

ANNEX 6

H. Hillewaert gave an update on the Belgian report about the southern North Sea sampling programme, which included both epifaunal and infaunal macrobenthos. Data for 1995 are currently available, 1996 is being processed.

Epibenthos

A qualitative study of epibenthos was continued in 1995.

Abundance, number of species, diversity (Shannon-Wiener diversity index), dominance (Simpson's dominance index), evenness and biomass were calculated.

Thirty-nine different epibenthos organisms were found. Richest sampling areas were Loswal S2, Westdiep and Bligh bank. Total number of organisms was considerably larger in autumn than in spring.

Most abundant species were *Crangon crangon*, *Liocarcinus holsatus* and *Ophiura* spp. for spring as well as autumn and *Spisula subtruncata* only in autumn.

Macrobenthos

In 1995 ninety-one macrobenthos species were counted with densities varying between 193 and 4433 ind/m². Number of species was lowest in station 'Loswal Zeebrugge Oost', which is situated just outside Zeebrugge harbour (see Figure 1), and was highest in station 'Westdiep', which is situated north of Nieuwpoort.

Polychaeta were dominant in spring (predominantly *Magelone mirabilis*, *Phylodoce maculata*, *Nephtys* spp., *Spiophanes bombyx* and *Capitella capitata*), followed by Mollusca (*Spisula subtruncata*, *Mysella bidentata* and *Ensis directus*) and Crustacea (*Pariambus typicus* and *Abludomelita obtusata*)

Autumn showed Mollusca as most abundant (*S. subtruncata* and *E. directus*), followed by Polychaeta (*S. bombyx*, *N. spp.*, *P. maculata*, *M. mirabilis* and *Chaetozona setosa*) and Crustacea (*A. obtusata* and *Phtisica marina*).

Results are comparable to those of 1993 and to studies by J. Craeymeersch and others.

Historical macrobenthos samples (dating back to 1979) are currently being identified. Results are expected early 1998.

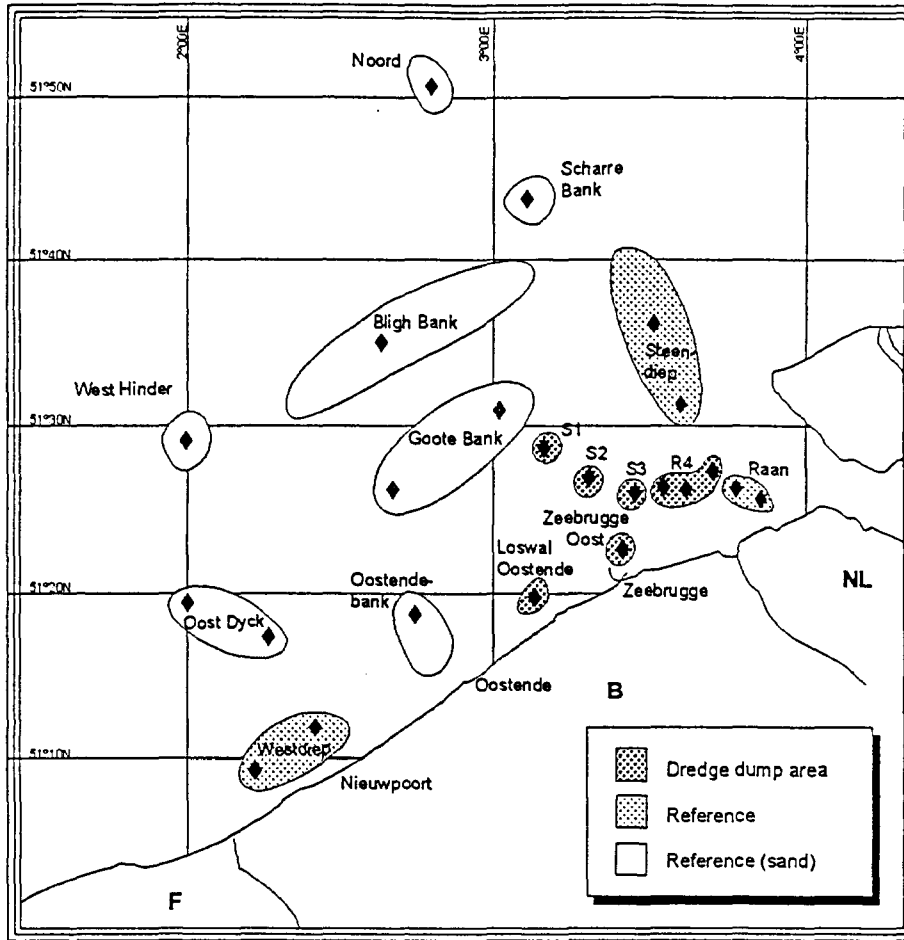


Figure 1 Sampling stations.

Two new pipelines crossing the Belgian continental shelf gave rise to new sampling and monitoring programmes.

Interconnector will cross from the United Kingdom to Zeebrugge. Monitoring of macrobenthos and demersal fishes is planned along the pipeline track. A considerable amount of sand and gravel (up to $1.6 \times 10^6 \text{ m}^3$) will be used to cover the pipeline south of the Goote Bank. The extraction areas will be monitored before and after extraction.

NORFRA (NORway-FRAnce) will cross from Norway to France. A similar study as for Interconnector will be carried out.

The map (Figure 2) shows the two planned pipelines, old and new sampling stations, and relevant sand banks.

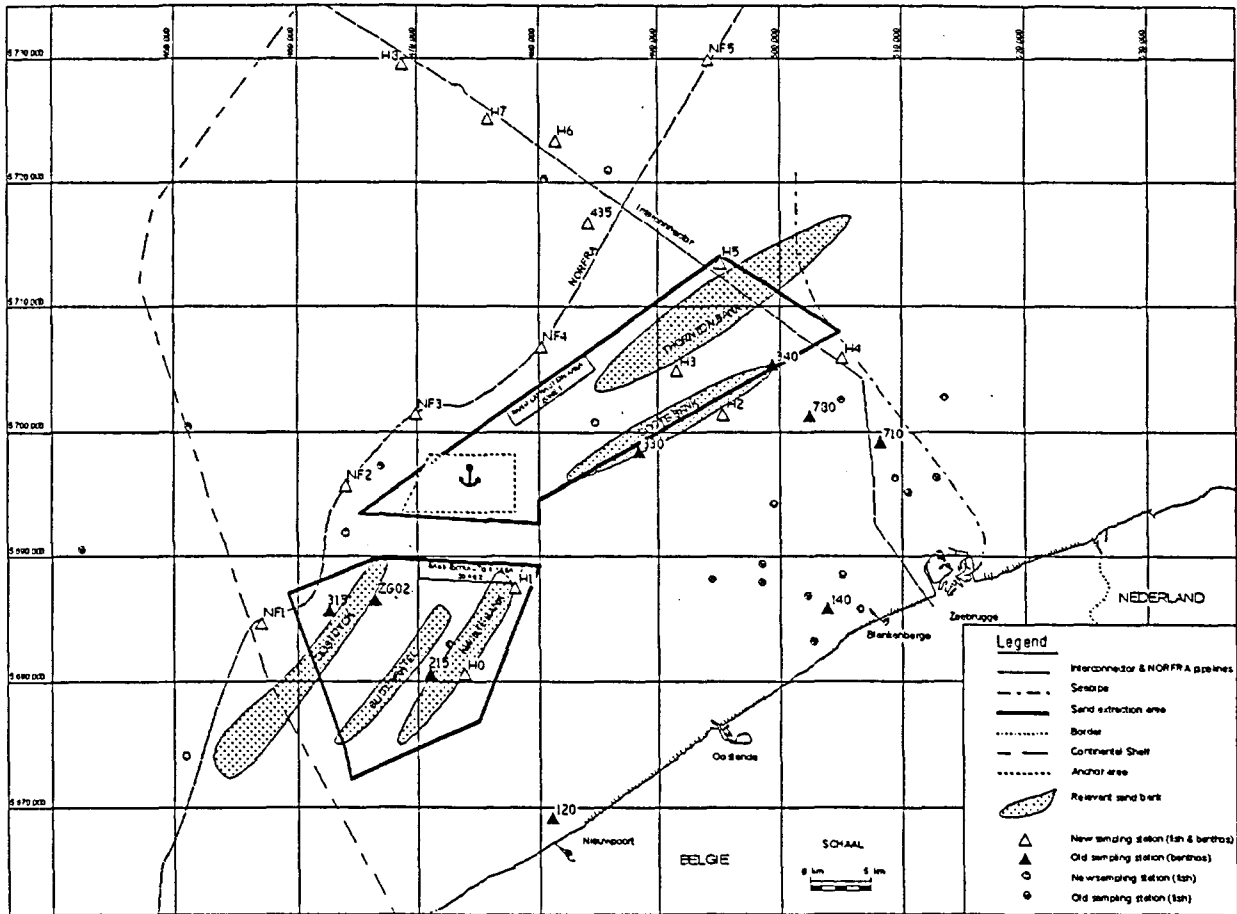


Figure 2 Map showing pipelines and sampling stations.