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

1988 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: CHARTERED COMMERCIAL VESSELS AND PUSHNETTING
(PROVISIONAL: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF: TEAM 1 C L Whiting
G J Howlett

TEAM 2 T Watson
A Lawler (part-time)
M W Easey (part-time)

TEAM 3 J D Riley
S P Milligan
G Haynes (part-time)

TEAM 4 C G Brown
M W Easey (part-time)

DURATION: 1-23 September 1988

LOCATION: Scottish Border - Swanage Bay

AIMS:

1. All teams. To carry out an inshore beam trawl and pushnet survey of part of the North Sea and English Channel coasts, of young demersal fish in relation to the environment. To include collecting data for juvenile flatfish year-class size estimation.
2. Teams 1 and 3. To continue studies of growth and mortality of young sole in the area off Lowestoft and in Rye Bay.

NARRATIVE:

Team 1

Staff travelled to Hastings on 31 August. FV JO'S BOYS of Dungeness was used for beam trawling on 4 and 5 September in the area Dymchurch to Camber. FV ST RICHARDS of Hastings was used for beam trawling in the area Rye Harbour to Pevensey Bay during the period 6-9 September. FV AVON VALLEY of Mudeford was used to survey the area Selsey Bill to Swanage Bay during 10-14 September inclusive. FV SHAROWNA of Brighton was used to complete the survey in the area Newhaven to Worthing on 17 September. Pushnet sites were sampled throughout the period 1-19 September.

The cooling water intake screens at Dungeness 'A' power station were sampled on 2 and 16 September. Staff returned to Lowestoft on 19 September.

Team 2

Staff travelled to Kent on 31 August. FV ALVIC of Whitstable was used for beam trawling in the south Thames estuary and the River Thames in the period 3-5 September. FV OUR TRACY of West Mersey was used in the north Thames

estuary in the period 7-9 September. FV CHALLENGE of Wainfleet Haven was used for beam trawling in the area between the River Humber and the north Norfolk coast during the period 14-21 September. Pushnet sites were sampled throughout the period 1-23 September.

Team 3

FV WASH HARVESTER of Lowestoft was used for beam trawling in area between Cromer and Sizewell in the period 5-9 September and local pushnet sites were sampled between 8 and 22 September.

Team 4

Staff travelled to Bridlington on 1 September and all pushnet sites were sampled between the Wash and Berwick during the period 1-10 September. Staff returned to Lowestoft on 10 September.

RESULTS:

1. Three hundred and twenty hauls using the standard 2 m beam trawl and 61 pushnet sites using the standard 1½ m pushnet were sampled. Eleven additional hauls were sampled in the River Humber in cooperation with the Anglian Water Authority.

All fish caught were identified and measured. Surface salinity samples and sediment samples were collected and observations of surface temperature and benthos were made at each station. Shrimp by-catch was recorded at each station. Observations on dissolved oxygen levels were made at most stations in the Thames estuary and at all stations in the River Thames.

Samples of plaice were taken in each of the main areas fished for age determination studies.

All this data is now in the process of being analysed but provisional results indicate that along the English east coast the 1988 year-class of plaice is poor and sole is average. Along the English south coast the 1988 year-class of plaice is slightly below average and sole below average.

2. Lowestoft and Rye Bay

- (a) A detailed survey of the distribution and abundance of 0-group sole was completed in both areas for estimation of overwintering mortality of sole (0 and 1-group) during late 1988 and early 1989.
- (b) Live 0-group sole were held in tanks for 24 hours then deep frozen for laboratory estimation of condition factors.

MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Samples of 0-group plaice were collected from all the main areas fished for Dr Berghahn, University of Hamburg.
2. 0-group plaice caught in the Bridlington Bay area were heavily infested with the metacercaria stage of the bucephalid trematode Rhipidocotyle sp. with approximately 75% of those caught being infected.

3. While in the North Shields area the sampling team was able to purchase and process samples from the Nephrops catch in order to obtain further information on the discard rates in this fishery.

GENERAL:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the skippers and crews of all the vessels taking part in the survey for their friendly help, advice and cooperation.

INITIALLED: DJG

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list +

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