

### **Netting close to shore.**

Recreational sea anglers have for many years expressed concerns about gill nets set close to shore and in estuaries. It seems to me that the amount of gill netting in shallow close to shore waters is either increasing or the number of anglers willing to stand up and complain is increasing. Netting legislation is very complex and perhaps that is one of the major failings. The complexity of legislation distinguishing between 'fixed' and 'non-fixed' netting, between legislation in estuaries and outside, plus distinguishing between those areas covered by the Fixed Engines Bylaw at: [http://www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk/sitedata/Misc/CIFCA\\_byelaws\\_A5\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk/sitedata/Misc/CIFCA_byelaws_A5_booklet.pdf) see pages 8 – 10, confuse many of us about what is allowed and what isn't. According to the latest report by the Chief Fisheries Officer for the IFCA meeting due this week, even some commercials are getting angry at inshore netting. Those expressing concern are those who use hook and line to target bass.

Many anglers question the effectiveness of enforcement and make the point that if those who are deploying nets illegally are a) rarely caught and taken to task and b) when they are, the consequences are so negligible that there is no deterrent either for the culprits or for other fishermen, what can the future hold other than an escalation of the problem?

### **Mackerel quota.**

Having mentioned the commercial hook & line men, some of the operators of the large Scottish pelagic fleet have been asking for unused mackerel quota of the Cornwall handliners to be passed over to them. The handliners only get a fraction of 1% of the UK mackerel quota and as I think we can all agree, are one of the most sustainable fisheries in existence. The greed of the large pelagic trawler owners is unbelievable. If the handliners require public support to retain their full quota, I will be recommending the CFSA makes representation in support of same.

### **House of Commons Fisheries Debate 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012.**

The CFSA sent a brief email to all Cornish MPs on the morning of the afternoon debate. It paid off with Andrew George MP specifically mentioning the validity of RSA in the debate and he has since emailed to say he has written to the Minister and will let us know the outcome. Sarah Newton MP (who was unable to attend the Fisheries debate) responding to say she had written to the Minister raising our concerns and would let us know what the Minister said.

The remaining four MPs, George Eustace MP for Camborne & Redruth, Dan Rogerson MP for North Cornwall, Sheryll Murray MP South East Cornwall and

Stephen Gilbert MP for St Austell & Newquay, have not responded (except with auto reponses acknowledging email)

In the debate the first MP to speak, was Mr Doran MP (Aberdeen North) who proceeded very craftily to confuse the economic footprint of the UK seafood trade with that of the UK catching sector. Mr Doran created the impression that the UK catching sector is responsible for almost £6 billion worth of sales! The two sectors are in fact quite separate with the seafood trade being worth almost £6 billion whilst the total UK catching sector landing a little over £500 million. The difference is because the vast majority of the seafood we consume is imported plus much comes from aquaculture. Mr Doran's figures selectively came from the website of SEAFISH at : <http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/seafood-industry-overview->

This same website splits the total UK landings [shellfish + pelagic + demersal] of £549 million into: Scotland £370.7 million, England £139.6 million, Wales £17.6 million and N. Ireland £21.1 million. To give these figures some perspective, the UK sandwich industry is worth almost £3 billion a year and just one leading London retailer achieved annual sales of £1 billion.

SEAFISH are also on record at:

<http://openscotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/02/09104458/3> with:

*Over the 25 years since 1981, there has been a very substantial increase in the amount of fish which is imported into the UK from foreign catchers for processing and/or consumption. Only a relatively small proportion of the fish now consumed in the UK is caught by the UK fleet while much of the fish caught by the UK fleet is exported. **The health of the UK catching sector is no longer of such central importance to the UK seafood industry.***

## **UK catches provide food security for UK**

ACCORDING to the National Federation of Fishermens Organisation (NFFO), there is a lack of media appreciation of the UK fishing fleet's contribution to the nation's food security.

In a statement released in November, the organisation states: *"the current debate about fishing's environmental impact takes place in a vacuum, with little or no reference to fishing's central contribution to the nation's food security. When assessing fishing's environmental impact it is important that this reflection takes place within an appreciation of the value of high quality protein put on the table by the people who catch and land fish throughout the year, in sometimes difficult conditions."*

Sounds reasonable? Well yes, UNTIL you consider the facts!

Total demersal landings (cod, sole, bass, monk, turbot, rays etc. etc. etc.) by UK boats

into UK ports for 2011 was 109,754 tonnes. UK boats ALSO landed an additional 50,478 tonnes abroad into foreign ports so almost a third of their catches were purposefully landed where the fish would end up on the diner tables of foreigners! I wonder why? Ah, perhaps it has something to do with prices?????????

Total pelagic landings (mackerel, pilchards, etc.) by UK boats into UK ports for 2011 was 142,872 tonnes. UK boats ALSO landed an additional 132,939 tonnes abroad into foreign ports so almost half of their catches were purposefully landed where the fish would end up on the diner tables of foreigners! I wonder why? Ah, perhaps it has something to do with prices?????????

That's not the end of the story because you now have to consider what happens to the fish that are landed into UK ports. Well, what better guide than the website of SEAFISH – the industry's own mouth piece – who say:

### **UK seafood exports**

- **The UK exports most of the seafood it catches.** Foreign seafood markets greatly value UK species such as langoustine, crab and mackerel, while domestic consumers continue to focus mainly on a smaller range of species such as cod, salmon and haddock.
- Total UK seafood exports showed price driven value growth of 9.9%, volume fell by -15%.
- High value shellfish like langoustine, crab and scallops are exported to the French, Spanish and Italian markets
- Pelagic species are destined mainly for Russian, Dutch French markets

Now, obviously some of what is landed by UK boats into UK ports IS consumed in the UK, but to suggest that the UK catching sector is contributing to our food security is just not tenable. Let's be blunt. Fishermen go to sea for money, the same reason as the rest of us go to work and frankly whether the food ends up on dinner plates in this country or France or Spain is irrelevant.

And to think the NFFO are trying to create the impression they are concerned with UK food security – pull the other one!