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FLUCTUATIONS IN YEAR-CLASSES OF HAKE
(*MERLUCIUS MERLUCCIOUS*, LINN.).

BY

C. F. HICKLING.

THE hake has a geographical range in the Atlantic, in commercial quantities, from the Coast of Norway to the Tropics, but material sufficiently detailed and continuous to allow of an estimate of fluctuations in brood strength is as yet available for British waters only. In these waters, the important hake areas lie to the south and west of Ireland and to the west of Scotland.

The "small hake" of the English statistics, landed from the regions south and west of Ireland, have a range in length from 33 to 60 cm., with most of the fish between 35 and 50 cm. These fish have been shown to be mainly five years old, and the fluctuation in abundance of the statistical "small hake" from year to year may be used as a rough index of the strength of the year-class born five years previously.

Putting year-class 1921 as having a value of 100, the following are the relative strengths of the year-classes born to the south and west of Ireland since then:—

1921	100	1926	92
1922	61	1927	75
1923	58	1928	44
1924	61	1929	43
1925	67	1930	63

It is more difficult to estimate the brood strength of hake in the region west of Scotland, but it would appear that the best year-classes since the war have been those born in 1921 and 1926, though that of 1926 was much inferior to that of 1921.