top display, Officers indicated that a lot of the general public were very interested in the NIFCA's role and duties.
5. Authority Officers took along St Aidan to the Blyth Maritime Festival (staying both Saturday and Sunday) also the Environment Team had a shoreside display on the Saturday.

CIFCO A B Browne



**NORTHUMBERLAND INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
IFCO D GRAHAM
SUMMARY FOR THE NORTHERN AREA
APRIL, MAY AND JUNE 2017**

Port	Potting Boats	Trawlers	Approx. Number of Crew	Salmon
North of border	9	None	16	
Berwick	4	None	6	
Holy Island	6	None	14	
Seahouses	11	1	20	1
Beadnell	3	None	4	3
Newton	1	None	1	
Craster	2	None	3	
Boulmer	3	None	4	4
Amble	20	7	51	7
Totals	59	8	119	15

GENERAL

Weather this quarter has been as expected for this time of year. April started with sustained periods of calm weather, of light winds and calm seas from a southerly direction, which allowed many of the districts fishermen to head to sea and tend their gear. This continued throughout April, but towards the latter end the wind backed to come from a more northerly direction, also increasing in strength, which raised the sea state somewhat. This continued as April ended and May began, but soon the wind backed again to come off the land in a westerly direction, reducing in strength which in turn eased the sea conditions. Periods of calm continued until the latter end of May which saw the wind back once again towards the south, increasing in strength which in turn increased the sea state once more. May drew on and June was upon us, the wind and sea was sustained from the southeasterly direction, until towards the middle part of the month where the wind veered again towards a westerly direction and off the land bringing periods of very calm seas again, this was only for a short period of time before veering back to the South East, increasing in strength and lifting the sea slightly.

Lobster Landings throughout this quarter have increased slightly over last quarter, with average landings seen being between half a box and three boxes. Prices per kilo for lobsters over this quarter were between £15.00 and £10.00, with the price slowly declining throughout the quarter.

Brown Crab landings seen, as with the lobster landings, have increased slightly, with

average landings of between 1 box and four boxes, but with a few landings of 9 and ten boxes at a time being seen landed over the quarter. Price per kilo of Brown crab has remained steady at £1.20 approximately.

Velvet Crab landings sighted throughout this quarter have been few and far between, with not many of the northern districts fishermen not landing them. Those that have landed and were sighted were between half a box and 1 box, but this was not a regular occurrence. Price per kilo of Velvet crabs has, as in previous quarters remained very steady at £1.00 being quoted to ourselves.

Salmon and Trout - June saw the start of the Salmon season with some of the district's fishermen leaving the potting alone and heading for the nets. Not many landings of fish have been sighted, but we have been alongside many boats during rib patrols, along with verbal accounts from fishermen when we're chatting with them on the quayside. Salmon seen/reported landing were depending on the activity, drift or fixed net. With numbers of approximately 10 Salmon being quoted/seen landed, similar numbers again of Grilse and Trout of between 40 and 50 approximately landed. Prices per kilo quoted to ourselves were between £15 and £16 for Salmon, between £7.50 and £9 for Grilse and between £6 and £8 for Trout.



**NORTHUMBERLAND INSHORE FISHERIES &
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
IFCO M DOCHERTY**

**SUMMARY FOR THE SOUTHERN AREA
APRIL - JUNE INCLUSIVE**

A Comprehensive Guide to Indigenous vessels, active in Southern part of the district

PORT	POTTERS	TRAWLERS	SALMON/TROUT
North Shields	5	18	5
Cullercoats/Seaton Sluice	3	0	0
Blyth	9	11	6
Newbiggin	2	0	2
Total	19	29	13

*The May Bloom clouds the water like the haze of Summer's Eve,
Perchance to dream and ponder
We take upon our leave.*

Static Gear:

The Lobster season is yet to fully commence and vessels seem to be operating on a day on/day off basis; hauling gear every second day to minimise expenditure on fuel and bait.

Gill nets for demersal fish are not typically seen in the district during this Quarter due to byelaws protecting Migratory Species.

However, fixed beach nets targeting Salmon and Trout have reported a fruitful start to the season and have been enjoying the combination of settled weather and a steady price on these luxury items.

Mobile Gear:

Vessels from North Shields and Blyth took time out in May for annual maintenance, this coincided with the end of the winter Prawn season in mid-April. Some of the local fleet have migrated to Port Seaton and Eyemouth to exploit their Summer Prawn season. However, there has recently been a good show of prawns from the local grounds in North Shields and trawlers have been reporting catches of around 200kg per night. A good price for both fish and prawns at presents translates this into a yield of around £1000 per night's fishing.

There have been no vessels indigenous to the Southern part of the District operating Scallop Dredges this quarter although there are currently several large dredgers berthed in North Shields and seem to be operating between there and Eyemouth. This class of vessel typically do not fish inside the District due to a Byelaw limiting the maximum allowable amount of dredges to 10 per vessel.

Recreational Activity:

Charter boats in the District have reported good day's fishing when weather allows, with Cod and Ling into double figures a welcome sight. However, patches of bad weather have occasionally dirtied the water and kept Mackerel offshore and slowing up fishing.

Shore Divers are now being seen in the local hotspots (Cullercoats/St Mary's) and charter vessels continue to be booked when weather allows.

Recreational pots can also be seen in the regular haunts and will continue to be a feature of the shallows until late September.