

**CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE  
LOWESTOFT LABORATORY, SUFFOLK, NR33 0HT**

**2008 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME**

**PROGRAMME: RV CEFAS ENDEAVOUR: CRUISE 4/08.**

**STAFF:**

S. Milligan (SIC)  
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M. Lilley (Swansea University)  
J. Baer (Irish whale and dolphin group)

**DURATION:** 22 February – 2 March 2008

**LOCATION:** Irish Sea

**AIMS:**

1. To conduct a series of plankton surveys using a 76cm Gulf VII plankton sampler, Bioness multinet and hyperbenthic sledge to estimate the abundance and distribution of plaice eggs and larvae in the plaice spawning area in Liverpool Bay.
2. To use various trawls to estimate the abundance and distribution of predators of plaice eggs and larvae in the plaice spawning area in Liverpool Bay.
3. To sample potential predators for detection of plaice eggs and larvae prey, using genetic probes.
4. To collect fin clips of adult dab and flounder for population genetic studies. (Dr B. Lyons)

**PLAN:**

RV Cefas Endeavour will sail from Belfast on the morning tide of 22 February 2008 and proceed to the east of Anglesey in Liverpool Bay (Fig 1). Work will commence with a 15-20 station plankton survey grid, which will be repeated in the middle and at the end of the cruise (Aim 1). A fishing survey of the potential predators of plaice egg and larvae will be sampled with various trawl gears on the intervening days using a 12 station fixed grid (Aim 2). The stomachs of fish predators will be dissected and frozen, and whole animal samples of non-fish predators will be frozen for genetic probe work (Aim 3) up to a total of 3000 samples. Fin clips of dab and flounder will be collected at the same time (Aim 4). If weather conditions are unfavourable, the plan described above will be transferred to focus on the cod spawning aggregation in Dundalk Bay, north-western Irish Sea. RV Cefas Endeavour will dock in

Swansea on 2 March. Scientific gear and samples will be offloaded on 3 March and Cefas staff will return to Lowestoft the same day.

**GEAR:**

List distributed separately and marked to relevant individuals for attention.

Stephen Milligan (Scientist In Charge) and  
Ewan Hunter (contract leader)  
23 January 2008

**INITIALLED:**

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Basic List +

Clive Fox (SAMS, Dunstaffnage)

Graeme Hays (Swansea University)

FCO (for Republic of Ireland)

Sea Fisheries Committees:

Cumbria

North Western and North Wales

South Wales

Cefas Endeavour 4/08, Predation Studies: Proposed sampling areas in Irish Sea

