

R1/3

Charter Fishing Vessel *Veracious II* (PD 373)

Charter Cruise 2004H

REPORT

9-13 August 2004

Ports

Loading: Peterhead

Unloading: Peterhead

Personnel

E Jones (In charge)

R Kynoch

A Jamieson (Oceanlab, University of Aberdeen)

N King (Oceanlab, University of Aberdeen)

Gear

BT 186

Day Grab

ROBIO baited camera lander (Oceanlab)

Scanmar

Objectives

To undertake a biological baseline survey of the Buzzard platform site prior to installation of the platform itself including a control area outside the future exclusion zone.

Narrative

Gear was loaded onto MFV *Veracious* on Friday 6 August and staff joined at 0900 on Monday 9 August. The fishing gear and lander equipment were rigged and secured, *Veracious* left harbour at 1230 and headed for the Buzzard site. On arrival at 1730 the ROBIO was deployed with a mooring line to the surface and a marker buoy. *Veracious* remained in the vicinity of the buoy and several unsuccessful attempts were made to deploy the day grab. Although the grab fired on each occasion, no sediment was collected. After 4.5 h the ROBIO was retrieved and redeployed once photographic and current meter data had been downloaded and the bait replaced. *Veracious* remained near the dhan buoy overnight, retrieving the lander first thing the next morning. Lander deployments continued over the next two days with the last deployment ending at 0630 on Thursday 12 August. During this time further attempts were made to collect grab samples, of which 10 were successful. Following the retrieval of the ROBIO for the last time, work switched to trawling. A series of seven 30 min tows were carried out, along a transect running from the rig site out to the control zone. In each case the catch was sorted, weighed and length measurements taken for all species. Stomach contents were also collected from a sample of haddock, whiting, common dab, plaice and grey gurnard. The *Veracious* returned to Peterhead harbour on Friday 13 August where the personnel disembarked and gear was offloaded.

Results

A total of nine lander deployments, seven trawls and 10 sediment grabs were completed during the cruise. The sediment samples are being analysed by collaborators at Aberdeen University. The baited lander attracted whiting, haddock, flatfish and hagfish in every deployment, often in high numbers. Although identification to species level was not consistently possible for flatfish; common dab, long rough dab and plaice were all positively identified in some photos. In addition, seven other species of fish were observed in one or more photographs as well as a variety of invertebrates. The table below lists the fish species sampled by trawl compared with the baited camera. The photographs from these deployments have all been analysed to produce first arrival times and maximum numbers for each species, which can be used as relative abundance indicators for comparison with trawl samples. These data form a baseline study along with GOV trawl samples collected during the August 2004 IBTS and towed camera transects and will be supplemented with further sampling during Scotia cruise 0605.

Emma Jones
14 February 2005

Table 1. List of species observed in photographs and caught in trawl samples at the site of the future Buzzard platform.

Species	Lander	Trawl
Haddock	✓	✓
Whiting	✓	✓
Common dab	✓	✓
Long rough dab	✓	✓
Lemon sole		✓
Plaice	✓	✓
Flatfish sp	✓	
Halibut		✓
Grey gurnard	✓	✓
Dragonet	✓	✓
Wolf fish	✓	
Ling	✓	✓
Spotted dogfish	✓	
Starry ray	✓	
Hagfish	✓	
John dory		✓
Herring	✓	✓
Mackerel		✓
Horse mackerel		✓
Poor cod		✓
Norway pout		✓
Greater Argentine		✓
Total	11	17