Stock Annex: Smalls Nephrops FU22

Stock specific documentation of standard assessment procedures used by ICES.

Stock Smalls Nephrops (FU22)

Date May 2015 (WGCSE 2015)

Revised by Jennifer Doyle.

A. General

A.1. Stock definition

Nephrops is limited to muddy habitat, and requires sediment with a silt and clay content of between 10–100% to excavate its burrows, and this means that the distribution of suitable sediment defines the species distribution. The Smalls Nephrops stock (FU22) covers ICES rectangles 31–32E3, 31–32E4 within 7.fg. Adult Nephrops probably only undertake very small scale movements (a few 100 m). Recent studies in larval tracking models show that larval transfer may occur between the separate mud patches in the Celtic sea as some patches are donors of larvae to adjacent grounds, For the Smalls some larval are donated to the Labadie but most are retained on the Smalls ground (O'Sullivan et al., 2015). Figure A.1.1. shows the proportion of Nephrops in the Irish landings overlaid on international OTB effort and the area of the Smalls is highly visible.

The ground polygon has been defined using integrated VMS data (2008–2010) linked to logbooks. The area is calculated using different projections in ArcGIS and the average value is taken as the final area (Table A.1.1.). The shapefiles of the FU17 ground are available at: http://www.isde.ie and also http://data.marine.ie/downloads/fisheries/NephropsGrounds.zip

A.2. Fishery

Ireland

The Irish fleet has been the main participant in this fishery in recent years. Vessels >18 m target *Nephrops* in several other FUs to optimize catch rates depending on tides and weather. These larger vessels freeze the catches at sea and have become increasingly prevalent since 2006.

France

French trawlers operating in this area fish also in the Celtic Sea (FU22 and FU20–21) and switch to FU19 depending on weather conditions. The fleet operating here has dwindled since the 1990s.

UK

Landings are minor from this FU coming mainly from the UK Northern Ireland fleet.

Belgium

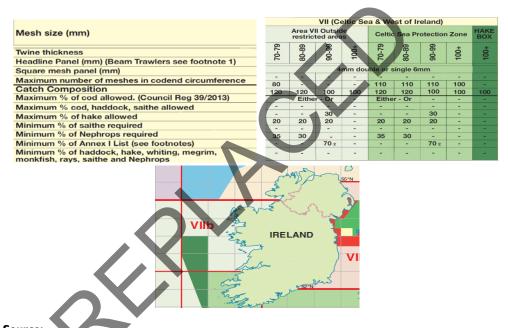
Landings are minor from this FU.

Technical Measures

The following TCMs are in place for *Nephrops* in VII (excluding VIIa) after EC 850/9 in operation since 2000:Minimum Landing Sizes (MLS); total length >85 mm, carapace length >25 mm, tail length >46 mm. This regulation is applied by the Irish and UK fleets whereas a more restrictive regulation adopted by the French Producers' Organisations (35 mm CL i.e. 11.5 cm total length) is applied by the French trawlers.

The French fleet uses a mesh size of 100 mm for codend since January 2000 (in order to not be constrained by bycatch composition).

The mesh size, catch composition and square mesh panel requirements in the Celtic Sea after EU 737/2012 are shown below in the table and maps below. The majority of Irish *Nephrops* vessels operating in the area use 70–89 mm mesh and are obliged to have a 120 mm square mesh panel (SMP) since 2012. Some Irish vessels and most French *Nephrops* vessels use >100 mm codend mesh with a 100 mm SMP.



Source: http://www.blm.ie/media/bim/content/downloads/BIM%20Fisheries%20Management%20Chart%202015.pdf

A.3. Ecosystem aspects

Physical oceanography

The larval tracking study has shown that in the Celtic Sea fast moving water is apparent around the southwest coast of Ireland in the summer months and water velocity increases moving south around the west coast of Ireland and clockwise along the south coast. Surface water consistently moves quickly through the northern channel of the Irish Sea and into the Clyde and through Georges Channel in the south. This is forced by strong tides in both areas (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2015).

Sediment distribution

Information on the spatial extent of the sediment suitable for *Nephrops* from UWTV surveys, seabed mapping programmes and the fishing industry is growing. There is insufficient sediment to explore relationships between burrow density and sediment

for these *Nephrops* grounds and to provide detailed sediment maps. Table A.3.1. shows number of sediment samples collected to date during UWTV surveys.

Bathymetry

In 2006 a multibeam echosounder was used to collect bathymetric and sediment hardeness data during the UWTV survey. Stations depths ranged from 73 m to 127 m in the deeper channels (Figure A.3.1). Backscatter data were more or less uniform denoting a soft type sediment (light grey colour) which was verified as a mud substrate from the video (Figure A.3.2).

B. Data

B.1. Commercial catch

Commercial landings data are supplied by Ireland, France, UK and recently Belgium.

The quality of historic landings data is not well known but they are perceived to be reasonably accurate. Irish landings data are available from 1989. The time-series of French landings commences in the late 1980s. UK landings are also available from 1989.

Landings statistics for the Irish fleet are obtained from EU logbooks since 1995. Vessels record daily retained catches in operations and make a declaration of total landings on return to port. Since 2012, most vessels in the fleet have been using electronic logbooks (EC Regulation 1224 of 2009 and 404 of 2011). Vessels are required to electronically report catches onboard in each 24 hour period.

Similarly landings from UK Scotland and England, Wales and Northern Ireland are available from the logbooks. Landings from France and Belgum are obtained from EU logbooks.

Figure B.1.1 shows that the Irish landings from this FU come mainly from ICES statistical rectangle 31E3.

B.2. Sampling Data

Since 2002 a new catch self-sampling programme was put in place. This involves unsorted catch and discard samples being provided by vessels or collected by observers at sea on discard trips. The catch sample is partitioned into landings and discards using an on-board discard selection ogive derived for the discard samples (Table B.2.1). Sampling effort is stratified monthly but quarterly aggregations are used to derive length distributions.

The sampling intensity and coverage has varied over the time-series, but in recent years has been good. The quality of the sampling has been assessed in terms of precision and accuracy and presented in Annex 2 and 3 of the 2015 data call. Figure B.2.1 shows the sampling levels over the time-series.

Fish and other bycatches in the fishery have been collected by on-board observers since 1994. Discarding by the Irish *Nephrops* trawl fleet is around 38% of the total catch by weight . The main discards are small whole *Nephrops*. The main fish species discarded are whiting, haddock, and dogfish (Anon, 2011).

B.3. Biological

Biological parameters for this stock are outlined in Table B.3.

Length-weight

The annual mean weight in the landings is calculated from the length–frequency data and a length–weight relationship from studies on Scottish stocks by Pope and Thomas (1955). Mean weight by sex (Figure B.3.1) shows a cyclical trend for the females which is linked to behaviour. Trends in mean weight by sex is calculated using a loess smoother.

Natural mortality

A natural mortality rate of 0.3 was assumed for all length classes and years for males and immature females, with a value of 0.2 for mature females. The lower value for mature females reflects the reduced burrow emergence while ovigerous and hence an assumed reduction in predation. The accuracy of these assumptions is unknown but the same assumptions are made for most *Nephrops* stocks (WKNEPH 2009; 2013a).

Maturity

Female

The L₅₀ for female maturity was estimated at 22 mm was based Irish sampling in FU22 and reported to WKNEPH 2006 (ICES, 2006), Figure B.3.3.

Discard survival

Given the trip durations (5–7 days typically) and behaviour of this fleet means the majority of discards are returned to the sea over suitable sediment. The proportion scavenged by birds is probably quite low. Tow durations, volume of catches, prolonged sorting on deck and moderate density of *Nephrops* on the seabed probably results in relatively low discard survival. This is assumed to be around 25% in line with other *Nephrops* stocks in the Celtic Sea.

B.4. Surveys

UWTV Survey

In 2006 Ireland conducted the first underwater television survey (UWTV) in FU22. The surveys were based on a randomised fixed grid design. Since 2012 a reduced isometric grid has been employed which results in CV or RSE well below 20% which is in line with SGNEPS recommendation of an acceptable precision level for UWTV survey estimates of abundance. The methods used during the survey were similar to those employed for UWTV surveys of *Nephrops* stocks around Ireland and elsewhere and are documented by WKNEPHTV (ICES, 2007), SGNEPS (ICES, 2009; 2010; 2012) and WGNEPS (2013b; 2014). Up to date UWTV survey reports are available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10793/919

UWTV Survey relative to absolute conversion factors

In order to use the survey abundance estimate as an absolute it is necessary to correct for potential biases. For FU22 the field of view of the camera was 0.75 m and expert judgment of the mean burrow diameter was in the range of 0.25–0.4 m. The edge effect is estimated at 1.35 which is similar to FUs of moderate density. In future it may become possible to quantitatively estimate burrow diameter from mosaics of the footage from this and other areas. Burrow detection rates were thought to be relatively high due to good water clarity and few other burrow systems of similar size. Burrow identification could be slightly overestimated since a few fish and crab species were

observed at burrow entrances. The proposed cumulative correction factor (check) for the area was 1.3 (Table below). When compared to with the correction factors applied in other areas it is quite close to the average used on other grounds.

The biases associated with the estimates of Nephrops abundance in FU22 are:

	Established	Edge effect	detection rate	species identification	occupancy	Cumulative blas
FU22: Smalls	2011	1.35	0.9	1.05	1	1.3

IBTS Groundfish Survey

There are two IBTS-GFS catching *Nephrops* in FU19: Irish groundfish survey-Q4: IGFS-WIBTS-Q4 commenced in 2003 (Stokes *et al.,* 2014) and French groundfish survey EVHOE-WIBTS-Q4 since 1997. These data are useful as additional indicators of trends in recruitment, mean weight and sex ratio for this *Nephrops* stock. Thse are not used in the assessment but for data exploration. Figure B.4.1 displays IGFS stations with *Nephrops* catches in FU22. Figure B.4.2 and B.4.3 shows the mean weight (grs) by sex from IGFS and EVHOE surveys in the Celtic Sea.

B.5. Commercial cpue

Disaggregated effort and lpue data are available for the Irish *Nephrops* directed fleet in FU22 from 1995–2014 for all vessels >18 metres total length. The lpue and effort-series is based on the same criteria for FU15, 16, 17, 22 and 20–21 (30% landings threshold) and will be contingent on the accuracy of landings data reported in logbooks. Effort and lpue data are not standardised, and hence do not take into account vessel capabilities, efficiency, seasonality or other factors that may bias perception of lpue abundance trend over the longer term. These data are not used in the assessment. WGCSE 2015 agreed that effort data in Kw days should be presented as these data are more informative than uncorrected lpue data.

C. Assessment: data and method

Model used: UWTV Based Approach to generate catch options.

Software used: separable SCA model Bell analysis in r.

At WGCSE 2011, in response to the recommendations of WKFRAME (2010), the Bell/Dobby combined sex–length cohort analysis (LCA) model (WKNEPH, 2009) was used to determine Harvest Rates associated with fishing at various potential Fmsy proxies i.e. F35%SPR, F0.1 and Fmax. This approach has previously been applied to all other *Nephrops* stocks with UWTV and catch sampling data. Length distributions for male and female landings and discards were available for Irish sampling from FU22 (Smalls) from 2003–2010 and the reference period 2008–2010 were used as input to the SCA model. The length distributions in the reference period were very stable. Other SCA inputs such as growth parameters and discard survival were all taken from the stock annex.

D. Catch option table based on UWTV surveys

- 1) Survey indices are worked up annually resulting in the TV index.
- 2) Comment if some patches not surveyed (take previous years estimate or average if time-series available).

3) Adjust the annual survey index by the bias correction factor to calculate the adjusted survey index.

- 4) Generate mean weight in landings and discards. Check the time-series of mean catch weights for evidence of changes in the most recent period. If there is no firm evidence of a recent change in mean weight then use a three year average. It may be necessary to deviate from this procedure in cases where there are changes to mean weight related to recruitment or sampling issues.
- 5) The last three years should be used for estimating the discard proportion in number and the dead discard rate.
- 6) The catch option table will include the harvest ratios associated with fishing at combined sex F_{0.1}, F_{35%SpR} and F_{MAX}.
- 7) Multiply the adjusted survey abundance by the harvest ratios to give the number of total removals.
- 8) Create a landings number by applying the discard ratio (dead discard rate) and multiply by the mean weight of landings to calculated a landings biomass.
- 9) Discards are calculated by applying 1- the discard ratio and multiply by the mean weight of discards. Discards are apportioned into dead and surviving discard components.
- 10) Produce landings biomass by applying mean weight.
- 11) In the context of the Landings Obligation all discards are assumed to be landed so discard survival is assumed to be zero and catch options are calculated on that basis. This will need to be kept under review as the LO is implemented.

E. Medium-term projections

None presented.

F. Long-term projections

None presented.

G. FMSY reference points

The reference points derived by WKMSYRef4 (ICES, 2016d; 2016e) for FU22 are updated on the basis of an average of estimated FMSY proxy harvest rates over a period of years, this corresponds more closely to the methodology for finfish. In cases where there is a clear trend in the values a five year average was chosen. Similarly, the five year average of the F at 95% of the YPR obtained at the FMSY proxy reference point was proposed as the FMSY lower bound and the five year average of the F above FMAX that leads to YPR of 95% of the maximum as the upper bound. Using an average value also has the advantage of reducing the effect of any unusually high or low estimates of the FMSY proxy which occasionally appear.

This stock previously did not have MSY $B_{trigger}$ specified ,the time-series and range of indicator biomass is also limited such that direct use of B_{loss} is considered too close to equilibrium biomass. The workshop proposed to use the 5% interval on the probability distribution of indicator biomass assuming a normal distribution, which is analogous to the 5% on B_{MSY} proposed for finfish stocks assuming these *Nephrops* FU have been

exploited at a rate close to near HR $_{MSY}$. The MSY $B_{trigger}$ for FU22 is 937 million individuals rounded to 900 million.

Stock code	MSY Flower*	F _{MSY} *	MSY Fupper* with AR	MSY B _{trigger}	MSY Fupper* with no AR
nep-22	10.2%	12.8%	12.8%	990***	12.8%

^{*} Harvest rate (HR).

H. Other issues

H.1. Historical overview of previous assessment methods

WGCSE 2011

Model used: UWTV Based Approach to generate catch options.

Software used: separable SCA model Bell analysis in r.

In response to the recommendations of WKFRAME (2010), the Bell/Dobby combined sex-length cohort analysis (LCA) model (WKNEPH, 2009) was used to determine Harvest Rates associated with fishing at various potential FMSY proxies i.e. F35%SPR, F0.1 and FMAX. This approach has previously been applied to all other *Nephrops* stocks with UWTV and catch sampling data. Length distributions for male and female landings and discards were available for Irish sampling from FU22 (Smalls) from 2003–2010 and the reference period 2008–2010 were used as input to the SCA model. The length distributions in the reference period were very stable. Other SCA inputs such as growth parameters and discard survival were all taken from the stock annex.

The results of the final SCA model carried out at WGCSE 2011 are given in the text table below. The F multipliers required to achieve the potential FMSY proxies, the harvest rates that correspond to those multipliers and the resulting level of spawner per recruit as a percentage of the virgin level.

		F _{BAR} 20	0-40 mm	Harvest	SPR	
		Female	Male	Rates	Female	Male
F _{0.1}	Combined	0.08	0.15	7.5%	57.2%	37.9%
	Female	0.13	0.26	10.9%	45.2%	25.5%
	Male	0.06	0.13	6.5%	61.5%	42.8%
F _{35%SPR}	Combined	0.13	0.26	10.9%	45.2%	25.5%
	Female	0.22	0.43	15.3%	34.1%	15.9%
	Male	0.09	0.18	8.4%	53.5%	33.9%
F _{MAX}	Combined	0.15	0.31	12.3%	41.2%	21.8%
	Female	0.28	0.56	17.7%	29.5%	12.6%
	Male	0.13	0.26	10.9%	45.2%	25.5%

^{***} Abundance in millions.

WGCSE took into account the following considerations based on the check list presented in Section 2.2:

- Compared to other *Nephrops* fisheries in the ICES area the population density of FU22 is the moderate ~0.5/m². These moderate densities have been fairly consistent throughout time and space (Figure 7.7.5) with the exception of 2006 when strong recruitment was observed. The time-series of UWTV estimates is short.
- The biological parameters in the Celtic Sea are rather old indicating slightly faster growth in males than in other areas. Natural mortality estimates are assumed in line with other stocks.
- Fishery operates throughout the year but there has been some variability in the seasonality depending on *Nephrops* emergence.
- The observed harvest rate has fluctuated over the time-series but is relatively stable over the most recent years.
- Overall the indicators suggest that the adult stock has been relatively stable or increasing for more than a decade.

WGCSE 2011 concluded that the default proxy of combined sex $F_{35\%Spr}$ is appropriate as an F_{MSY} proxy. This corresponds to a harvest rate of 10.9%, this is in line with several other stocks in the remit of this WG. Fishing at the combined sex $F_{35\%Spr}$ is predicted to keep the SPR for both sexes >25% and should deliver long-term yield with a low probability of recruitment over-fishing. No $B_{trigger}$ can be proposed given the shortness of the UWTV series although other indicators suggest that the stock is currently at a high level relative to the past.

Table H.1 below gives the von Bertalanffy growth parameters, natural mortality and weight–length parameters by sex for various *Nephrops* stocks.

FU	Ground	VBK. Female	L.INF. Female	M. Female	VBK. Male	L.INF. Male	M. Male	a. Female	b. Female	a. Male	b. Male	L50 Female maturity
6	Farn Deeps	0.06	58	0.2	0.16	66	0.3	0.00091	2,895	0.00038	3.17	25
7	Fladen	0.1	56	0.2	0.16	66	0.3	0.00074	2.91	0.00028	3.24	25
8	Firth of Forth	0.065	58	0.2	0.163	66	0.3	0.00085	2.91	0.00028	3.24	26
9	Moray Firth	0.06	56	0.2	0.165	62	0.3	0.00074	2.91	0.00028	3.24	
11	North Minch	0.06	60	0.2	0.16	70	0.3	0.00074	2.91	0.00028	3.24	
12	South Minch	0.06	59	0.2	0.16	66	0.3	0.00074	2.91	0.00028	3.24	
13	Clyde	0.06	60	0.2	0.16	73	0.3	0.00074	2.91	0.00028	3.24	
15	western Irish Sea	0.1	56	0.2	0.16	60	0.3	0.00068	2.96	0.00032	3.21	24
14	eastern Irish Sea	0.1	56	0.2	0.16	60	0.3	0.00068	2.95	0.00032	3.21	24
17	Aran	0.1	56	0.2	0.16	60	0.3	0.000684	2.963	0.000322	3.207	22
16	Porcupine	0.16	50	0.2	0.14	75	0.2	0.00009	3.55	0.00009	3.55	26.2
19	S&SW coast Ireland	0.8	56	0.2	0.16	60	0.3	0.000684	2.963	0.000322	3.207	
22	Smalls	0.1	49	0.2	0.17	68	0.3	0.000684	2.963	0.000322	3.207	22

WG Nephrops 2003

Age-structured XSA assessment for this stock was carried *Nephrops* WG in 2003 (ICES, 2003). The results were considered unreliable for several reasons most importantly; inadequate historical sampling of catch, growth and natural mortality assumptions and concern about accuracy of tuning data. Since then the focus has been on developing a time-series of UWTV survey data as the basis of assessment and advice for this stock.

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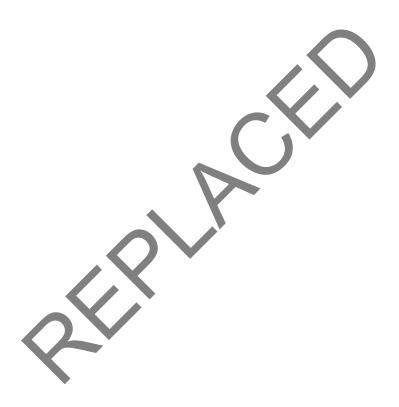


Table A.1.1. *Nephrops* in FU22 (Smalls). Area (km²) calculation by projection method in ArcGIS and final average.

FU	VMS grounds Polygons	WGS_1984 UTM_ZONE 30N (km²)	Eckert VI (world) (km²)	irish National Grid (km²)	Cylindrical Equal Area (km²)	Average (km²)
22	Smalls	2439.93	2435.34	2439.39	2439.39	2438.04

Table A.3.1. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). Sediment data collected during UWTV surveys.

Year	Number of Sediment Samples
2006	110
2007	107

Table B.2.1. Nephrops in FU22. Sampling levels.

	Number o	f Samples			Total numbers of <i>Nephrops</i> measured				
Year	Graded Landings	Catch	Discards	Year	Graded Landings	Catch	Discards		
2003		11	10	2003		7774	7599		
2004		10	8	2004		5918	9952		
2005		4	3	2005		6799	5509		
2006	4	26	4	2006	2615	20 576	3302		
2007	2	34	12	2007	411	20 158	4049		
2008		19	24	2008		6323	9210		
2009		33	32	2009		9248	12 563		
2010		36	35	2010		10 261	11 769		
2011		34	31	2011		10 968	10 278		
2012		55	47	2012		15 510	16 399		
2013		29	29	2013		8772	10 477		
2014	6	27	25	2014	730	8146	8299		
2015	*			2015					

Table B.1. Biological Input Parameters for FU 22 Nephrops Stock.

Parameter	Value	Source
Discard Survival	25%	assumed in line with other stocks
MALES		
Growth - K	0.17	
Growth - L(inf)	68	
Natural mortality - M	0.3	assumed, in line with other stocks
Length/weight - a	0.000322	based on Scottish data (Pope and Thomas, 1955)
Length/weight - b	3.207	п
FEMALES		
Immature Growth		
Growth - K	0.17	
Growth - L(inf)	68	
Natural mortality - M	0.3	assumed, in line with other stocks
Size-at-maturity (L50)	22	WKNEPH 2006
Mature Growth		
Growth - K	0.1	
Growth - L(inf)	49	
Natural mortality - M	0.2	assumed, in line with other stocks
Length/weight - a	0.000684	based on Scottish data (Pope and Thomas, 1955)
Length/weight - b	2.963	п

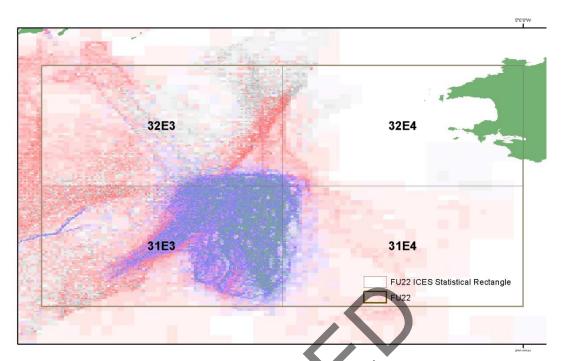


Figure A.1.1. *Nephrops* in FU22 (Smalls). Proportion of *Nephrops* in the Irish landings overlaid on international OTB effort (red=0% *Nephrops*; blue=50-60% *Nephrops*; grey=unknown (no Irish landings) and ICES statistical rectangles.

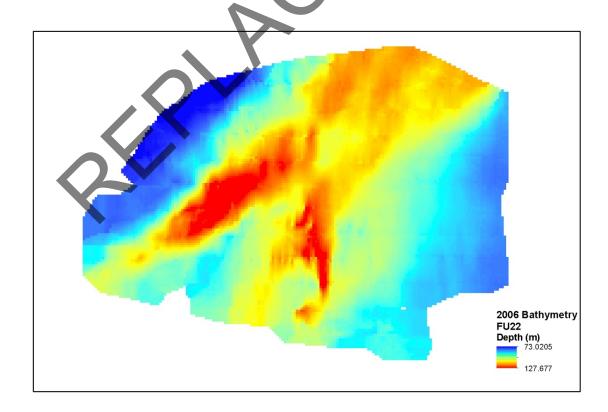


Figure A.3.1. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). 2006 bathymetric data in metres.

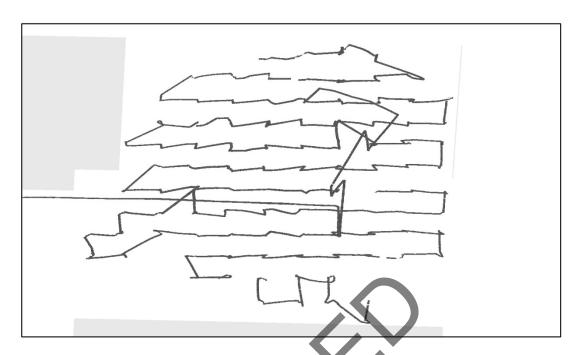
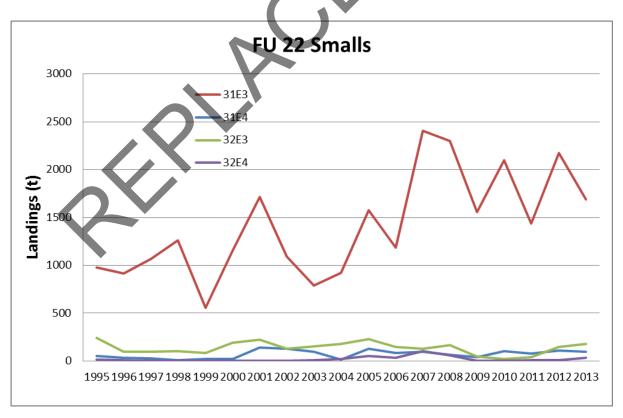


Figure A.3.2. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). 2006 Backscatter data collected.



Figure~B.1.1.~Nephrops~in~FU22~(Smalls). Irish ~landings~(t)~by~ICES~statistical~rectangle.



Figure B.2.1. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). Time-series of sampling levels.

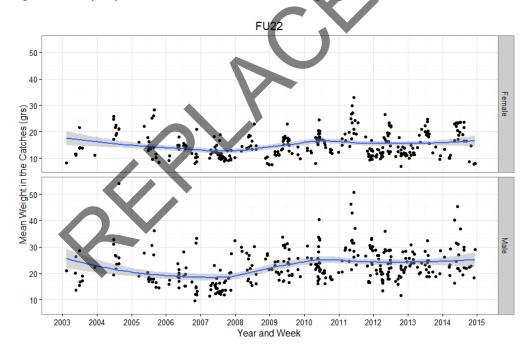


Figure B.3.1. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). Mean weight (gr) trend by sex from catch sample data.

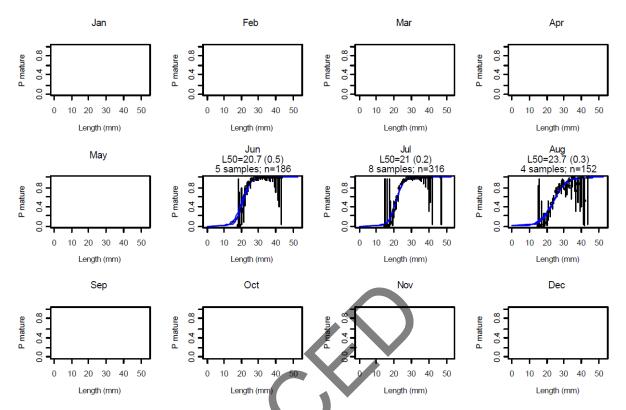


Figure B.3.3. *Nephrops* in FU22 (Smalls). Female proportions mature-at-length for FU22. The 95% confidence limits of the proportions mature-at-length are indicated by the vertical bars. The black curve indicates the model and its standard errors are given by the blue lines. The L_{50} is the estimated length at 50% maturity and its standard error is given between brackets. Blank plots indicate no sampling took place.

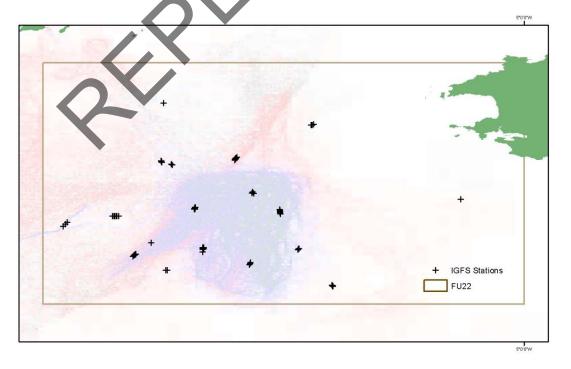


Figure B.4.1. *Nephrops* in FU22 (Smalls). Station positions with *Nephrops* catches from Irish (green cross) groundfish survey.

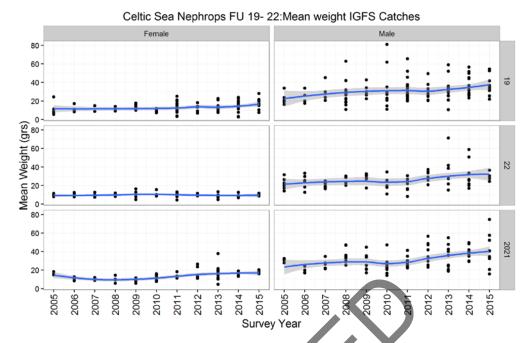


Figure B.4.2. *Nephrops* in FU19 (S and SW Ireland). Time-series of mean weights (grs) by sex in catches from IGFS for Celtic Sea *Nephrops* FUs.

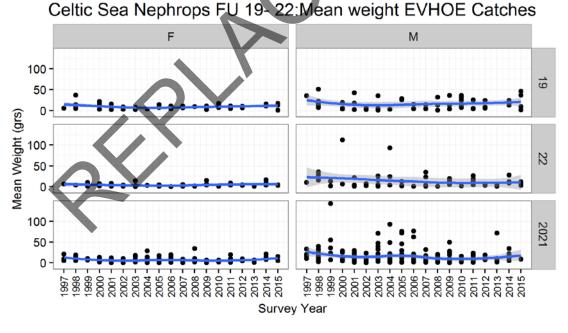


Figure B.4.3. *Nephrops* in FU19 (S and SW Ireland). Time-series of mean weights (grs) by sex in catches from EVHOE for Celtic Sea *Nephrops* FUs.

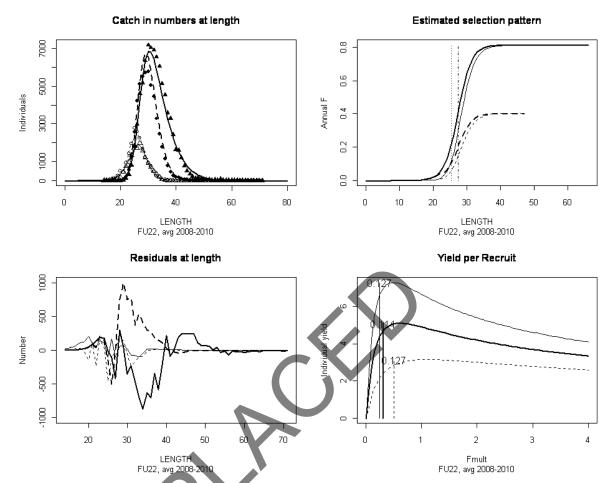


Figure C.1. Nephrops in FU22 (Smalls). Separable Cohort Analysis model fit. Solid lines are for males, dashed lines are females, thick lines represent the landings component, the thin lines represent the discarded component. The top left panel gives observed and predicted numbers-atlength in the discards and landings, top right gives the fishing mortality-at-length with the vertical lines representing length at 25% selection and 50% selection. Bottom left shows residual numbers-(observed-expected) at length. The bottom right gives the Yield Per recruit against fishing mortality, the thick solid line gives the combined value and vertical lines represent F_{0.1} for the three curves.