

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

1989 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: CHARTER DOUBLE-BEAM TRAWLER (BRIXHAM)

STAFF: M R Vince
B F M Harley

DURATION: 25 September-3 October

LOCALITY: Western English Channel

AIMS:

1. To carry out a trawl survey for sole by repeating the standard positions.
2. To collect length distributions and otolith samples of sole, monk, plaice and lemon sole.
3. To collect samples of Bryzoa and Hydrozoa from all hauls on which they occur for later examination by the shellfish group for scallop spat.
4. To collect details of all crab (*Cancer pagurus*), lobster, and crawfish.
5. To collect samples of ungutted commercial fish for pesticide analysis. (A Franklin, Burnham-on-Crouch).

NARRATIVE

Staff travelled to Brixham by van on 24 September. The following day the necessary gear and ships provisions were put aboard in preparation for sailing that evening. CARHELMAR left Brixham at 2000 hrs, and after taking the two MAFF 4m beam-trawls from CORYSTES in Tor Bay steamed overnight to the first station position in mid-channel. The grid of 57 stations was started at 0600 hrs 26 September and completed at 0730 hrs 3 October with only one days break on Saturday 30 September.

VESSEL, GEAR AND SURVEY AREA

The vessel was a 24m, 300 bhp beam-trawler which was delivered new this year from Holland. It replaces John Lovells previous vessel BOGEY ONE used on the same survey since 1984.

The gear was the same 4m beam-trawls used on the earlier MAFF surveys in the Eastern English Channel (CORYSTES Cr 9/89) and also in the Irish Sea (CORYSTES Cr 10/89). Both nets were rigged with 75mm cod-ends but only one had a small mesh liner in keeping with previous years surveys in the Western Channel. The survey area was identical to those of 1984-87. (Station Chart).

An effort was made to tow the gear at the same speed as on previous surveys, but additionally the wheelhouse equipment provided a distance towed measurement for each station.

RESULTS

1. A total of 57 half hour tows were made; all were valid with virtually no damage sustained to the gear. The mean cpue (uncorrected nos per hour) for sole appears to be slightly down on last year which itself was down by 33% of the previous 4 year mean. These and all other cpue results quoted in this report are provisional and are subject to correction.
2. All sole, plaice, 'monk', lemon sole, whiting, cod, ray, turbot and brill were measured and stratified otolith samples taken from the first six species. The numbers were:- Sole 189, plaice 141, 'monk' 58, lemon sole 35, whiting 2, cod 1. Other species were sampled when time allowed. Catch rates of the main commercial species were down on previous years.
3. Samples of Bryzoa and Hybrozoa were collected from 7 stations on which larger than average quantities were caught.
4. A total of 41 crab (*Cancer pagurus*) were measured and sexed. Also all spider crab (*Maia squinado*) and scallop (*Pecten maximus*) were measured.
5. Samples of ungutted sole, plaice and pout were deep frozen for A Franklin, Burnham-on-Crouch.

COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITY

The local beamer fleet were well dispersed during the period of the charter. Some were observed nearby on a few stations working beam gear. Others were fishing in other sub-areas or scalloping with dredges. Fishing in general was poor. The local sprat fishery was restricted to a small area inside Brixham breakwater due to the absence of this species elsewhere.

The staff once again wish to acknowledge the helpful co-operation of the skipper and crew of the CARHELMAR.

M R Vince
18 October 1989

SEEN IN DRAFT: BWJ

INITIALLED:



DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List +
M R Vince
B F M Harley
Dr D Bennett
Dr P Dare
D W Palmer
A Franklin (B on C)
Skipper Lovell (CARHELMAR)

