



Agenda Item C5
Recreational Angling Report
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Quarterly report for the period November 2024 to January 2025

Overview

Despite a period of cold, windy, stormy weather, anglers have still been making the most of getting out to target the winter species. The majority of the catch reports are of whiting and dabs.

The 2025 bass guidance was released in January, and as it stands this year a maximum of two bass may be retained per recreational fisher per day. The bass closure will again be in place from the 1st February to the 31st March, so anglers have had the opportunity over the winter to continue to target the bass before the closure- there are still a few about, but the reports are that they are smaller in size. Anglers have recently turned their attention to other winter species, such as dabs and whiting, and a few codling have been caught when lucky. The rays are also starting to make an appearance, which makes for good beach fishing.

KEIFCA Progress

With the release of the 2025 Bass Fishing Guidance, officers have visited various angling venues within the District to keep anglers updated on the regulations. Engagement with the recreational angling sector has remained a core priority during this quarter. With the retirement of our Angling and Commercial Liaison Officer, officers have continued to patrol beaches and piers in the district to carry out inspections and issue the KEIFCA Minimum Sizes ruler stickers and business cards to anglers and local tackle shops.

There have been no recreational angling infringements this period.

Kent Angling Summary

On the Kent shore, flatfish and whiting have been the main winter target species, with anglers landing some good fish. There has been an increase in

catches of dabs in the south of the district, with the odd flounder here and there. Across Kent, small whiting have been dominating catch reports, and the larger keepers are few and far between. For the lucky few, there are still some bass out there to target before the bass closure, however most of the reports have been that the bass are small in size. Other species showing an appearance include pouting, dogfish, smoothhound and some thornback rays.

Ramsgate pier has been returning some small whiting, pouting, and dabs. Anglers are anticipating the arrival of rays.

South Kent have seen some big whiting, over 30cm. The piers have been fishing well, and there were reports of a few haddock being caught off of Admiralty Pier too. A few rays are starting to show but no big females yet, and so the beaches have been relatively quiet. The dogfish are slowly reappearing. The cold water seems to have pushed the squid off.

Essex Angling Summary

In Essex, despite the cold snap in January, recreational anglers have still managed to get out. There has been a fair number of flounder and whiting being caught from the piers. Other species include bass and dogfish.

Inner Thames and River Medway

There have been some reports of catches of flounders in the Medway. Some small bass are still about in both rivers, but the main species being caught are dabs.

Boat Fishing

During this quarter in Kent, fishing has been better than expected for the time of year. Although populations of species such as bass, mackerel, and smoothhound have dropped off, good size whiting have been caught. As well as these, plenty of dogfish and large dabs have kept anglers from blanking. Catches of thornback ray, and silver eel up to 2lbs have been a nice change to the common species.

Adam Ayles

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer