

THE NORTHUMBERLAND SEA FISHERIES COMMITTEE



ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN

2008-2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Annual Report and Business Plan of The Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee.

The aims of this document are:

- To give an overview of the Committee, its fishery officers and office staff
- To look at the objectives and vision of the Committee and how they are being delivered and achieved
- To report on the Committee's financial performance and how budgetary targets are being met
- To provide information on the management tools which have been implemented by the committee to assist with efficient organisation and planning of the Committee's actions through the performance of its staff including fishery officers
- To provide strategic direction and help to improve delivery of the Committee's core aims and objectives, which are:

THE EFFECTIVE REGULATION AND MANAGEMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE FISHERY AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE NORTHUMBERLAND SFC DISTRICT, TOGETHER WITH PROPORTIONATE ENFORCEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE'S BYELAWS AS WELL AS NATIONAL AND EU LEGISLATION WHICH APPLY TO THE FISHERY.

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are all living through a time of great potential change in inshore fisheries management in England and Wales, with the prospect of a Marine and Coastal Access Act (currently at the Bill stage in parliament) heralding, amongst other changes in the maritime world, modernisation of Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) by their transition to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). The key question for SFCs in the last 12 months has been whether there will be any fundamental change in the number and size of management authorities from the present 12 SFCs in England and Wales.

Defra have now duly confirmed following a lengthy period of consultation, that apart from Welsh sea fisheries being subsumed into the Welsh Assembly Government, the size and shape of IFCAs will be largely based upon the present SFC structure (except in the North West where one IFCA will run from the Welsh to the Scottish border). It is therefore pleasing that after a lot of hard work to prepare this Committee, the transition to a Northumberland IFCA (subject to the passage to an Act of Parliament of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill) has been confirmed. The

Committee's premise in supporting that position has been that it represents the best interests of fisheries management, a sustainable fishery and the environment and of the local fishing and wider community in the Northumberland district.

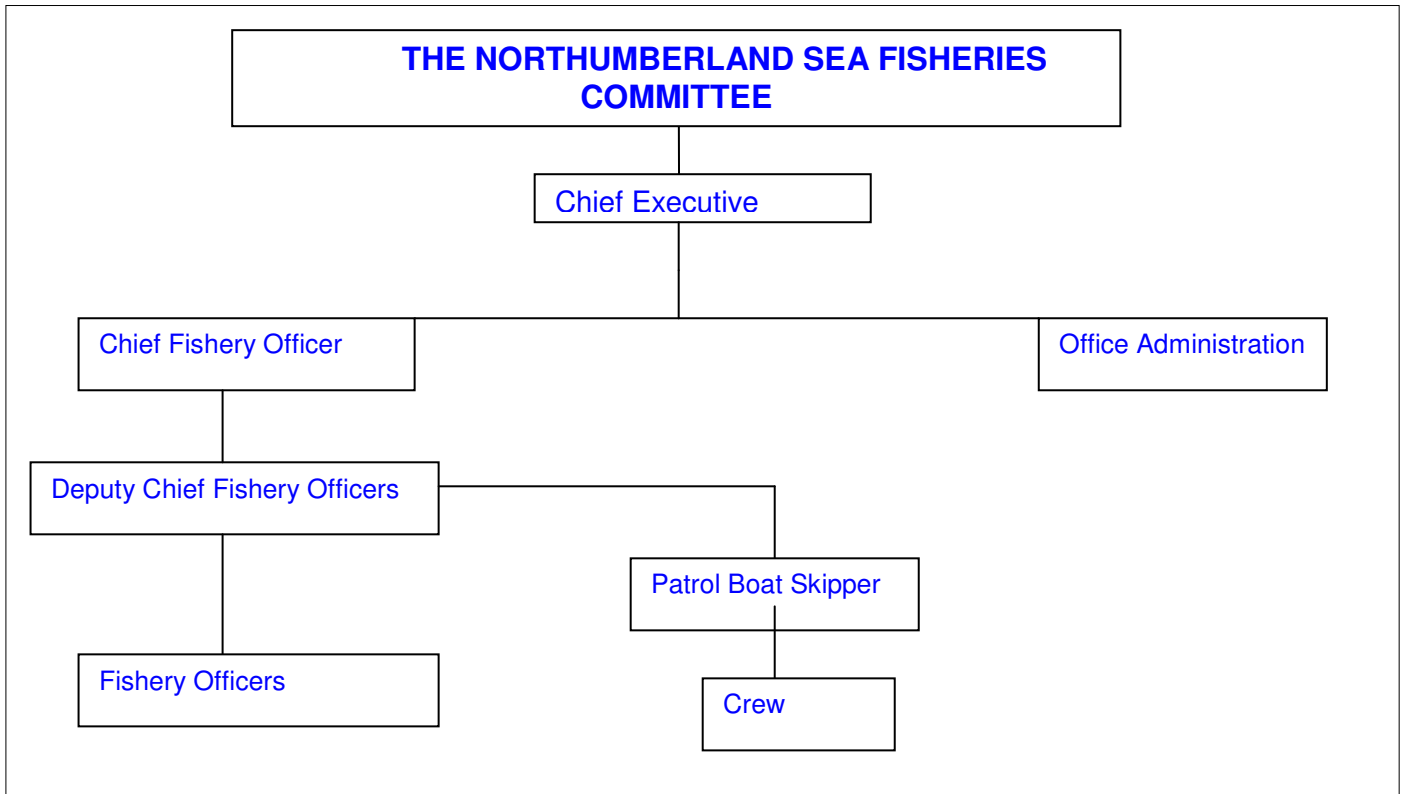
The other major development in fisheries in Northumberland in the last year has been the introduction of the committee Pot Limitation Byelaw No. 15 (copy below). This applies to permit holders and recreational fishermen and has been introduced in the interests of conservation and improved monitoring and management of the stock and potting activity and has generally been welcomed as well as attracting national interest, with its purpose appreciated by most members of the fishing community.

The Committee is also making good progress with the Defra Fisheries Challenge Fund project commenced in June 2008 to measure lobster distribution and potting activity in the district. The assistance of the School of Marine Science and Technology at Newcastle University and particularly Research Student Rachel Turner in carrying out the project is greatly appreciated by the Committee with the report on the project due in the autumn of 2009. The Committee hopes to engage in further research work of benefit to the Committee as well as fisheries and environment in Northumberland with committee member Professor Polunin of the School of Marine Science and Technology at Newcastle University in 2009/10.

Further information on the current and future work of the Committee can be obtained by enquiry at the committee office in Cramlington.

2. COMMITTEE PROFILE

2.1. Structure of Organisation



2.2. Who's Who At NSFC

CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Michael H. Hardy LL.B
ADMINISTRATOR	Pearl Richards
FINANCE OFFICER/BOOKKEEPER	Julian Sutton
AUDIO TYPIST	Debbie Carr
CHIEF FISHERY OFFICER (Operations)	Alastair B. Browne
DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER (Operations)	Mark Southerton
DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER (Environmental)	Jonathan Green
FISHERY OFFICER/ENGINEER	Justin Cooke
FISHERY OFFICER	Darren Graham
FISHERY OFFICER	Eric Balsdon

2.3. The Members

2.3.1. Northumberland County Council

Councillor G.R. Arckless (Vice Chairman)
Councillor T. Brechany
Councillor M.I. Douglas
Councillor Mrs. J. Fearon
Councillor D. Ledger

Councillor A.J. Murray
Councillor J.A. Thompson
Councillor R.J.D. Watkin
Councillor J.G. Watson

2.3.2. North Tyneside Councillor

Councillor I. Macaulay

2.3.3. Defra Members

Mr. K.A. Henderson	Commercial Fisherman
Mr. D. Herriott	Anglo-Scottish Fish Producers Organisation
Mr. D. Morton	Recreational Angler
Mr. S. Moss	Commercial Fisherman
Dr. N.V. Polunin	Marine Scientist, Newcastle University
Mr. H.A. Rowe	Retired Fisherman
Mr. J. Stephenson	Commercial Fisherman
Mr. J. Thomson	(Chairman) Retired Fisherman
Mr. L. Weller	Recreational Angler

2.3.4. Environment Agency

Dr. J. Hogger

2.4. Functions of the Committee

Since being established in 1890 the Committee has made byelaws for the regulation of the fishery in its district. These byelaws reflect activity in the district and are together with relevant EU and UK fisheries legislation (see below) enforced by the Committee's fisheries officers who carry out patrols in the district. Patrols are conducted both at sea and ashore. At sea the committee's patrol vessel "St. Oswald" is utilised the length and breadth of the district together with the shore-based RIB "Bravo 1" to observe fishery activity and where necessary gather evidence for enforcement of byelaws and other fisheries legislation. Similar activity is carried on by the committee Fishery Officers ashore including in respect of angling, cleeking, diving and fish wholesalers.

The Committee will also offer guidance and advice on the fisheries and fishing activity in the district and carry out research in conjunction with partners, particularly the Department of Marine Science and Technology at Newcastle University. St. Oswald is also available for charter to suitable organisations for fisheries-related research and inspection work.

Further details of the committee function can be found in the latest SFC "Insight into the Fisheries throughout the District" document.

FISHERIES LEGISLATION ENFORCED BY COMMITTEE OFFICERS

1. **Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1966** - amongst its provision is the authorisation of byelaw-making, fishery officer powers and miscellaneous SFC powers.
2. **Seafish (Conservation) Act 1967** authorising boarding of fishing boats and entry of sea fish related premises with search and examination powers plus miscellaneous provisions in relation to fish, nets and gear and penalties.
3. **The Sea Fisheries (Wild Life Conservation) Act 1992.**
4. **The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994.**
5. **The Environment Act 1995.**
6. **The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.**

EU REGULATIONS including particularly Regulation 850/98 containing Technical Measures for Conservation of Fishery Resources, mesh sizes, fish sizes and catch composition

2108/84 (as Amended) containing rules for determining mesh sizes

3440/84 dealing with attachments to nets.

NSFC Byelaws (these can be found on the committee website at www.nsfc.org.uk).

3. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

3.1. Summary of Enforcement

2008

ANNUAL ACTIVITY BY FISHERY OFFICERS

<u>2008 Activity</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of sea patrols St. Oswald	5	1	6	8	6	9	10	6	6	5	8	5	75
Cancelled sea patrols St. Oswald	2	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	17
Number of patrols pv RIB Delta 1	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	9
Number of boardings at sea Delta 1/ Bravo 1	6	5	0	17	23	25	20	21	7	0	0	0	124
Number of patrols sea using shore RIB Bravo 1	0	0	0	2	2	2	4	4	5	1	0	0	21
Cancelled sea patrols shore RIB Bravo 1	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	10
Static gear inspected RIBs Delta 1/ Bravo 1	6	6	0	12	37	31	53	80	47	6	0	0	278
Seized gear	0	0	0	0	6	3	9	6	2	0	0	0	26
Number of ports visited	44	57	43	74	64	63	66	57	81	61	54	44	708
Number of shore landings inspected	43	40	39	64	62	62	55	66	48	42	34	37	592
Wholesalers/premises/vehicles inspected	15	14	15	27	23	18	19	17	22	12	19	14	215
Number of shore/boat anglers inspected	10	15	11	17	29	26	33	26	39	21	23	21	271
Number of cleekers inspected	4	11	15	16	36	23	10	42	45	19	4	1	226
Number of skindivers inspected	0	0	0	0	6	20	30	40	4	0	0	0	100
Verbal warnings	0	1	0	0	6	1	4	8	4	5	0	0	29
Written warnings given	0	1	3	0	2	0	2	0	6	0	0	0	14
Reports to Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	6

3.2. Funding and Expenditure – Annual Accounts 2008-9

2007-2008 £	Expenditure	2008-2009 £	2007-2008 £	Income	2008-2009 £
251,038.10	Salaries and related payments	281,127.39	11,615.79	Bank Interest	16,036.82
19,646.18	Officer's and Member's Travel	20,541.72	731.59	Prosecution Costs	854.23
3,882.66	Establishment	4,161.04	500.00	Lobster-v-Notching	5,430.00
34,761.22	Unit 60B	55,496.05	3,980.52	Fuel and Excise Duty	5,412.59
			0.00	Grant Income	12,283.13
			6,362.93	Sundry Income	12,614.73
579.44	Enhanced Pensions	557.18			
5,802.38	Legal Costs	13,909.50		Precepts Received	
5,177.38	Courses and Conferences	11,933.95	432,711.00	Northumberland County Council	449,577.90
			48,079.00	North Tyneside Council	49,953.10
	Patrol Vessel				
20,204.92	Fuel	31,237.17			
46,664.86	Repairs and Maintenance	24,258.48			
24,440.90	Sundries	20,886.31			
1,706.41	Land Rover	2,536.65			
367.46	RIB	725.98			
8,481.80	Lobster-v-Notching	8,678.90			
0.00	Fisheries Challenge	4,045.19			
65,000.00	Patrol Vessel Replacement Fund	65,000.00			
	Depreciation		42,321.60	Capital Financing Account	34,457.28
39,321.60	Patrol Vessel	31,457.28			
2,000.00	Land Rover	2,000.00			
1,000.00	RIB	1,000.00			
16,227.12	Excess of income over expenditure	7,066.99			
546,302.43		586,619.78	546,302.43		586,619.78

2007-2008 £	Financed by	2008-2009 £	2007-2008 £	Assets	£	2008-2009 £
				<u>Fixed Assets</u>		
			157,286.40	Patrol Vessel	125,829.12	
			4,000.00	Land Rover	2,000.00	
370,000.00	Patrol Vessel Replacement Fund	435,000.00	2,000.00	Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB)	<u>1,000.00</u>	128,829.12
270,728.86	Fixed Asset Restatement Account	270,728.86				
158,913.60	Capital Financing Account	193,370.88		<u>Current Assets</u>		
			440,190.13	Cash in Hand	460,386.93	
86,449.39	Northumberland County Council	92,809.68	5,489.69	Debtors	17,512.39	
9,605.49	North Tyneside Council	10,312.19	3,194.81	VAT to be reclaimed	8,697.01	
			7,042.38	Prepayments	7,133.65	
			-41,333.28	Accruals	<u>-7,079.25</u>	486,650.73
-0.01	(rounding)					
577,870.13		615,479.85	577,870.13			615,479.85

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1 The accounts are kept on an income and expenditure basis.
- 2 The Balance sheet and net expenditure on the revenue accounts are apportioned 90% to Northumberland County Council and 10% to North Tyneside Council in accordance with the Northumberland Sea Fisheries District (Constitution of Committee and Expenses) (Variation) Order 1973.
- 3 The Committee's main assets are the patrol vessel, the St Oswald, a Land Rover and a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB). These have been depreciated as follows:

	Patrol Vessel	Land Rover	RIB
Basis of depreciation	20% reducing balance	20% straight line	20% straight line
Estimated useful life from date of purchase	10 years	5 years	5 years

The main assets were revalued as at 31 March 2005 for the 2004-05 Accounts this resulted in the fixed asset restatement account on the balance sheet

- 4 Depreciation charges are shown in the Income and Expenditure Account on the above basis. Depreciation is reversed out of the accounts to provide a figure required from the constituent authorities.
- 5 The Committee is setting aside funds to replace the patrol vessel, the contribution to the replacement fund was £65,000 in 2008/2009.
- 6 The Income and Expenditure Account shows a surplus of £7,066.99 for the year. This after charging depreciation and making a contribution to the Patrol Vessel replacement fund.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

- 4.1. Mussel Survey 2008 (full report available on committee website)
- 4.2. Lobster V-Notching Report 2008 (full report available on committee website)
- 4.3. Fisheries Challenge Fund – Lobster Survey 2008-2009 – available on committee website in autumn 2009.
- 4.4. Berwickshire and North Northumberland European Marine Site
- 4.5. General environmental matters.

4.1. Mussel Survey 2008

The mussel bed on Fenham Flats was visited on 10 March 2008 at low water (between 09.00 and 11.30) on a spring tide.

The mussel bed was found to occupy an area of 36.72 hectares, being slightly down on the 37.18 hectares in 2007 and the 41.52 hectares in 2006. Within this mussel bed, mussels were found to occupy 78.58%, similar to the 79.82% of the ground in 2007 which was up from 60.44% in 2006.

The mean biomass per m² was 16.41, which is significantly up from the 10.52 kg/m² in 2007 and the 7.467 kg/m² in 2006, with the mean density per m² being 1173 mussels per m², again significantly up from 651 mussels/m² in 2007 and 535.65 mussels/m² in 2006. From these figures the total tonnage of mussel biomass was calculated to be 6,022 tonnes which is significantly up from the 3,911 tonnes in 2007 and 3,101 tonnes in 2006 with the total population, which is estimated at 431million, reflecting the increase in biomass with estimates for 2007 and 2006 being 242million mussels and 222million mussels respectively.

4.2. Lobster V-Notching Report 2008

The scheme is now in its ninth year and 1,000 mature egg-bearing females were v-notched and returned back to the fishery in 2008.

A v-notch takes at least two castings (2 years) to grow out, thereby enabling each notched animal to release up to 2 clutches of eggs before, possibly, being caught again. In order to protect v-notched animals, the Committee has a byelaw prohibiting the landing of v-notched lobsters and it is also an offence to 'mutilate a lobster', that is to remove any part of a lobster's tail to hide the fact it had been v-notched. To distinguish between animals released each year, v-notching has been carried out on alternative uropods (inner tail flap) adjacent to the telson (centre flap) on the left hand side one year and on the right side the next. As a result it is possible to broadly identify the rate of notch loss when lobsters cast their shells during the following year, although it is difficult to assess precisely the number of offspring that will be produced as survival rates are governed by a large range of factors. However, since the scheme started, fishermen throughout the committee district have continued to report an increase in the number of immature animals being seen in their respective areas. This bodes well for the future of the fisheries, as the main reason for the v-notching scheme is to maintain and enhance lobster stocks throughout the committee district.

In 2008 the v-notching programme was funded from a variety of sources including local fishermen and local organisations. Also, the whole programme would not have been possible without the kind help of 2 local wholesalers, one in the north and one in the south, who have taken the time to sort and keep all the berried lobsters in their holding tanks for committee officers to collect and release back into the sea in excellent condition. The Committee has been using these two wholesalers for a number of years with little recognition.

Summary

To summarise, in 2008 1,039 mature egg-bearing female lobsters were released in various suitable grounds throughout the Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee District. It was decided to wait until the middle of July before starting the release programme as this is the time when the lobsters were re-emerging after their seasonal moult. The lobsters were released on 5 different dates on 13 release tracks either using the committee patrol vessel, "St. Oswald", or the shore-based RIB "Bravo 1", all activity being recorded on the St. Oswald computerised chart system.

4.3. Fisheries Challenge Fund – Lobster Survey 2008-2009

To help define the Northumberland lobster fishery, the committee applied in 2007 under the Fisheries Challenge Fund for funding to undertake a survey from July 2008 to July 2009. Historically, there had been limited research and assessment of the lobster fishery in the Northumberland SFC district and the project aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To describe distribution of potting and to estimate pot deployment densities as well as seasonal variability of these in the Northumberland SFC district, by sub-district and specifically by marine habitat.
- (2) To improve estimates of landings and catch size structures by fishing port and examine landing data for temporal changes in catch volume and size structure.
- (3) Examine the possible effects on catches of any increase in minimum landing size (MLS),

This is a joint project led by the Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee with assistance and advice from Professor N. Polunin from Newcastle University. A post-graduate student from the University has been contracted to carry out the bulk of the analysis of the data.

There has also been considerable assistance given by Northumberland fishermen, particularly from 10 lobster fishermen who were brought into the project and have filled out catch returns on a daily and monthly basis. The committee's fishery officers also collect catch return data during sea patrols with the two RIBs and also ashore at various landing points.

Progress is good with all objectives currently up to date. The project will finish at the end of July 2009 and the report should be available on line in the autumn of 2009.

4.4. Berwickshire and North Northumberland European Marine Site (EMS)

Commercial fishing within the EMS has generally been restricted to potting for shellfish, principally lobsters, brown crabs, velvet crabs and, to a lesser degree, nephrops and whelks. One boat from Berwick has also on occasion used tangle nets to target lobsters. Other fishing methods employed in the EMS have included salmon nets during the summer season, scallop dredging by visiting boats this year and local boats on a handful of occasions and trawling on at least two days. Hand-gathering of mussels from Fenham Flats (see Mussel Report above) and winkles from the intertidal reefs has also taken place.

4.5. General Environmental Matters 2008-2009

On 27 November 2008 DCFO Green assisted Mr. John Hlland of CEFAS to carry out a survey of lobsters at wholesalers Moir Seafood at North Shields, Berwick Shellfish and Northern Seafoods of Blyth. The survey was conducted to establish if the disease Gaffkemia was present within the district. "Blood" samples were taken from approximately 30 lobsters from each wholesaler which will be analysed at the CEFAS laboratories and results forwarded to the participating wholesalers.

Throughout the year there were various meeting held to discuss environmental issues from venues as far north as Berwick upon Tweed, to Durham and Lowestoft. Deputy CFO Green was in attendance at 10 such meetings.

5. PATROL VESSEL AND LAND ROVER REPORT

5.1. PATROL VESSEL ACTIVITY

2008 Vessel Activity	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Number of sea miles St. Oswald	192	55	269	490	416	585	567	280	270	175	453	295	4,047
Number of hours St. Oswald at sea	27.30	6	32	55	44.30	64.15	68	37.30	31.30	27	48.45	31.30	473.30
Number of sea patrols St. Oswald	5	1	6	8	6	9	10	6	6	5	8	5	75
Total number of sightings at sea	33	5	45	75	52	168	97	198	45	60	128	73	889
Total number of visuals at sea	29	3	42	57	35	120	69	80	31	42	74	66	648
Fuel taken by St. Oswald in litres	Nil	8,106	Nil	6,382	5,627	7,069	8,032	4,669	Nil	5,963	Nil	5,802	51,650
Number of patrols RIB Delta 1	1	Nil	1	Nil	3	1	Nil	1	1	1	Nil	Nil	9
Number of patrols RIB Bravo 1	Nil	Nil	Nil	2	2	2	4	4	5	2	Nil	Nil	21

5.2. SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT BY OFFICERS 2008

DISTRICT	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Total
<u>Southern</u>					
Number of port visits	65	67	63	49	244
Inspection of Landings	34	46	35	34	149
Boardings in Ports	Nil	3	2	3	8
Wholesalers/Vehicles	13	23	23	32	91
Anglers	21	42	37	33	133
Cleekers/Winklers	9	26	40	4	79
Skin Divers	Nil	26	25	Nil	51
<u>Central</u>					
Number of port visits	39	65	71	49	244
Inspection of Landings	28	71	60	35	194
Boardings in Ports	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wholesalers/Vehicles	5	11	14	14	44
Anglers	2	20	37	33	133
Cleekers/Winklers	4	25	40	9	78
Skin Divers	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<u>Northern</u>					
Number of port visits	54	55	70	57	236
Inspection of Landings	63	69	74	43	249
Boardings in Ports	1	3	2	1	7
Wholesalers/Vehicles	17	19	19	25	80
Anglers	8	32	30	10	80
Cleekers/Winklers	12	26	20	11	69
Skin Divers	Nil	Nil	49	Nil	49

SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT USING ST. OSWALD

<u>St. Oswald</u>					
Number of sea patrols	12	23	22	8	75
Cancelled sea patrols	5	4	Nil	8	17
Number of sea miles	516	1,491	1,117	923	4,047
Number of hours at sea	65.30	163.45	137	107.15	473.30
Sightings at sea	83	295	250	261	889
Visuals at sea	74	212	180	182	648
Fuel taken (in litres)	8,106	19,078	11,765	Nil	51,650

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Committee Health and Safety Policy is available for inspection at the committee office.

Below is a copy of the first quarterly report produced for the Committee's Annual Report prepared by Deputy Chief Officer (Operations) & Health and Safety Officer M. Southerton.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 30 JUNE 2009

- 1. Chief Fishery Officer A.B. Browne and Deputy Chief Fishery Officer (Operations) M. Southerton attended a three day Advanced Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting Course held at South Tyneside College early in April. All officers have attended basic fire awareness courses over the years, either organised through the committee or previous employers and it was felt the level of training should be increased especially for ship-borne duties. CFO Browne and DCFO Southerton were the first officers to attend such training because either one or both of them are always being onboard the patrol vessel at any one time. The course itself was of a very good standard, with purpose-built facilities to replicate how fighting a real fire would be on board a ship. The climax of the course was an exercise involving recovering a dummy two floors below in real fire conditions. It is hoped that as soon as possible in the future all officers will have attended this training course.*
- 2. Fishery Officer Balsdon attended a two-day RYA level 2 RIB Handling Course at the Royal Quays in April. The course was a mixture of theory and practical navigation and boat handling skills and again was another very well-run course with lots of positive feedback from FO Balsdon. All fishery officers with the exception of FO Graham now have at least Level 2 certificates with three officers holding level 3 certificates. FO Graham will be required to attain this certificate after his 6 month probation period.*
- 3. Deputy CFO (Operations) M. Southerton attended a three-day Radar ARPA course, again at South Tyneside College. The course covered radar set up, manually plotting radar positions on paper and eventually using radar ARPA to plot radar targets. There were also exercises using simulators for collision avoidance.*
- 4. The last but one risk management meeting held at Cramlington with Barbara McKie of Northumberland County Council identified occasions where there was lone working occurring at the committee's office. After discussion with the office staff a risk assessment was carried out and recorded together with a Lone Working Policy, which has now been adopted. As part of the risk assessment, manual handling was looked into again and after speaking to office staff and looking at the work they do, it was mutually felt no formal training was required. However I have put a booklet together which explains what 'manual handling', employer duties, employee duties mean and the need to 'risk assess' any manual handling, which has been circulated to all office staff.*

5. *The committee's patrol boat St. Oswald was chartered out on 27th May 2009 by Dove Marine and, because of the increased amount of persons on the patrol boat, it was necessary to purchase an extra 4 lifejackets and 6 thermal protective aids. Prior to the charter, a meeting was held with Drs. Jane Delany and Ben Wigham from Dove Marine to discuss arrangements and needs for the students, and copies of the patrol boat risk assessments were also given to them to hand out to students before arrival. On the day of the charter due to the number of students (26) the day was split into 5 trips and, on boarding the patrol boat, each group was given a full safety brief.*

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

With assistance from Northumberland County Council, the Committee has implemented a Risk Assessment Policy with effect from 2008 and a copy of the Quantification of Risks Scoring Grid is outlined below.

Once risks have been graded, they are then be reflected on a risk scoring grid, which acts as a useful aid to provide focus on key risk areas. By plotting impact and likelihood on the grid, an assessment of the overall risk can be made. Northumberland County Council’s risk scoring grid is as follows (the colour coding is explained below, under “risk classification”):

IMPACT (as defined by ALARM)	4	11	12	15	16
	3	7	10	13	14
	2	3	6	8	9
	1	1	2	4	5
		1	2	3	4
		LIKELIHOOD (as defined by ALARM)			

Risk classification

Northumberland County Council has agreed broad classifications reflecting the residual risks which it faces. These are as follows:

Acceptable: risks where any action to further reduce the level of risk would be inefficient, i.e. the cost in time or resource outweighs any potential impact of the risk materialising. Such risks include infrequent events with low impact. These risks are being effectively managed, and are coloured green on the scoring grid, scored as 1 - 3

Manageable: risks which can be reduced within a reasonable timescale, in a cost effective manner. Any mitigating actions must be monitored and recorded. Manageable risks are coloured yellow on the scoring grid, scored as 4 - 7

Serious: risks which have a serious impact, and detrimental effect on the achievement of objectives. Action plans should be developed to reduce the level of residual risk, and reviewed periodically. Serious risks are shown as orange on the scoring grid, scored as 8 – 11.

Very severe: risks which could have a potentially disastrous effect on the organisation without immediate comprehensive action to reduce the level of risk. Very severe risks are those on the scoring grid coloured red, scored as 12 or more.

Further information on the committee Risk Assessment Policy can be provided from the committee office.

8. APPRAISALS

The Committee has implemented a system of Staff Appraisals with effect from 2008. The committee Appraisal Scheme is based on that at Northumberland County Council from whom the Committee has received assistance in implementation.

The Appraisal Scheme has the aim of enhancing personal development and the success of the organisation. Successful appraisals are characterised by good preparation, sufficient time set for meaningful discussion and a joint commitment to make them work.

The appraisals at Northumberland SFC also aim to complement good quality day to day supervision and management.

The views and ideas of all personnel working for the committee are valued, along with those of their line manager. A wide range of issues are discussed in each appraisal including:

- Work circumstances and performance etc.
- The organisation's priorities for the year ahead and especially those for your service or department.
- How, in the year ahead, you can help the organisation and your service to meet targets, including achieving any objectives that are agreed with you.
- How you can make best use of any new skills, knowledge and development you have acquired and identify any that you will need in the year ahead.
- Your career interests and work preferences.
- Your special circumstances such as a disability etc. inasmuch as this is relevant to your work.
- Ideas that you have for improving your service, communications and working arrangements.

The Line Manager makes a record of all key points, especially the actions jointly agreed which is seen by the member of staff and signed.

The Line Manager provides ongoing support as required to put agreed actions into place and if necessary to make new plans if circumstances change.

Individual appraisals take place annually, with a half-year review.

Appraisal records are confidential and only the individual concerned, their Line Manager and their Senior Manager (where applicable) will normally see them.

Further information on the general principles of the Appraisal Scheme can be provided from the Committee Office.

9. TRAINING

Courses attended in 2008.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Date attended</u>
Fishery Officer/Engineer J.P. Cooke	Sea Fisheries Officers Course – Torquay	4-8 February 2008

Normally the List of Courses Attended would be much more comprehensive but quite a number of courses booked for fishery officers at South Tyneside College and Fire Training UK were cancelled by those organisations for various reasons. One course was arranged and cancelled 3 times.

This means there will be a wealth of courses to be attended/recorded next year in 2009.

10. PLANNING AHEAD FOR 2009-10

Main committee objectives in 2009-10:

- (1) To continue to manage the fishery in accordance with the Committee's core aims and objectives.
- (2) To manage the Committee's budget in accordance with best practice, Audit Commission requirements and the budget monitoring controls developed by the Committee.
- (3) To continue to plan for the transition from SFC to IFCA status by means of attendance at IFCA Workshops and other events and in conjunction with the assigned Coordinator from Defra, Dr. Colette Clarke.
- (4) To complete the committee's Defra Fisheries Challenge Fund project measuring lobster distribution and potting activity in the district and to use the same as a foundation for future management and development of the Northumberland lobster fishery; also to commence Defra Challenge Fund scientific project in 2009-10 in conjunction with the Marine Science and Technology Department at Newcastle University.