

R1/3

Not to be cited without prior reference to FRS Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen

Charter Fishing Vessel *Samantha Jane (K94)*
 Merlin II (K69)
 Shaunette (K157)

Cruise 0209H

SISP Crab tagging (Inshore)

REPORT

11 - 17 February 2009

Ports

Samantha Jane (K94)

Loading: Stromness, 11 February

Unloading: Stromness, 11 February

Merlin II (K69)

Loading: Stromness, 12 February

Unloading: Stromness, 13 February

Shaunette (K157)

Loading: Pierowall, Westray, 16 February

Unloading: Pierowall, Westray, 17 February

Personnel

G Jones (SIC)

P Gibson

Project: – MF06R06 10632 - 5 days

Objectives

1. To increase the knowledge of the offshore and inshore crab stocks to the North of Scotland.
2. To tag Brown Crab, of a range of sizes, from inshore waters to the north of Scotland for investigations of their movements. Tagging will involve using both high visibility double t-bar tags that are retained on moulting and 'cable-tie' type tags which will be attached to the claws of some of the animals.
3. To biologically sample all tagged crabs for carapace width, shell condition, sex and reproductive state (of females) and record date, time and latitude, longitude, and depth of the return location.

Narrative

Samantha Jane (K94)

All gear and scientific equipment was loaded onto the vessel in Stromness on the morning of Wednesday 11 February. Recent bad weather had left a medium swell but the weather was still workable, the vessel departed and made passage to inshore fishing grounds to the west of Hoy, where it already has gear deployed. The vessel hauled 6 strings each with 60-80 creels per string depending on condition of the string hauled. We spent 20mins creeping for the second string as the buoy had been cut from the string. The vessel returned to Stromness mid afternoon due to the strong tides produced by the full moon. All gear and scientific equipment was unloaded in Stromness on arrival for transfer to the Merlin II K69 the following day.

Merlin II (K69)

All gear and scientific equipment was loaded onto the vessel in Stromness on the morning of Thursday 12 February. Weather and sea were both calm, the vessel departed and made passage to fishing grounds within Scapa Flow, where it already has gear deployed. The vessels hauled 11 strings of 65 creels around the island of Grimsay. Again due to the strong full moon tides we returned to Stromness mid afternoon. On Friday 13 February we steamed from Stromness to fishing grounds to the north west of Hoy, the vessel hauled a further 8 strings of 65 creels before having to return to Stromness due to the tides mid afternoon. All gear and scientific equipment was unloaded on arrival at Stromness.

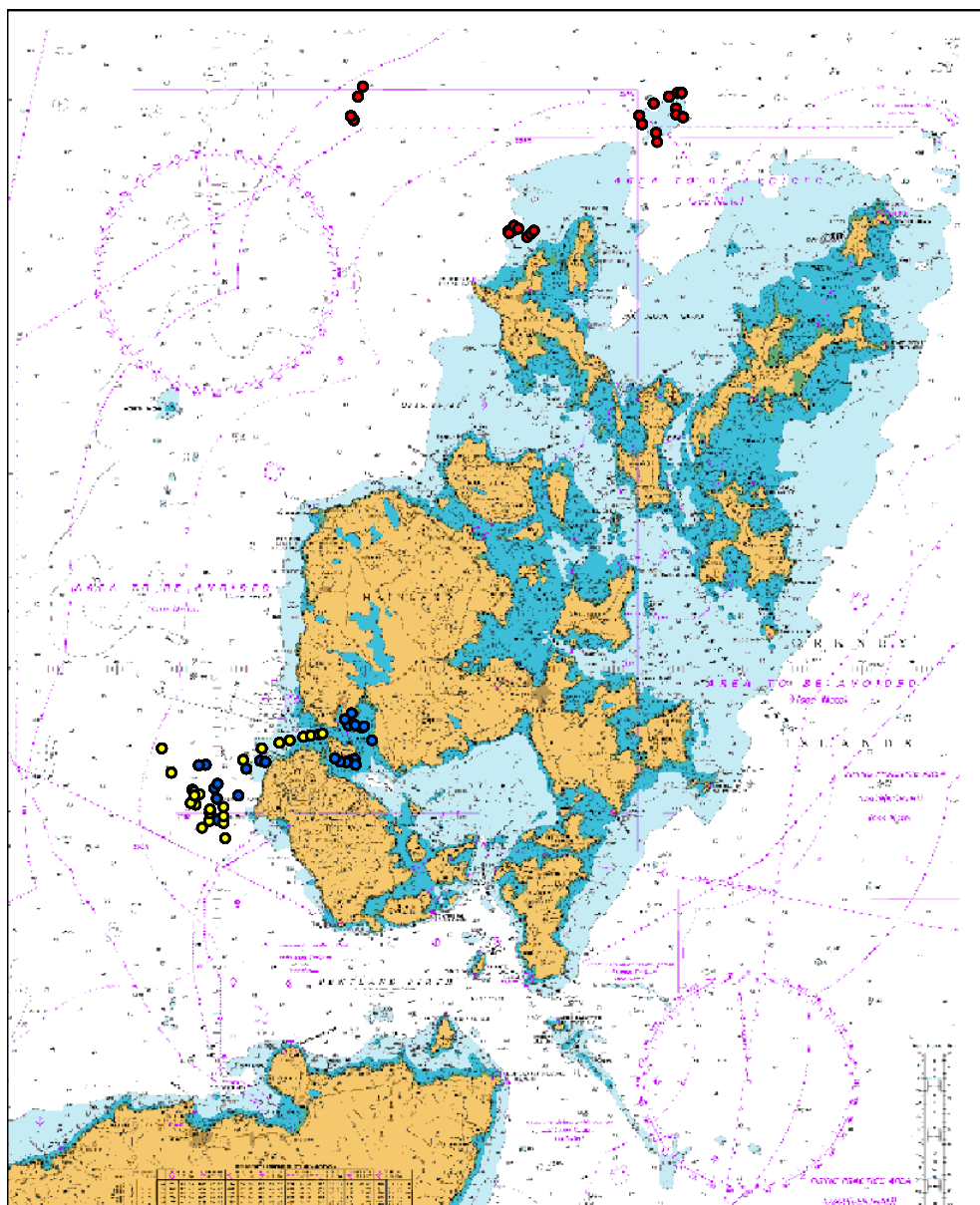
Shaunette (K157)

All gear and scientific equipment was loaded onto the vessel in Pierowall, Westray on the morning of Monday 16 February. The vessel departed and made passage to inshore fishing grounds to the north/west of Westray, where it hauled 8 strings of 60-80 creels. The vessel returned to Pierowall that night. On the morning of Tuesday 17 February the vessel departed Pierowall and made passage to grounds approx 20 miles to the north east of Westray. The vessel hauled 5 strings of 60-80 creels. The vessel then steamed approx 30 miles west and hauled a further 3 strings of 60-80 creels. Due to breakages of the tagging needles, tagging had to be suspended and the vessel returned to Pierowall that evening. All gear and scientific equipment was unloaded in Pierowall, Westray on the evening of Tuesday 17 February.

Results

The charters achieved the objectives set; covering a wide area of inshore fishing grounds in and around the Orkney Isles (statistical rectangles 46E6, 47E6 and 47E7). Approximately 2900 creels were hauled (1200 from north of Westray, 715 from Scapa Flow and 985 from west of Hoy). 1642 crabs were tagged with high visibility blue T-Bar tags (Figure 1), comprising of 631 females, 996 males and 15 berried. Of these 1470 were tagged with blue cable ties on their claws to help in identification of tagged crabs by fisherman and also to provide moulting indicators.

Figure1: Map showing release sites of the crabs tagged.



Fisherman will return information on tag no., location, sex, size for crabs that are recaptured. Releasing them back in order that they may be caught again and build up a track of movements for individuals over time.

A report is to be written in April 2009 for the Scottish Industry/Science Partnership, detailing the movements to date and any possible conclusions that can be drawn as to possible relationships between the offshore and inshore stocks.

Submitted:
G Jones
4 March 2009