



Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

## **Scallop Dredger Caught in Lyme Bay Marine Protected Area**

In a case heard in Weymouth Magistrates Court the Plymouth based scallop fishing dredger Cristal Waters FY34 was found to have used scallop dredges within the Lyme Bay Marine Protected Area, contrary to the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016.

Weymouth Magistrates heard that on the 5th July 2018 the Fishing Vessel Cristal Waters was intercepted by a Southern IFCA Fisheries Protection Vessel approximately 3 miles offshore from Burton Bradstock and consequently some 200m inside the protected area. Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) observed the vessel to have scallop dredges over the side of the vessel which were full of scallops.

Southern IFCA is responsible for the management of fisheries off the coast of Hampshire Dorset and the Isle of Wight. The IFCA has a range of byelaws to protect fisheries and the marine environment and operates four patrols vessels in coastal waters.

Commenting on the case, Robert Clark, Chief Officer of Southern IFCA said "The Lyme Bay Marine Protected Area is designated for the protection of mud stone reefs for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. The protected mud stone reefs provide a habitat for species including sea fans, sponges and corals. These habitats in turn attract many fish and crustacea. Fishing is allowed in the marine protected area, as long as the activities are not damaging to the seabed or to nature conservation. Coastal fishing communities from Lyme Regis, West Bay and elsewhere rely upon this productive ecosystem for their livelihoods. Illegal fishing, which damages the reefs, threatens both the marine environment and these coastal fishing communities. Southern IFCA byelaws protect this important and fragile habitat."

The master of the vessel Cristal Waters Matthew David Bull, 40 of Exmouth, in Devon failed to appear in Weymouth Magistrates Court on the 21st January 2019 to answer the charges and in his absence, he was sentenced with a fine of £3000, costs of £2192 and a victim surcharge of £170, making a total of £5362.

**Ends**

### **Further information**

For further information please contact Southern IFCA on 01202 721373 email [enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk) [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

Southern IFCA is a joint committee of local government. The Authorities jurisdiction is the coastal waters of Hampshire Dorset and the Isle of Wight. The IFCA manages coastal fisheries. IFCA's lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.