

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, PAKEFIELD ROAD, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK NR33 0HT**

1995 CHARTER VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: ANGELLE MARIE 1/95

(Provisional: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author).

STAFF: G. Pickett
W. Riley

DURATION: 14 - 20 May 1995

LOCATION: The Solent, Southampton Water, Chichester and Langstone Harbours.

- AIMS:**
1. To carry out a trawl survey for pre-recruit bass in the Solent area.
 2. To sample commercial bass landings in the area to augment the biological sampling programme.

NARRATIVE:

Equipment was loaded aboard the ANGELLE MARIE at Sparkes Marina, Hayling Island on 14th May and the survey commenced in Chichester Harbour the following day. After two days working the survey stations in the eastern Solent, Chichester and Langstone Harbours, the next two days were spent in Southampton Water, the mid and western Solent. The fifth day was spent repeating stations in the Chichester Harbour area, where poor catches had been obtained on the first day. The survey grid was completed without interruption or damage to the gear and staff returned to Lowestoft on 20 May.

RESULTS

1. Forty six survey tows were completed and 2646 bass were caught. Of these 2206 were 1-group (1994 year-class). Only 0.7% of the total bass caught (18 fish) were above the 36cm MLS. The high number of 1-group bass is unusual for surveys in May but most of these were taken in a single tow at the top of Langstone Harbour. There were few bass in the eastern Solent or Chichester Harbour.

A notable feature of this survey was the continuing presence of a few bass from the exceptional 1989 year-class. At 6 years old some of these fish have still not attained 36cm. This year-class has now largely dispersed from nursery areas and recruited to the adult stock. The slow-growers appear to be left behind, suggesting that it is size and not age that determines how long bass remain in their inshore nurseries.

Catch rates (bass/min) were 9.7 inside the harbours and 0.5 outside (5.1 overall). The overall value is higher than in recent May surveys but this is largely due to the one large haul of 1 year old bass taken in Langstone Harbour. The next September survey should confirm the size of the 1994 year-class of bass.

2. Around 200 pounds (60 fish) of commercial, line-caught bass were measured to augment the biological sampling programme.

G.D.Pickett
June 1995

INITIALLED: CTM

DISTRIBUTION:

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