

R1/3

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

Charter Fishing Vessel *Noronya* (K733)

Cruise 0409H SISP Crab Tagging (Offshore)

REPORT

9 – 15 March 2009

Personnel

G Jones (SIC)
P Gibson

Objectives

1. To tag Brown Crab (*Cancer pagurus*), of a range of sizes, from 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.
2. To biologically sample all tagged Brown Crab for carapace width, shell condition, sex and reproductive state (of females) along with date, time and latitude, longitude, and depth of the return location.

Narrative

Staff and equipment joined the vessel *Noronya* at Stromness on the evening of 9 March 2009. The vessel steamed to grounds and commenced fishing on the morning of 10 March 2009 at the northern side of the 'windsock' where 10 strings of 60-80 creels were hauled.

The vessel steamed to grounds at the 'Noup' over night. Fishing commenced at the 'Noup' on the morning of 11 March 2009 where 8 strings of 60-80 creels were hauled.

Following an overnight steam to grounds at the North West side of the 'windsock' fishing commenced on the morning of 12 March 2009. Three strings of 60-80 creels were hauled after which fishing ceased due to poor weather. Vessel dodged until early evening when fishing recommenced and a further 7 strings of 60-80 creels were hauled.

On 13 March 2009, 5 strings were taken aboard and then moved to new grounds due to problems with other vessels in the area, crab was tagged from 4 of the 5 strings and released in the middle of the 'windsock'. The vessel then steamed overnight to grounds at the 'Noup'.

On the morning of 14 March 2009 fishing commenced and 10 strings of 60-80 creels were hauled, 8 of these were the same strings that were hauled on the 11 March 2009. It was noted that large quantities of squid eggs had been deposited on the creels during these 2 days.

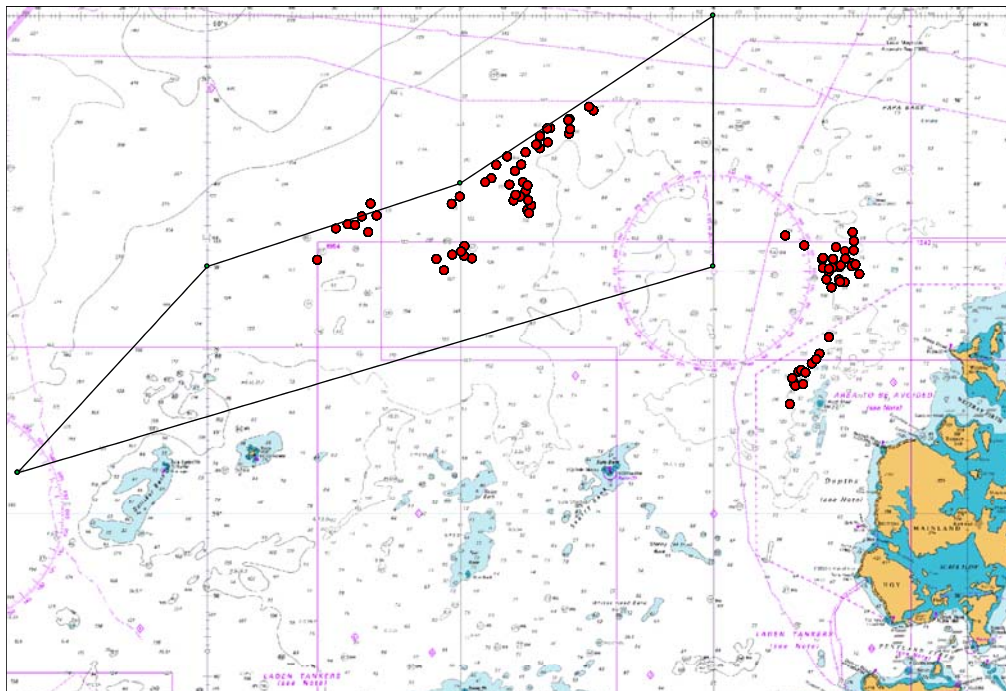
Fishing recommenced on the 15 March 2009 after a short overnight steam to grounds at the 'north shoal'. The weather rapidly deteriorated and by early evening fishing had to be suspended as the conditions were not safe to work. The vessel made passage for Stromness to make high tide at 2300 hrs.

All gear and scientific equipment was unloaded in Stromness on the morning of 16 March 2009, and staff returned to Aberdeen.

Results

The charter achieved the objectives set; covering several areas within the windsock and grounds off the 'Noup'. 2257 crab were tagged with high visibility T-Bar tags, 1845 females, 364 males and 48 berried. All crabs were also cable tied on one of the claws to aid fishermen in identifying the tagged animals and also act as a moult indicator.

Figure 1. Map showing the 'windsock' closed area and the tagged crab release points.



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.

Gareth Jones
24 March 2009