

**THE CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE SCIENCE,
LOWESTOFT LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, NR33 0HT.**

2005 CHARTER CRUISE PROGRAMME

REPORT: YOUNG FISH SURVEY 2005

(PROVISIONAL: not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF:	Team 1 – South Coast	John Dann Sophy McCully
	Team 2 - Thames	Gary Burt Sophie Pitois Pt1 Mike Easey Pt2
	Team 3 – NE Coast	Tom Woods Dave Brown

LOCATION: Flamborough Head - Eastbourne

AIM: To carry out an inshore beam trawl survey of parts of the North Sea and English Channel for juvenile flatfish year class size estimation and collect data on young demersal fish in relation to the environment.

METHODS:

Teams of two staff working on charter vessels carried out the Young Fish Survey. The stations worked in the survey areas (Figure 1) were as last year. The gear used was a 2-metre wooden beam trawl with a 3mm-mesh liner. Tows of 10-minute duration were carried out. At each station all the fish were identified and measured, shrimp catch was estimated volumetrically and benthic species were recorded. Observations of temperature, salinity and sediment type were also collected.

TEAM: 1

LOCATION: Dungeness Bay to Eastbourne (survey areas 16 to 17)

DATES: 1st to 10th September

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Folkestone on 1st September and the survey commenced the following day using F.V. lady Patricia. A total of 27 valid survey stations were completed Dungeness Bay. between Folkestone and Rye Harbour over a 2-day period without any

damage. On completion of the survey from Folkestone the staff travelled to Hastings where 47 valid tows were fished successfully over a period of 4 days between Bexhill and Rye Harbour on F.V. St Richard. A further 11 valid tows were carried out using F.V. Halcyon from Sovereign Harbour after which the staff travelled back to Lowestoft on 10th September.

RESULTS:

All of the 85 core tows were completed successfully. The catch rates for sole and plaice varied between survey locations, with very few fish being taken at the western end of the survey area in Pevensey and Norman's Bays. Higher than normal numbers of plaice were taken in Dungeness bay; sole catches were low compared with recent years with the only sizeable numbers being taken close inshore at Hastings Stade. Otoliths were collected for ageing purposes from sole and plaice.

TEAM: 2

LOCATION: Thames Estuary (survey areas 13 to 15)

DATES: 28th August to 31st August and 4th September to 9th September

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled from Lowestoft to Whitstable to meet the skipper of the "Columbine" on 28th August and commenced fishing the following day. All of the stations along the North Kent coast were successfully completed over a 3-day period. The weather was particularly fine resulting in no loss of time. For the first half of the survey a total of five nets were damaged mainly due to large catches of benthos and cockleshells ripping the net. Only one of these hauls, in Sheerness Harbour, at the mouth of the Medway (List 158) was deemed invalid, where an iron bar caused damage to the net. Staff returned to Lowestoft on the 31st August.

After a change of staff and a short delay whilst awaiting the completion of maintenance to the "Fisher Lassie", staff travelled to West Mersea on the 4th September. The charter from West Mersea was completed over the next 4 days with the weather remaining calm through out.

RESULTS:

All the core stations were completed successfully with a total of 38 valid tows worked from Whitstable and 44 from West Mersea. Sole catches were generally higher at the stations fished by the West Mersea vessel and were relatively consistent throughout for this sector of the survey. Higher catches of 0-group sole were encountered at West Blyth, Barrow No.9, Maplin Sands and The Wallet Staff returned to Lowestoft on 9th September. Catches of 0-group and 1+-group plaice remained low throughout the survey but were more abundant along the North Kent coast stations.

TEAM: 3

LOCATION: North East Coast (survey areas 8 to 11)

DATES: 30th August to 10th September

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Gibraltar Point, Skegness on 30th August and loaded gear aboard the FV Challenge. Fishing was delayed until 1st September due to poor weather, Challenge sailed from Gibraltar Point and steamed north to commence fishing and a total of 13 stations including some off Mablethorpe and in the Humber were completed on the first day.

Over the good 2 days the remaining 12 Humber stations were completed in exceptional weather, before the vessel returned to Grimsby for the night. Challenge sailed the following morning and steamed out of the Humber and completed 7 stations off the Lincolnshire coast and in the Wash. With the weather deteriorating and with the forecast predicting worse to come the decision was made to call off the next days work. Staff drove back to Lowestoft for the night and returned the following day. The remaining stations in the Wash and off the South Lincolnshire coast were completed over the following 6 days. Staff returned to Lowestoft on 10th September.

RESULTS:

A total of 80 valid stations from a total of 84 were completed. Dissolved oxygen readings were taken at Environment Agency stations in the Humber. Salinity samples were collected at each station. Catches of 0-group and 1+-group plaice remained low throughout the survey area compared with recent years

J Dann

17th October 2005

Initialled:

Distribution

Basic List +

J Dann

S Pitois

M Easey

S Mc Cully

T Woods

D Brown

P Welsby

G Burt

FLR 9641

Participating skippers

North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee

Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee

Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee

Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee

Southern Sea Fisheries Committee

Lancs and Western Sea Fisheries Committee

H Gudmundsson - Environment Agency

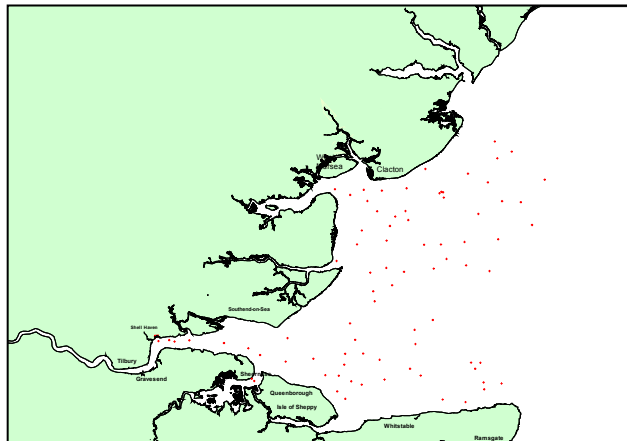
M Elliot - University of Hull

Figure 1 Haul positions 2005 YFS

Humber and Wash



Thames



Eastern Channel

