

Petition to end all netting in our estuaries and inside the 10 metre depth contour.

On December 6th Jim Taylor, Brian Collick, John Brooks and myself attended the IFCA meeting in Truro and our Petition of more than 2500 signatures was presented.

The subject was not discussed during the meeting as the Chairman insisted that the bylaw working group were dealing with it and they would eventually bring their recommendations to the full committee.

I subsequently heard that a bylaw working group meeting was held four days later on Dec. 10th where the paperwork circulated to members of group included critical comments about our Petition such as the initiative was wholly political and our proposals were not supported by any evidence or justification.

Obviously, I refute such claims as we have provided a considerable body of evidence to support our proposals which includes a number of references to scientific papers.

I have written to the Democratic Services office asking whether the papers and meeting minutes for the bylaw working group are in the public domain. My email was dated 10th Jan. and to date I've heard nothing back. However, our Chairman did receive a letter which I will read to you.

I suspect this issue will be on the agenda of next IFCA meeting in March. We definitely have significant support amongst the main Committee but as far as I can tell, we do not currently enjoy the support of the majority. There is still more work to do.

I will be writing again to all Committee members in advance of the next meeting re-stating our case with supporting evidence/justification but the most influential action now required is for the angling community - anglers, tackle dealers, charter skippers, etc. - to lobby IFCA members, especially Councillors who sit on the Committee.

I have a list of IFCA Committee members with contact details and the list will also be available on our website. Your Conservation group is more than happy to assist you in making representation - you only have to ask. This initiative is winnable, and it would be a stunning success for RSA across the County. But it requires everyone to make the effort to let members of the IFCA Committee know their feelings.

The letter from the IFCA confirms that it will be developing a strategy for RSA and that this will require engaging with all RSA representation across the county. In principle, this is good news, but we will only get out of it what we are prepared to put into it. There will be opposition within the IFCA to doing any thing positive for RSA. We will have to make our case and develop dialogue with members to inform them and persuade them of our validity and economic value.

In short, RSA has an opportunity; the question is will RSA rise to the challenge?

Meetings will need attending, letters will be required and so on. I propose to come back to this issue at the end of my report.

Sea Angling 2012

The results of this research (about England only) were published in November last year.

Headline results are:

884,000 sea anglers.

Angler spend £1.23 billion - direct spend after imports and taxes are excluded = £831 million.

RSA across England is DIRECTLY responsible for 10,400 FTE jobs and when indirect jobs are added, the total number of jobs is 23,600.

Important for relaxation, physical exercise, and socialising.

Improving fish stocks the single most important factor to increase angling participation.

Charter boat anglers averaged 10 fish per trip

Private boat anglers averaged 5 fish per trip

Shore anglers averaged 2 fish per trip.

Shore anglers release 75% of their catches (includes undersized fish)

Boat anglers release 50% of their catches.

Between 230 and 440 tonnes of bass are taken by RSA

Between 430 and 820 tonnes of cod are taken by RSA

To give some perspective to RSA expenditure and catches:

Commercial landings England 2012 - £164.6 million.

£130 million pounds worth (approx. 80%) of commercial landings (shellfish, hake, lemon sole, monk etc.) consist of species of absolutely no direct interest to RSA

Those fishery resources that £1.23 billion of RSA expenditure is dependent on, (cod, pollack, plaice, mullet, bass, whiting, flounder etc.) generate less than 3% - £34 million for commercial fishing.

There are of course additional economic impacts from commercial landings such as transport, packaging and processing. But even when these

are taken into account, some species generate far greater economic impacts from recreational fishing than commercial fishing.

Defra and the scientists who carried out Sea Angling 2012 research, are visiting the County in March to make a presentation to the IFCA at their statutory meeting 14th March. The evening before, - the 13th - they will present the research findings to RSA. I understand this will be at County Hall. I hope we're not embarrassed with only a handful of anglers taking enough interest to turn up. Pass the word around, especially to tackle dealers, charter skippers and anyone whose livelihood is linked to RSA.

The results of Sea Angling 2012 are already creating waves across commercial fishing circles. An article in Fishing News, the weekly commercial fishing newspaper, described the bass that are caught and kept by recreational anglers as 'shocking'. The assumption is that bass stocks belong to commercials and we shouldn't take any! The truth is that prior to the seventies, commercial bass fishing was minimal and whatever fishing mortality took place, recreational anglers were responsible for the lions share. By the nineties, commercial fishing for bass had escalated to where they took as much as anglers. Now, they take more than two thirds of the total catch. And, surprise, surprise, the latest science now states that bass stocks are in decline and have been so since 2005 and that EU bass landings need reducing by almost 40% this year! I regret it isn't going to happen and with 2008 to 2013 being poor to mediocre for spawning success, I fear that by 2015 we are likely to witness the start of a significant deterioration in the quality of our bass angling.

Possible SPA

Recent local media coverage may have drawn your attention to proposals for a Special Protected Area along the south coast from Nare Head just south of the Helford in the west to Gribbin Point, St Austell in the east. This is an area where three rare species of diving birds over winter and Natural England have launched a Consultation on designating the area an SPA. The paper work is considerable and I am, as time allows, wading through it. I estimate that to read, digest and understand all the detail and respond on behalf of the CFSA is a minimum of two day's work.

CFSA resources for representing RSA interests to policy makers.

Finally, I cant end this report without a moan. The Petition was only possible with the help of eight volunteers, seven CFSA members and one co-opted from BASS. It involved many miles of driving to speak to tackle shops and deliver/collect Petition sheets. It involved thousands of sheets of paper, envelopes, postage, printing etc and so far has cost almost £500 of direct out of pocket expenses and I know some volunteers have not claimed for everything. None of that money came from CFSA funds because the CFSA doesn't have any funds to meet out of pocket expense needs. It came from donations from NMC, BASS, the old Cornish Div. of NFSA and MBAS.

If this organisation wants to engage with policy makers and make effective representation to the IFCA, it will require both volunteers and money. You can not expect volunteers who already give their time, to pay for out of pocket expenses. I raise this issue because all members need to reflect on how to proceed. The choice, in my opinion is starkly obvious. Either the CFSA collects a small contribution from each member for a 'conservation fund' and makes sure volunteers are reimbursed or it declines to play its role in representing RSA concerns to policy makers. I understand there are approx 26 clubs with a combined membership of around 800+ anglers.