

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

1990 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: CHARTER DOUBLE-BEAM TRAWLER (BRIXHAM)  
(PROVISIONAL: Not to be cited without prior reference to the author)

STAFF: M R Vince  
B F M Harley

DURATION: 26 September-3 October

LOCATLITY: 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 samples of Bryozoa and Hydrozoa from hauls on which they occur for later examination by the shellfish group for scallop spat.
4. To collect details of all crab (Cancer pagurus), and lobster.

NARRATIVE

Staff travelled to Brixham by road on 25 September. The following day the MAFF owned 4m beam-trawls were collected from RV CORYSTES in Tor Bay, and after taking provisions the CARHELMAR sailed at 2200 hrs. The grid of 57 half-hour trawl stations was commenced at 0600h on 27th and was completed without hinderence by mid-morning of 3 October. CARHELMAR returned to Brixham to unload the gear and staff.

RESULTS

1. All 57 tows were complete and valid with virtually no damage to the gear. The mean cpue (numbers per hour) for sole for all age groups show a continuing decline and is now less than half the previous 5 year mean.
2. All commercial species of fish were measured and most of the others when possible. Stratified samples of otoliths were taken from sole (160) plaice (136) 'monk' (31) and lemon sole (41). The catch rates of all commercial species show a continuing decline.
3. Samples of Bryozoa and Hydrozoa were collected from hauls on which larger than average quantities were caught, although both were much less in evidence than on previous years.
4. A total of 29 crabs (Cancer pagurus) and 1 lobster was measured and sexed. Additionally 27 scallops (Pecten maximus) were measured.

One noteworthy increase in catch observed on all but one haul during the survey was in the numbers of cuttlefish (Sepia officinalis). The mean catch per haul was 21 individuals which roughly equates to 2 to 3 stone per half-hour tow. Considerable quantities were being reported throughout the English Channel.

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

M R Vince  
29 October 1990

SEEN IN DRAFT:

INITIALLED: JGS

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list +  
M R Vince  
B F M Harley  
Dr D Bennett  
Dr P Dare  
D W Palmer  
Mr J Portus (South Western FDO Ltd)  
Skipper Lovell (CARHELMAR)

