

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
THE EXPLORATION OF THE SEA**

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Demersal Fish Committee
Sess. T. Poster



**“BESSIE TURF” - A MACINTOSH APPLICATION FOR ON-BOARD
REGISTRATION OF SURVEY CATCHES**

by

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ABSTRACT

A computer program has been developed for storing information on length distributions of survey catches on a Macintosh computer. The use of this program on board of research vessels replaces scoring information with pencil and paper. The output comprises length distributions by subsample as well as raised length distributions of the total catch by species and haul, as spreadsheet formatted text files. The binary data files produced can be converted to any format required for further processing after the survey is completed. After a testing phase, this program is now routinely used during surveys on board Dutch research vessels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

On board research vessels catches are usually too large to measure every individual fish. Therefore the catches are sorted and split into subsamples, from which length measurements are taken. Often, more subsamples of the same species are processed for different size categories e.g.: all of the larger specimens may be measured, whereas a subsample may be taken from the smaller and more abundant ones. In the past, the fish lengths were scored on printed forms, after which the numbers scored had to be raised to numbers in the total catch, and subsequently added by species before they could be punched in the laboratory for further processing. In addition, preliminary figures for the catch of certain species within a specified size range had to be calculated on board for direct exchange between participating countries.

Depending on the type of survey, the numbers sometimes have to be expressed as numbers per standard fishing period, e.g. numbers per hour. Different types of survey, using different gear and different data processing requirements, may even be combined in one cruise. Traditionally, all the additional calculations on the length-frequency distributions were done on board using a pocket calculator, in between hauls or at the end of the day. Obviously, these procedures demand a lot of concentration from the staff involved. In practice, this often resulted in mistakes, particularly since the data forms were not always entirely legible (see genuine example in appendix).

After the survey, the length-frequency distribution and trawl lists were punched at the institute for further processing, stock assessments, and production of files for exchange with other countries within ICES. The data entry program running at our institute frequently "beeped" when it encountered errors in the length-frequencies, after which the original data had to be re-examined to recover the error. Some errors may never have been noticed...

All these problems led to the idea to automate the on-board registration and processing of length measurements. Initially, some attempts were made to use specially prepared spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel) for the purpose. However, these experiments were not very successful, because the spreadsheet program proved to be rather slow in calculating length-frequency distributions from lists of lengths entered, and because of the skill required to work with it. In July 1991, when we were on board R.V. Tridens for the annual echo survey for herring, this problem was brought to our attention. Since there was not much else to do, we decided to start writing a computer program especially for storing and processing length measurements on board, using a Macintosh computer.

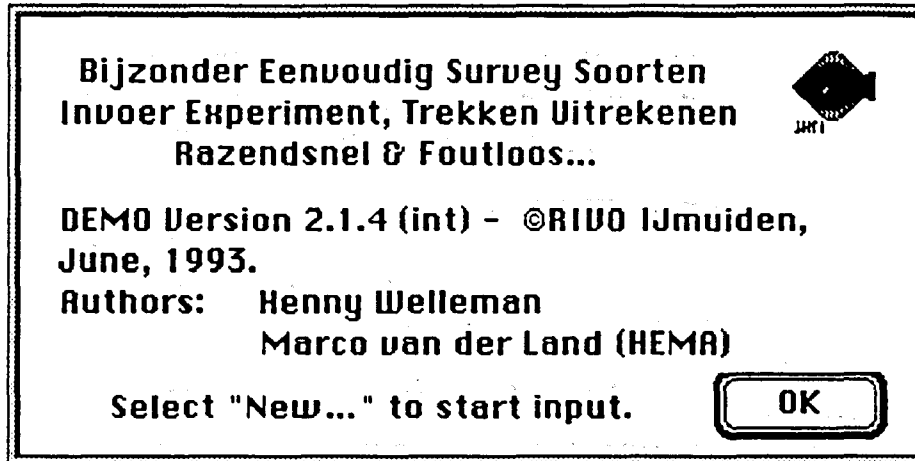
This paper describes first the program, in the form of a "quick reference manual". Some technical notes on its development follow, after which a description is given of the way in which the program is currently being used. A running version will be made available to the theme session.


2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM - QUICK REFERENCE MANUAL

Bessie Turf ^{HEMA} has been developed for Dutch research vessels. The version presented here is merely a 'demo', adapted for an international public by translating a couple of names and terms in the resource.

Note: we take no responsibility whatsoever when this version is used for more than demonstration purposes.

At start up the following text appears:



When running Bessie Turf, the top strip of the screen displays a menu bar that contains pull down menus. 'About Bessie' described above is found under the  menu item.



This reference manual will guide you quickly along the major program options, following the sequence of the menus and their commands. Mostly, the selection of a menu command results in the appearance of a dialog box. These boxes contain fields in which information is asked from the user, and different dialog boxes follow after each other.

^{HEMA} The association with the name of the fat female comic strip character, used as an acronym, can't be explained. We suggest you learn (double) Dutch.

2.1. The File menu

File	Edit	View
New...		⌘N
Open Datafile...		⌘O
Continue Input		⌘I
Close		⌘W
Save Raw List...		⌘R
Save Final List...		⌘F
<hr/>		
Print Final List...		⌘P
<hr/>		
Quit		⌘Q

Most of the actions within Bessie can be found in the pull down menu of File. It contains items for: creating new data files, reading existing data files and displaying them in the main dialog box, continuation of input after disposal of the main dialog box, converting data to text files and quitting.

- As an example we select **New...** from the File menu and the main dialog will appear.

New

Survey type: IYFS DFS SNS BTS

Convert data to one hour fishing

Haul duration: min


Date:

Vessel:

Haul number:

ICES rectangle:

VALID:



Haul characteristics (e.g., vessel, haul number, survey) can be entered in the main dialog box. The calculation and sampling methods of four different survey types are implemented in the program (radio buttons show which one is selected). Data conversion to one hour fishing is default for the IYFS and BTS and a check appears in front of the string **Convert data...** The conversion rule can be changed by clicking on the check box after the survey type is defined.

Date is an editable text field in which Bessie will generate today's date. Whenever a haul is invalid, make sure you remove the check after **VALID**.

From this main dialog box onwards, the catch data can be given to the program by choosing **Input Fish**, **Catch Weights** or **Bycatch - NO FISH!**. Important options like writing data from memory to hard disk are performed within this dialog box (after saving, the title of the window will change from 'New' to the file name).

- As an example, let's select **Input Fish** in the main dialog. A new dialog will appear.

Click fishname...

lumpsucker
mackerel
megrim
norway haddock
norway pout
pearlside
pilchard
pipefish (greater)
pipefish (Nilsson's)
pipefish (snake)
pipefishes
plaice (European)
pollack
poor cod
rat-fish / rabbit fish / rat tail
ray (cuckoo)

Enter Factor:


Selected species:
pipefish (greater)
(SYNGNATHUS ACUS)
8820020120

Cancel
OK

Fish species are shown in alphabetic order in a scrollable list. The selected species is displayed to the right of the species list supplemented with the Latin name and the NODC code.

The subsampling factor for the fish to be measured must be entered in the numeric field behind **Enter factor**. For a single species, different subsampling factors may be used. The program will use these subsampling factors when the total catch per species is calculated. Pressing the **OK** button results in a window for entering the length data of the fish measured.

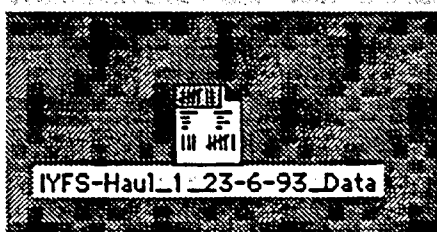
Length distribution	
Measured: 13	
15	1
23	2
25	5
26	2
28	1
30	1
34	1

pipefish (greater) n: 3	
Enter length:	
<input type="text" value="36"/>	<input type="button" value="Enter"/>
	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
	<input type="button" value="Remove All"/>
	<input type="button" value="OK"/>

This dialog box contains one numeric field in which the fish length (cm) can be typed. The value in the length field is processed whenever the enter key is pressed or clicked. The accepted lengths are displayed in the window Length distribution. Lengths can be removed simply by using Remove instead of Enter. Pressing Remove All does what it says: removal of the entire subsample.

Pressing the OK button will show the main dialog box again. The two other options, Catch Weights and Bycatch... NO FISH!, will reveal windows with text fields in which names, kilo's and/or numbers can be filled.

Since computer memory is vulnerable, interim savings to a Bessie data file is strongly recommended. The first time you choose Save data, the possibility is offered to change the data file's name or disk location. Bessie data files are binary files, which contain all the information of one haul. Only Bessie Turf can read these files, the structure of these data files will be explained later. The icon of the files is given in the following desktop snapshot:



Once the main dialog box has been dismissed by clicking Exit, the file menu options Save Raw List and Save Final List can be selected. These options produce export text files for other programs (for instance Microsoft Excel). The difference between them is that for the Final list all subsamples of one fish species are combined and converted to the catch per haul or fishing hour. In the Raw list all subsamples are printed separately, just as they were entered.

2.2. The Edit menu

Edit	View
Cut	⌘H
Copy	⌘C
Paste	⌘U

The Edit menu matches the Apple Macintosh standard. When System 7.0 or higher is used, the Edit menu allows you to Cut, Copy and Paste text within the dialog boxes. Otherwise, the Edit menu will not be available when dialog boxes are active.

2.3. The View menu

View	
lumpsucker	▶
plaice (European)	▶ H 72
pipefish (greater)	▶ H 2

The View menu is unique for Bessie Turf. It is used as a synopsis of fish species and subsampling factors entered for the particular haul one has selected. In the example haul above, the View menu shows that three species were entered (lumpsucker, plaice (European), and pipefish(greater)). A closer look with the mouse will reveal the different subsamples with associated factors entered. By selecting one, a confirmation dialog box will appear. This dialog box offers the possibility to change the sampling factor and it recalls the length distribution of the sample, which may also be modified.

3. DEVELOPMENT

3.1: Macintosh programs and programming

An application program for Macintosh computers should be seen as a collection of so-called "resources" of different types. Each resource contains a coded description of a part of the program: for example, the description of a dialog box and the items it contains, the description of a menu, a sound, version information or a list of strings (e.g. the species names in Bessie Turf). In fact, the compiled program code itself is stored in a number of resources. Basically, Macintosh programmers therefore need two tools: a resource editor for designing the various user interface elements (or stealing them from other programs: games are a great source of weird sounds), and a compiler program for converting the program code into a resource.

Several resource editors for Apple Macintosh are available, as well as compiler programs for various programming languages. We wrote the program in the "C" programming language, a language we were familiar with because of our involvement in the development of image processing applications at RIVO (in the fields of plankton and otolith analysis). We used the compiler program THINK C (version 5.0.4, from Symantec Corporation), and the resource editor ResEdit (version 2.1.1, from Apple Computer, Inc.).

From the "C" programming environment calls can be made to standard commands or routines which are built into each Macintosh computer, either in ROM (read only memory, stored in a chip) or in the system software. These commands and routines are documented in the "Inside Macintosh" series. Recently, Apple introduced a new version of the system software (version 7). Bessie Turf was designed to run under system software version 6, it will also function under the new system 7.

3.2: Data structure

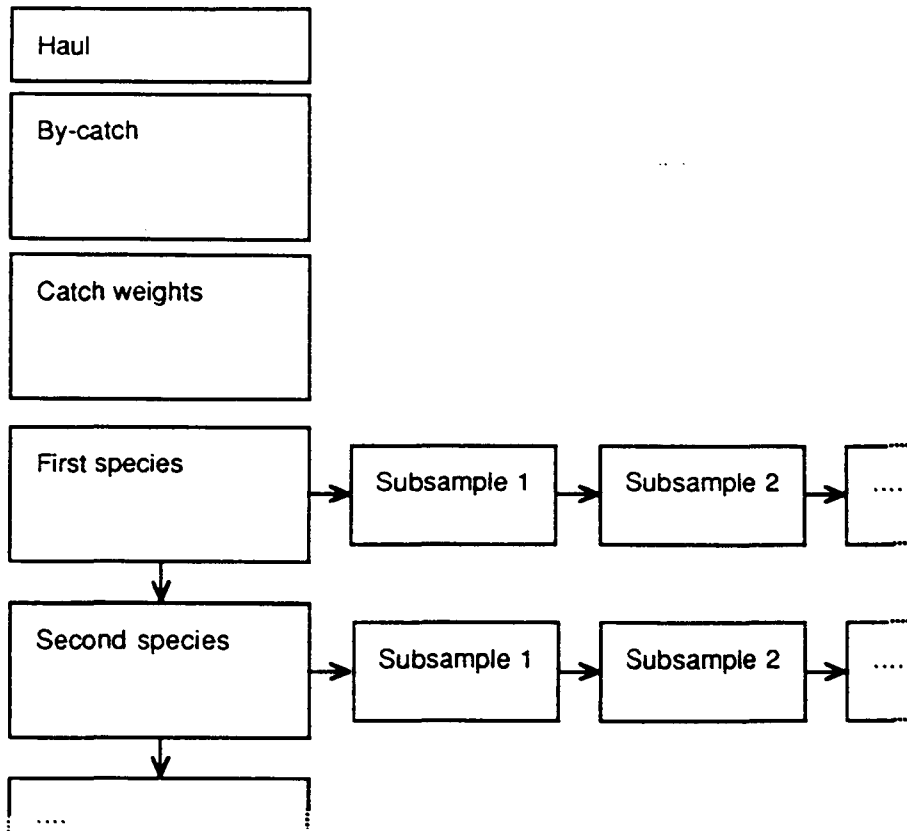
As described in the manual above, the data for each haul are stored in a data file in a compressed form, which cannot be displayed or printed. The program can only handle one haul at a time. The figure below is a schematic representation of the format of the data files, which is also the format in which the data are kept in the computer's memory when the program is running.

The first three records contain haul information, information on by-catch (non-fish) species, and catch weights. These three records are always present in a data file and have a fixed size. After these records, the actual length distribution data follow. For each species for which data are present, a species record is created, each species record linked with one or more subsample records. The contents of the haul, species and subsample records is given in the following table:

Record type		
Haul	Species	Subsample
- survey type	- name	- subsampling factor
- vessel's name	- Lmin / Lmax	
- date	- total number	
- haul number	- total number measured	- number measured
- haul duration	- total numbers per length	- numbers measured per
etc.	class	length class

The way in which the species and subsample records are kept is known as a "linked-list" structure. It would go beyond the scope of this paper to describe the structure in detail. In short: each species record contains a field representing the address (in memory) of the

next species, and a field representing the address of the first subsample record. Each subsample record includes a field representing the address of the next subsample. The main advantages of this linked-list structure are its efficient use of memory space (memory for a species or a subsample record is allocated only when needed) and its flexibility (species and subsamples can be added to or removed from the list at any time).



Schematic representation of the data structure used by Bessie Turf.

4. THE USE OF THE PROGRAM

After a testing phase, and initial hesitation from some senior scientists responsible for the surveys carried out by RIVO, Bessie Turf is now routinely used on board the Dutch research vessels. This chapter describes the procedures currently followed, on board and at the institute, and the advantages of using Bessie Turf.

4.1 On board

When the catch is brought on board, it is first sorted on the conveyor belt and subsequently laid out subsample by subsample and marked with the associated factor (a subsample in this context can also be the total catch for a certain species). One of the staff then washes his or her hands and takes a seat behind the computer in a dry area of the ship. Someone else measures the fish which are lying ready. Both people are communicating through head-sets, headphones and microphones, connected by wire.

After all the fish have been measured, Bessie Turf provides the so-called raw and final lists (the data in readable form), which are then both printed on an ink-jet printer (Hewlett-Packard Deskwriter 500). By doing this immediately after each haul, and before the fish are discarded, the data are always safely printed on paper in case anything might go wrong with the computer, and the files are also backed up on diskettes. After printing, the raw and final lists may be deleted because they can always be generated again by Bessie Turf. The binary data file must always be kept.

4.2. At home

After the survey, the data have to be fed into the RIVO's central computer system (VAX). In the past, the data had to be typed into the computer at this stage, but now the Bessie Turf data files are converted into a format, which can be read by the VAX-based programs for further processing. For this conversion, a separate program was developed. Using this conversion utility, it takes about ten minutes before the results of a 50-haul survey are ready for transfer.

4.3. Advantages

The advantages of using a program especially designed for the task of storing and processing length distribution data are quite clear. There are much less errors in calculating length distributions for the total catch from subsamples, and this step does not take any time any-more. The lists produced are readable (see appendix) and the data are available for further processing immediately after the survey. Unique names and obligatory subsampling factors remove some uncertainties that exist in respect of hand written information, which are often in shorthand (e.g. gurnard instead of red or grey gurnard)

4.4. Disadvantages

There are no apparent disadvantages, with one exception: the data typist cannot oversee what is done by the person identifying and measuring the fish. Therefore a second check, which may prevent possible mis-identifications or overlooking individual fish, is lacking. In practice this is solved by assigning a general overview task to another staff member during this stage.

5. RIVO SURVEY SUITE

Bessie Turf is one in a series (suite) of programs in use or under development at RIVO for facilitating the collection, processing and display of survey data using Macintosh computers.

"NeptuNet" is used for logging data from R.V. Tridens' central computer system (Hydraut). The data provided by Hydraut include nautical information, such as the ship's position, course, speed, air and water temperatures, etc.

"FishMap" is a program designed to display and print maps of the geographical distribution of fish species. In practice, it could be used to display any kind of numerical data, fitting into (sub-divisions of) ICES statistical rectangles. This program will also be demonstrated in this theme session.

Currently, a prototype of a program for processing data on sex, maturity, age, length and weight of fish on board research vessels is nearing its completion. In its use, this program will be similar to Bessie Turf.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bessie Turf would not have existed without Martin Warmerdam, who made us do it, and Frank Storbeck, who told us how to. Niels Daan critically read the manuscript and suggested some valuable additions.

APPENDIX

Example output from Bessie Turf, and an old IYFS form.

IYFS

Datum: 24-8-90 Schip: MY

Trek: 13

Kwadrant:

43 F7

KAB.		SCHELVIS		WIJTING		MAKR.		KEVER		HARING	
NT 386	NT 7292	NT 2306	NT 2	NT 20	NT	NT 6214					
Nm 67	Nm 138	Nm 296	Nm 10	Nm	Nm	Nm 54					
Lmi 7	Lmi 8	Lmi 6	Lmi 29	Lmi	Lmi	Lmi 12					
Lma 55	Lma 49	Lma 39	Lma 36	Lma	Lma	Lma 28					
x9x/1x	x9/36x	x72 9x/x1	x	x	x	x72/1x					
4		4		4		45					
5		5		5		50					
6		6		6		5					
7	18	7		7		60					
8		8		8		5					
9		9		9		70					
10	90	10		10		5					
11	126	11		11		80					
12	18	12		12		5					
13	54	13		13		90					
14		14		14		5					
15		15		15		100					
16		16		16		5					
17		17		17		110					
18		18		18		5					
19		19		19		120					
20		20		20		5					
21		21		21		130					
22		22		22		5					
23		23		23		140					
24	2	24		24		5					
25		25		25		150					
26		26		26		5					
27		27		27		160					
28		28		28		5					
29		29		29		170					
30		30		30		5					
31		31		31		180					
32		32		32		5					
33		33		33		190					
34		34		34		5					
35		35		35		200					
36		36		36		5					
37		37		37		210					
38		38		38		5					
39		39		39		220					
40		40		40		5					
41		41		41		230					
42		42		42		5					
43		43		43		240					
44		44		44		5					
45		45		45		250					
46		46		46		5					
47		47		47		260					
48		48		48		5					
49		49		49		270					
50		50		50		5					
51		51		51		280					
52		52		52		5					
53		53		53		290					
54		54		54		5					
55		55		55		300					
56		56		56		5					
57		57		57		310					
58		58		58		5					
59		59		59		320					
60-64		60		60		5					
65-69		61		61		330					
70-74		62		62		5					
75-79						340					
80-84						5					
85-89						350					
90-94						5					
95-99						360					
100-104						5					
105-109						370					
110-114						5					
115-119						380					
120-124						5					

VISSOORT N MANDEN á kg

BIJYANGST

Aantal soorten: 12

Schm G. Penn Houtm h. Schri. SCHOLE SCHAR TANGSCHAR DIVIS

NT	NT	NT 1692	NT 34	NT 8	NT 72	NT 34	NT 6	NT 20	NT 9
Nm	Nm	Nm 47	Nm 17	Nm 4	Nm 4	Nm 17	Nm 3	Nm 10	Nm 4
Lm	Lm	Lm 8	Lm 13	Lm 23	Lm 13	Lm 27	Lm 17	Lm 14	Lm 10
Lma	Lma	Lma 27	Lma 31	Lma 23	Lma 23	Lma 40	Lma 22	Lma 36	Lma 22
x	x	x 18	x 1	x 1	x 9	x 1	x 1	x 1	x 1
4	4								
5	5								
6	6								
7	7								
8	8	36							
9	9								
10	10								
11	11	108							
12	12	108							
13	13	144			1 18				
14	14	144							2
15	15	144							
16	16	144							1 2
17	17	144							
18	18	22	4		1 18				1 2
19	19	252	2						1 2
20	20	108	2						2
21	21	144	6						
22	22	144	8		1 18				2
23	23	168	8		1 18				2
24	24	36	2						
25	25	1	2						2
26	26								
27	27	36	4			2	1	2	4
28	28					2			
29	29					6			
30	30								
31	31								
32	32					8	11	4	4
33	33				1 2				
34	34				1 2				2
35	35								
36	36				1 2				2
37	37								
38	38				1 2				
39	39								
40	40								
41	41					2			
42	42								
43	43								
44	44								
45	45								
46	46								
47	47								
48	48								
49	49								
50	50								
51	51								
52	52								
53	53								
54	54								
55	55								
56	56								
57	57								
58	58								
59	59								
60-65	60								
65-70	65								
70-75	70								
75-80	75								
80-85	80								
85-90	85								
90-95	90								
95-100	95								
100-105	100								
105-110	105								
110-115	110								
115-120	115								
120-124	120								

SOORTEN	tot	N gem.	LENGTE
waarvan 1 of 2 gevangen			
ZEEWOLF x 1	2	1	59
2 v. Koolvis	4	2	30, 30
Tandot	2	1	61
Heek	6	3	49, 49, 50

RESTANT (geen vis!!!!)

	stuks	liter		stuks	liter
X			X		
X			X		
X			X		
X			X		

Survey	Datum	Schep	Trek	Trekduur	Kwadrent				
IVFS	24- 8-90	Troens		13.30 min	43F7				
PRAL		Hoofdsorten	AANTAL/UUR						
Soort	kabelsaw	ischaivis	wijfing	malreel	Soort	haning			
Nt	406	7292	23062	20	Nt	6214			
Nm	67	138	296	10	Nm	54			
Lm	7	8	6	29	Lm	12			
Ma	55	49	38	36	Ma	28			
1						0.5			
2						1			
3						1.5			
4						2			
5						2.5			
6				288		3			
7	18		1296			3.5			
8		72	2592			4			
9			4896			4.5			
10	90		5184			5			
11	126	504	3744			5.5			
12	18	576	1152			6			
13	54	1728	864			6.5			
14		1224	144			7			
15		1368				7.5			
16		576	144			8			
17		504				8.5			
18		90	18			9			
19			18			9.5			
20		18	36			10			
21			198			10.5			
22			504			11			
23			522			11.5			
24	2		720			12	144		
25		18	468			12.5	432		
26	2		108			13	1152		
27	8	36	90			13.5	1440		
28	4	108				14	1008		
29	20	54	54	4		14.5	720		
30	20	144	18	2		15	432		
31	18	54		2		15.5	288		
32	2	56		2		16	144		
33	4	92		4		16.5			
34	2	20				17			
35		22		2		17.5			
36	4	20		4		18	288		
37			2			18.5			
38						19			
39		2	2			19.5			
40		2				20			
41	2	2				20.5	144		
42						21			
43						21.5			
44						22			
45	2					22.5			
46						23			
47	2					23.5			
48	2					24	2		
49		2				24.5			
50						25			
51						25.5			
52	2					26	4		
53						26.5			
54	2					27	10		
55	2					27.5	2		
56						28	4		
57						28.5			
58						29			
59						29.5			
60						30			
65						30.5			
70						31			
75						31.5			
80						32			
85						32.5			
90						33			
95						33.5			
100						34			
105						34.5			
110						35			
115						35.5			
120						36			
125						36.5			
130						37			
135						37.5			
140						38			
SOORT	N MANDEN	IKILOS							

Survey	Datum	Schip	Trek	Trekduur	Koördinat							
NYFS	24- 8-90	Tridans		13:30 min	43F7							
RYAL	Bycatch	N soorten	11 in AANTAL/UR									
Soort	heek	tarbot	koornvis (zwarte zeevolf)	pitvis	longschar	schol	lange schar	hormmakreel	poon (grauwe schar)			
Nr	5	2	4	2	8	20	34	72	8	34	1698	
Nm	3	1	2	1	4	10	17	4	4	17	50	
Lm	49	60	30	59	16	14	27	13	33	18	8	
Lma	50	60	30	59	22	36	40	23	38	31	32	
1												
2												
3												
4												
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