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Charter Fishing Vessel MV *Audacious* (BF83)

Charter Cruise 2001H

REPORT

18-27 September 2001

Personnel

K J Peach (In charge)
J Mair
D O'Driscoll

Gear

2 x Vessels own design 180 ft scrapper nets with 90 mm square mesh windows.

Objectives

1. To map the relative population density of *L. piscatorius* using trawl positions from the 2000 Rockall charter.
2. To sample monkfish for length, total weight, gutted weight, liver weight, gonad weight, sex, maturity and age.
3. To further explore areas on the plateau primarily looking for mature female *L. piscatorius*.
4. To collect samples of coral *Lophelia pertusa* for radiocarbon dating.

Narrative

Audacious sailed from Lochinver at 0900 hours on 18 September and headed west to the first trawling position (5752N 1259W) arriving at 1100 hours on 19 September. Fishing operations proceeded without incident until 2100 hours on 26 September when *Audacious* set sail for Lochinver. A total of 31 hauls of three hours duration were completed giving comprehensive coverage of the survey area see Map 1. *Audacious* returned to Lochinver at 2200 hours on 27 September.

Results

Comparative fishing was carried out at 22 stations using trawl positions from the 2000 monkfish charter. A further nine hauls were completed on the plateau to further assess the population density of *L. piscatorius*. Catches ranged from 20 to 180 baskets with *L. piscatorius* being present in all 31 hauls (Map 2), the bulk of the larger hauls comprised mainly deepwater species predominantly bluemouth and ratfish (*H. dactylopterus*, *H. mirabilis*, and *C. monstrosa*).

A total of 2,655 *L. piscatorius* were caught, of which 1,532 were scored for length, total weight, gutted weight, liver weight, gonad weight, sex, maturity and age, the remainder was scored for length, sex and maturity. Catches of *L. budegassa* were almost non-existent with two fish being scored for all parameters.

The comparative hauls produced mixed results with hauls to the west of the plateau producing disappointing numbers compared to the 2000 survey. Hauls on the east edge and within the 200 metre contour were more encouraging with 62% of hauls showing an increase in numbers caught (Table 1). Of the nine new hauls completed, the four to the west produced low numbers, whilst the five to the east gave good results (Table 2).

Numbers of large maturing females (85 cm+) dropped considerably from the 2000 survey 93 out of a catch of 751 fish, 12.4% compared to 139 out of 501 27.7%.

Coral damage was minimal with four samples being collected for radiocarbon dating.

Two relative strangers to our shores were caught, a Seatoad *Chaunax pictus* in haul 23 (318 metres) and a Deal fish *Trachipterus arcticus* in haul 26 (344 metres).

All survey objectives were met. The invaluable experience and hard work of Skipper Gatt and his crew coupled with an exceptional spell of settled weather ensured the success of this charter.

K J Peach
5 October 2001

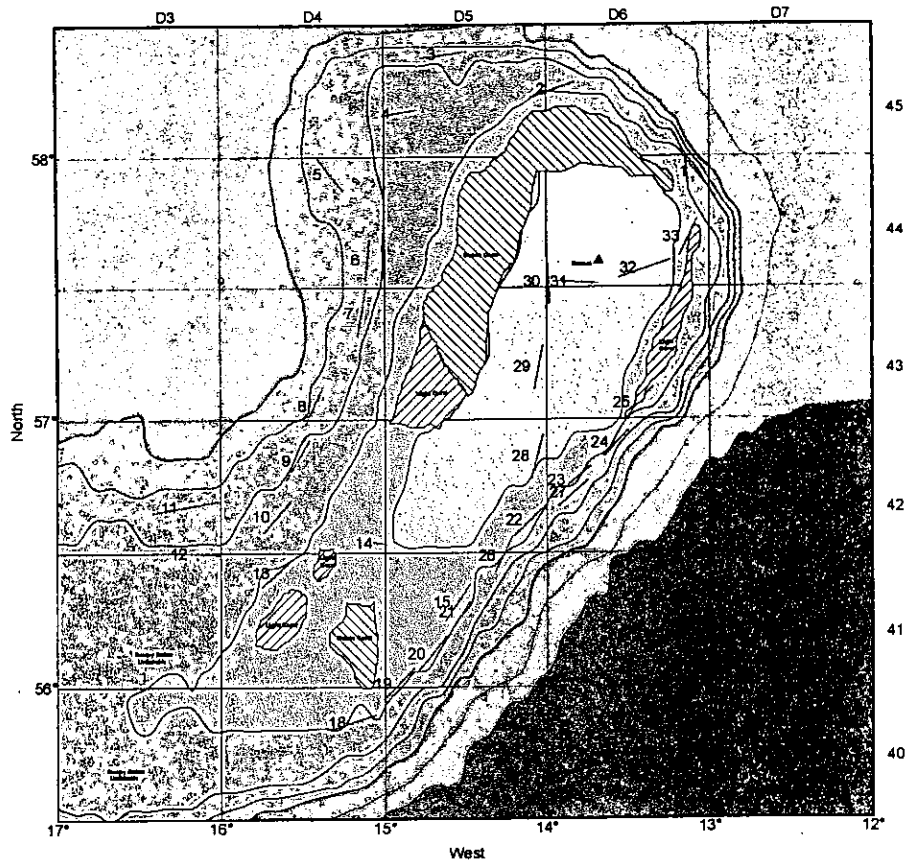
Table 1. Comparative Fishing Catch Data

2001 Survey Data							2000 Survey Data						
Haul No	Male	Female	Total	%M	%F	Mean Length	Haul No	Male	Female	Total	%M	%F	Mean Length
1	8	14	22	36	64	67	35	23	13	36	64	36	64
2	18	14	32	56	44	67	2	24	19	43	56	44	69
3	3	5	8	38	63	77	3	0	5	5	0	100	93
4	8	4	12	67	33	73	5	4	7	11	36	64	71
6	10	10	20	50	50	75	14	14	17	31	45	55	73
7	5	17	22	23	77	81	12	17	18	35	49	51	74
9	6	8	14	43	57	82	16	4	18	22	18	82	77
10	7	10	17	41	59	80	17	6	16	22	27	73	81
13	6	15	21	29	71	76	20	4	24	28	14	86	74
14	27	46	73	37	63	54	19	16	27	43	37	63	60
15	71	75	146	49	51	49	25	74	61	135	55	45	48
18	15	11	26	58	42	61	22	11	17	28	39	61	76
19	38	45	83	46	54	60	23	35	51	86	41	59	64
20	55	54	109	50	50	62	24	66	54	120	55	45	60
22	141	122	263	54	46	55	29	27	17	44	61	39	55
23	149	128	277	54	46	50	28	54	61	115	47	53	50
25	19	27	46	41	59	53	31	17	13	30	57	43	44
28	102	76	178	57	43	33	30	49	51	100	49	51	36
29	104	115	219	47	53	35	9	14	21	35	40	60	52
30	20	35	55	36	64	42	8	20	31	51	39	61	52
32	96	77	173	55	45	35	33	44	35	79	56	44	36
33	6	5	11	55	45	53	34	15	21	36	42	58	55
Total	914	913	1827	50	50	60		538	597	1135	47	53	62

Table 2. Exploratory Fishing Catch Data

Haul No	Male	Female	Total	%M	%F	Mean Length
5	3	5	8	37	63	86
8	2	7	9	22	78	83
11	2	2	4	50	50	86
12	4	5	9	44	56	62
21	47	28	75	63	37	58
24	43	27	70	61	39	57
26	183	148	331	55	45	54
27	127	105	232	55	45	51
31	23	17	40	58	42	41
Total	434	344	778	56	44	64

Map 1. Audacious Monkfish Charter 2001 Trawl Positions & Haul Numbers



Map 2. Audacious Monkfish Charter 2001 *L. piscatorius* Nos per hour

