

FOREWORD

All member countries but one, participating in the Shellfish Committee Activities provided input on research and assessment activities. Survey activities of both crustaceans and molluscs continue to play a very important rôle in the activities of member countries. Research and development activities have otherwise continued to emphasise the recently implemented geostatistical survey techniques. These methods are now being compared and contrasted with the classically used ones, e.g. stratified random sampling. Attention has also been aimed at bringing multivariate statistical techniques (e.g. principal components analysis, correspondence analysis) into operation to determine patterns and trends in catch and demographic data. Multivariate techniques appear particularly promising where uni- or bivariate methods have failed to provide satisfactory results. Further attention has been paid towards developing production, productivity, and energy budget models at the individual and population levels; these complement efforts aimed at understanding life history trends relative to abiotic and biotic environmental factors. Two ICES Shellfish Workshops were arranged for 1989, as a prelude to the 1990 ICES Symposium on "Shellfish Life Histories and Shellfishery Models".

CRUSTACEA

Belgium - Belgique

(F. Redant)

Crangon Crangon

The biennial Young Fish and Brown Shrimp Surveys (in spring and autumn) were continued in 1988. These investigations included faunistic and quantitative analyses of the epibenthic and demersal fauna in the Belgian coastal waters. The surveys consisted of 15 minutes' hauls with a small meshed beam trawl at about 35 fixed sampling stations in an area within 10 miles off the Belgian coast.

Nephrops norvegicus

The market sampling programme on the Norway lobster, Nephrops norvegicus, was continued, in order to detect possible long-term changes in the catch and landing composition (length-frequency distributions and sex-ratio) and the exploitation pattern of the Norway lobster in the Central North Sea (Botney Gut - Silver Pit stock).

A two years' study on the development of the abdominal eggs in relation to the size of the berried females was concluded in 1988. These investigations provided further evidence on the occurrence of biennial spawning amongst Nephrops in the Central North Sea.