

BELGIUM

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In the field of fuel-saving studies, commercial fishing gear has been adapted and new types of fishing nets have been designed to reduce the energy consumption.

The application of a variation of the "Rock-Hopper" gear, rigged on a semi-pelagic net for the inshore fishery on roundfish, has been considered.

Comparative fishing experiments have been carried out with beam trawls using a combination of a chain mat and flip-up ropes, towed from a 1200 hp beam trawler.

For the purpose of reducing the drag of the gear, further experiments have been carried out with electrified beam trawls. An underwater pulse generator has been designed for use on the coastal fishery. Work has been done on the cable winch required in electric fishing. In this case the cable has four internal conductors.

In order to increase safety on board beam trawlers, a new overload protection system was tested on board a 900 hp vessel. The system automatically releases the towing cable if a preset overload occurs in one of the warps, or if a given load difference between the two warps is detected, or in the event of a sudden, well-defined increase in load.

On a fishing vessel of 500 hp, experiments were carried out to test a semi-pelagic net as a bottom pair-trawl for roundfish. A four panel-trawl for demersal fishing has been studied on the research vessel "Belgica".

Research on the selectivity of the beam trawl used in coastal fisheries for sole was begun. Diamond and square codend meshes were tested using both the parallel haul and the covered codend methods.

A laboratory has been developed to test the shrinkage of netting under tension due to the ingress of sand between the twine fibres.