

DEMERSAL FISH (NORTHERN) COMMITTEE

by A. Meyer

1971

Belgium  
(P. Hovart)

*received 7/3/72*

Work at sea. The RV "Hinders" made monthly cruises off the Belgian coast on 10 stations to analyse the stocks of juvenile sole, plaice, dab, flounder, gadoids, shrimps and other organisms.

The joint programme with Holland, Germany and Denmark on the nurseries was continued by two cruises.

1 500 plaice were tagged off the Belgian coast.

1 000 plaice were tagged on board the RV "Tridens" in the Morecambe Bay.

500 cod were tagged off the Belgian coast.

Work on fish. The stock analysis by means of market sampling was continued. Age, length, weight, sex and stage of maturity of cod, whiting, plaice and sole were determined. The areas studied are as follows: Cod - North Sea; whiting - North Sea; plaice - North Sea, English Channel and Irish Sea; sole - North Sea, English Channel and Irish Sea.

A special study was started on the growth of the year class 1971 of sole on the Belgian coast. An analysis was made of the by-catches of the shrimp fishery.

Canada

(W. Templeman and F. D. McCracken)

In 1971 groundfish surveys, coordinated through ICNAF, in which the St Andrews and St. John's Station participated along with laboratories in St Pierre, USA and USSR covered the area from the Grand Bank to Cape Hatteras. Detailed comparison between research vessel results and those obtained from commercial sampling showed good agreement for most areas and species. There is now convincing evidence of the ability of research vessel surveys to measure groundfish abundance with sufficient accuracy to indicate major trends. The use of this new tool for stock assessment is important since reduction of stocks in some areas has markedly affected distribution of fishing effort and thus the catchability co-efficient which has been used in estimating populations.

Routine size, age and maturity sampling of landings from ICNAF Sub-areas 2-5 were continued in 1971.