

**CENTRE FOR ENVIROMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
SCIENCE LOWESTOFT LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK NR33
OHT**

1998 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGAMME

REPORT: CHARTER DOUBLE BEAM TRAWLER (BRIXHAM)

STAFF: M R Vince
I Holmes

DURATION: 6 – 14 October 1998

LOCATION: Western English Channel

AIMS:

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

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Brixham by road on 6 October. The following day the two 4 metre survey beam-trawls, sampling gear and ship's stores were put aboard CARHELMAR at Philips Ltd on the river Dart. The fishing survey commenced on the afternoon of 7 October, and was completed on the morning of 14 October in time for staff to returned to Lowestoft that same day.

RESULTS:

Aim 1

The survey grid of 58 half-hour tows was completed and no time was lost for bad weather. Very few undersize sole were caught this year indicating that the number of 2 year old recruits to the fishery in 1999 is likely to be low. In contrast, the number of sole just above minimum landing size was more plentiful than in recent years probably due to the 1996 year class.

Unlike sole, there was some evidence of undersize plaice on a few of the tows inshore, but in the main the catch consisted of medium size fish around 31 cms many of which are likely to be 2 year olds.

One notable change this year was the large amount of ascidiacea taken on all 3 of the inshore tows located in Babbacombe Bay. On last years survey, the innermost tow yielded high numbers of pre-recruit plaice and sole, compared to this year's haul of ascidians and very few fish.

Aim 2

All commercial species of fish were measured from all hauls and stratified samples of otoliths collected from the following species: sole (400), plaice (444), lemon sole (32), anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*) (7). The number of anglerfish caught is the lowest since the survey began in 1984. All non-commercial fish were collected from the starboard side gear on the majority of hauls, identified to species and counted.

Aim 3


All brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*) were measured, and all spider crab (*Maia squinado*), scallop, and cuttlefish were counted on every haul.

MISCELLANEOUS

The survey this year coincided with the fishing of 5 very large Dutch pelagic trawlers working to the south and west of Start Point. Trawl hauls made by CARHELMAR in the vicinity of these vessels frequently contained quantities of dead rotting horse mackerel and the occasional mackerel and black sea bream.

Our thanks must go to the owner for making the ship available and to the skipper and crew for their work on the beam-trawls and assistance throughout the survey.

M R Vince
20 October 1998.

INITIALLED: 

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list +

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J Lovell Brixham

Devon Sea Fisheries Committee

J Portus South Western Fish Producers Organisation Ltd