

2004 CHARTER CRUISE PROGRAMME

REPORT: ANGELLE MARIE 2/2004

(**PROVISIONAL:** not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF: M J Brown
S Walmsley

DURATION: 4 June – 8 June 2004

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

AIMS:

1. To carry out the annual spring trawl survey for pre-recruit bass in the Solent area.
2. To determine the relative abundance and distribution of juvenile bass and other species in the Solent and associated harbours.

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Portsmouth on 3 June. Survey gear was unloaded that evening at Whale Island, Portsmouth. The survey commenced at 07.48 on 4 June, with the 9 stations in Chichester Harbour and 4 stations outside being completed. The penultimate tow of the day (Outer ski buoy and Inner ski buoy) was towed 100 yards to the east, to avoid static gear on the normal tow. Three quarters of the way through the tow the trawl came fast on an underwater obstruction, but after approximately 1 hour the gear was retrieved undamaged. On 5 June stations inside and outside Langstone Harbour were completed successfully. During the day the hydraulic winch developed problems. The Angelle Marie moved to Warsash Marina that night in order to start the tows at the western end of the survey area. The fishing for Sunday had to be abandoned to allow for repairs to the winch be carried out. The weather remained fine throughout Monday and 11 tows in Southampton Water, Western Solent and off Ryde, Isle of Wight, were completed. The next day the tows in Southampton water were completed without incident and four tows were repeated using a replacement CEFAS bass trawl of standard design to check that it was fishing effectively. The fishing gear was unloaded at Warsash Marina and staff returned to Lowestoft the next day.

RESULTS:

40 valid tows on 35 core stations were fished (Figure 1). Four core stations were repeated using the new bass trawl which was shown to fish effectively. A total of 402 bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) were caught, 193 in the harbours and 209 outside.

A total of 180 bass scales were taken and read during the survey, allowing an age length distribution to be produced before returning to the laboratory. The results indicate that 21.6% of the fish caught throughout the survey area were 2 year olds (the 2002 year class), 36.4% were 3 year olds (the 2001 year class) and 24.8% were 4 year olds (the 2000 year class), with modal lengths at 20 cm, 25 cm, and 31 cm respectively. Fifty two (12.9%) of the bass caught were above the minimum landing size (36cm).

Catch rates of bass were 1.14/minute towing in the harbours and 1.05/minute outside (1.09/minute overall). This overall value is well below the mean for the spring surveys and also below the figure for May last year (1.52/minute).

A wide variety of other species were caught, notably 98 flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), 64 plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*), and 87 starry smoothounds (*Mustelus asterias*). A garfish (*Belone belone*) and a worm pipefish (*Nerophis lumbriciformis*) were also caught in Langstone Harbour.

CEFAS would like to thank the skipper and crew of the Angelle Marie for their help in the successful completion of this year's survey.

M J Brown
29 June, 2004

INITIALLED:

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list +
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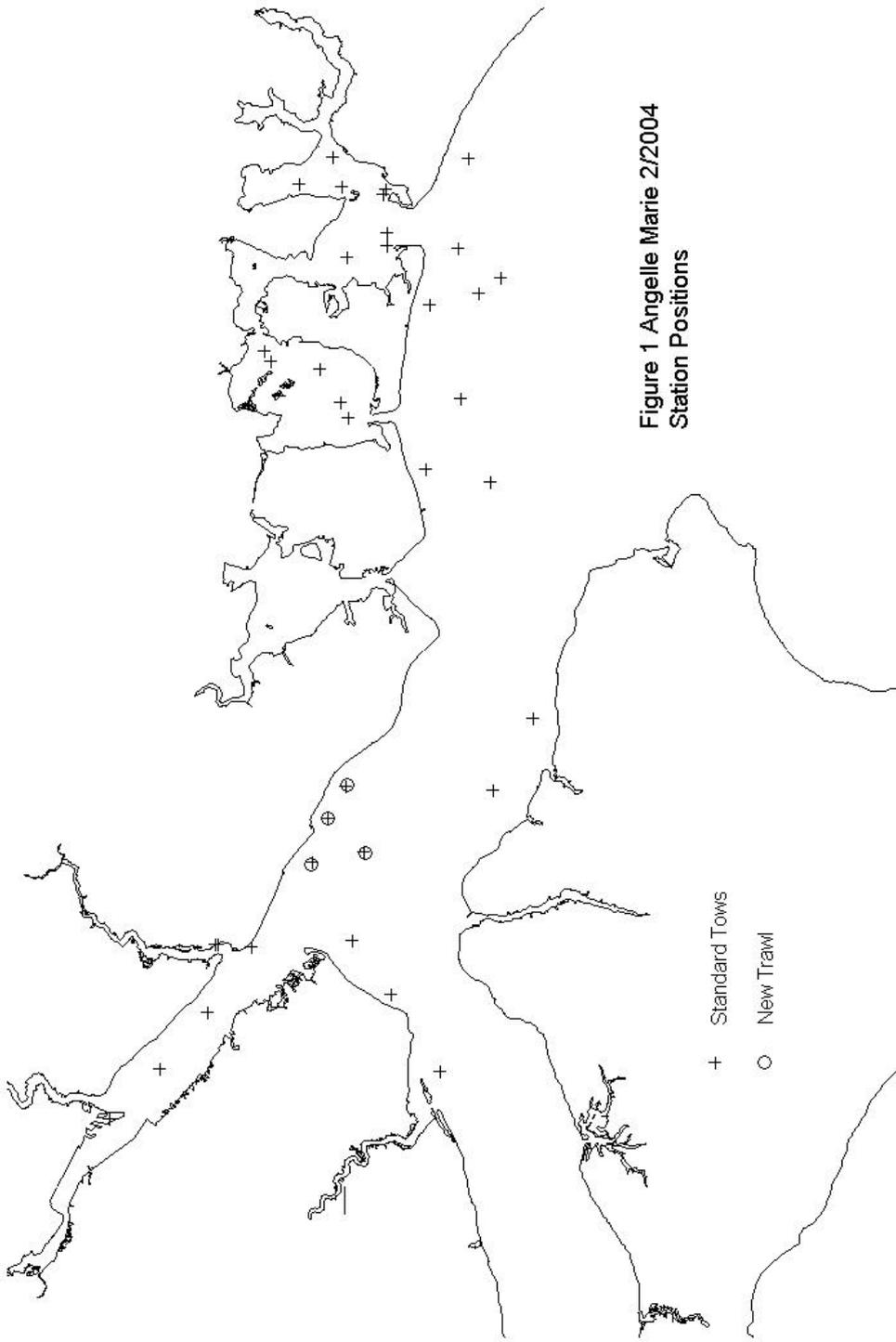


Figure 1 Angelle Marie 2/2004
Station Positions

