

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

1991 CHARTER VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: ANGELLE MARIE 1/91

STAFF:

D Eaton

M Easey

DURATION:

12-23 May 1991

LOCATION:

Solent, Southampton Water, Langstone and Chichester harbours and Sussex and Hampshire ports.

AIMS:

1. To carry out a survey of pre-recruit bass in the Solent area using a standard high-headline trawl with cod-end liner fitted.
2. To investigate the distribution and abundance of 1990 year class bass in the area.
3. To tag juvenile/pre-recruit bass in bass nursery areas.
4. To sample commercial landings of bass along the Hants, and Sussex coast.

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Portsmouth on the afternoon of Sunday 12 May in order to enable early morning visits to local fish merchants to be made on Monday, the optimum time for gaining access to the largest landings of bass which usually take place over weekends. Fishing commenced on 14 May and continued without interruption for weather or gear damage for the whole charter period (14-20 May). Sampling of commercial catches recommenced on the evening of 20 May in the Portsmouth area and continued with visits to other ports along the Sussex coast as far east as Rye until the afternoon of 23 May when staff returned to Lowestoft.

RESULTS:

1. Fifty-two trawl stations covering the whole of the survey area were completed between 14-18 May. Replicate tows were made at some of the more productive stations at differing states of the tide, and the opportunity was taken to achieve more intensive coverage of the survey area, in the light of three successive strong year-classes, by introducing several new tows. Eight hundred and sixty-two bass in the length range 13-38 cm were caught with the 1989 year-class predominant (85.5%). Only three year-classes were represented in the catch (see attached Figures 1 and 2).

Catch rates for bass were 0.4/minute in the Solent/Southampton Water and 3.3/minute in the harbours. The overall catch rate was 1.2/minute, compared with 1.4/minute and 4.9/minute in September 1989 and 1990 respectively.

2. Nineteen trawl stations were completed in Chichester and Langstone Harbours using the sandeel trawl. One thousand and seventy-six bass (length range 13-36 cm) were caught (catch rate 5.7/minute compared with 10.2/minute in September 1990), the majority (97%) being the 1989 year-class and the remainder being either 1988 or 1987 fish. No bass from the 1990 year-class were caught in either survey, despite large numbers of 0-group fish having been taken on power stations screens last year.

3. Three hundred and eighteen bass were tagged and release in nursery areas (Southampton Water, Langstone and Chichester Harbours). Hallprint 'T-bar' internal/external tags were placed in 289 fish (size range 20-29 cm) and 29 fish were tagged using Mini-Howitt rigid flag tags (size range 30-37 cm). A 'T-bar' tagged bass released in Langstone harbour on 20 September 1990 was recaptured in the same location and returned to the water. The tag was intact and apart from some slight inflammation around the tagging wound the fish appeared healthy.

4. Opportunistic visits to the merchants and ports along the south coast produced measurements of 367 bass and 222 scale samples which will be included in the biological sampling programme for the area.

D Eaton
21 June 1991

INITIALLED:

G P A

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List +

Mr Eaton

Mr Easey

Mr Pickett

Mr Balcacchino

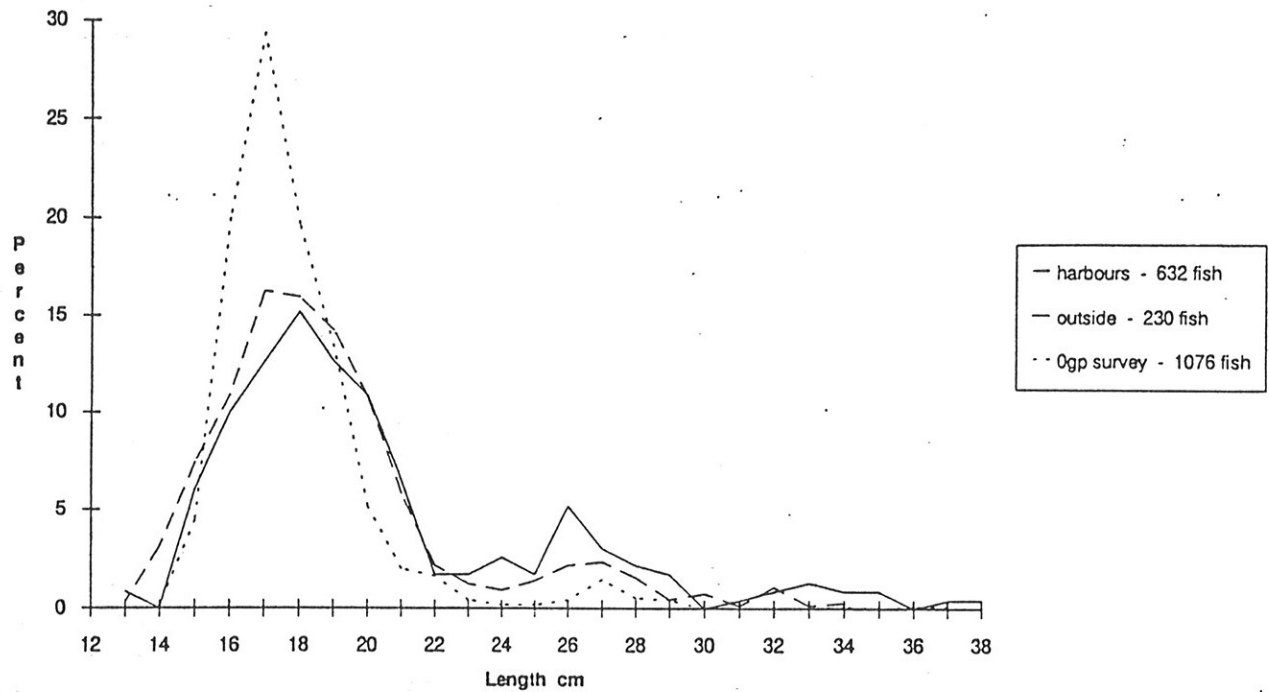
Mr T Whyatt, DI, SE District

Mr R Hawkinge, FO II, Portsmouth

Mr J Howell, Sussex SFC

Mr K Abell, CBE, DL, Southern SFC

SOLENT SURVEY MAY 1991 BASS % LD'S



SOLENT SURVEY MAY 1991 BASS ALD

