

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, PAKEFIELD ROAD, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, UK

1992 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT : CHARTER DOUBLE-BEAM TRAWLER (BRIXHAM)

(Provisional: not to be cited without prior reference to the author)

STAFF: M R Vince
P A Large

DURATION: 29 September-5 October

LOCALITY: Western English Channel

AIMS:

1. To carry out a trawl survey for sole, by repeating the standard grid of station positions.
2. To collect length distributions and otolith samples of sole, monk, plaice and lemon sole.
3. To collect details of all crab (*Cancer pagurus*), lobster and scallop.

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Brixham by road on 28 September. The following day after loading the MAFF owned 4m beam-trawls and sampling gear the CARHELMAR sailed from the river Dart to commence the survey. Work continued uninterrupted until the morning 5 October when Ian Todd (FO₂ Brixham) came aboard for the day to obtain some first hand experience of the work. The survey grid of 56 trawl hauls was completed the following morning and CARHELMAR returned to the river Dart to unload. Staff returned to Lowestoft the same day.

RESULTS:

1. All but two of the 56 tows were of half-hour duration and only one was void. The sole catch rate continues to improve from the 1990 low, mainly due to the 1987 year class which showed up well last year as 2 year olds and is still well represented this year as 3 year olds.
2. All commercial fish species were measured and all others were sorted and counted when possible. Stratified samples of otoliths were taken for sole (338), plaice (230), lemon sole (19) and 'monk' (16). Catch rates for plaice were slightly up on last year due to an increase in numbers of small recruiting fish between 21-26cms. Catches of 'monk' and lemon sole were very low and all fish of both these species were otolithed.
3. All 63 crabs caught (*Cancer pagurus*) were measured, sexed, and examined for damage. One lobster, and 56 scallops (*Pecten maximus*) were also measured.

Our thanks go to the owner and crew for making the CARHELMAR available again, and for the help and co-operation provided.

M R Vince
16 October 1992

INITIALLED : J W H

DISTRIBUTION :

Basic list+

M R Vince

P A Large

Dr D Bennett

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Mr J Portus (South Western FPO Ltd)

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