



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



This study was carried out thanks to the financial support of the European Commission under Regulation (EC) No.199 / 2008 and Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community framework for the collection, management and use data in the Fisheries sector and support for scientific advice on the Common Fisheries Policy, the National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture – Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Bulgaria, and:

Institute of Oceanology – BAS, Varna, Bulgaria

Project No BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, "Collection, management and use of data for the purpose of scientific analysis and implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy for the period 2017-2019", funded by the Maritime and Fisheries Program co-financed by European Union through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund."

The survey was carried out during the period November - December 2018 in Bulgarian Black Sea area on board of R/V HAITHABU" in execution of National Programs of Bulgaria for data collection in 2018.

#### List of authors:



BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
INSTITUTE OF OCEANOLOGY  
VARNA

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violin Raykov; Assoc. Prof. Maria Yankova; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Ivanova Assoc. Prof. Veselina Mihneva, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitar Dimitrov; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kremena Stefanova; Chief Assist. Dr. Elitsa Stefanova; Dr. Ilian Kotsev; Dr. Nina Dzembekova; Technician Nelly Valcheva; Technician Dobroslav Dechev; Technician Hristina Stamatova; Technician Svetla Koleva; Logistics Peter Trandafilov;

1----- [www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg) -----

Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## Contents

---

1. Results from pelagic survey in December 2018.....	3
1.1. Summary .....	3
2. R/V and gears .....	5
3. Material and methods .....	8
3.1. Sampling design.....	9
3.2. Onboard sampling/processing .....	10
3.3. Laboratory analyses .....	11
3.4. Statistical analysis .....	11
3.5. Age estimation.....	16
3.6. Maturity.....	27
4. Results .....	43
4.1. Selectivity of the gear.....	43
4.2 .Abundance and biomass indices.....	47
4.3 CPUA and biomass .....	55
4.4. Catch per unit of effort.....	59
4.5. Size structure.....	63
4.6. Age structure.....	71
4.7. Growth.....	73
4.8. Sex ratio.....	77
4.9. Fertility and fecundity.....	78
4.10. GSI.....	81
5. Food composition .....	82
6. Forecasts .....	101
7. MSY .....	108
8. Conclusions and recommendations.....	109
9. References.....	112
Annex I .....	117
Annex II .....	118
Annex III.....	119
Annex IV .....	120
Pictures.....	121



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## 1 Results from pelagic survey in December 2018

### 1.1. Summary

Pelagic Trawl Survey was accomplished in December 2018 in the Bulgarian Black Sea area. Scientific team has produced a biological analysis of the results obtained in the marine area.

The survey of pelagic trawl was carried out in December 2018 in the Bulgarian Black Sea area. Biological analysis is based on the biomass of the species found during the study. In addition, an analysis of the distribution and abstraction of the other species caught as by-catch is presented. The Black Sea sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) is a key species for the Black Sea ecosystem. Together with the anchovy, sprat is one of the most abundant, planktivorous, pelagic species. The level of its stocks depends on the conditions of the environment mainly and on the fishing effort.

The changes in the environment due to anthropogenic influence, affect the dry land as well as the world ocean. The level of the sea pollution and its "self-purifying" ability are completely different. There is a clear indication of changes in the nature equilibrium in the corresponding ecological niches.

The greatest impact in the world ocean has the commercial fishery, which directly devastates a significant part of the given species populations. As a result of this some of the species stocks are declined or depleted.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



As a result of the excessive exploitation, altered habitats and climatic variations numerous of the commercial species are critically endangered or vulnerable.

The abundance of the given fish species generations is dependent on different abiotic and biotic factors. With great importance are: the level of fishing mortality, changes in trophic levels due to mass occurrence of the ctenophore *Mnemiopsis leidyi*, algal blooms which lead to hypoxia in the shallower waters with mass mortality of the bottom dwelling organisms and etc.

Recent state of the sprat stock biomass (aggregations) off Bulgarian Black sea coast show relative stability i.e. taking into consideration almost constant level of exploitation (in western and north-western part of the Black Sea) in the last years the stock possibly is underexploited yet. Estimates of the numbers and size distributions of fish stocks based on experimental trawling have become a necessity in fisheries management (Godø, 1990). The main assumption in these studies is that the level of catches are constant, no matter how long the trawling is. Any deviation from the linear dependence between the catch and the magnitude of the effort applied to the fishery can have a significant impact on the composition of the catches and the estimates of the numbers and to deviate from the results of the trawl studies (Wassenberg et al., 1998). The duration of the fishing effort during the trawling period may last up to 200 min (Godø, 1990), but for economic reasons, together with the need for multiple reps and maintaining statistical validity, the duration of trawling is reduced. Thus, the standard trawl duration varies from 30 to 120 minutes for each selected station. Some authors (Godø, 1990; Wassenberg et al., 1998; Somerton et al., 2002) allow larger specimens to swim in the trawl without entering the bag and that trawls of varying lengths may affect the levels the catches and the size distribution of the trawl. In this way, some size groups may not be captured in short-



haul trawls. The average catch (in units of weight or in units) per unit of effort or per unit area is the inventory of the stock (assumed to be proportional to the stock). This index can be converted into an absolute measure for biomass by the so-called Area Method ". The "area method" is the so-called holistic methods ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). All analyses are based on the biomass and density estimates and by geographical strata. All the teams calculated their standard statistical estimates using the same software.

This report presents successively the results obtained at these two levels. The regional reports are presented in an order following the coast, from the northern to southern part of the Black Sea. The document is completed by a series of tables and figures related to the biomass/abundance indices and length frequency distributions of the species included in the reference list.

## 2 R/V vessel and gears

---

The Pelagic Trawl survey (PT) was accomplished on board of research vessel "HaiHabu". The main characteristics of the ship are given bellow:



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Picture 2.1. R/V HaitHabu



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



R/V HaitHabu

- IMO: 8862686
- MMSI: 207139000
- Позивна: LZHC
- Flag: Bulgaria [BG]
- AIS Vessel Type: Other
- Gross Tonnage: 142
- Length Overall x Breadth Extreme: 24.53m × 8m Crew: 6



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



*Picture 2.2. Catches in trawl codend*

### 3. Material and Methods

Pelagic Trawl survey was accomplished with accordance with National Programs for Data Collection in Fisheries sector of Bulgaria for 2018. The study held during the period of December 2018, in the area enclosed between Durankulak and Ahtopol (Bulgaria) with total length of coastline of 370 km. Study area encloses



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



waters between 42°05' and 43°45' N and 27°55 and 29°55 E.

During the survey, total 36 mid-water hauls were carried out in Bulgarian area (December 2018). The survey undergoes during the day and the following types of data were collected:

- Coordinates and duration of each trawl
- Sprat total catch weight
- Separation of the by-catch by species
- Composition of by-catch
- Conservation of the samples

### 3.1 Sampling design





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



To establish the abundance of the reference species (*Sprattus sprattus*) in front of the Bulgarian coast a standard methodology for stratified sampling was employed (Gulland, 1966;). To address the research objectives the region was divided in four strata according to depth – Stratum 1 (15 - 35 m) Stratum 2 (35 – 50 m), Stratum 3 (50 – 75 m) and Stratum 4 (75 – 100 m).

The study area in Bulgarian waters was partitioned into 128 equal in size not overlying fields, situated at depth between 10 - 100 m. At 36 of the fields chosen at random, sampling by means of mid-water trawling was carried out.

Each field is a rectangle with sides 5' Lat × 5' Long and area around  $62.58 \text{ km}^{-2}$  (measured by application of GIS), large enough for a standard lug extent in meridian direction to fit within the field boundaries. The fields are grouped in larger sectors – so called strata, which geographic and depth boundaries are selected according to the density distribution of the species under study. At each of the fields only one haul with duration between 30 - 40 min. at speed 2.7-2.9 knots was carried out.

As a result of the trawling survey a biomass index was calculated.

### 3.2 Onboard sample/processing

The data recorded and samples collected at each haul include:

- Depth, measured by the vessel's echo sounder;
- GPS coordinates of start/end haul points;
- Haul duration;



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И

- Abundance of sprat caught; ГОРИТЕ
- Weight of total sprat catch;
- Abundance and weight of other large species;
- Species composition of by-catch;
- 4% Formaldehyde solution with marine water was used for conservation of sprat for stomach content examination.

### 3.3 Laboratory analyses

The samples collected onboard were processed in the laboratory for determination of age and food composition.

The age was established in otoliths under binocular microscope.

The food spectrum was determined by separation of the stomach contents into taxonomic groups identified to the lowest possible level.

### 3.4 Statistical analyses



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

### Swept area method

This method is based on bottom trawling across the seafloor (area swept), weighted with chains, rock-hopper and roller gear, or steel beams. Widely used direct method for demercal species stock assessment.

The main point of the method: the trawl doors are designed to drag along the seafloor for defined distance. Trawling area was calculated as follows:

$$(1) \quad a = D * hr * X2 \\ D = V * t$$

(Where: a – trawling area, V – trawling velocity, hr\* X2 – trawl door distance, t – trawling

duration (h), D – dragged distance on the seafloor;

$$(2) D = 60 * \sqrt{(Lat_1 - Lat_2)^2 + (Lon_2 - Lon_1) * \cos(0.5 * (Lat_1 + Lat_2))}$$



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



$$(3) D = \sqrt{VS^2 + CS^2 + 2 * VS * CS * \cos(dirV - dirC)},$$

Where,  $VS$  is vessel velocity,  $CS$  - present velocity (knots),  $dirV$  vessel course (degrees) and  $dirC$ - present course (degrees).

Stock biomass is calculated using catch per unit area, as fraction of catch per unit effort from dragged area:

$$(4) (\frac{C_{w/t}}{a/t}) = C_{w/a} \text{ kg / sq.km}$$

Where:  $Cw/t$  – catch per unit effort,  $a/t$  – trawling area ( $\text{km}^2$ ) per unit time;

Stock biomass of the given species per each stratum could be calculated as follows:



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



$$(5) \quad B = (\overline{C_{w/a}}) * A$$

Where:  $\overline{C_{w/a}}$  - mean CPUA for total trawling number in each stratum, A- area of the stratum.

The variance of biomass estimate for each stratum is (equation 4):

$$(6) \quad VAR(B) = A^2 * \frac{1}{n} * \frac{1}{n-1} * \sum_{i=1}^n [Ca(i) - \overline{Ca}]^2$$

Total area of the investigated region is equal to the sum of areas of each stratum:

$$A = A_1 + A_2 + A_3$$

Average weighted catch per whole aquatic territory is calculated as follows:

$$(7) \quad \overline{Ca}(A) = Ca_1 * A_1 + Ca_2 * A_2 + Ca_3 * A_3 / A$$

Where: Ca1- catch per unit area in stratum 1, A1 – area of stratum 1, etc., A- size of total area.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Accordingly, total stock biomass for the whole marine area to:

$$(8) \quad B = \overline{Ca}(A) * A$$

Where:  $\overline{Ca}(A)$  - average weighted catch per whole investigated marine area, A – total investigated marine area.

#### Estimation of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)

The Gulland's formula for virgin stocks is used – equation 7:

$$(9) \quad MSY = 0.5 * M * B_v$$

where: M – coefficient of natural mortality;  $B_v$  – virgin stock biomass.

#### Relative yield-per-recruit model with uncertainties

$$(10) \quad Y'/R = E * U^{M/k} \left\{ 1 - \frac{3U}{(1+m)} + \frac{3U^2}{(1+2m)} - \frac{U^3}{(1+3m)} \right\}$$



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

where:  $U = 1 - (L_c / L_\infty)$

$$m = (1-E)/(M/k) = k/Z$$

$E = F/Z$  – exploitation coefficient.

### Length-converted catch curve

A number of methods are available with the help of which total mortality ( $Z$ ) can be estimated from length-frequency data. Thus it is possible to obtain reasonable estimates of  $Z$  from the mean length in a representative sample, or from the slope of Jones' cumulative plot. In this article, a variety of approaches for analysing length-frequency data are presented which represent the functional equivalent of [age structured] catch curves; these "length-converted catch curves" are built around assumptions similar to those involved in age-structured catch curves.

### **3.5. Age estimation**



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



6 cm (0+)



7.5 cm (1+)



8.2 cm (1+)



9 cm (2+)



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



9.5 (3+)

10.7 (4+)

As it is well known, the Calcified Structures (CS) are usually used to assign age useful to obtain their growth model and so, to reconstruct age composition of exploited fish populations. Fish ageing implies the presences in the CS of a structural pattern, in terms of succession of opaque and translucent zones and the knowledge of the periodicity of this deposition pattern. Calcified structures available for fish ageing are different: otoliths (sagittae, lapilli, asterischi), scales, vertebrae, spines and opercular bones (Panfili et al., 2002). For the selected stocks the CS utilized is the sagittae. The most important aspects (difficulties, extraction, storage, preparation method, ageing criteria) regarding the age analysis are addressed by species. Otoliths are important for fish and fisheries scientists. Otoliths are playing role balance, motion and sound. These structures are effective from growth to death in entire life cycle. They are most commonly used for age in order to determine growth and mortality research. Research on otoliths began in 1970s and continues to 21st century. Periodic growth increments which in scales, vertebrae, fin rays, in



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
cleithra, opercula and otolith are used to determine annual age in many fish species.

Researchers have used otolith reference collections and photographs in publications to aid in identifications. Otoliths have a distinctive shape which is highly specific, but varies widely among species.

Biologists, taxonomists and archaeologists, based on the shape and size of otoliths determined fish predators feeding habits (Kasapoglu and Duzgunes, 2014). In teleost fishes, otoliths are the main CS for the age determination and it is widely used in fisheries biology. On the other hand analysing O<sub>2</sub> isotopes in their structure is useful to determine fish migrations between fresh water and sea as well as species and stock identification. Otoliths are the balance and hearing organs for the fish. They are in three types located on the left and right side of the head in the semi rings; "sagitta" in the saccular, "lapillus" in the lagena and "asteriskus" in the utricular channels. Place, size and shape of these three types are different by species, the biggest one is sagitta and the smallest one is asteriscus. So, sagitta is the one mostly used in age determination in bony fishes (Aydin, 2006). Other reasons for the preference to otoliths are;

- Their formation in the embryonic phase which shows all the changes in the life cycle of the fish,
- Existence in the fish which have no scales,
- Giving better results than the scales and more successful age readings in older fish than their scales,
- No resorption or regeneration,



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



- Having same structure in all the individuals in the same species (Jearld, 1983).

On the other hand, their disadvantages are the obligation of dissecting the fish and some failures in age determination due to crystal like formations by irregular CaCO<sub>3</sub> accumulations on the otoliths.

### 3.5.1 Otolith preparation for sprat

Sampling of the fish for otolith extraction from the overall samples is very important to have representative samples for the catch. Number of otoliths needed is lower for the species having smaller size range than the species having larger size range. According to the availability 5 fish for each length group may be better for age readings to be representative for the population. Each of the individuals should be recorded individually with place of catch, date and ID number. These steps are useful for the process:

- For each fish total length ( $\pm 0,1$  cm), total weight ( $\pm 0,01$ g), sex, maturation stage (I-V), gonad weight ( $\pm 0,01$ g) are recorded.
- Sagittal otoliths of each fish are removed by cutting the head over eyes after all individual measurements. Then, rinsed and immersed in 96% ethyl alcohol to get rid of organic wastes/residuals and finally kept in small chambers in plastic roomed boxes with the sample number and other operational information.

### 3.5.2 Preparation of the otoliths for the age determination



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Otoliths are put into small black convex glasses containing 96% ethyl alcohol for age readings under binocular stereo microscope which is illuminated from top and sides (Fig 3) (Polat ve Beamish, 1992). Magnifying level depends on the size of the otolith; X4 is good for sprat and X1 for turbot.



Fig 3.5.2. Binocular stereo microscope with top and side illumination

### 3.5.3. Age readings and commenting on annuluses



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



In order to prevent bias, during age reading reader should not refer length and weight of that fish. But information on the date of the catch and gonadal state is very important. First step is to clarify the place of the center and the first age ring. After that, observation of the successive rings, whether they are continuous or not is important.

Finally, determination of the fish in growth or just at the end of the growth period by checking characteristics of the ring at the edge of the otolith to decide it is opaque or hyaline. After these procedures otoliths can be read under these protocols which are very important to provide data on age to determine realistic population parameters and reduce uncommon procedures and biases by standardized age reading criteria.

### 3.5.4. Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*)

In sprat left and right otoliths shows isometric growth. These are small and transparent (Fig 3.5.4). Age readings can be done over otolith surface by clear ring views. Due to summer and winter growths there are two different nucleus formation in the center; spring recruits has opaque, late fall recruits has hyaline rings which is taken into consideration during age readings (Pisil, 2006).



TL:  $a - 6.2 \text{ cm}$ ;  $b - 6.7 \text{ cm}$



$b$

*S.sprattus*



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



*Merlangius merlangus*



*Trachurus mediterraneus*



*E. encrasiculus*



*M. barbatus*



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



*P. salstarix*

Figure 3.5.4. Sprat, anchovy, horse mackerel, red mullet, bluefish otoliths

### 3.5.5. Age reading protocol

1. Dissected otoliths rinsed and treated with 96 % ethyl alcohol and stored dry.
2. Readings are carried out by inspecting the whole otolith in 96% ethyl alcohol in black colored convex glass bowl under reflected light against a dark background.
3. Magnification set considering the biggest otolith size which is totally fit the visual capacity of the lens. It is aimed not to change magnification rate which may enable false rings visible in bigger otoliths and permits to see true rings (hiyalins) better by unchanging the color contrasts. Thats why magnification rate X4 is selected for the sprat otoliths.
4. Otolith samples observed from distal surface as a whole, broken ones are not



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



used.

5. Birthday of the sprat accepted as 1st of January as the common principle for the fish living in the Northern semisphere in line with the sub-tropic fish growth models.
6. Central point surrounded by the hyalin rings which is one in some cases or two for the others, is formed after the end of consumption of yolk sac and starting of the free feeding, and known as "stock rings". Next opaque accumulation is known as "first year growth ring". This ring keeps its circular form in the postrostrum region. Together with this ring and the next hyalin ring forming "V" shape in the rostrum, is accepted as first age rings.
7. Tiny and continuous consantric rings prolonge close to real hyalin ringed are counted togetherwith the real one as one age. This ring may be either a very tiny and opaque inside the hyaline band or tiny hyaline ring near the outer edge of the opaque ring.
8. Sprat and some other short lived species has very fast growth rate especially in the first two years. Width of the growth bands after 2nd year ring has relatively getting narrower. This issue should be kept in mind in the older age ring readings.

Number of tiny and weak hyaline rings, known as false rings, in the opaque region, is not so high and, their separation from age rings is rather easy. When they are so much and unseperable, these otoliths should not be used.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Photo Sizes of the horse mackerel (*Trachurus mediterraneus*) and Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*)



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



### 3.6. SEX AND MATURITY ESTIMATION

#### 3.6.1 SPRAT

The European sprat (*Sprattus sprattus* L.) is a small short-lived pelagic species from the family Clupeidae. Sprat has a wide distribution including shelf areas of the Northeast Atlantic, the Mediterranean Sea and the Baltic Sea. Sprat is most abundant in relatively shallow waters and tolerates a wide range of salinities. Spawning is pelagic in coastal or offshore waters and occurs over a prolonged period of time that may range from early spring to the late autumn. Sprat is an important forage fish in the North Sea and Baltic Sea ecosystems. Commercial catches from pelagic fisheries are mainly used for fish meal and fish oil production. Three subspecies of sprat have been defined i.e. *Sprattus sprattus sprattus* L., distributed along the coasts of Norway, the North Sea, Irish Sea, Bay of Biscay, the western coast of the Iberian peninsula down to Morocco, *Sprattus sprattus phaleratus* R) in the northern parts of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and *Sprattus sprattus balticus* S. in the Baltic Sea. Knowledge about stock structure, migration of sprat and mixing of populations among areas is limited. Questions have been raised about the geographic distribution and separation of stocks and their interaction with neighboring stocks (ICES 2011). The apparent overlap e.g. between North Sea sprat and English Channel sprat seems very strong, whereas the overlap between North Sea sprat and Kattegat sprat is not as strong and varies between



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



years. A distribution wide phylo-geographic study showed that sprat in the Western Mediterranean is a subgroup of the Atlantic group and that these two populations are closer to each other than to sprat in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea (Debes et al., 2008).

### 3.6.2. Maturity Stages of Sprat

It is very important to use standardized maturity scales for sprat (and all species) to evaluate sampling strategies and timing for accurate classification of maturity in order to provide reliable maturity determination for both sexes. For sprat, small gonad size and the batch spawnings by several cohorts of eggs over a long period of time are the main challenges for standardizing a maturity scale.

According to the ICES (2011), present standardized maturity scales of sprat include 6-stages for both sexes (Fig3.6.2.Table 3.6.2.)



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

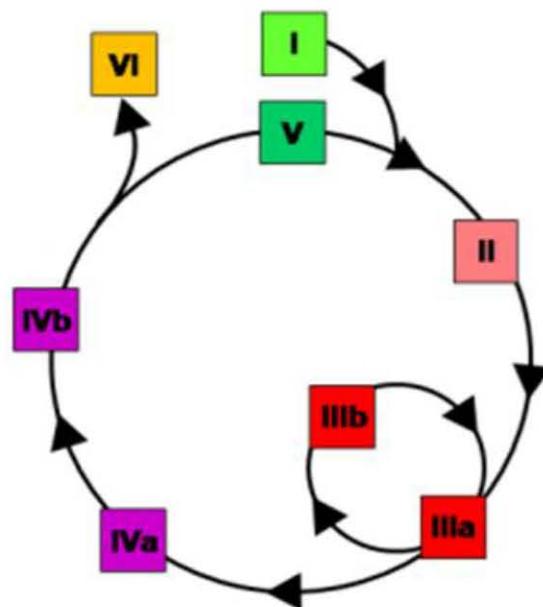


Figure 3.6.2. Scale with six maturity stages in sprat (Name of the stages are given in Table 3.6.3)

In particular, specimens without visible development have been combined into Immature and Preparation, whereas the spawning stage has been sub-divided into a non-active spawning stage (maturing and re-maturing characterized by visible development of gametes) and an active spawning stage indicated by hydrated eggs/running milt. The integration of maturing and re-maturing into the spawning stage allows an accurate determination of maturing and spawning specimens and reliable assessment of the spawning fraction of the population.



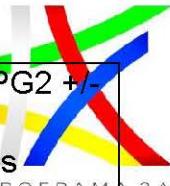
МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Table 3.6.3. Macroscopic and histological characteristics of gonadal development stages.

Stages	Macroscopic Characteristics	Histological characteristic s
<p><i>FEMALES (OG: Oogonia, PG1: Early previtellogenic oocytes, PG2: Late previtellogenic oocytes, CA: Cortil alveoli oocytes, VT1: Early vitellogenic oocytes, VT2: Mid vitellogenic oocytes, VT3: Late vitellogenic oocytes, HYD: Hydrated oocytes, POF: Postovulatory follicles, SSB: Spawning stock biomass).</i></p>		
I-Immature	<i>Juvenile: ovaries threadlike and small; transparent to wine red and translucent in color; sex difficult to determine; distinguishable from testes by a more tubular shape; oocytes not visible to the naked eye</i>	OG+/-PGI
II-Preparation	<i>Transition from immature to early maturing; oocytes not visible to the naked eye; ovaries yellow-orange to bright red in color; ovaries occupy up to half of the abdominal cavity. This stage is not included in SSB.</i>	PG1, PG2, CA



<b>III. Spawning</b>		
a. Spawning (inactive)	<p><i>Maturing and re-maturing yolked opaque oocytes visible to the naked eye; ovaries change from semi-transparent to opaque yellow-orange or reddish in color as more oocytes enter the yolk stage; ovaries occupy at least half of the body cavity; re-maturing ovaries may be red to grey-red or purple in color and less firm than an ovary maturing first batch, few hydrated oocytes may be left</i></p>	<p>PG1, PG2, ПРОГРАМА ЗА СА, МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО VT1, VT2, VT3, +/- POF</p>
b. Spawning (active)	<p><i>Spawning active. Hydrated eggs are visible among yolked opaque oocytes; hydrates oocytes may be running; ovaries fill the body cavity; overall color varies from yellowish to reddish.</i></p>	<p>PG1, PG2, CA, VT1, VT2, VT3, HYD, POF</p>
IV.a Cessation	<p><i>Baggy appearance; bloodshot; grey-red translucent in color; atretic oocytes appear as opaque irregular grains; few residual eggs may remain</i></p>	<p>PG1, PG2, POF, atretic oocytes, residual HYD</p>
IV.b. Recovery	<p><i>Ovaries appear firmer and membranes thicker than in sub-stage IV.a; these characteristics together with the slightly larger size distinguish this stage from the virgin stage; ovaries appear empty and there are no residual eggs; transparent to wine red translucent in color</i></p>	<p>PG1, PG2, atretic VT oocytes</p>



V. Resting	Ovaries appear more tubular and firmer; oocytes not visible to the naked eye. transparent or grey-white to wine red in color with well-developed blood supply; this stage leads to stage II.	PG1, PG2 +/- atretic oocytes ПРОГРАМА ЗА МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО
VI. Abnormal	a) infection; b) intersex - both female and male tissues can be recognized; c) one lobe degenerated; d) stone roe (filled with connective tissue); e) other	Abnormal tissue
MALES (SG: Spermatogonia; PS: Primary spermatocytes; SS: Secondary spermatocytes; ST: Spermatids; SZ: Spermatozoa; SSB: Spawning stock biomass)		
I. Immature	Juvenile: Testes threadlike and small; white-grey to grey brown in color; difficult to determine sex, but distinguishable from ovaries by a more lanceolate shape (knife shaped edge of distal part of the lobe).	SG, PS
II-Preparation	Transition from immature to maturing: Testes easily distinguishable from ovaries by lanceolate shape; sperm development not clearly visible; reddish grey to creamy translucent in color; testes occupy up to ½ of the abdominal cavity; this stage is not included in SSB.	SG, PS, SS, potentially few ST



III. Spawning  
a. Spawning(inactive)



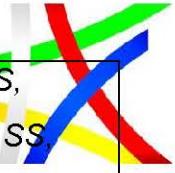
*Maturing and re-maturing. Testes occupy at least half of the body cavity and grow to almost the length of the body cavity; the empty sperm duct may be visible; color varies from reddish light grey, creamy to white; edges may still be translucent at the beginning of the stage, otherwise opaque; re-maturing testes may be irregularly colored with reddish or brownish blotches and grey at the lower edge with partly whitish remains of sperm*

c. Spawning  
(active)

*Spawning active: testes fill the body cavity; Sperm duct filled and distended throughout the entire length; sperm runs freely or will run from the sperm duct, if transected; color varies from light grey to white..*



SG, PS, SS,  
ST, SZ



IV.a Cessation	<p><i>Baggy appearance (like an empty bag when cut open); bloodshot; grey to reddish brown translucent in color; residual sperm may be visible in sperm duct.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЪЛСТВО, ХРАНИТЕ И ГОРИТЕ</p>	SG, PS, atretic SS, ST and SZ
IV.b. Recovery	<p><i>Testes appear firmer and the testes membrane appear thicker than in stage IVa due to contraction of the testes membrane; these characteristics together with the slightly larger size distinguish this stage from the virgin stage; testes appear empty and no residual sperm is visible in the sperm duct; reddish grey to greyish translucent in color.</i></p>	SG, PS, potentially SS, atretic SZ
V. Resting	<p><i>Testes appear firmer, development of a new line of germ cells; grey in color; this stage leads to stage II.</i></p>	SG, PS, SS
VI. Abnormal	<p><i>a) infection; b) intersex - both female and male tissues can be recognized; c) one lobe degenerated; d) other.</i></p>	e.g. oocytes visible among spermatogenic tissues

### 3.6.3. Batch fecundity

All fish were measured to the nearest 1 mm in the Total Length (TL) and weighted to the nearest 1 g. Gonads of the fish were examined under a dissecting microscope for its external features such as turgidity and colour in order to determine a maturity stage. The sex ratio also calculated in this study (i.e., No. of males/No. of females (Simon et al., 2012). The female was determined by the macroscopic observation of



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



matured ovary (Laevastu, 1965a).

Batch fecundity can vary considerably during the short spawning season, low at the beginning, peaking during high spawning season and declining again towards the end.

Annual egg production is the product of the number of batches spawned per year and the average number of eggs spawned per batch.

Batch fecundity of sprat was determined by Hydrated Oocyte Method'. (Hunter et al. 1985). Only hydrated females were used. After sampling their body cavity was opened and they were preserved in a buffered formalin solution (Hunter 1985). The ovary free female weight and the ovary weight were determined: Three tissue samples of - 50 mg were removed from different parts of the ovary and their exact weight were determined. Under binocular number of hydrated oocytes, in each of the three subsamples was determined.

Hydrated oocytes can easily be separated from all other types of oocytes because of their large size their translucent appearance and their wrinkled surface which is due to formalin preservation. Batch fecundity was estimated based on the average number of hydrated oocytes per unit weight of the three subsamples.

Gonadosomatic Index (GSI) was determined monthly. GSI was calculated as:

$$GSI = \frac{GW}{SW} \times 100$$

where, GW is gonads weight and SW is somatic weight (represents the BW without GW)

For the estimation of sprat growth rate, the von Bertalanffy growth function (1938) is used, (according to Sparre, Venema, 1998):



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



$$(11) \quad L_t = L_{\infty} \left\{ 1 - \exp[-k(t - t_0)] \right\}$$

$$(12) \quad W_t = W_{\infty} \left\{ 1 - \exp[-k(t - t_0)] \right\}^n$$

where:  $L_t$ ,  $W_t$  are the length or weight of the fish at age  $t$  years;  $L_{\infty}$ ,  $W_{\infty}$  - asymptotic length or weight,  $k$  – curvature parameter,  $t_0$  - the initial condition parameter.

The length – weight relationship is obtained by the following equation:

$$(13) \quad W_t = qL_t^n$$

where:  $q$  – condition factor, constant in length-weight relationship;  $n$  – constant in length-weight relationship.

#### Coefficient of natural mortality ( $M$ )

Pauly's empirical formula (1979, 1980) is applied:

$$(14) \quad \log M = -0.0066 - 0.279 * \log L_{\infty} + 0.6543 * \log k + 0.4634 * \log T^{\circ}\text{C}$$

$$(15) \quad \log M = -0.2107 - 0.0824 \log W_{\infty} + 0.6757 \log K + 0.4627 \log T^{\circ}\text{C}$$

where:  $L_{\infty}$ ,  $W_{\infty}$  and  $K$  – parameters in von Bertalanffy growth function;  $T^{\circ}\text{C}$  - average annual temperature of water, ambient of the investigated species.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## Food composition and feeding patterns of sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*, L) and red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*, L) in XII.2018

The study was based on analysis of stomach content composition of 110 sprat and 10 red mullet specimens, collected in front of Bulgarian Black Sea coast during 14.XII - 23.XII.2018. This study encompassed additional analysis of the zooplankton species composition and biomass in the marine environment, as these pelagic organisms form the main food source of planktivorous fish species.

The coordinates and information about the sampling sites were presented at Table 3.6.3.

Table 3.6.3. Investigated areas in 14.XII - 23.XII.2018

Date	№	Coordinates	Dept h (m)	Zooplankto n stations	Spr at food	Re d mullet food
14.12.2018	1	42.53 N - 27.75 E	36	Zoo1	Sp 1	
14.12.2018	2	42.55 N - 27.79 E	35	Zoo2	Sp 2	
14.12.2018	4	42.51 N - 27.75 E	35	Zoo3		Mb 1
15.12.2018	8	42.45 N - 27.78 E	36	Zoo4	Sp 3	
15.12.2018	10	42.45 N - 27.70 E	37	Zoo5	Sp 4	

21.12. 2018	16	E	42.58 N - 27.87 E 34	Zoo6	5	Sp	
21.12. 2018	18	E	42.64 N, 28.09 E МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И ГОРИТЕ 52	Zoo7	6	Sp	 АЗА ЕЛО И ВО
23.12. 2018	26	E	42.57 N - 27.73 E	30	Zoo8	7	Sp
27.12. 2018	28	E	43.05 N - 27.98 E	22	Zoo9	8	Sp
28.12. 2018	32	E	42.84 N - 28.05 E	33	Zoo10	9	Sp
29.12. 2018	34	E	42.65 N - 27.85 E	25	Zoo11	10	Sp
29.12. 2018	36	E	42.59 N - 27.74 E	31	Zoo12	11	Sp

Per trawl catch, about 10 fish specimens were separated and preserved in 10 % formaldehyde: seawater solution. The absolute length (TL, to the nearest 0.1 cm) and weight (to the nearest 0.01 g) of fish specimens were measured. Under laboratory conditions the stomachs of the selected animals were weighted with analytical balance (to the nearest 0.0001 g). The food mass of each individual has been calculated as a difference between the weights of full and empty sprat stomach. The stomach content was investigated under microscope for estimation of species composition and prey number. The prey biomass was estimated by multiplication of the number of consumed mesozooplankton species by their individual weights.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

The following indices were calculated:

1. Stomach fullness index (ISF) as a percent of body mass: (stomach content mass/fish mass) \*100; and

2. Index of relative importance - IRI, Pinkas et al. (1971):  $IRI = (N+M) \times FO$ ; where N - the proportion of prey taxa (species) in the diet by numbers (abundance); M - the proportion of prey taxa (species) in the diet by mass; FO- frequency of occurrence among fish.

The zooplankton samples in marine environment were gathered from the whole water layer (bottom- surface) with a plankton set (opening diameter d = 36 cm; mesh size 150 µm). The samples were fixed onboard ships with 4% formaldehyde: seawater solution (Korshenko & Aleksandrov, 2013). The mesozooplankton species composition has been identified by Guides for the Black and Azov Seas (Morduhai-Boltovskii et al., 1968), and its quantity - by the method of Bogorov (Korshenko & Aleksandrov, 2013).

## SELECTIVITY OF THE FISHING GEAR

The change in mesh size of the codend is the basis of the analysis of the selectivity in the calculations. The mesh size (a, mm) of the trawl bag is shown in Fig. 3.7 The study of the variation in the trawl selectivity is based on calculations at the corresponding change in the size of the "eye" side.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

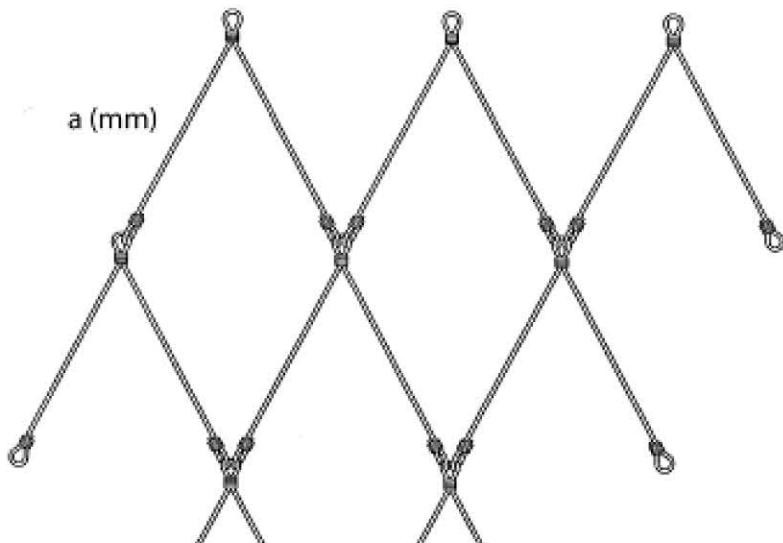


Figure 3.7. "Eye" of the codend and size a (mm)

Using the model of Tresthev (1974), it was worked out to construct an additional trawl bag to experimentally study the change in selectivity:



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Figure 3.8. Codend bag scheme: 1 - main bag 2 - apron; 3 - connector, 4 - the main bag 5 - the trailer outer bag connection.

Linear size measurements were used to evaluate the following biological parameters:

L50, L25 and L75 the amount at which 50%, 25% and 75% of the individuals entered into the fishing gear are detained therein;

Selectivity factor;

(c) an extent of selectivity

The dimensional selectivity of the trawl bag is determined by the relationship between

the probability p, the fish entering the bag and its size l (Holden, 1971). This link is described by the logistic function (Fryer, 1991):

$$p = \frac{e^{(v_1 + v_2)l}}{(1 + e^{(v_1 + v_2)l})}$$



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Where  $v_1$  represents the intersection of the abscissa,  $v_2$  is the slope of the curve following log-transformation. The L50, L25 and L75 function values can be estimated from the following expressions:

$$L_{50\%} = \frac{v_1}{v_2} \quad L_{25\%} = \frac{(-\ln(3) - v_1)}{v_2} \quad L_{75\%} = \frac{(\ln(3) - v_1)}{v_2}$$

$$SR = L_{75} - L_{25} \quad SF = \frac{L_{50}}{\text{meshsize}}$$

Suppose that fish of size: I1, I2, . . . IN enter the trawl bag. Small fish may loose through the mesh (ie, have a low probability of retention), but as they grow in length, the chance to get rid of the net decreases. At some point, because of their increased size, they can not get out of the net (their probability of retention equals 1).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Selectivity of the fishing gear

There are presented the possibilities of holding individuals from sprat of mesh size  $a = 8$  mm; 7.5 mm and 6.5 mm (Table 4.1.) in order to trace the change in the probability of retention of individuals when changing the mesh size of the network.

Table 4.1. Possibilities for holding individuals from a twine in a "mid-water otter trawl" of different mesh sizes; Selectivity factor (SF) and Selectivity Spectrum (SR).

Размер на окото	селективност	8.00 mm	селективност	7.5 mm	селективност	6.5 mm
Вероятност за	$L_{25\%}$	6.2 cm	$L_{25\%}$	5.4 cm	$L_{25\%}$	5.2 cm
	$L_{50\%}$	7.0 cm	$L_{50\%}$	6.2 cm	$L_{50\%}$	5.7 cm
	$L_{75\%}$	7.8 cm	$L_{75\%}$	7.0 cm	$L_{75\%}$	6.2 cm
SF		4.4		4.13		4.77
SR		1.6		1.6		1

In the trawl bag of mesh size  $a = 8.00$  mm, the probability is that 25% of the specimens retained in the bag should have a size of 6.2 cm ( $L_{25} = 6.2$  cm). With 50% probability ( $L_{50\%}$ ), individuals with a size of 7.00 cm and the largest will be retained probability of retention ( $L_{75\%}$ ) were individuals with a linear size of 7.8 cm (Table 4.1, Fig.4.1).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

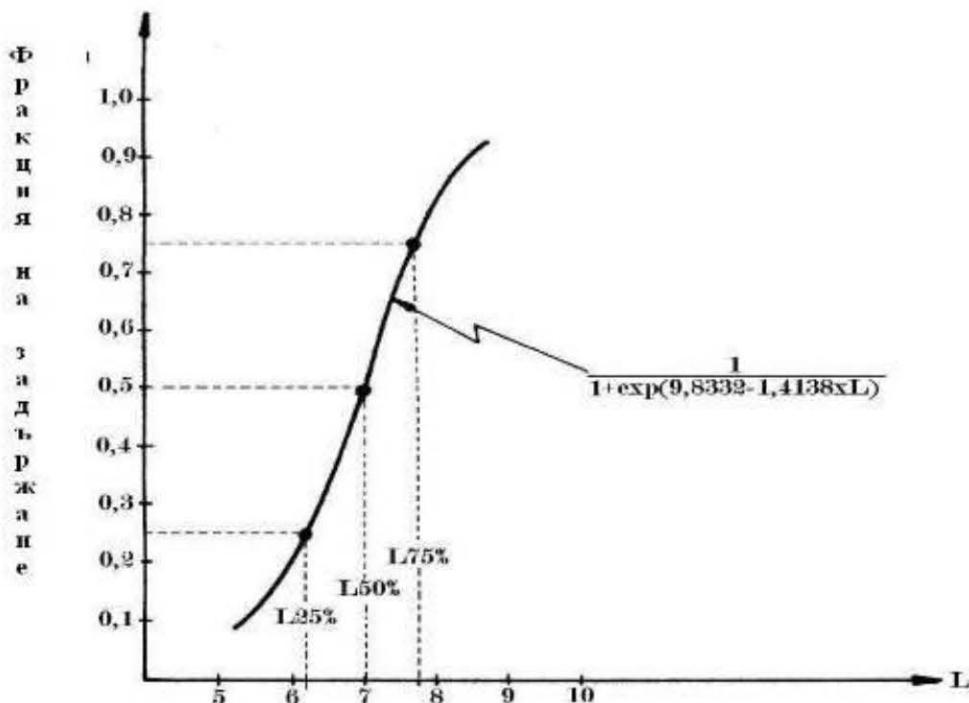


Figure 4.1. Graphical representation of L25%, L50%, L75% at the mesh size of the "bag"  $a = 8.00$  mm.

The next scenario examined is to change the selectivity, with the mesh size being 0.5 mm smaller: 7.5 mm. In this case, 6.2 cm individuals will retain a probability of 50% in the trawl net ( $L_{50\%} = 6.2$  cm, Table 5.1.1), which is 0.8 mm less than the case of mesh size  $a = 8$  mm. In this case, it reduces the size of the specimens that would be retained in the trawl with a probability of 25%, namely  $L_{25\%} = 5.4$  cm. Reducing the network mesh from 8.00 to 7.5 cm results in a 75% retention probability of 7.00 cm specimens, which is 0.8mm less than the previous case. The selectivity factor for this particular case decreases to 4.13 and the SR selectivity range is maintained at the mesh size  $a = 8.00$  cm. The proportion of the



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



magnitude in both cases examined so far is the same, but with decreasing mesh size, the size of the retained specimens also diminishes. In the third case, the mesh size is  $a = 6.5$  mm. Such a network will retain in a proportion of 50% individuals with  $TL = 5.7$  cm, which is 1.3 cm less than in the case of mesh size of the net -  $a = 7$  mm.

In this case, the difference between the individuals of the trickles of certain dimensions retained in the bag (inner) with an eye of 6.5 mm in the proportion of 25, 50 and 75% will be 0.5 cm.

A codend of mesh size  $a = 6.5$  mm will hold fish in a proportion of 6.2 cm in a proportion of 75% and in a proportion of 25%, 5.2 cm in size, 5.1. The selectivity factor in this case increases to 4.77 (from 4.4 and 4.5) and the selectivity range is equal to one ( $SR = 1$ ). It can be seen that in all cases with a mesh size of 6.5 mm, the change in the size of the detainees varies within a smaller range, but in all variants, the holdings are very much below the minimum allowable harvest size (2001) spatula, namely 7.00 cm. We should note the fact that active trawl-fishing gears are using nets with mesh sizes from 6.0 to 6.5 cm. This fact undoubtedly speaks of the fact that there are specimens that have not reached sexual maturity in different proportions. Not least, the fact that active fishing activity related to the use of trawls take place in the near coastal strip at a lower depth. It is well-known, from the biology of the species, which the large individuals, respectively the senior age groups, migrate to greater depths in search of favorable temperature and nutritional conditions. According to the calculations made on the selectivity of the trawl bag of different mesh size, it can be seen that at  $a = 8$  mm, 50% of the  $TL = 7$  cm individuals have a chance of being trapped while the  $TL = 7.8$  cm 75% retention capability. A



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



further reduction in mesh size leads to a reduction in the selectivity of the trawl. In eye mesh  $a = 7.0\text{cm}$ ,  $L_{50\%} = 6.2\text{cm}$  and  $L_{75\%} = 7\text{cm}$ . For nets with a mesh size of 6.5mm, the size of the trait-retained individuals drops to 5.7cm at L50%. As the mesh of the bag grows, the number of small individuals that escape the trawl increases. At the same time, the average length of the fish caught, i.e. this is part of the breeding biomass that has already participated in the reproduction. The Regional Fisheries Commissions are aiming for maximum mesh sizes, which would allow maximum "extraction" of juvenile individuals.

The minimum allowable catch for sprat referred to in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act (2001) is 7 cm. This fact is indicative that in order to comply with the measure of resource use referred to in the law, the mesh size of the trawl should be  $a = 8 \text{ mm}$ , which would result in the proportion of individuals in the proportion of  $L_{75\%} = 7.8 \text{ cm}$ . This measure is essential to protect the exploited resource from overloading and undermining stocks in the longer term.

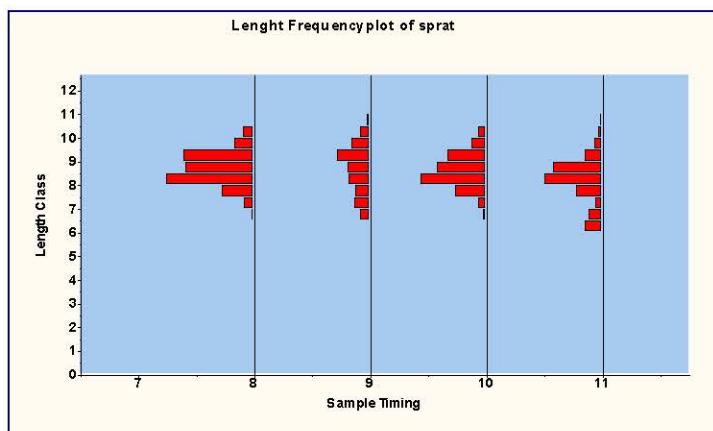


Fig. 4.1.1. Linear dimensions of the sprat in the codend of the trawl



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## 4.2. Abundance and biomass indices

### Introduction

A total of 36 trawlings in the Bulgarian marine aquaculture area were carried out on board the NIK "Haiti Harbu", the total number of established species being 19, of which 15 fish, crustaceans - 2, molluscs - 1 and one macrozoo-planktonic species.

The most common species in total trawl operations (in terms of presence / absence) are (in descending order): in December 2018: Single specimens of *Raja clavata* and *Dasyatis pastinaca*, *Scophthalmus maximus* were captured. In December, most of the catch is sprat, whiting (68%), horse mackerel 11%, other species are presented in single pieces.

In the Bulgarian Black Sea area, 36 trawls were made in the period from 14.12-29.12.2018.

The trolling time is 25 and 40 minutes, at a depth of between 17 m and 84 m, in the region between Ahtopol and Durankulak.

The surveyed area in Bulgarian waters was 6633.48 sq. km. During the study period, the *Sprattus sprattus*, which dominated the pelagic society, was the largest number, followed by *M. merlangius* and *Tr.mediterraneus*.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

### Locations of trawling stations - 2nd expedition

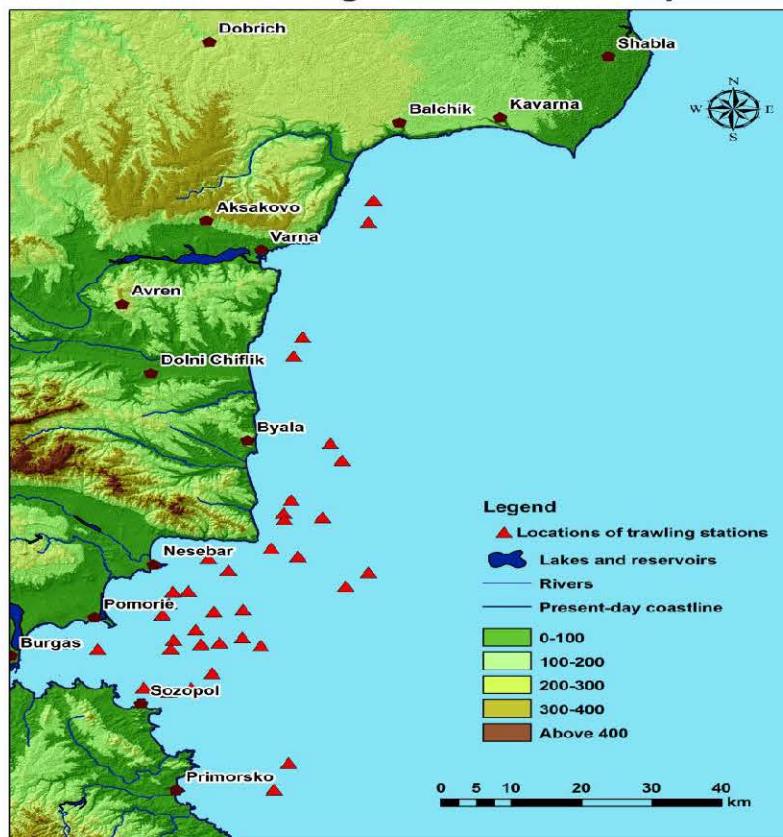


Fig.4.2.1. Station location from December, 2018.

#### Global Comments on Fish and Other Species:

H.mackerel (*Trachurus mediterraneus*)



During the studied period, the species did not form thick clusters, as it was recorded in all surveyed lanes with similarly equivalent CPUA kg.km<sup>-2</sup> and biomass (t). The prevalence of catches per unit area and biomass was in stratum 30-50m.

#### Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus* L.)

Small pelagic species inhabiting the continental shelf area up to 100 - 120 m.

In the December 2018 study, higher gains and splinter aggregates were found. The hydrometeorological conditions, the presence of large predators, the strong underwater currents and the large clusters of the *Aurelia aurita* jelly, are probably factors that have a very negative effect on the clusters of the species. The prevalence of catches per unit area was 15-30m (2065kg.km<sup>-2</sup>). In a strain of 30-50 m, it was 1815 kg.km<sup>-2</sup> and the highest catch per unit area in a 50-75m depth - 2754 kg.km<sup>-2</sup> on the clusters of the species.

#### Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*)

Whiting inhabits the bed near the bottom and feeds mainly on a sprat. The species is a predator on sprat and is an important component of food for the biggest predators such as turbot and dolphins. Whiting in December was present together with the sprat (overlapping ecological niches).

#### Other species

#### Anchovy (*E. encrasiculus* L)

The species is migratory and pelagic. In November - December, catches were sporadic, with individual specimens.



### Round goby (*N.melanostomus*)

The species is benthic, coastal. Several copies were registered in catch.

### Shad (*A. Immaculata*)

The species is present in single-catch catches.

Comments on *Sprattus sprattus* biomass from different depth layers

Table. 4.2.1. Sprat. Area Method in December 2018

CPUA mean	Biomass (kg)	Area (Ax)	No Fields
1867.739	15-30	3857.142	2065.14
1730.739	30-50	3140.98	1814.82
1416.389	50-75	3900.056	2753.52
10898.18		6633.48	106

Total biomass in December 2018 is 10 898.18 tonnes for the Bulgarian Black Sea area. Catch predominance per unit area was 15-30m (1868kg.km<sup>-2</sup>)



Table. 4.2.2. Descriptive catch statistics for *Sprattus sprattus* December 2018

	15-30м	30-50м	50-75м
Mean	1867.739	1730.739	1416.389
Standard Error	471.2985	231.7836	228.9086
Median	1512.81	1466.262	1489.536
Mode	#N/A	2792.88	#N/A
Standard Deviation	1333.033	1087.162	605.6353
Sample Variance	1776978	1181920	366794.1
Kurtosis	2.283527	7.921022	-0.61944
Skewness	1.408772	2.403399	0.149215
Range	4142.772	5213.376	1768.824
Minimum	512.028	465.48	558.576
Maximum	4654.8	5678.856	2327.4
Sum	14941.91	38076.26	9914.724
Count	8	22	7
Largest(1)	4654.8	5678.856	2327.4
Smallest(1)	512.028	465.48	558.576
Confidence Level(95.0%)	1114.444	482.0204	560.1192



## Comments on the biomass of *Trachurus mediterraneus* from different depth layers

Total biomass in December 2018 is 2965,407 tonnes for the Bulgarian Black Sea area. In a depth of 50-75m, clusters of the species were not registered.

December 2018 at a depth of 46 meters ( $CPUA = 1629 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ ). In struts 15-30 and 30-50m biomass agglomerations were as follows: 1466 and 1500 tonnes.

Table. 4.2.3. Horse mackerel. Area Method in December 2018

<b>CPUA mean</b>		<b>Biomass (kg)</b>	<b>Area (Ax)</b>	<b>№ Fields</b>
709.857	15-30	1465.954	2065.14	33
826.227	30-50	1499.453	1814.82	29
0	75-100	0	0	44



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Table. 4.2.4. Horse mackerel. Descriptive statistics of biomass indices (t) December, 2018.

statistics	15-30m	30-50m	50-75
Mean	354.9285	150.2231	0
Standard Error	182.3999	88.81277	0
Median	46.548	0	0
Mode	0	0	0
Standard Deviation	515.9049	416.5688	0
Sample Variance	266157.9	173529.6	0
Kurtosis	1.229682	8.834435	0
Skewness	1.386573	3.056185	0
Range	1396.44	1629.18	0
Minimum	0	0	0
Maximum	1396.44	1629.18	0
Sum	2839.428	3304.908	0
Count	8	22	0
Largest(1)	1396.44	1629.18	0
Smallest(1)	0	0	0
Confidence Level(95.0)	431.3073	184.6963	0

The momentary value of the horse mackerel biomass reported in December 2018 was 2966 tonnes. Horse mackerel in the 15-30m strata is 1466 t had a followed by 1500 t in 30-50m depth strata. No observations of horse mackerel in 50-75m were detected.



Table. 4.2.5. Whiting. Area Method in December 2018

CPUA mean	Biomass (kg)	Area (Ax)	№ Fields	
1611.725	15-30	3328.437	2065.14	33
924.6126	30-50	1678.005	1814.82	29
824.5646	50-75	2270.455	2753.52	44
	7276.897	6633.48	106	

Table. 4.2.6. Whiting. Descriptive statistics of biomass indices in December 2018

	15-30m	30-50m	50-75m
Mean	1611.725	924.6126	824.5646
Standard Error	472.0778	83.27297	196.6263
Median	1280.07	861.138	930.96
Mode	#N/A	837.864	#N/A
Standard Deviation	1335.238	390.5849	520.2242
Sample Variance	1782859	152556.5	270633.2



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Kurtosis	4.671846	0.092315	-0.512
Skewness	2.028315	0.341692	0.110074
Range	4142.772	1582.632	1536.084
Minimum	512.028	232.74	93.096
Maximum	4654.8	1815.372	1629.18
Sum	12893.8	20341.48	5771.952
Count	8	22	7
Largest(1)	4654.8	1815.372	1629.18
Smallest(1)	512.028	232.74	93.096
Confidence Level(95.0%)	1116.287	173.1756	481.1271

#### 4.3. Catch per unit area

The calculated area-by-catch (CPUA) for the Bulgarian Black Sea area of the deep layers is presented in Fig. 4.3.1.

Figure 4.3.1.CPUA kg.km<sup>-2</sup> and turbot biomass December 2018 of the surveyed areas Tuesday, December, CPUA kg.km<sup>-2</sup>.



CPUA ( $\text{kg}/\text{km}^2$ ) of horse mackerel - 2nd expedition      Biomass (kg) of horse mackerel - 2nd expedition

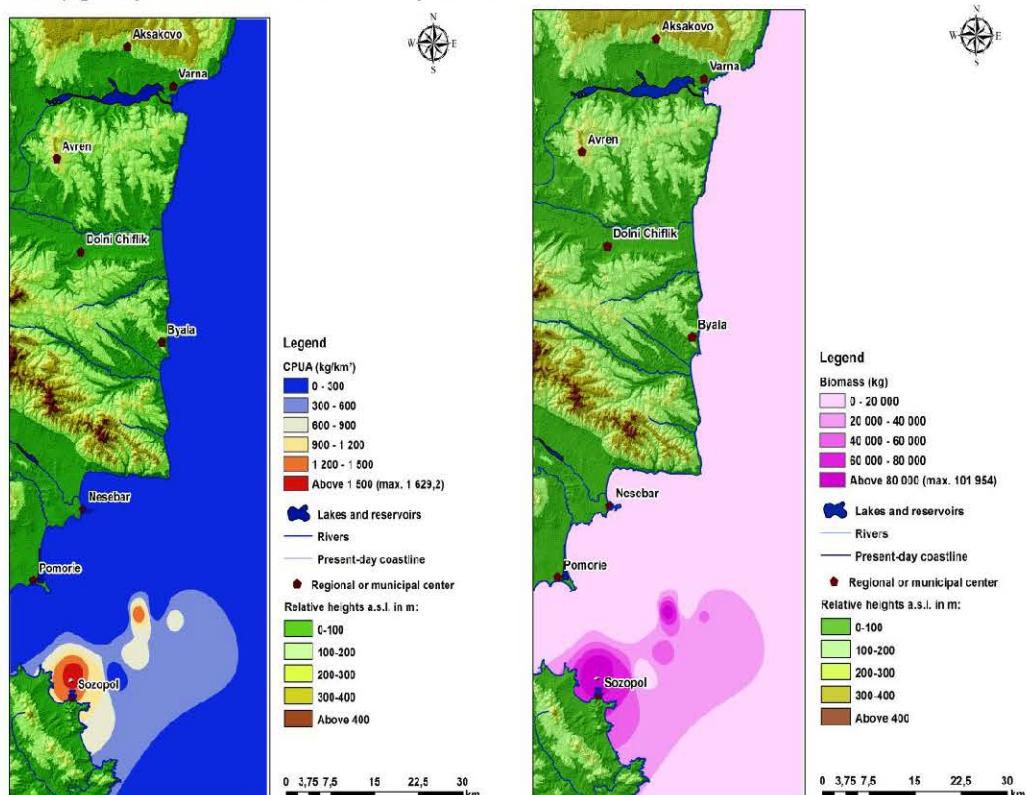


Figure 4.3.1.A, B. CPUA  $\text{kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$  and horse mackerel biomass in December 2018 of the surveyed area.

The highest catch per unit area was recorded at a depth of 50m southeast of Pomorie. ( $\text{CPUA} = 5679 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ ). In the Nesebar bay and in the Cape Oyster region at depths of 29-30m, a  $\text{CPUA} = 2560 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$  and a depth of 62m -  $\text{CPUA} = 1955 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ .



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

In a depth of 50-75m, clusters of the type were not recorded in December 2018 at a depth of 46 meters ( $CPUA = 1629 \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$ ).  $CPUA = 1400 \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$ . In the other surveyed areas, the clusters were insignificant, and in most of the catch areas they were not registered.

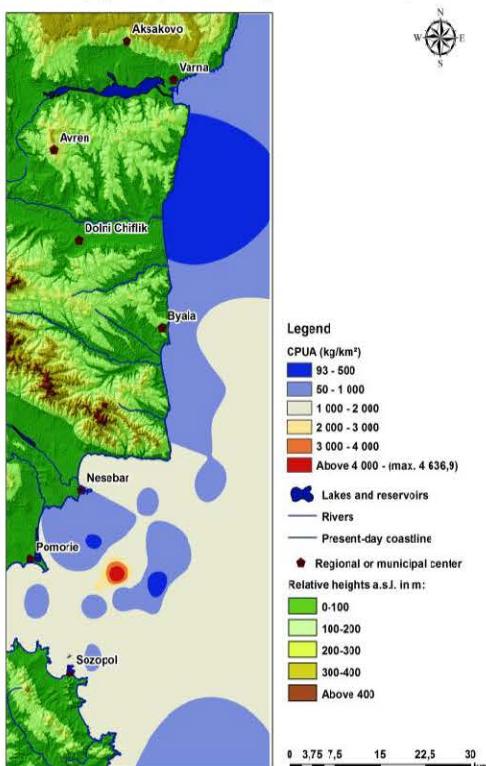
Whiting, December,  $CPUA \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$

In the layer 15-30 m, the highest catch per unit area was  $2050 \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$ , average for the layer -  $1612 \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$ . In the 30-50m and 50-75m depths, CPUAs were close to 925 and  $825 \text{ kg.km}^{-2}$ . Coastal zone biomass was 7277 tonnes. In all surveyed polygons we recorded clusters of the species. The highest values of the highest catch per unit area and the biomass of the species were in front of Maslen Cape, Nesebar Bay and Pomorie.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

CPUA ( $\text{kg}/\text{km}^2$ ) of whiting - Second expedition



Biomass (kg) of whiting - Second expedition

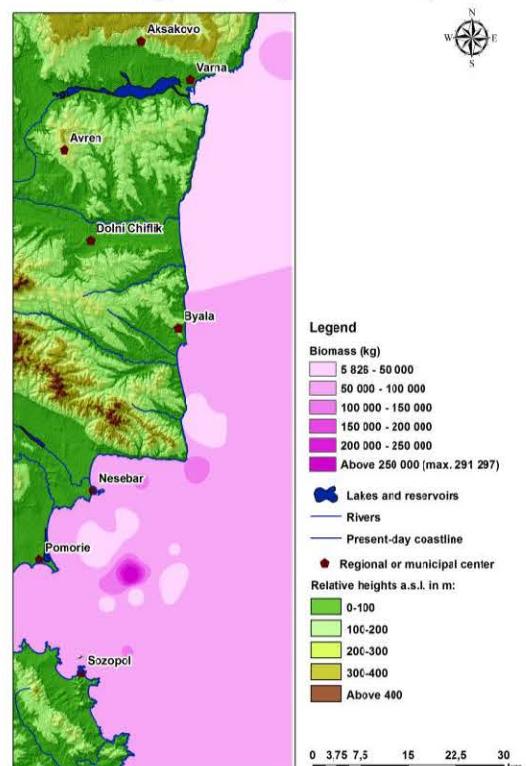
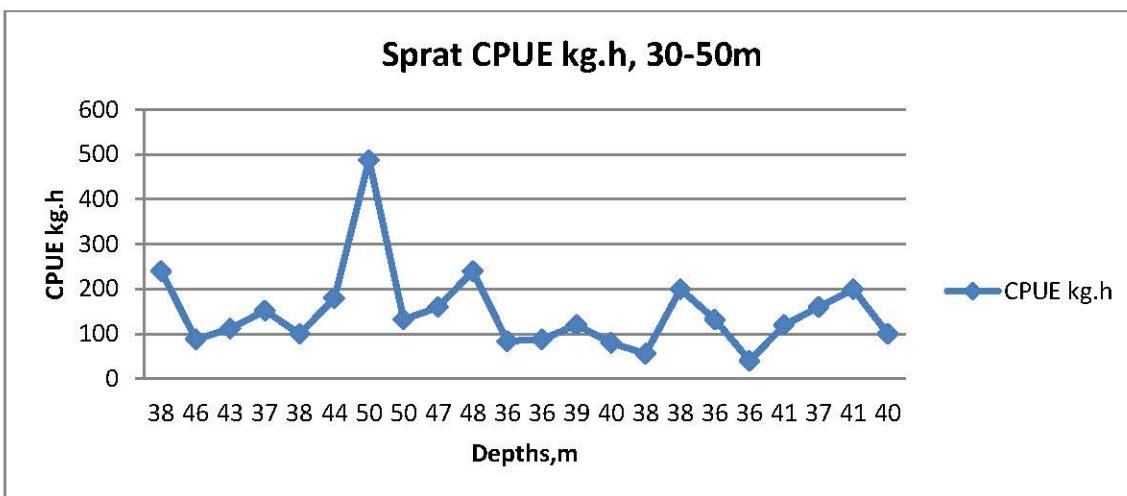
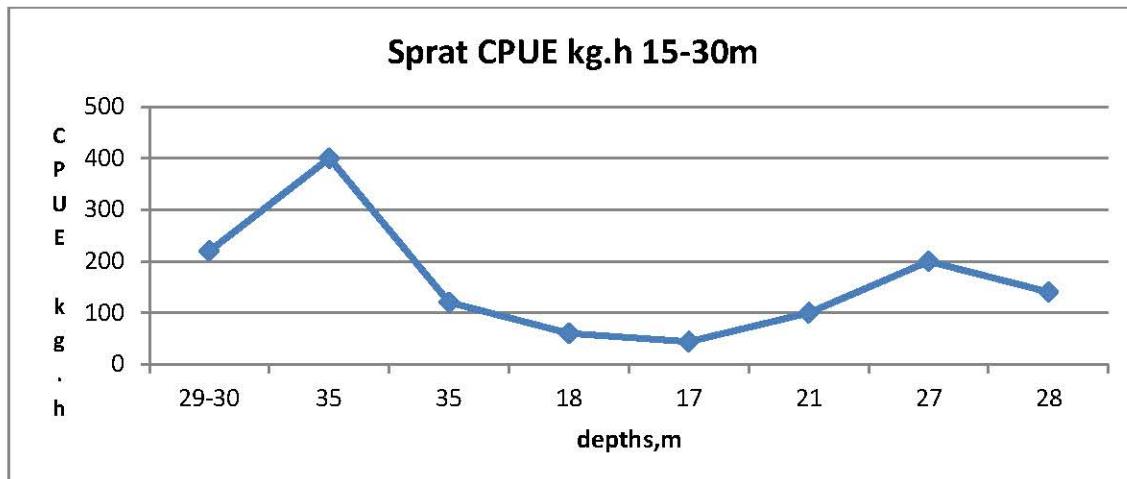


Figure 4.3.2.A, B. CPUA  $\text{kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$  and the biomass of whiting December 2018 of the studied area.

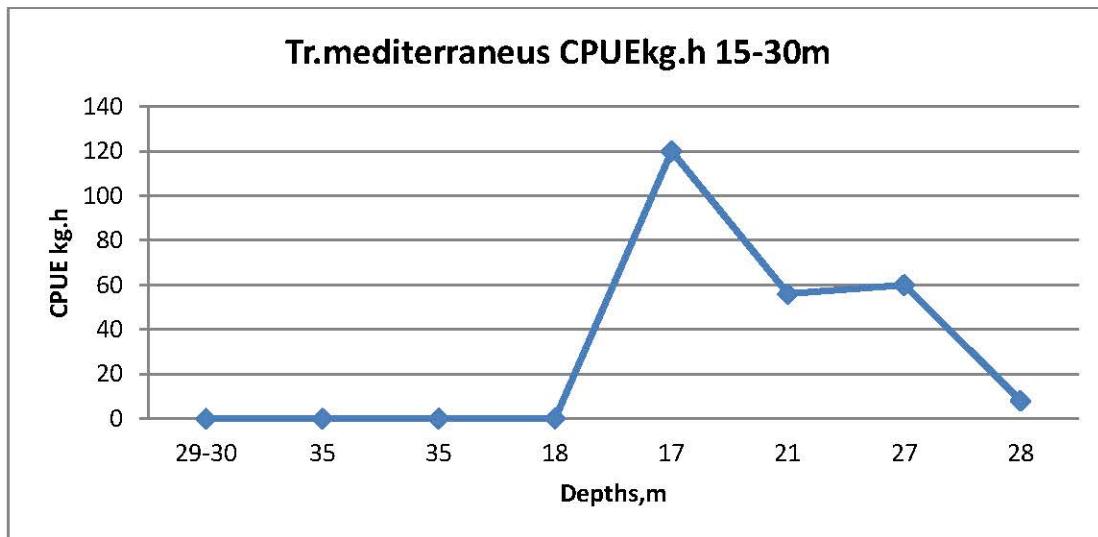
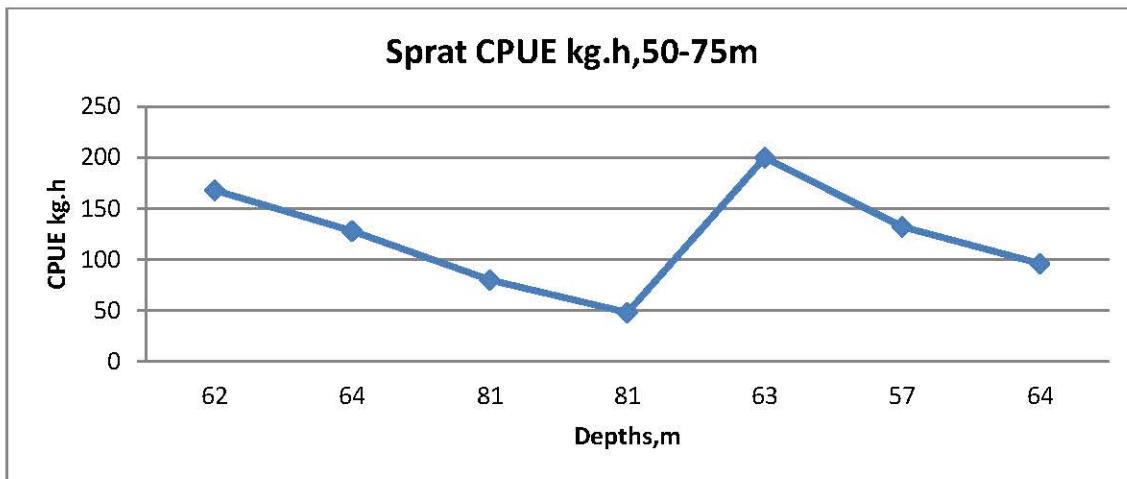


#### 4.4. Catch per unit of effort





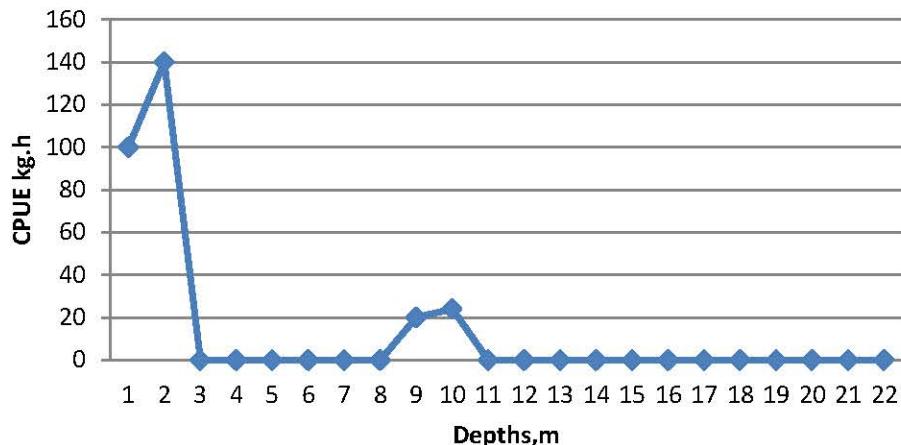
МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



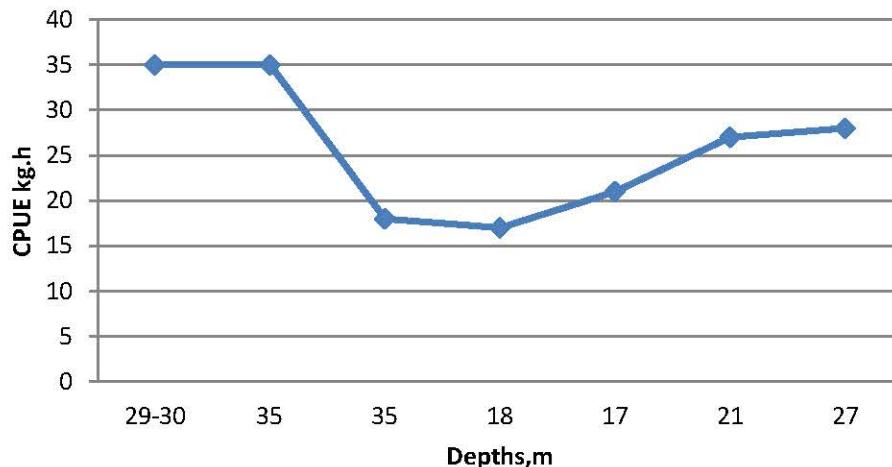


МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

### Tr.mediterraneus CPUE kg.h,50-75m



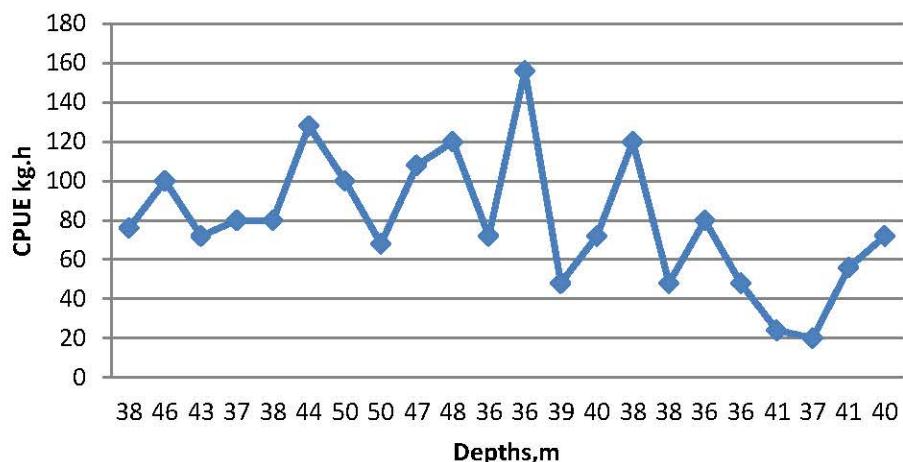
### M.merlagius CPUEkg.h 15-30m





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

### M.merlangus CPUEkg.h,30-50m



### M.merlangus CPUEkg.h,50-75m

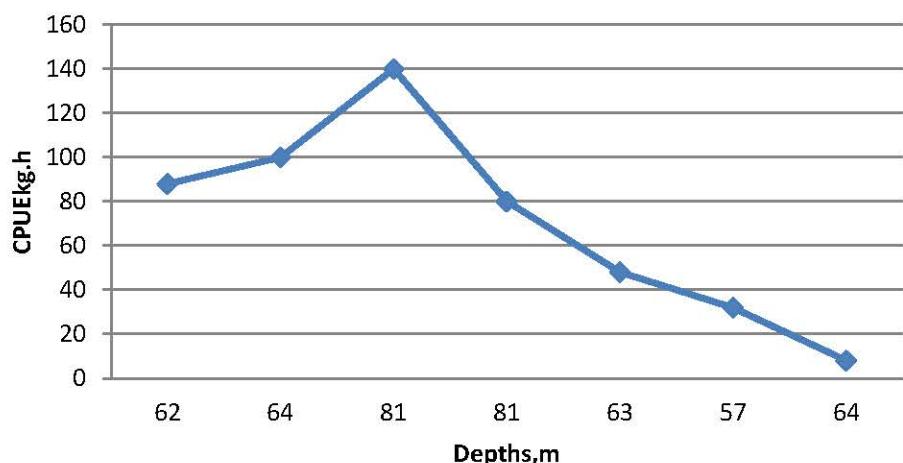


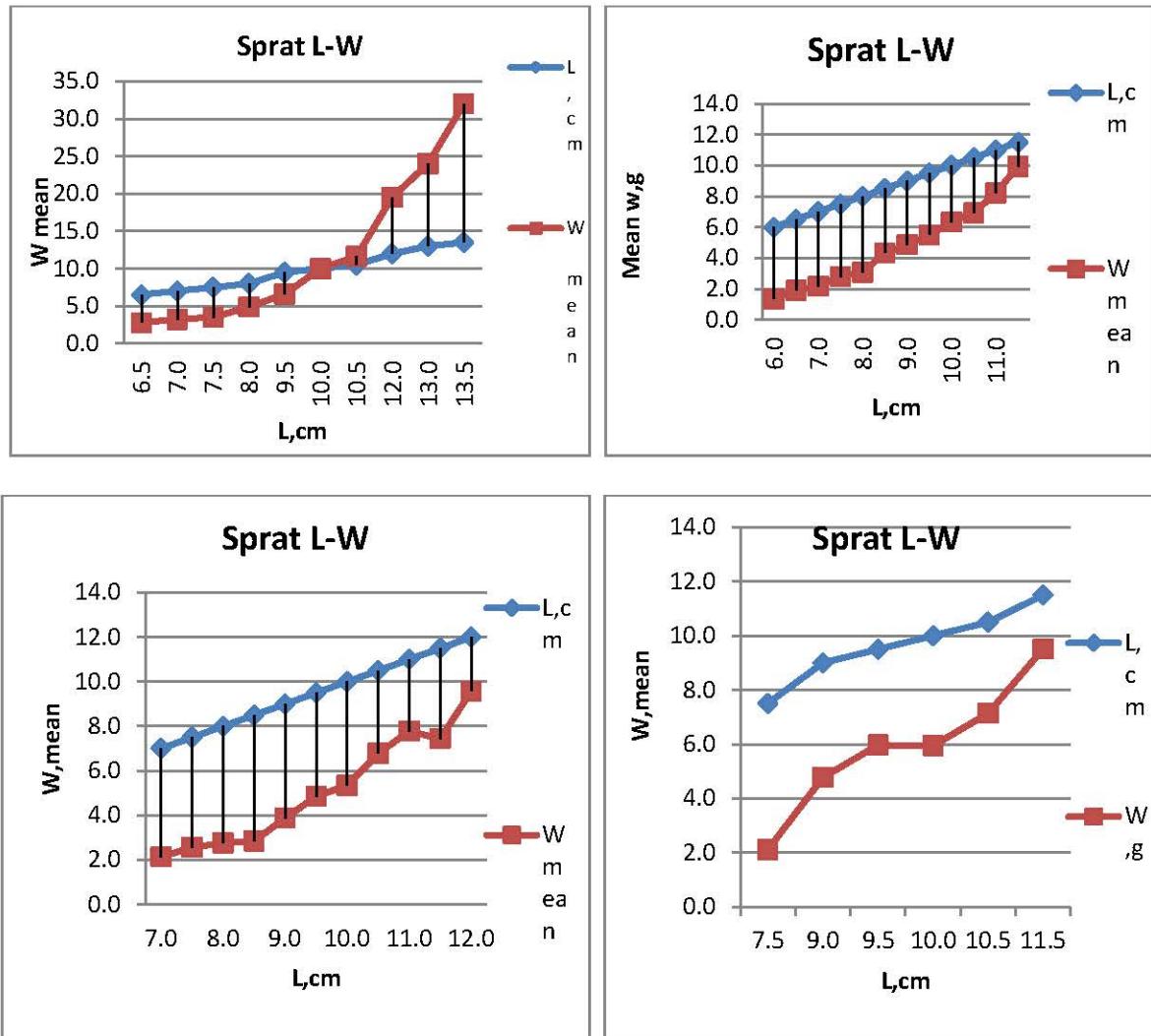
Figure 4.3.1. CPUE kg.h-1 of the study area



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И

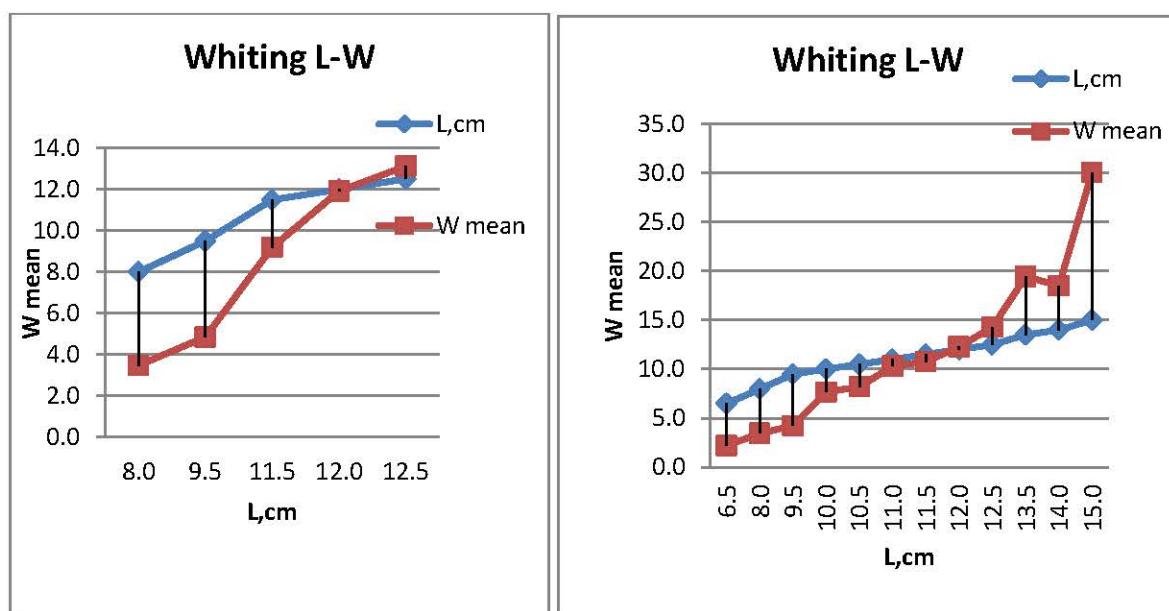
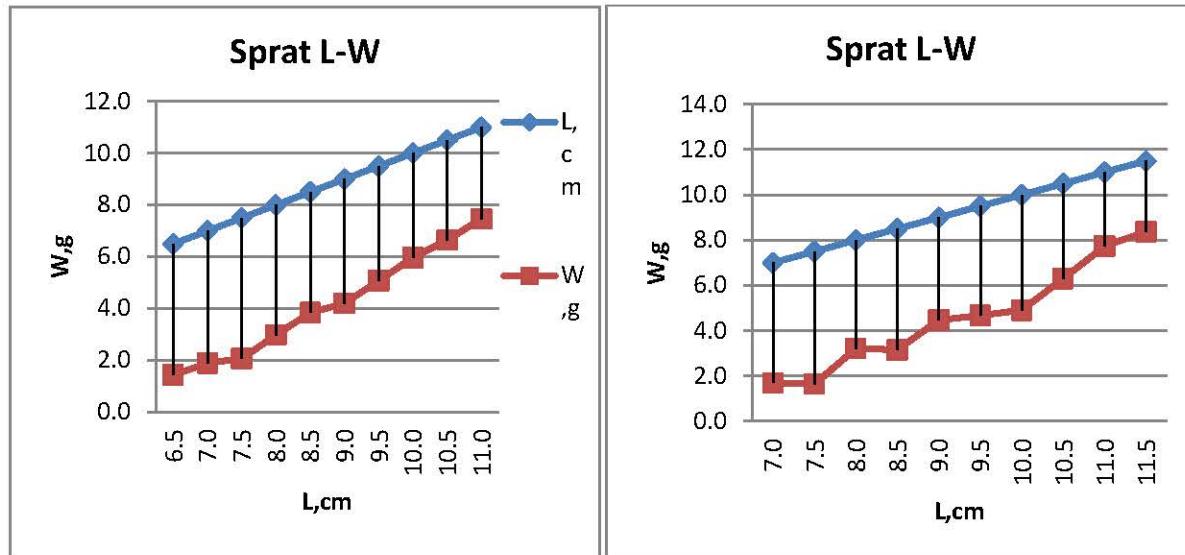
#### 4.5. Size structure of *Sprattus sprattus*

Frequencies and average weights from different stations



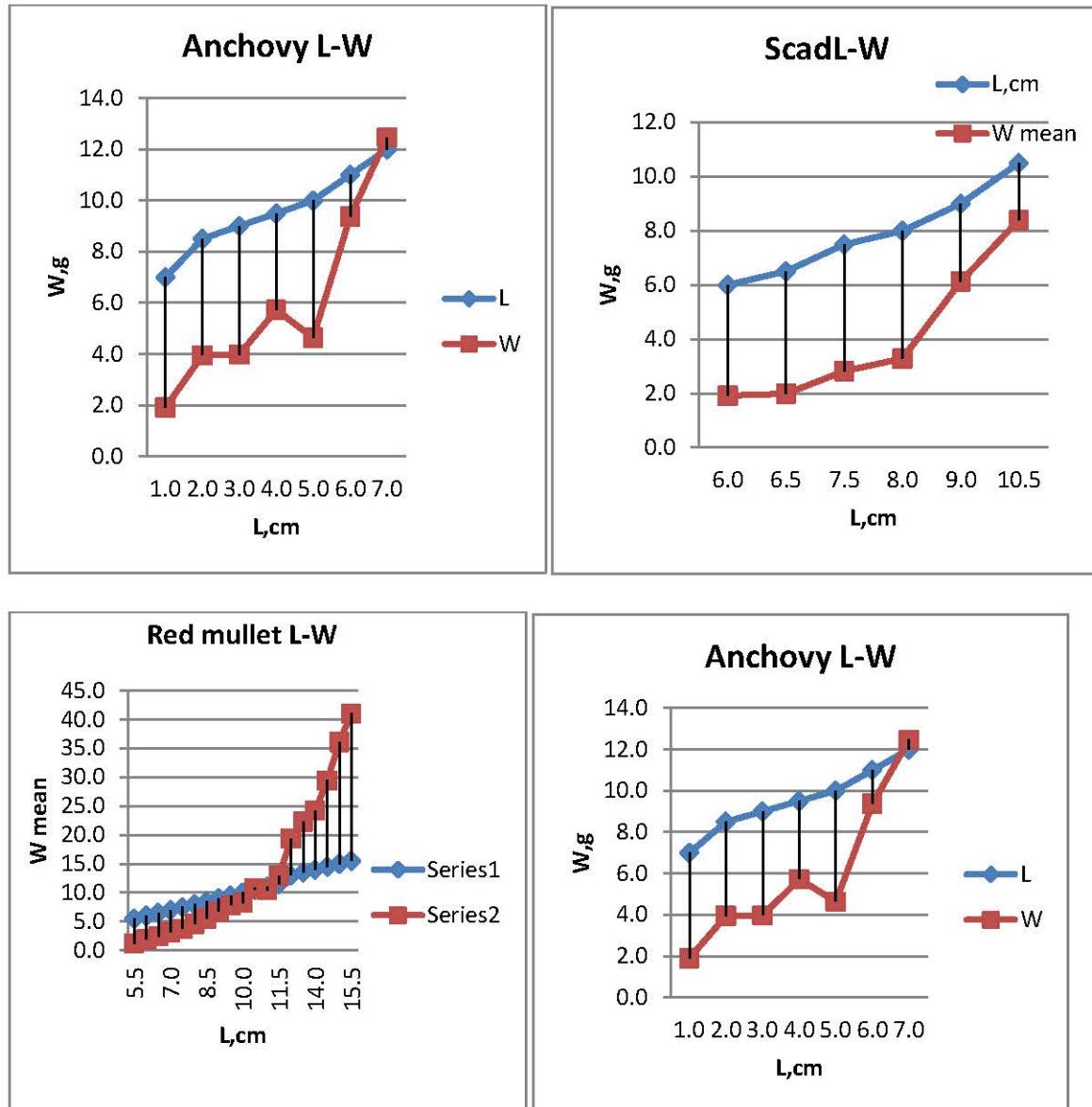


МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

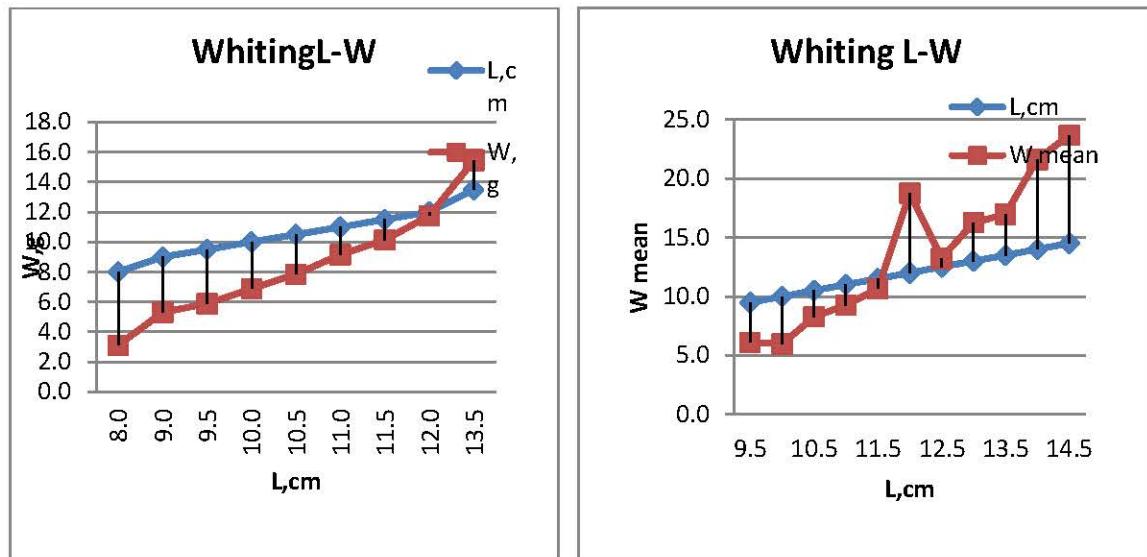


Fig..4.5.1.L-Wanalysis

The composition of the sprat size consists of the following size classes (TL, cm) from 6.5 cm to 11.5 cm in samples from the Bulgarian sea area (Fig.4.5.1 and 4.5.2).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

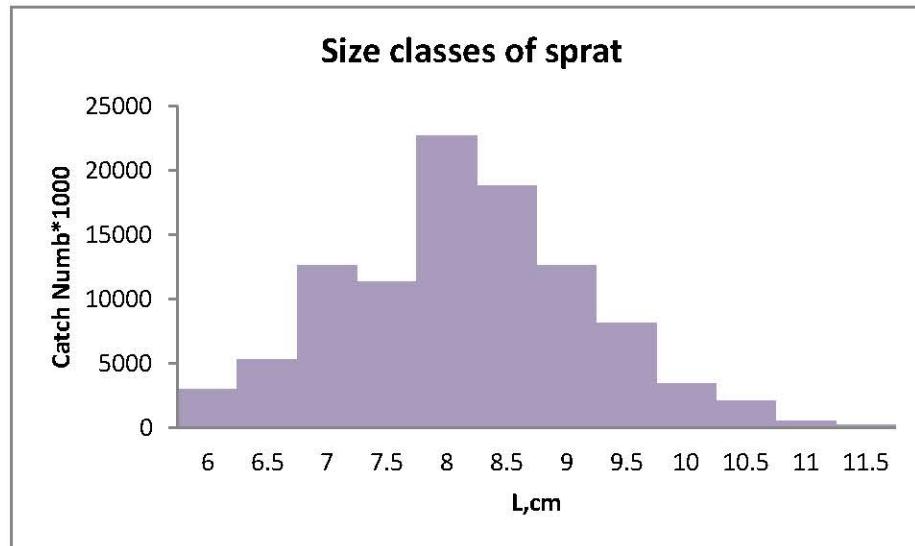


Figure 4.5.2. Size of size classes of sprat from the Bulgarian marine aquarium.

It is obvious that size classes 8 - 8.5 cm are dominant, with older classes being represented with a low percentage. In December size class 8 is very high, followed by L = 7.0.8.5 and 9 cm. The situation with the lack (or low share) of the older (the most senior) individuals is the same in the period 2007-2018 (Raikov et al., 2018).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

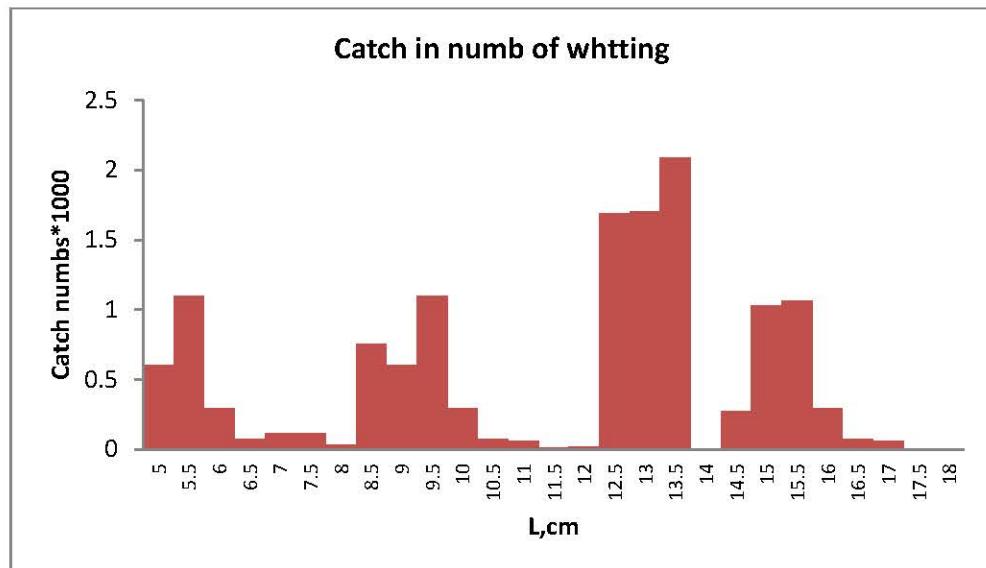


Figure 4.5.3. Share of groups in size from the Bulgarian marine aquatory.

In December the share of 12.5 and 13 cm was highest, despite the presence of all dimensional classes. Later in December, the proportion of all size classes increased, with 12.5, 13 and 13.5 classes increasing two times and more. The top 15 and 15.5 centimeters increased significantly in December 2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

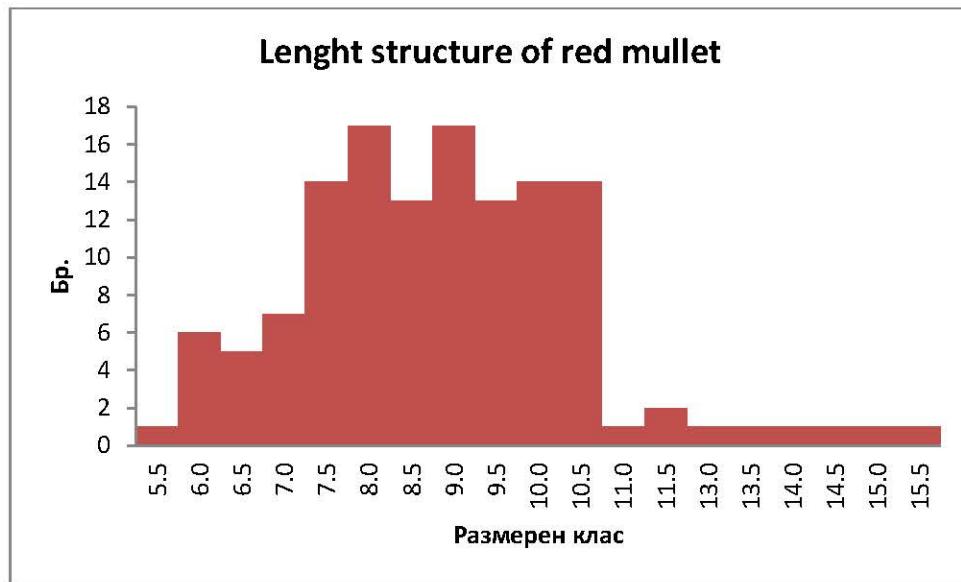


Figure 4.5.4. Share of red mullet size groups from the Bulgarian marine area



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

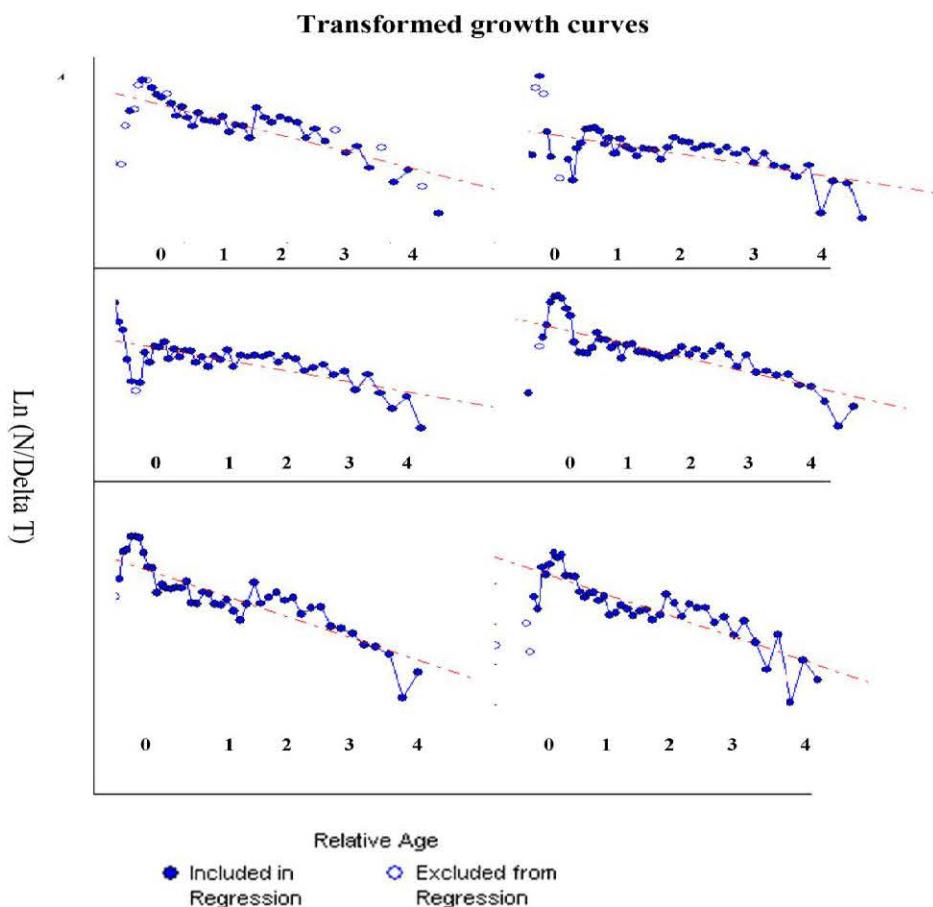


Fig.4.5.5. Spinning curves of the splinter from December 2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
МОСКО ДЕЛО И  
'СТВО

#### 4.6. Age structure

The age structure is determined on the basis of direct reading of the otoliths with the binocular of the reflected light. The analysis shows that the percentage of annuals is the highest in the present study (Fig.4.6.1.A, B.)

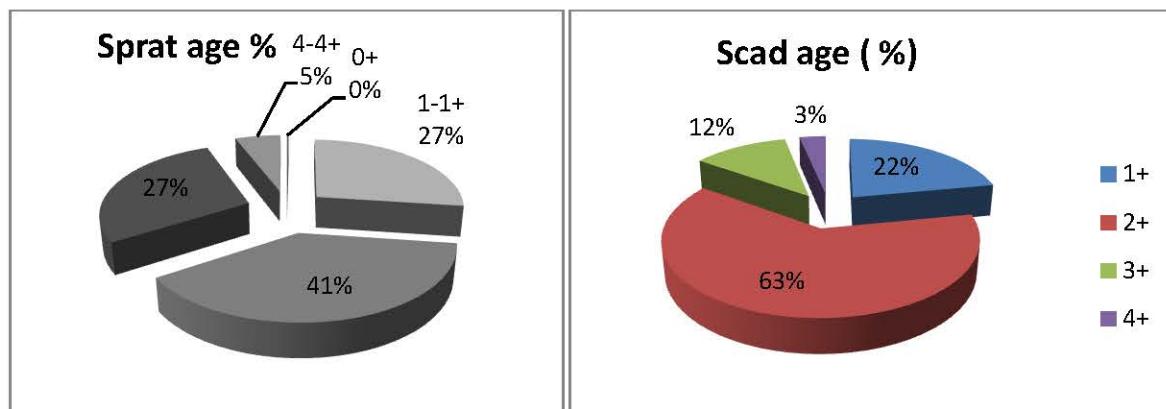
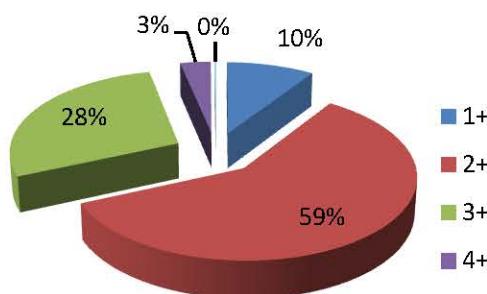


Fig.4.6.1, A, B Distribution by age of sprat and scad in December 2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И

Age of red mullet (%)



Age of whiting (%)

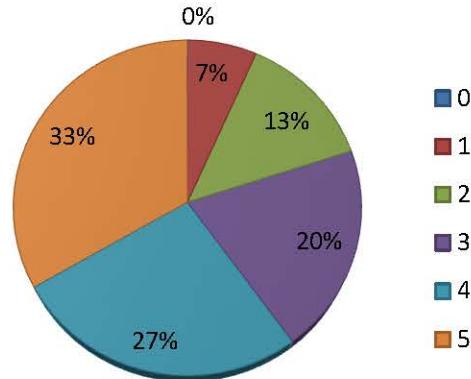


Fig.4.6.2. The age distribution of the species in December 2018

Table 4.6.1. Parameters in the VBGF system.

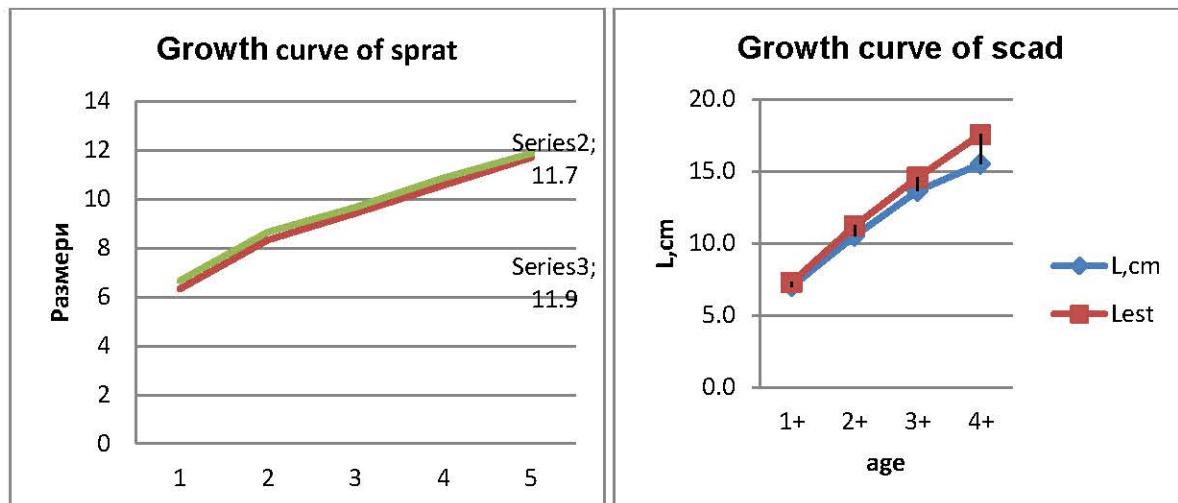
$L^\infty = 12.34$
$k=0.45$
$t_0 = -1.2355$
$q = 0.009$
$n = 2.76$



## 4.7. Growth

### L growth

To calculate the growth rate and growth parameters from the Bulgarian area, we used the Von Bertalanfi equation, VBGF. The estimation of asymptotic length, growth rate and coefficients related to the coefficients is presented in Table 4.7.1.





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

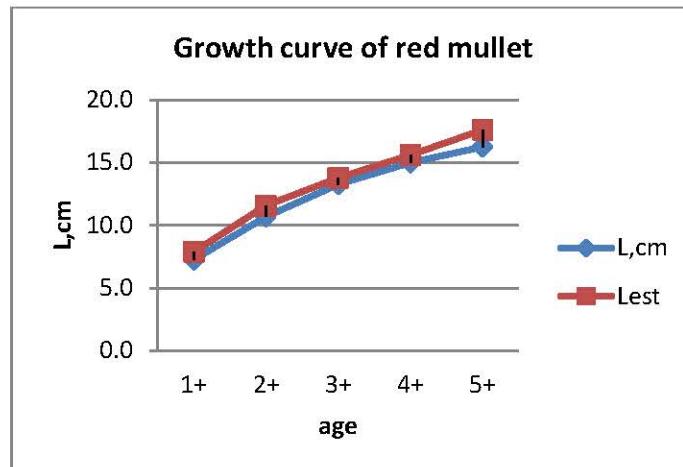


Fig.4.7.1. L asymptotic for sprat, horse mackerel and red mullet

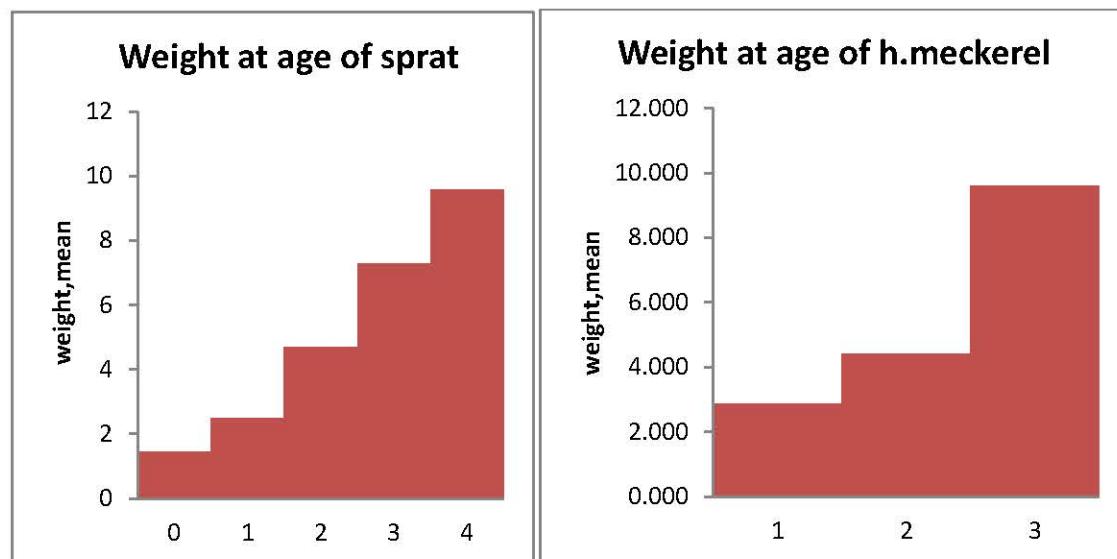
The asymptotic length reaches 12.34 cm; the rate of growth can be determined as being relatively high  $0.45 \text{ y}^{-1}$ . The growth of sputum from the present study is positive allometric ( $n = 2.76$ ) (Fig.4.7.1).

The most important note here is that because of the lack (or low share) of the oldest large age groups, the asymptomatic size function shows a relatively low value. In this regard, the maximum or asymptotic length reaches this value, which is probably not fully consistent with the literal data on the size of the species and the marginal length and growth rates. Therefore, we can accept the growth analysis as this is what reflects in the current situation of absence (low presence) of large individuals.



## Body growth

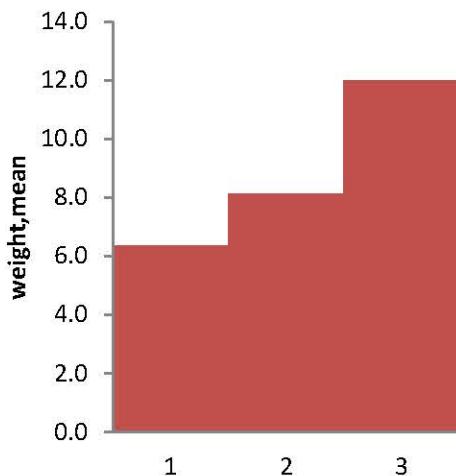
The somatic growth of sprat from current research shows that the average weight corresponding to the oldest age group is 8.05 grams. The value corresponds to the marginal size of 11.75 cm measured in samples from the trawl survey in Bulgarian waters (Fig.4.7.2).



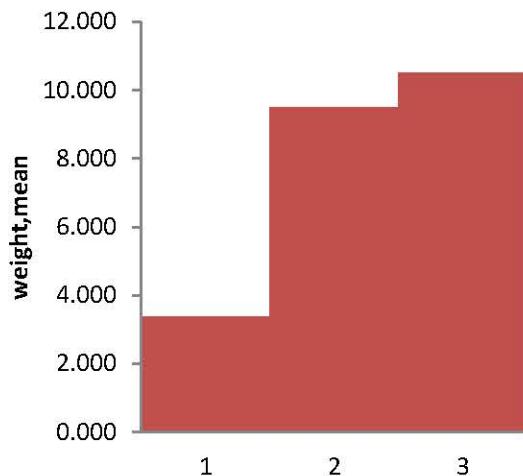


МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

**Weight at age of anchovy**



**Weight at age of whiting**



**Weight at age of Red mullet**

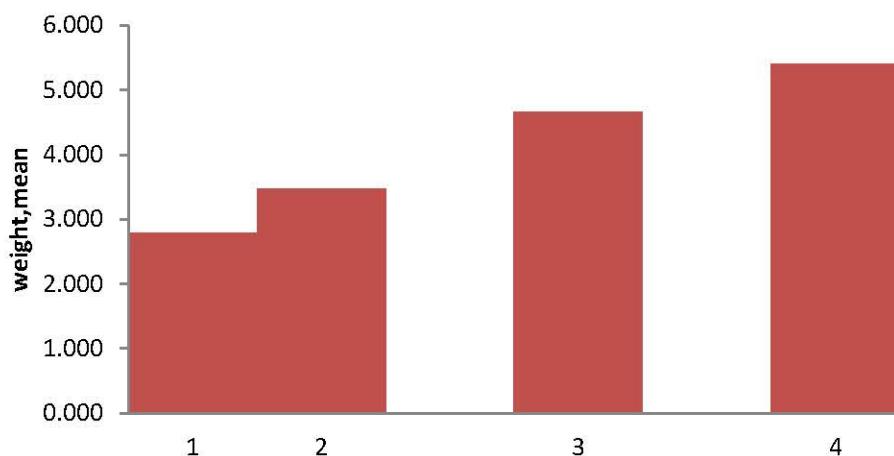


Figure 4.7.2. Somatic growth of target species.



The asymptotic weight reached 11.41. The weight was assessed as relatively stable and high 0.44. This fact could be related to the fact that in December, the hawads have a high degree of maturity.

### Natural mortality

We used values of asymptotic size obtained from Pauly (1980) mean sea water temperature. In the lower layers it is 6.9 ° C.

From asymptotic length:

$$M = 0.7632$$

Asymptomatic weight:

$$M = 0.582$$

In the present study, we used a natural mortality coefficient for sprat equal to 0.95 (Ivanov and Beverton, 1985, Prodanov et al., 1997, Daskalov, 1998).

### 4.8. Sex Ratio

Females predominate by 49%, followed by males (48%). Juveniles were represented with a low percentage (3%)



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

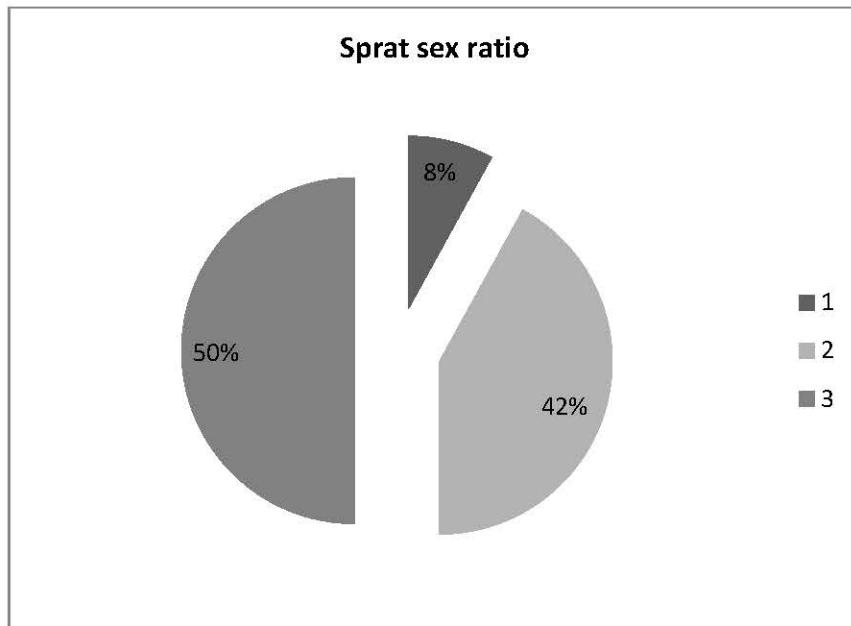


Figure 4.8.1. Ratio of sexes1 - juvenile; 2-male, 3-female

#### 4.9. Fertility and fecundity

The sprat was in the spawning phase of the current investigation in December. Most of the individuals have a III - IV stage of the gonads. A more detailed analysis should be made in the active period of spawning of the species (October-February).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

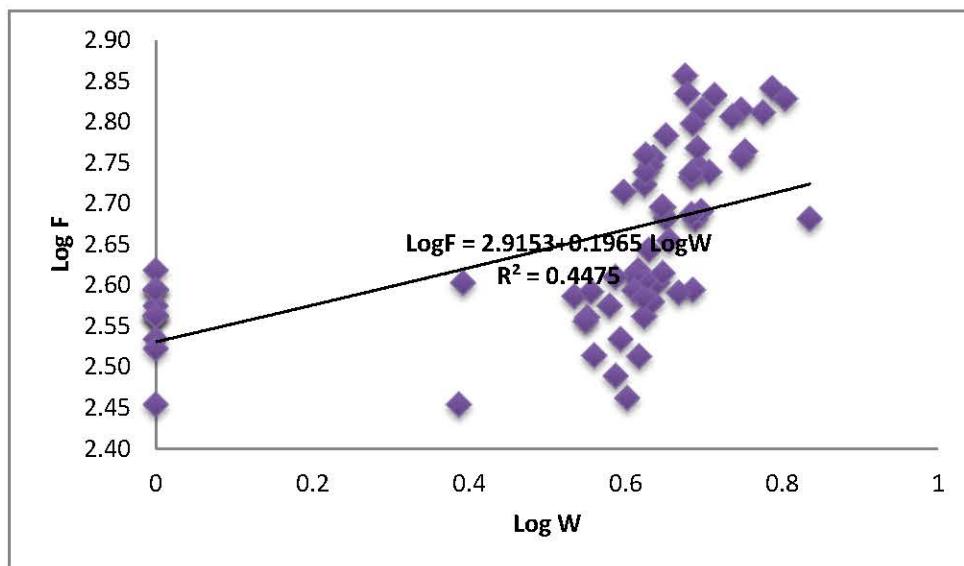


Figure 4.9.1. Fruit Plot (LogF) in relation to the size (LogL) of the sprat from the December 2018 study.

The fertility of the sprat correlates positively with its length ( $R^2 = 0.45$ ), with large size classes corresponding to high fertility.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И

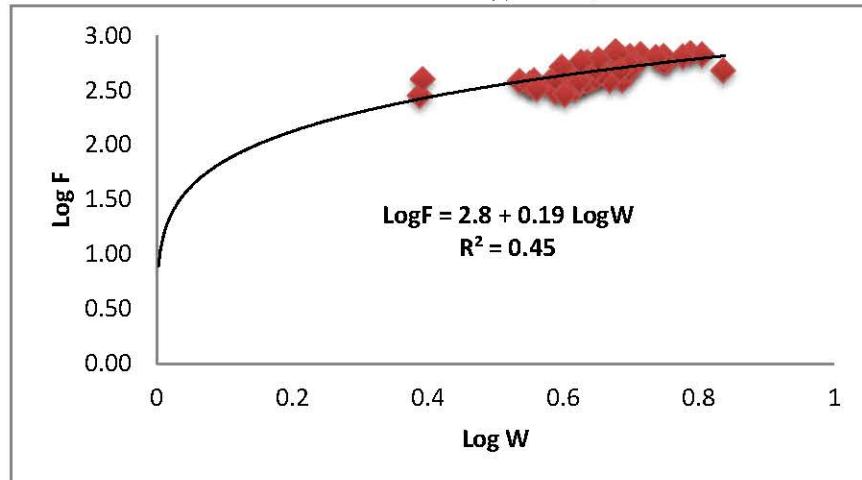


Figure 4.9.2. Fertility - log (LogF) related to weight (LogW) of the sprat in December, 2018

The ratio between fertility and sprat weight is very well expressed ( $R^2 = 4.46$ ; Fig.4.9.2).



#### 4.10. Gonado-somatic index

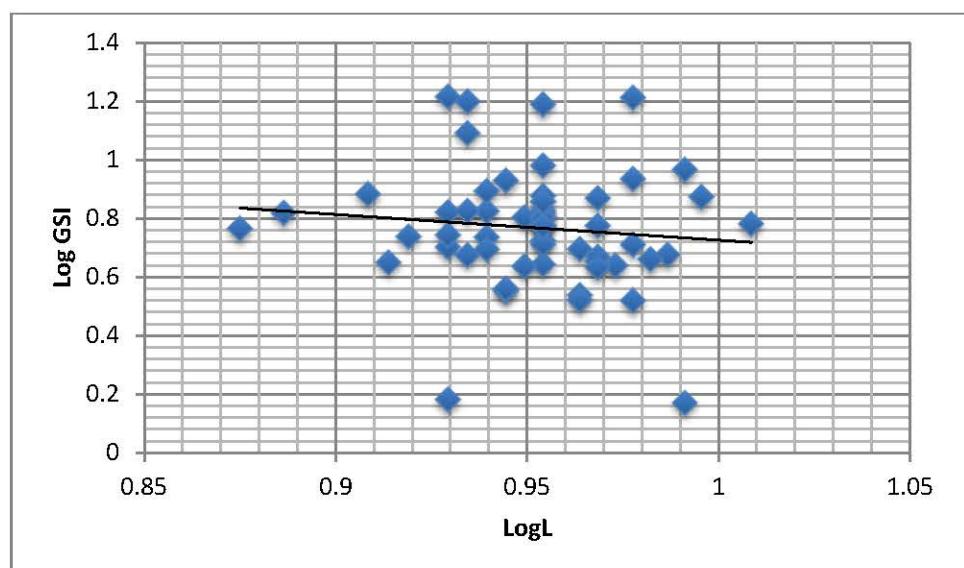
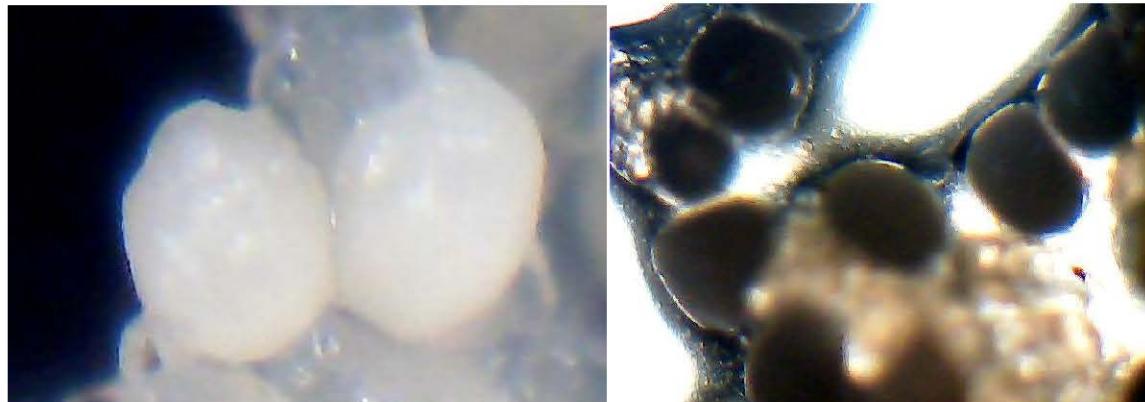


Figure 4.10.1. Gondo-somatic index of the sprat of this study (GSI, %) The GSI (%) indicates that over 50% of females are actively spawning. Very few specimens were in early maturation, so we can conclude that in December 2018, active propagation began, even at a relatively high seasonal water temperature.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Picture 4. Sprat eggs

## 5. Food composition

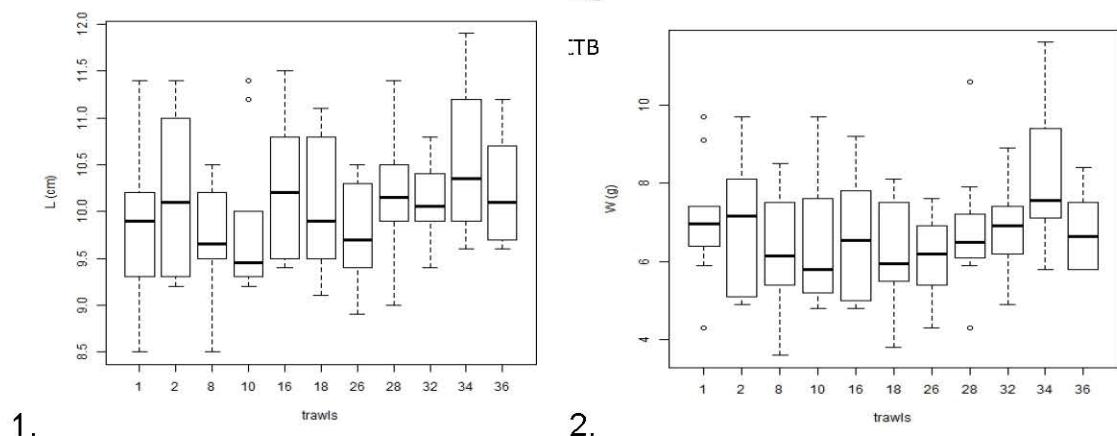
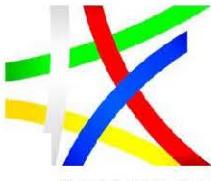
The mean absolute length of investigated sprat specimens reached 10.06 cm  $\pm$  0.70 (SD), varying between 8.5 - 11.5 cm, correspondingly the mean weight was 6.75 g  $\pm$  1.53 (SD), varying from 3.61 g to 11.61 g (Table 5.1, Fig 5.1.).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Table 5.2. Summary statistics of sprat length (L, cm), weight (W, g) and ISF (% BW), analysed for stomach content composition during XII.2018.

	L, cm	W, g	ISF, % BW
<b>Mean</b>	10.06	6.75	1.20
<b>Standard Error</b>	0.07	0.15	0.10
<b>Median</b>	10.00	6.58	0.87
<b>Mode</b>	10.00	#N/A	0.00
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0.70	1.53	1.05
<b>Sample Variance</b>	0.49	2.34	1.11
<b>Kurtosis</b>	-0.39	0.54	-0.48
<b>Skewness</b>	0.34	0.66	0.69
<b>Range</b>	3.40	8.00	4.31
<b>Minimum</b>	8.50	3.61	0.00
<b>Maximum</b>	11.90	11.61	4.31
<b>Sum</b>	1107.10	742.66	128.13
<b>Count</b>	110.00	110.00	107.00
<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	0.13	0.29	0.20



1.

2.

Figure 5.1. Box plot (median values, 25 – 75 % hinge, minimal and maximal values): Distribution of sprat length (1, cm) and weight (2, g) per trawls during XII.2018.

The weight-length dependence for sprat could be described by the following equation:  $\text{Log } WW(g) = 2.8631 * \text{Log } L(\text{cm}) - 2.0495$ ; ( $r^2 = 0.78$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Fig.5.2).

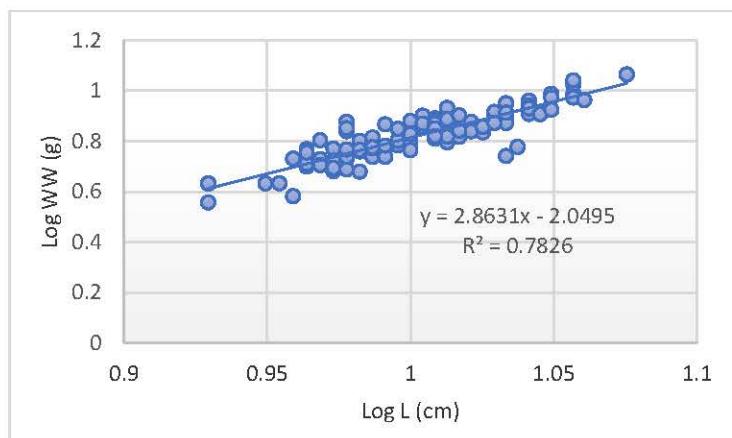
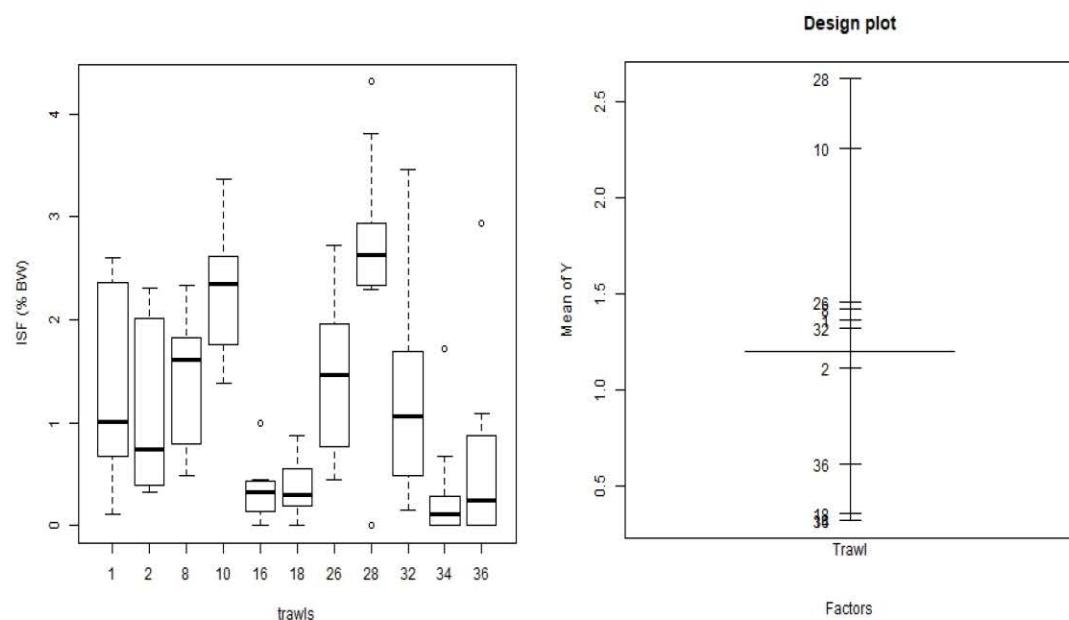


Figure 5.2. Weight-length relationship for sprat, investigated in XII.2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

In the period from middle to late December 2018, the mean value of the index of stomach fullness (ISF) reached  $1.20\% \text{ BW} \pm 1.05$  (SD) (Table 5.2). ISFlateXII.2018 was with 63.74 % higher than the average level of ISF in 2017 (0.62 % BW). This index has shown an increase with 18.87 % in comparison with the first stage of the study.



1. 2.  
Figure 5.3. (1) Boxplot: sprat index of stomach fullness (ISF, % BW) in late December 2018. (2) Design plot: distribution of mean ISF (% BW) by trawls.

The highest mean values of ISF = 2.25 - 2.61 % (Fig. 5.3 and 5.4) were detected in trawls 28 and 10 – in front of Sozopol and in Chernomorec - Varna region. ISF show minimal levels in front of Cape Emine and in the northern Bourgas Bay (Fig.5.4).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

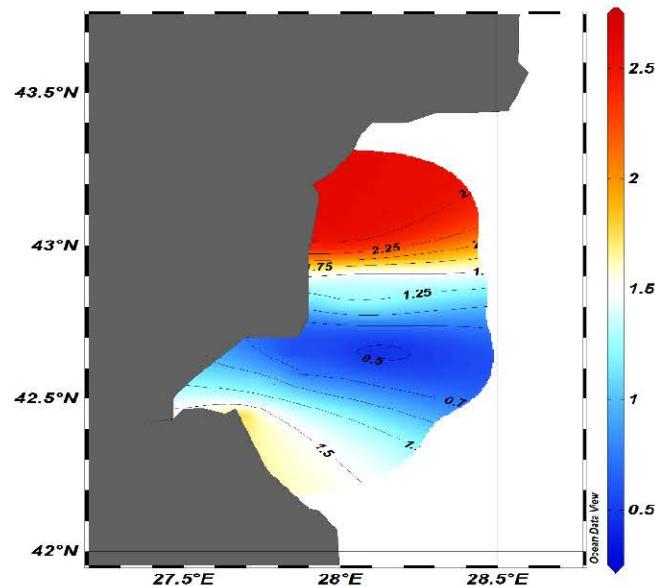


Fig. 5.4. Spatial distribution of ISF (% BW) in XII.2018.

Between ISF and sprat weight within the limits of 3.61 - 11.61 g wasn't established statistically significant difference (Fig.5.5).



Photo: Ovaries of clupeids (source: Internet)

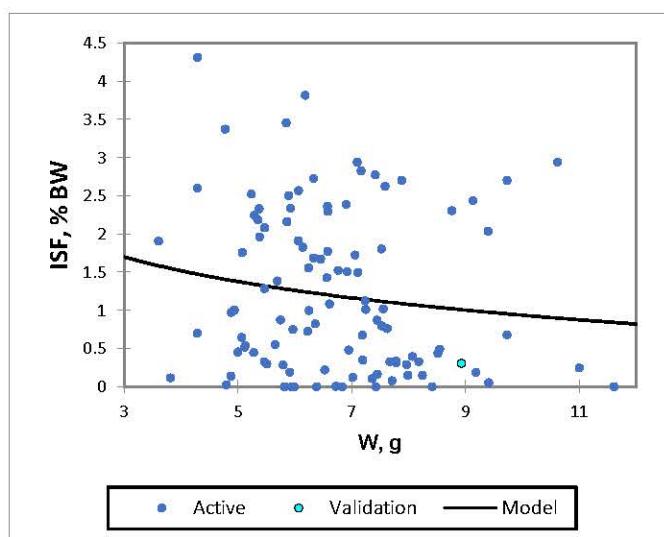


Figure 5.5. Scatterplot: Relationship between sprat weight (WW, g) and ISF (% BW).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Prey number, species composition and index of relative importance (IRI) of mesozooplankton species in the sprat diet .

The average prey number (PN) in the sprat diet accounted 100 ind/stomach  $\pm$  91.49 SD, comparable with data from the first stage of the study. The maximal individual PN - 356 ind/stomach was found in front of Chernomorec (trawl 28, depth 22 m), by average PN - 233 ind/stomach and maximal ISF - 2.62 % BW, due to intensive consumption of *Calanus euxinus*. In spatial aspect, the highest PN > 150 ind/stomach were detected in north direction, above Biala and up to Varna region (Fig.5.6).

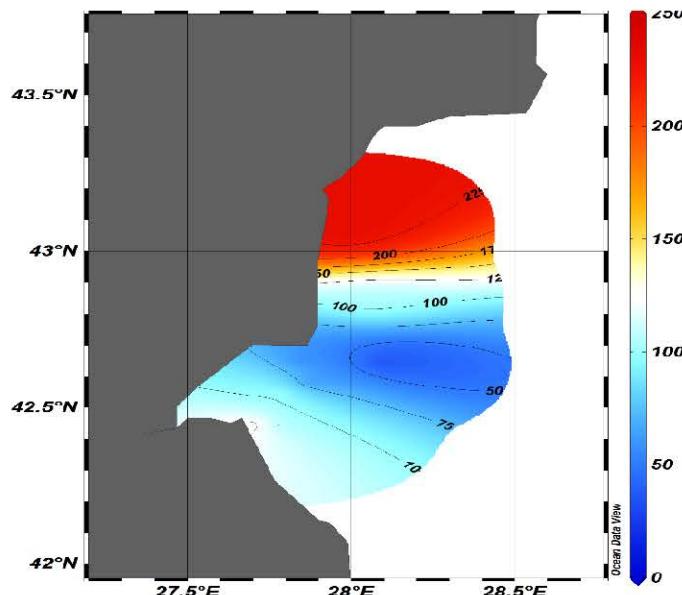


Fig. 5.6. Spatial distribution of the average prey number (PN) per trawls in XII.2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Twenty mesozooplankton species/groups were identified in marine environment during the studied period, but only 11 species/groups were detected in the sprat diet. In the sprat food, Copepods were represented by several species - *Calanus euxinus*, *Pseudocalanus elongatus*, *Acartia clausi*, *Oithona spp.*, *Paracalanus parvus*, *Copepoda nauplii*, *Copepoda spp.*; three taxonomic groups were found from the pelagic larvae of bottom species (meroplankton) - *Lamellibranchia veliger*, *Cirripedia cypris* and *Decapoda larvae*; class *Chaetognatha* was represented by the species *Parasagitta setosa*, class *Appendicularia* - by *Oicopleura dioica*. The sprat food was more diverse in late December 2018 as compared with the first stage of the survey, but the structure of dominating species remained akin, including two main species - *Calanus euxinus* and *Parasagitta setosa*.

The indices of relative importance (IRI) of the zooplankton species in sprat food spectrum (based on the percent shares from total abundance, biomass and frequency of occurrence in samples) were represented in Table 5.3.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Table 5.3. The sprat food composition in XII.2018.

Sprat food components	N (%, from total abundance)	M (%, from total biomass)	FO - Frequency of occurrence	IRI - Index of relative importance
<i>Calanus euxinus</i>	68.81	76.31	94.86	13711.73
<i>Parasagitta setosa</i>	17.60	19.77	60.81	3455.89
<i>Pseudocalanus elongatus</i>	3.82	0.15	59.24	301.63
<i>Paracalanus parvus</i>	2.80	0.05	45.28	161.10
<i>Acartia clausi</i>	1.28	0.07	37.53	68.60
<i>Oikopleura dioica</i>	1.12	0.01	20.56	32.01
<i>Copepoda</i>	0.67	0.03	3.33	4.61
<i>Lamellibranchia veliger</i>	0.17	0.00	13.28	4.10
<i>Cirripedia cypris</i>	0.03	0.00	2.39	0.44
<i>others</i>	3.44	3.61		
<b>total</b>	100%	100%		

The sprat food was dominated by the copepod *Calanus euxinus*, flowed by *Parasagitta setosa*, *Pseudocalanus elongatus*, *Paracalanus parvus* and *A. clausi*

(Table 5.3 & 5.4, Fig. 5.7). The cold -water species predominated the sprat diet by abundance and biomass, and showed the highest frequency of occurrence.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

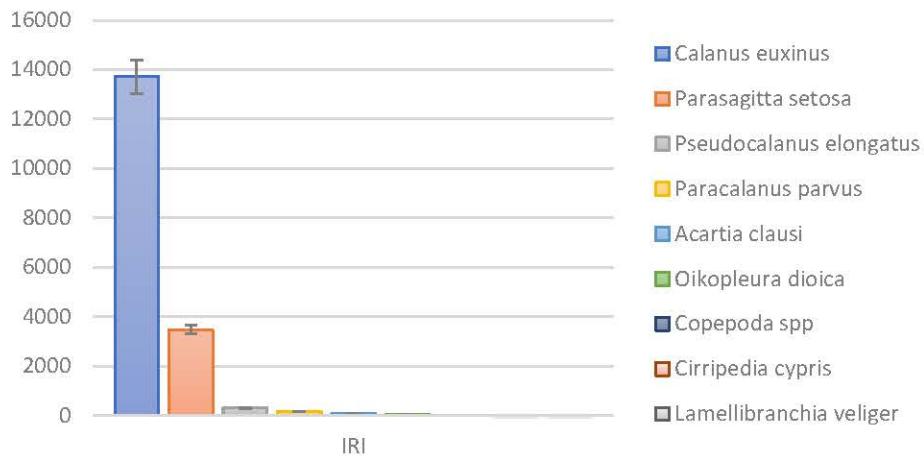


Figure 5.7. Mean IRI of mesozooplankton species in the sprat food in XII.2018.

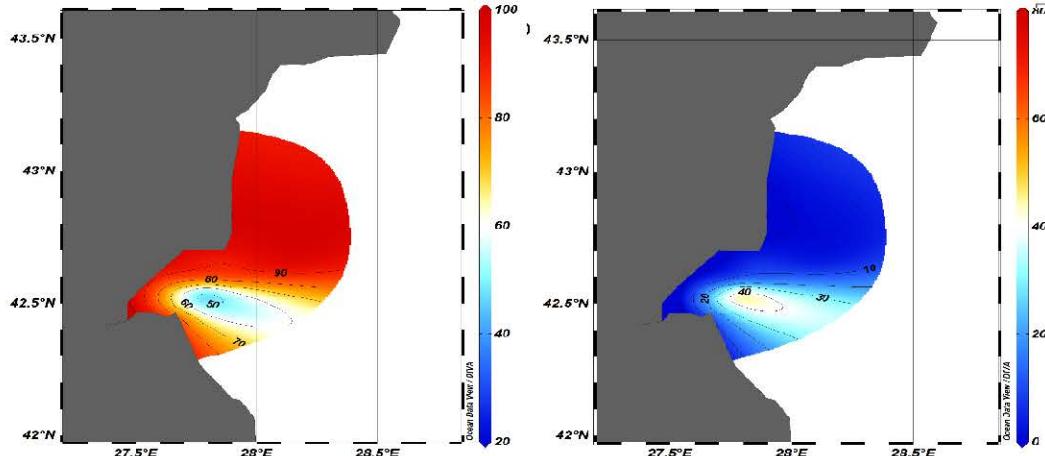
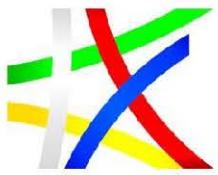
The species *C. euxinus* dominated almost all sprat food samples (with exception of samples from the southern Bourgas Bay, in front of Sozopol); the species *Parasagitta setosa* was detected in the sprat ration mostly in the large Bourgas Bay, while *Pseudocalanus elongatus* has an important role in the sprat food off the southern coasts, below Primorsko (Table 5.4, Fig. 5.8).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

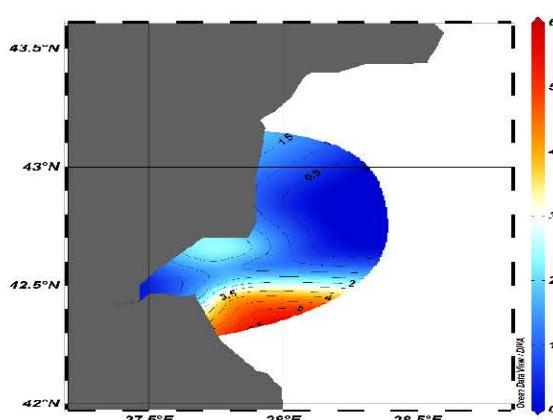
Table 5.4.IRI (%) of mesozooplankton species in sprat food per trawls in December 2018.

Sprat food components	1	2	8	10	16	18	26	28	32	34	36
<i>Calanus euxinus</i>	31.31	22.54	58.02	94.94	99.02	98.70	82.74	93.49	98.11	80.04	96.37
<i>Parasagitta setosa</i>	55.36	74.29	30.92	1.61	0.00	0.95	3.97	4.48	0.85	15.83	0.42
<i>Pseudocalanus elongatus</i>	0.90	2.42	5.86	0.45	0.18	0.24	1.24	1.40	0.10	3.08	2.72
<i>Paracalanus parvus</i>	0.35	0.60	3.47	2.89	0.29	0.09	0.17	0.19	0.47	0.15	0.48
<i>Acartia clausi</i>	0.69	0.03	1.35	0.02	0.18	0.00	0.36	0.41	0.33	0.69	0.01
<i>Oikopleura dioica</i>	0.01	0.09	0.34	0.06	0.34	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.00
<i>Lamellibranchia veliger</i>	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.00	0.00
Други	11.36	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.50	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.00
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100



(1)

(2)



(3)

Fig 5.8. Spatial distribution of IRI (%) of mesoplankton species in sprat food –

(1) *C. euxinus*, (2) *Parasagittta setosa* and (3) *Pseudocalanus elongatus* during XII .2018.

Parasitic Nematodes were discovered by 9 % of a total of 110 sprat specimens.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



### *Mullus barbatus*: length and weight parameters, index of stomach fullness (ISF)

The mean absolute length of investigated red mullet specimens reached 8.62 cm  $\pm$  0.90 (SD), varying between 7.4 - 10 cm, while the mean weight was 6.20 g  $\pm$  2.01 (SD), varying from 3.27 g to 10.72 g (Fig.8). The mean value of stomach fullness index reached 0.94 % BW  $\pm$  0.65 (SD) during the studied period (Fig. 8), showing an increase with 39.49 % compared to the data from the first stage of the study in 2018.

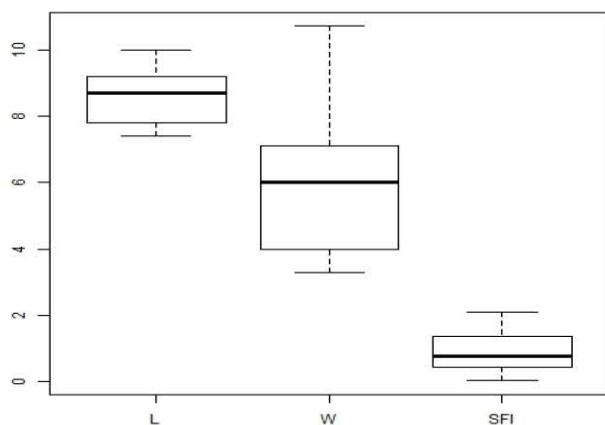


Figure 5.8. Boxplot: red mullet size (L, cm) weight (W, g), and ISF (% BW) in 2018.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

## Prey number, species composition and IRI of different mesozooplankton species in the red mullet diet

In the investigated samples, the mean prey number reached 11.8 ind/stomach  $\pm 4.91$  (SE), comparable with data from the first stage of the study. The maximal PN - 36 ind/stomach was found by high consumption of the polychaeta *Nephthys spp.*

In the red mullet stomach content, a total of 3 benthic groups - *Nephthys spp.*, *Paramysis spp.* and *Cumacea*. The indices of relative importance (IRI) of the main food components in the red mullet diet were represented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. The red mullet food composition in XII.2018

Red mullet food components	N (%, from total abundance)	M (%, from total biomass)	FO - Frequency of occurrence	IRI - Index of relative importance
<i>Nephthys sp.</i>	97.5	46.1	100.0	14361.9
<i>Paramysis sp.</i>	1.8	49.1	40.0	2036.0
<i>Cumacea</i>	0.7	4.8	30.0	164.4
<b>total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

The polychaeta *Nephthys spp.* dominated in the red mullet food in the studied area during the late December 2018 (Table 5.5, Fig. 5.9).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

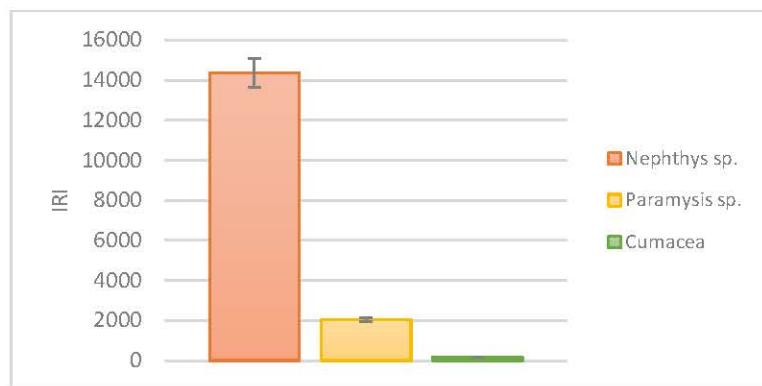


Figure 5.9. IRI of mesozooplankton species in the red mullet diet in late December 2018.

#### Zooplankton in the marine environment: species composition and biomass

During the studied period the zooplankton biodiversity was formed by 20 species (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6. Species diversity of zooplankton.

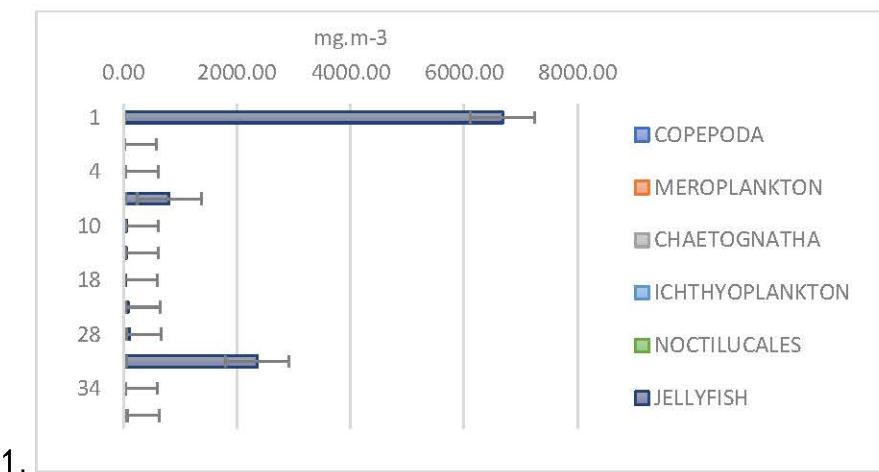
	XII.2018
1.	<i>Noctiluca scintillans</i>
2.	<i>Beroe ovate</i>
3.	<i>Pleurobrachia pileus</i>
4.	<i>Aurelia aurita</i>
5.	<i>Acartia clausae</i>
6.	<i>Acartia tonsa</i>
7.	<i>Pseudocalanus elongatus</i>
8.	<i>Calanus euxinus</i>
9.	<i>Daphnia longispina</i>
10.	<i>Oithona davisae</i>



11.	<i>Ctenophora similis</i>
12.	<i>Harpacticoida spp.</i>
13.	<i>Cirripedia nauplii/cypris</i> МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И ГОРДИТЕ
14.	<i>Lamellibranchia Veliger</i>
15.	<i>Polychaeta larave</i>
16.	<i>Gastropoda veliger</i>
17.	<i>Isopoda Larvae</i>
18.	<i>Parasagitta setosa</i>
19.	<i>Oicopleura dioica</i>
20.	<i>Pisces ova, larvae</i>



The main component in the total zooplankton biomass ( $\text{mg.m}^{-3}$ ) is the jellyfish species *Aurelia aurita* (Scyphozoa) - 93.06 %, by low percent share of the fodder mesozooplankton - 3.73 % (Fig. 5.10, 1, Table 5.7). The Copepoda and meroplankton dominate by abundance, generating respectively 74.64 % and 16.86 % of the total zooplankton abundance (Fig. 5.10, 2).





МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

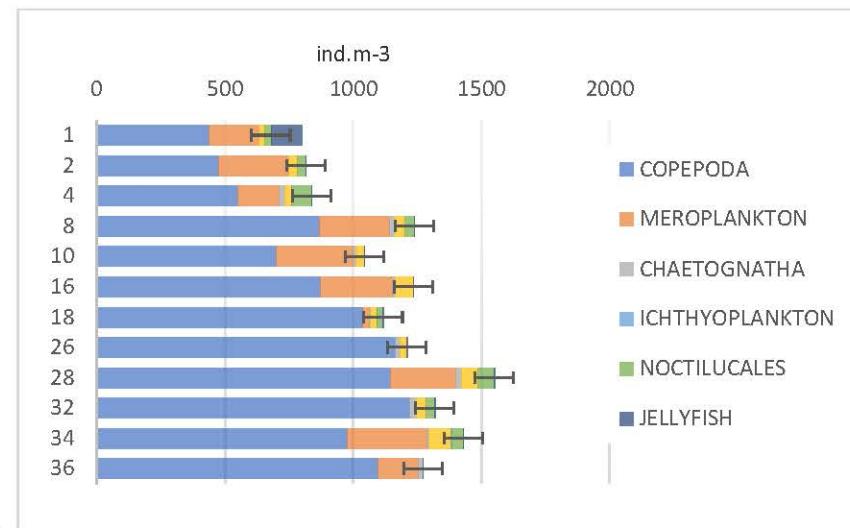


Fig. 5.10. Distribution of the biomass (1.  $\text{mg} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ ) and abundance (2.  $\text{ind} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ ) of the main zooplankton groups ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ ) per stations during late December 2018.

Table 5.7. Percentage distribution (% from total biomass) of main zooplankton groups per stations during late December 2018.

trawl	COPEPODA	MERO-PLANKTON	CHAETO-GNATHA	APPENDICULARIA	ICHTHYOP-PLANKTON	NOCTILUCALES	JELLYFISH	Total zooplankton biomass ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ )
1	0.12	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	99.83	6675.32
2	39.97	15.53	0.34	1.11	0.00	11.47	31.58	12.17
4	15.17	3.08	57.30	0.56	0.59	10.42	12.87	39.62
8	1.66	0.33	2.45	0.05	0.00	0.29	95.22	38.45
10	22.85	5.27	19.34	0.36	0.15	0.00	52.02	25.47
16	39.44	5.54	8.46	1.33	0.00	0.00	45.24	28.35
18	44.59	0.21	2.02	0.69	0.45	4.23	47.81	18.51

26	27.79		0.00	14.18		0.20 0.35	0.99 0.00	0.00	57.83	34.86
28	31.33		14.53	12.29				3.58	50.93	51.87
32	1.17	0.00	0.84		0.01	0.00	0.09		97.89	49.76
34	55.89	8.79	19.38		2.13	1.33	8.20		4.28	49.76
36	58.00	1.35	36.31		0.00	0.00	0.00		4.35	63.96

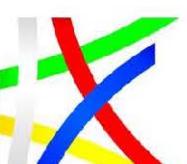
Table 5.8 shows general statistical data about the total zooplankton biomass variability in late December 2018, including three main groups – mesozooplankton, Protozoa and jellyfish.

The total zooplankton biomass reached  $860.66 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 563.44$  (SE), as the jellyfish component produced  $826.87 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 564.86$  (SE), and the fodder mesozooplankton -  $32.07 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 4.61$  (SE). The monthly mesozooplankton biomass was close to the levels measured in the first stage of the study, while jelly-plankton biomass decreased with 128 % in comparison to November 2018.

Table 5.8. General statistical data about biomasses ( $\text{mg.m}^{-3}$ ) of the main zooplankton components in December 2018.

Meso-zooplankton	Protozoa	Jellyfish	Total zooplankton biomass
Mean	32.07	1.72	860.66
Standard Error	4.61	0.45	563.44
Median	31.60	1.77	59.98
Mode	#N/A	0.00	#N/A
Standard Deviation	15.98	1.56	1951.82
Sample Variance	255.24	2.44	3809584.96
Kurtosis	0.02	-0.41	8.47
Skewness	0.42	0.49	2.86
Range	53.84	4.74	6662.33
Minimum	10.13	0.00	17.78
Maximum	63.96	4.74	6675.32



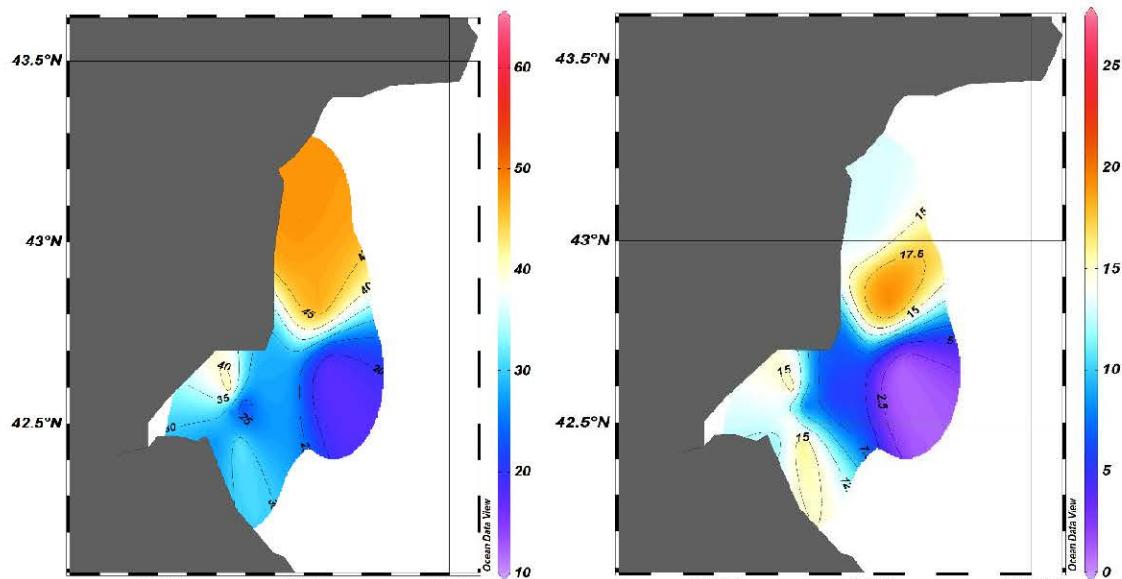


Sum	384.79	20.64	9922.49	10327.93
Count	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Confidence Level (95.0%)	10.15	0.99	1243.24	1240.12

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО

During the study, the mesozooplankton biomass has increased in north direction (Fig. 5.11, 1), while high quantities of *Chaetognatha* were registered in the Bourgas Bay and in the Obzor - Biala area (Fig. 5.11, 2), where also was localised intensive development of gelatinous zooplankton (Fig.5.11, 3).

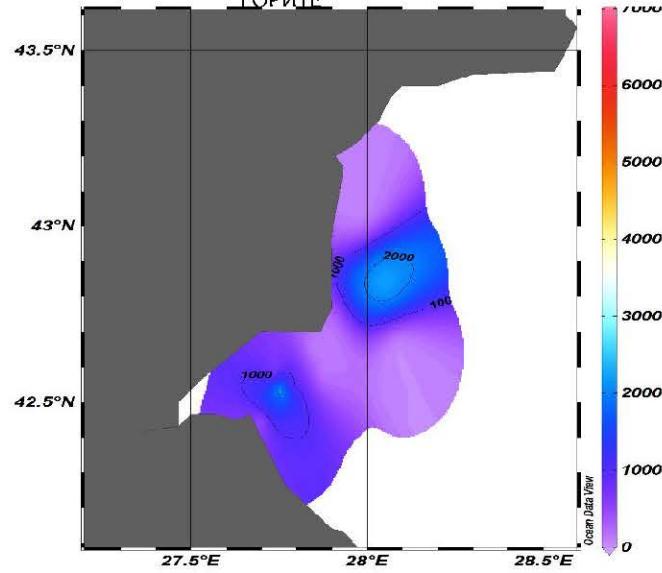


1.

2.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



3.

Figure 5.11. Spatial distribution of biomass ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ ) of: fodder mesozooplankton (1) *Chaetognatha* (2) and Jellyfish (3) in XII.2018.

## 6. Forecasts and Operational Opportunities

### Steady state of sprat stock

Equilibrium and the associated biomass of sprat from Bulgarian Black Sea waters are presented graphically in Fig.6.1.1. On the first graph, Equilibrium Yield with confidence intervals (showing very low Cimed and CI2.5%), Y / R with CI97.5% reaches its maximum and corresponds to fishing mortality at about 1.16 then follows the plateau the curve follows and the determination of Fmax becomes impossible.

Obviously, levels above  $F = 0.8$  will result in stock collapse. Sustained fishing mortality rates are around  $F = 0.5$ , which will correspond to the level of the catch of 12.5 thousand tons of sprat in NW Black Sea.



ГОРИТЕ

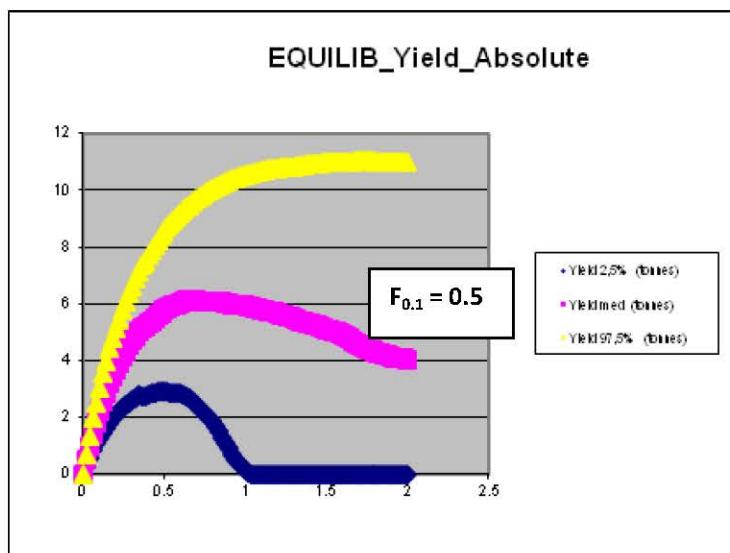


Figure 6.1.1. Equilibrium level with CI. Optimal level of fishing mortality and corresponding catches of sprat from Bulgarian waters.

Biomass of the reproductive stock, vulnerable to fishing biomass and total biomass follow a similar downward trend since only CI values of 97.5% have relatively high levels of the lowest fishing mortality. Therefore, with increasing fishing mortality of all biomass tested (Fig.6.1.2, Fig 6.1.3, and Fig.6.1.4.), A decreasing trend follows, following  $F = 0.8$  (at CI2.5%) and after 1.16 (with Cimed), the stocks of trinkant will fall below unsustainable levels - Fig.6.1.1.

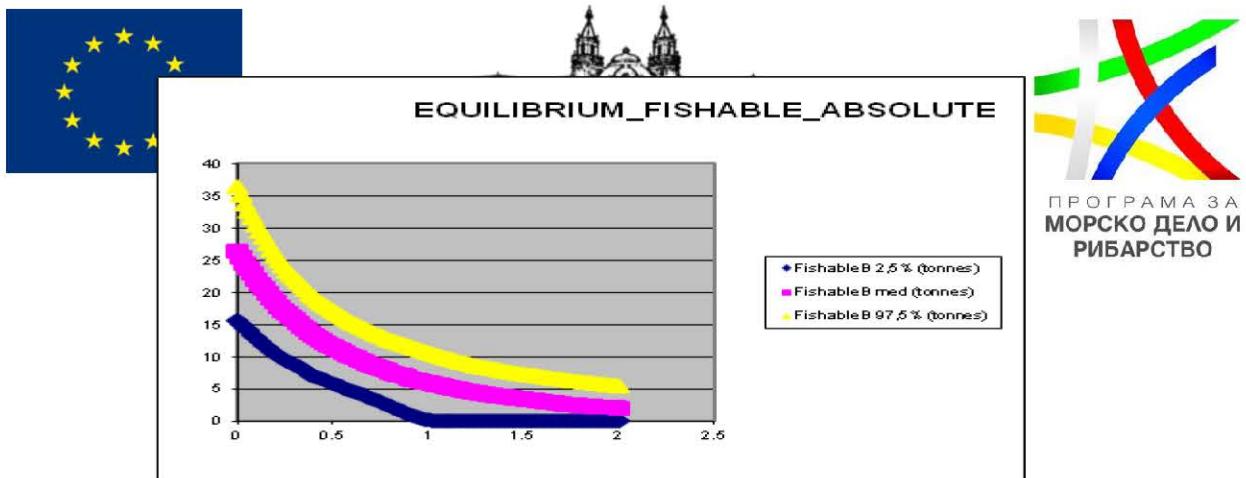


Figure 6.1.2. Balance state of biomass vulnerable to fishing

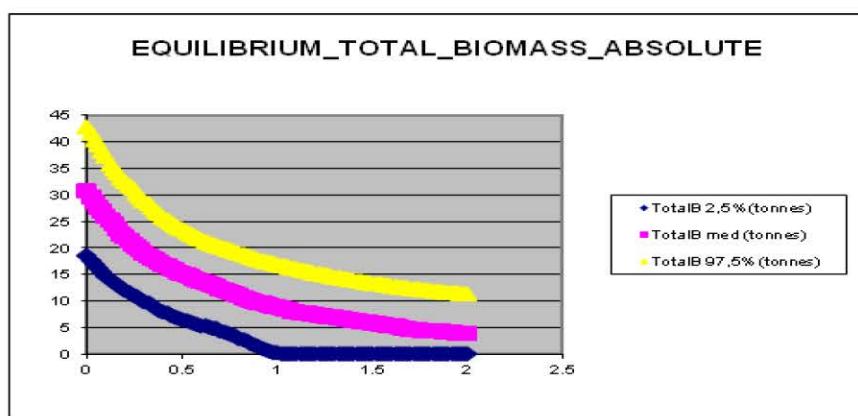


Figure 6.1.3. Balanced state of total biomass

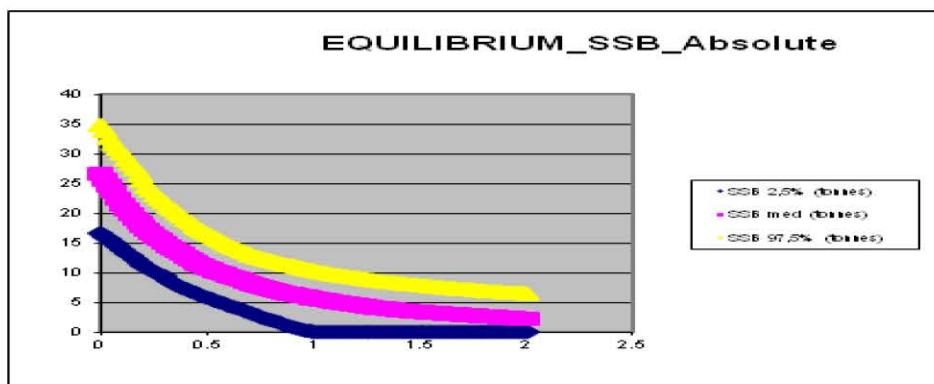


Figure 6.1.4. Sustainable propagation biomass

Filling is heavily affected by fishing mortality and after  $F = 0.5$  falls very steeply - Fig. 6.1.5.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЪЛСТВОТО, ЛОДИТЕЛСТВОТО  
ГОСУДАРСТВОТО

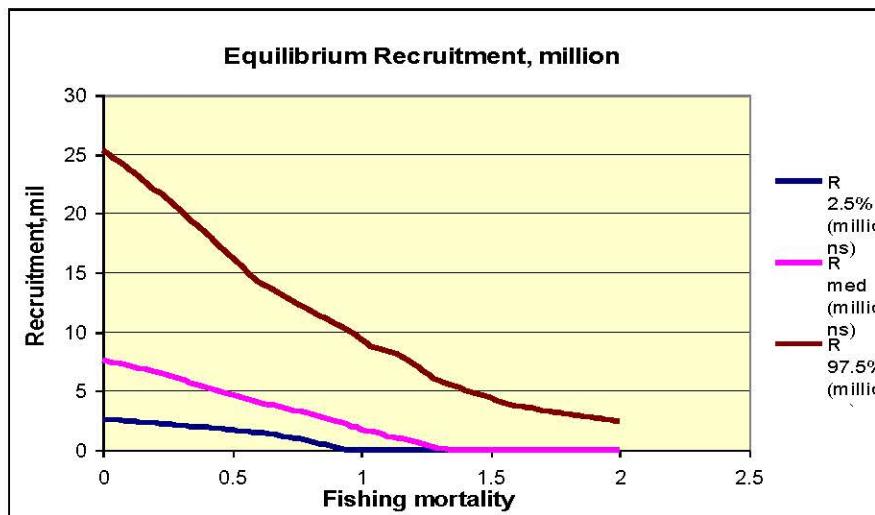


Fig. 6.1.5. Balance equilibrium

From figure 6.1.6. it is clear that the number of individuals in the catch in December marks a peak for 3-3+ year olds.

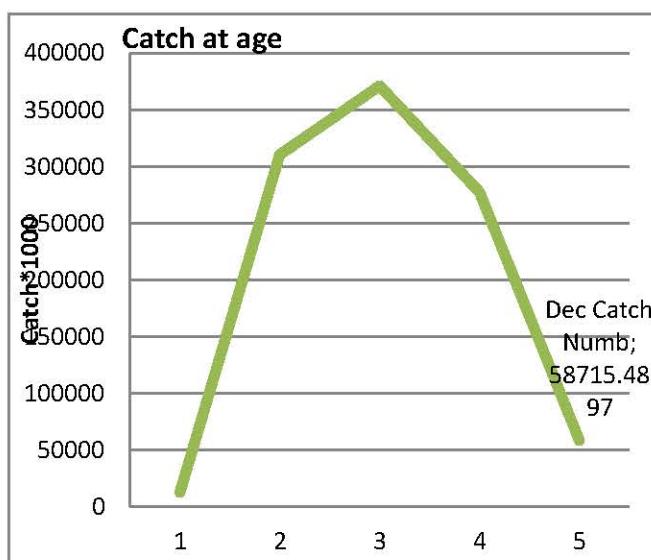
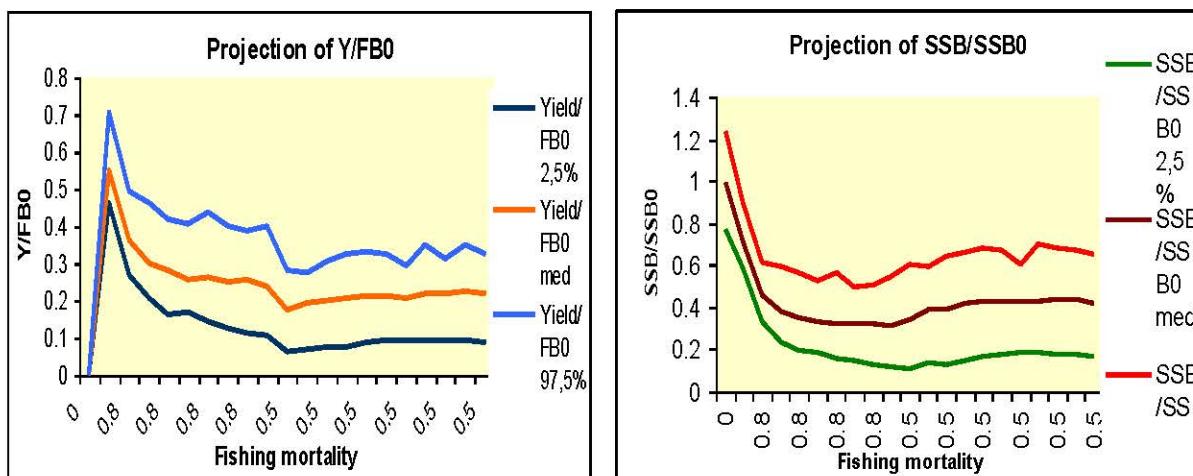


Fig.6.1.6. Number of catches December 2016 by age for sprat.

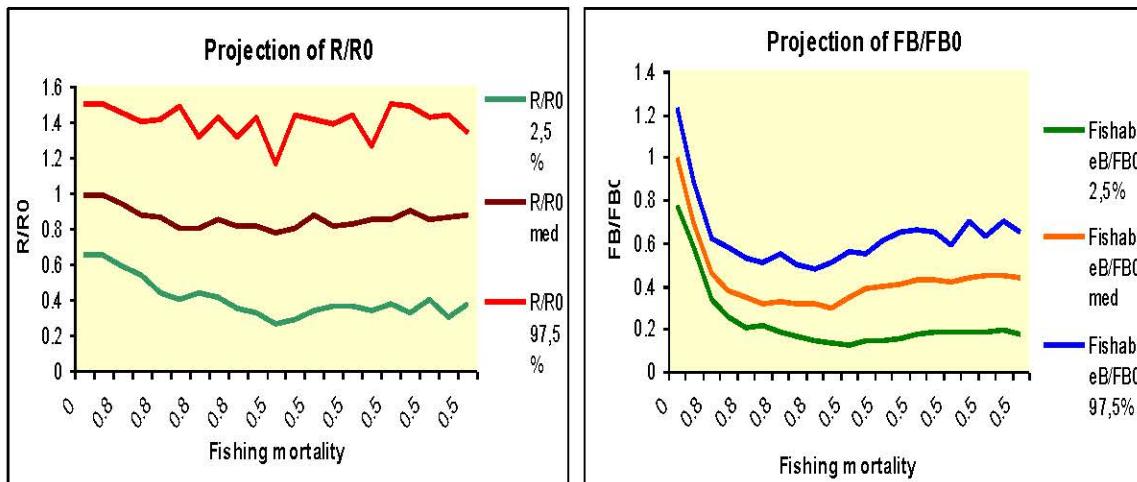


## Estimated model of stock parameters related to variation in fishing mortality over 10 years



A)

B)

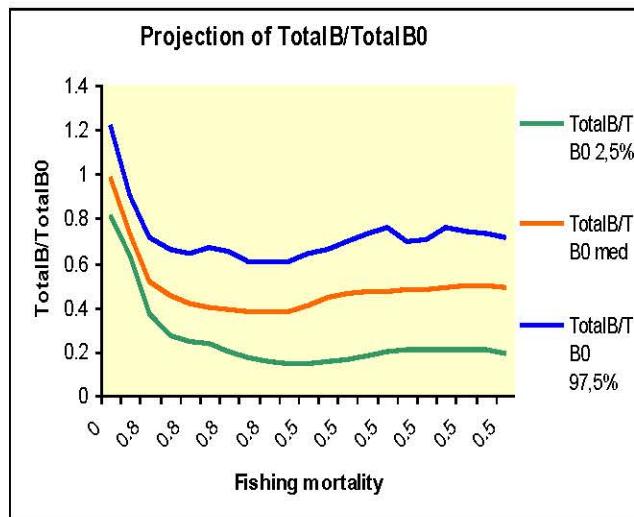


C)

D)



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



E)

Fig. 6.1.6. Forecasts of the stock of turkey stocks related to fishing mortality Devastated (unexploited).

Relative catches ( $Y/F_0$ ) at very low fishing mortality rates are high during the first forecast year (Fig.6.1.6 A). At  $F = 0.8$ , in the second year, the relative catch is expected to fall to levels of  $F = 0.5$  (Figure 6.1.6, A). After the fifth year it is expected that the  $Y / F_0$  connection plate will be observed at all tested confidence intervals. Similar to SSB / SSB<sub>0</sub> (Figure 6.1.6, B), and even a slight increase of CI 97.5% and SSB / SSB<sub>0</sub> honey after a change in fishing mortality (from  $F = 0.8$  to  $F = 0.5$ ). Filling (Figure 6.1.6, C) is stable and is not affected by changes in fishing mortality. Biomass Vulnerable by fishing and total biomass presented as a link with biomass when unused state, show similar trends with those of the relative SSB (Figure 6.1.6, D, E).

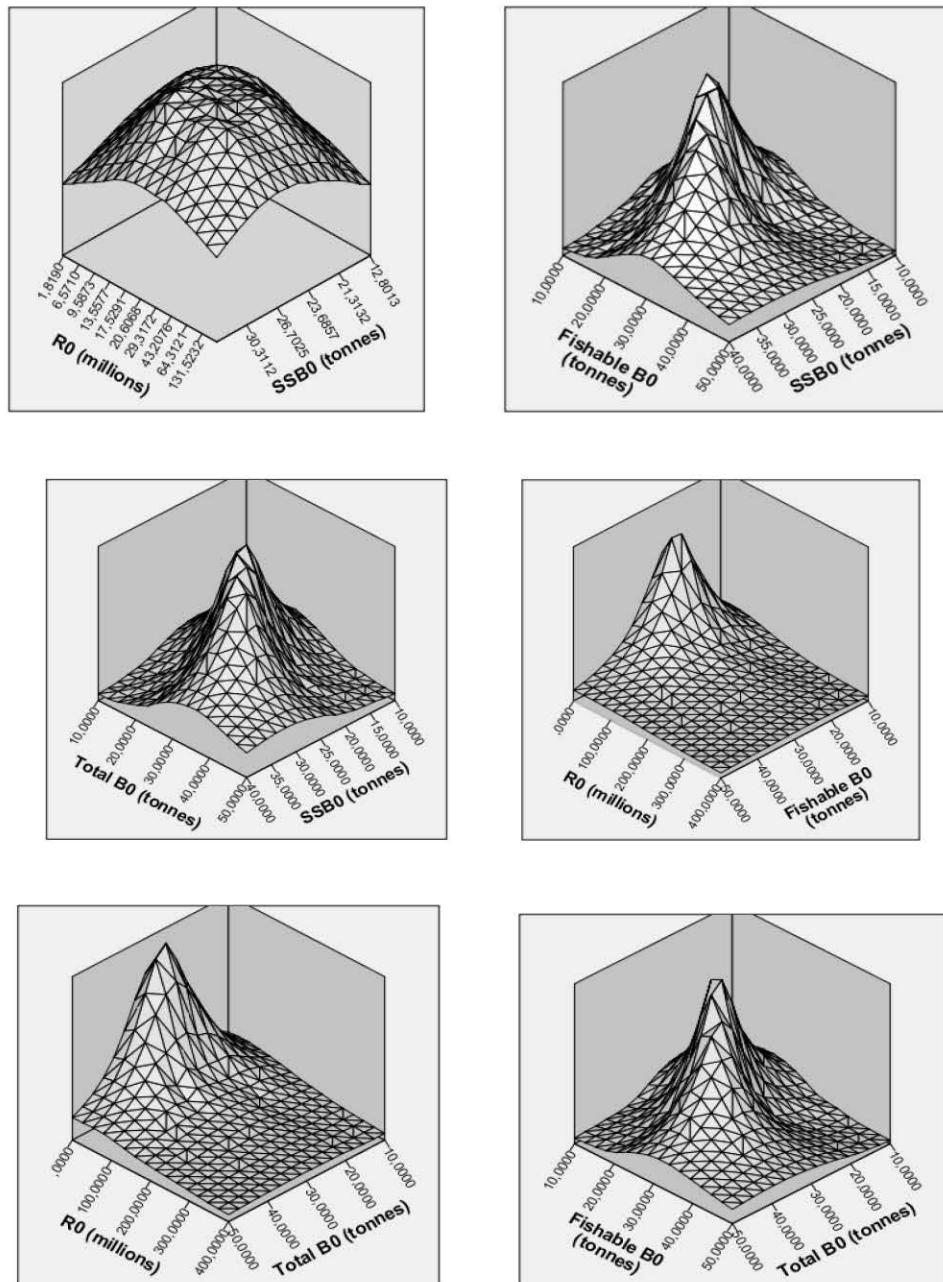


Fig. 6.1.7. Unused state



## 7. Maximum sustainable yield

Maximum sustainable yield (MSY), according to the Gulland method (1970), is calculated for the exploitation biomass of the studied aquatory. In the present study, we used the mortality coefficient  $M = 0.95$  (Ivanov and Beverton, 1985; Prodanov and al, 1997). The results obtained are given in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Biomass (t) and MSY.

Bulgaria	Biomass	MSY (t)	
	(t)	Gulland	BH steepness, $F_{0.1}$
December	10 898 tons	5 449 tons	5 550 tons

Expected MSYs are the maximum potential catches, including quota-based catch, as well as false or unreported catches and by-catches in other fisheries. Calculated exploitation biomass and equilibrium levels (MSYs) should not be considered as an absolute value for possible future yields given the fact that the methods have some ambiguities and the share of IUU catches is still unknown. In such cases, special approaches have been used, such as 2/3 MSY (Caddy and Mahon, 1995).

The recommended value of the catches in the Bulgarian Black Sea Basin, according to the current condition, should not exceed 5500 tonnes.



## 8. Conclusions

1. A total of 36 trawlings in the Bulgarian marine aquatory were carried out on board the R/V HaitHabu, 19 of which 15 fish, crustaceans - 2, molluscs - 1 and one macrozo - planktonic species;
2. The most common species in total trawl operations (in terms of presence / absence) are (in descending order): in December 2018: Single specimens of *Raja clavata* and *Dasyatis pastinaca*, *Scophthalmus maximus* were captured. In December, most of the catch is sprat, whiting (68%), horse mackerel 11%, other species are presented in single pieces;
3. The total biomass of the sprat in December 2018 is 10 898.18 tons for the Bulgarian Black Sea area. Catch predominance per unit area was 15-30m (1868 kg. km<sup>-2</sup>);
4. The total biomass of safflower in December 2018 is 2965.407 tons for the Bulgarian Black Sea area. In a depth of 50-75m, clusters of the type were not recorded in December 2018. at a depth of 46 meters (CPUA = 1629 kg.km<sup>-2</sup>). In the strata 15-30 and 30-50m the biomass of the agglomerations were as follows: 1466 and 1500 tons;
5. Temporary biomass of whiting reported in December 2018 was 7277 tonne. Similar to the sprat, the clusters in the layer 15-30m had a predominance (1612 tons), followed by 925 and 825 tons (30-50m and 50-75m);
6. The highest catch per unit of sprat was recorded at a depth of 50m southeast of Pomorie. (CPUA = 5679 kg.km<sup>-2</sup>). In the Nesebar bay and in the Cape Oyster region at depths of 29-30m, a CPUA = 2560kg.km<sup>-2</sup> and a depth of 62m - CPUA = 1955kg.km<sup>-2</sup>
7. In a depth of 50-75 m, there were no accumulations of tsorfid in December 2018 at



a depth of 46 meters ( $CPUA = 1629 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ ).  $CPUA = 1400 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ . In the other surveyed areas, the clusters were insignificant, and in most of the catch areas they were not registered;

8. In the 15-30m layer, the highest catch per unit of whiting was  $2050 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ , average for the layer -  $1612 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ . In the 30-50m and 50-75m depths, CPUAs were close to 925 and  $825 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{km}^{-2}$ . Coastal zone biomass was 7277 tonnes. In all surveyed polygons we recorded shoals of the species. The highest values of the highest catch per unit area and the biomass of the species were in front of Maslen Cape, Nesebar Bay and Pomorie;

9. The composition of the size of the sprat consists of the following size classes (TL, cm) from 6.5 cm to 11.5 cm in the samples from the Bulgarian Marine Zone;

10. Size classes 8 - 8.5 cm are dominant, with older classes being represented with a low percentage. In December size class 8 is very high, followed by L = 7.0.8.5 and 9 cm. The situation with the lack (or low share) of the larger (the most senior) individuals is the same in the period 2007-2018 (Raykov et al., 2018);

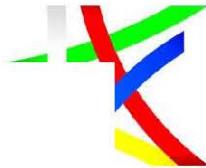
12. The age structure of the studied species did not show deviations from the norm (long-term 2007 -2017);

13. Asymptotic length reaches 12.34 cm; the rate of growth can be determined as being relatively high  $0.45 \text{ y}^{-1}$ . The growth of sprat from the present study is positive allometric ( $n = 2.76$ );

14. The somatic growth of sprat from current studies shows that the mean weight corresponding to the oldest age group is 8.05 grams. The value corresponds to the marginal size of 11.75 cm measured in the samples of the trawl survey in Bulgarian waters;



15. The asymptotic weight reaches 11.41g. The weight is assessed as relatively stable and high 0.44. This fact could be related to the fact that in December, the species has a high degree of maturity.
16. The sprat was in an active spawning phase of the current investigation in December. Most of the individuals have a III - IV stage of the gonads. A more detailed analysis should be made in the active period of spawning of the species (October-February);
17. The GSI (%) indicates that over 50% of females are actively breeding. Very few specimens were at an early stage of maturation, so we can conclude that in December 2018, active reproduction began, even with comparative high water temperature for the season;
18. The fertility of the sprat correlates positively with its length ( $R^2 = 0.45$ ), with large size classes corresponding to high fertility;
19. The ratio between fertility and weight of sprat is very well expressed ( $R = 4.46$ )
20. In December 2018, the sprat food spectrum was constituted by 11 zooplankton species/groups, including several copepods:
21. The average sprat ISF reached 1.20 % BW  $\pm$  1.05 (SD), with 18.87 % increase in comparison with the first stage of the trawl studies during November 2018. High mean ISF = 2.25 - 2.61 % were found off Sozopol and Chernomorec, while minimal levels were detected in front of the Cape Emine and in the northern Bourgas Bay.
22. During the survey, the total zooplankton biomass attained  $860.66 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 563.44$  (SE), while the gelatinous zooplankton biomass was  $826.87 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 564.86$  (SE), and the fodder mesozooplankton formed quantities of  $32.07 \text{ mg.m}^{-3} \pm 4.61$  (SE). The fodder zooplankton biomass remained relatively low for the season. In December, the quantity of the jellyfish decreased with 128 % in comparison to November 2018.
24. The relative catch ( $Y / F_0$ ) at very low fishing mortality rates is high during the first forecast year. At  $F = 0.8$ , in the second year, the relative catch is expected to fall to  $F = 0.5$ ;
25. Sprat is a rapidly developing species with large variations in native biomass and



recruitment, and is dependent on anthropogenic impacts other than fishing, as well as on the dynamics of environmental factors. Therefore, when studying these dependencies, the continuing nature of research is of great importance;

26. The momentary state of sprat biomass in December was 10 898 tons. According to the method of Gulland and BH steepness,  $F_{0.1}$ , the limits of the yearly catch should be within the 5 550 tons;

27. Calculated biomass and equilibrium levels (MSYs) should not be considered as an absolute value for future catches given the fact that the methods have some ambiguities and the share of IUU is still unknown. In such cases, special approaches are used, such as 2/3 MSY (Caddy and Mahon, 1995). The recommended value of the catches should not exceed 5,500 tonnes of sprat for this year of exploitation in Bulgarian waters of the Black Sea.

## 9. References

- Anonymous 2014. Balıkçılık İstatistikleri. [Fisheries Statistics.] Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, Ankara, Turkey. <http://tuik.gov.tr> [In Turkish.]
- Alexandrov B. and Korshenko A., 2006. Manual for zooplankton sampling and analysis in the Black Sea Region.
- Atılgan, E., Erbay, M., Aydın, 2010. Otolith characteristics of some economic species in the Eastern Black Sea. Yunus Research Bulletin.10(3)12-15.
- Aydın I., Sahin T. 2011. Reproductive performance of turbot (*Psetta maxima*) in the southeastern Black Sea. Turkish J. Zoology 35 (1): 109–113. DOI: 10.3906/zoo-0905-26.
- Bertalanffy L. VON 1938. A quantitative theory of organic growth (Inquiries on growth laws. II). Human Biol. 10: 181-213.
- Beverton, R.J. and S.J. Holt. (1957). On the dynamics of exploited fish populations. Fish. Invest. Ser. 2, Vol 19.
- Debes, P. V., F. E. Zachos and R. Hanel (2008). Mitochondrial phylogeography of the European sprat (*Sprattus sprattus* L., Clupeidae) reveals isolated climatically vulnerable populations in the Mediterranean Sea and range



expansion in the northeast Atlantic. *Molecular Ecology* 17: 3873-3888.



Dimov I. 1959. Improved quantitative method for zooplankton calculation. Rep. BAS, 12, 5, 427-429. (in Russian)

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И

ГОРКИ



Foote, K.G. 1996. Quantitative fisheries research surveys, with special reference to computers. In: B.A. Megrey & E. Moksness. Computers in fisheries research. Chapman & Hall. 254 pp. 80-112.

Gulland J.A., 1966. Manual of sampling and statistical methods for fisheries biology. Part I: Sampling methods. FAO Manuals in Fisheries Science No. 3, Rome.

Gulland J.A., 1970. The fish resources of the ocean. FAO Fish. Techn. Pap. No. 97, 1-425, Rome.

FAO: Precautionary approach to fisheries. FAO Fish. Tech. Paper N. 350 (1), 1995.

ICES. 2011. Report of the Workshop on Sexual Maturity Staging of Herring and Sprat (WKMSHS), 20-23 June 2011, Charlottenlund, Denmark. ICES CM 2011/ACOM:46. 143pp.

ICES. 2012. Report of the Workshop on Sexual Maturity Staging of Turbot and Brill (WKMSTB 2012), 5-9 March 2012, IJmuiden, Netherlands. ICES 2012/ACOM:56. 48 pp

Jerald, Jr., A. 1983. Age Determination. In: *Fisheries Techniques* (L.A., and D.L. Johnson, eds). Southern Printing Company, Inc., Blacksburg, VA, pp 301-324.

Kasapoglu, N., Duzgunes, E. 2014. Otolith Atlas for the Black Sea. *Journal of Environmental Protection and Ecology* 16, No 1, 133–144

Korshenko, A., Alexandrov B., 2012. Manual for mesozooplankton sampling and analysis in the Black Sea monitoring (Black Sea Zooplankton Manual) Online: <http://bsc.ath.cx/documents/ExpertNetwork/default.asp?I=/Expert%20Network%20-%20Zooplankton>

Laevastu, T., 1965. Manual methods in fisheries biology. Observations on the chemical and physical environment. Chemical analysis of water FAO. *Marine Physiological Sci.*, 6: 86-86.

Mordukhay-Boltovskoy, F.D. (Ed.). 1968. The identification book of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov Fauna.- Kiev: Naukova Dumka Publ., T. 1 (Protozoa, Porifera, Coelenterata, Ctenophora, Nemertini, Nemathelminthes, Annelida, Tentaculata), 423 pp. (in Russian).

Mordukhay-Boltovskoy, F.D. (Ed.). 1969. The identification book of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov Fauna.- Kiev: Naukova Dumka Publ., T. 2 (Arthropoda: Cladocera, Calanoida, Cyclopoida, Monstrilloida, Harpacticoida, Ostracoda, Cirripedia, Malacostraca, Decapoda), 536 pp. (in Russian).



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Mordukhay-Boltovskoy, F.D. (Ed.). 1972. The identification book of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov Fauna.-Kiev: Naukova Dumka Publ., T. 3 (Arthropoda, Mollusca, Echinodermata, Chaetognatha, Chordata: Tunicata, Ascidiacea, Appendicularia), 340 pp. (in Russian).

Mihneva V., Raykov V., Grishin A., Stefanova K., 2015. Sprat feeding in front of the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, MEDCOAST conference 2015, vol.1, 431- 443

Nelson J.S. 2006. Fishes of the world. 4th edn. Wiley, New York, NY, USA.

Nielsen J.G. 1986. Scophthalmidae. Pp. 1287–1293. In: Whitehead P.J.P., Bauchot M.-L., Hureau J.-C., Nielsen J., Tortonese E. (eds.) Fishes of the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Vol. 3. UNESCO, Paris.

Petipa, T.S. 1959. On the mean weight of the principle forms of zooplankton in the Black Sea. Tr. Sevast. Biol. St. 9, P. 39-57

Pinkas L., Oliver M.S, Iverson I.L.K., 1971. Food habits of albacore, bluefin tuna and bonito in Californian waters. California Fish Game 152:1-105.

Pisil, Y., 2006. Karadeniz'de Yaşayan Çaça Balığı (*Sprattus sprattus* (L., 1758))'nda Kemiksi Yapıları ve Uzunluk-Frekans Metodu ile Yaş Tayini. 19 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Y. Lisans Tezi, 32 s.

Prodanov K., Mikhailov K., Daskalov G., Maxim C., Chashchin A., Arkhipov A., Shlyakhov V., Ozdamar E. 1997. Environmental management of fish resources in the Black Sea and their rational exploitation. Studies and Reviews. GFCM. No. 68. FAO, Rome.

Raykov V., Panayotova M., Stefanova K., Stefanova E., Radu G., Maximov V., Anton E.. 2011. Statement to the Deputy Minister of Ministry of environment and waters in order to annual workshop of Black Sea commission National Report to GFCM 35 - Annual Assembly; Scientific report from international pelagic trawl survey in the Bulgarian and in the Romanian Black Sea area, June 2010 to National Agencies of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Bulgaria and Romania in relation to National Data Collection programs for 2010, 71 pp.

Raykov V., Schlyakhov VI., Maximov V., Radu Gh., Staicu I., Panayotova M., Yankova M., Bikarska I., 2008 - Limit and target reference points for rational exploitation of the turbot (*Psetta maxima* L.) and whiting (*Merlangius merlangus euxinus* Nordm.) in the western part of the Black Sea.VI Anniversary Conference of the Institute of zoology. Acta Zoologica



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Bulgarica, 2008, Suppl.2: 305-316, ISSN 0324- 0770.

Raykov V, Yankova M, Radu Gh., Lisichkov K., 2009 - Exploitation patterns call for limit the sprat catches off the north-western coast of the Black sea. Intern. Conf.: Sustainability in South-eastern Europe" Tekirdag, Istanbul 16-20 VI.(under review for JEPE).

Raykov V., I. Staicu, G. Radu, V. Maximov, S. Nicolaev, 2008 – Specificity of the fishery and common fishery policy implementation: a case study of the western part of the Black Sea. Cercetari marine. Recherches marines. INCDM. 38: 223-232, ISSN:0250-3069, Cod CNCSIS: 74.

Raykov.V 2006. From EU25 to EU27. El Anzuelo, European newsletter on fisheries and the environment Vol.17, 10-11p.

Raykov V 2008. Stock agglomerations assessment of sprat (*Sprattus spratus* L.) off the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Cercetari marine. Recherches marines. INCDM. 37. ISSN: 0250-3069.

Raykov, V. M Yankova., V. Mihneva, Dineva S., Petrova D. M. Panayotova, 2008 Stock Assessment of Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) by Swept Area Method during the spring season of 2008 along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Technical report, 2008.

Raykov V Primary management objectives for sustainable Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus* L.) stock

exploitation at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast - preliminary results J. Environmental Protection and Ecology, 8 (2) (2007), 302-318.

Raykov V.S, V.V.Mihneva, Daskalov, and G: Investigations on sprat (*Sprattus sprattus* L.) population dynamics related to its trophic base and climate change over the period 1996-2004 in Bulgarian waters of the Black Sea. J. Environmental Protection and Ecology, 8 (2) (2007), 319-332.

Raykov, V, Panayotova Stefanova K, E. Stefanova 2011 Stock assessment of sprat in Bulgarian marine area, Institute of Fish resources and National Agency for fisheries and Aquaculture – Bulgaria in accordance with the Council Regulation (EC) № 199/2008 establishing a community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy. 100 pp.



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



Simon, K.D., Y. Bakar, A.G. Mazlan, C.C. Zaidi and A. Samat et al., 2012. Aspects of the reproductive biology of two archer fishes *Toxotes chatareus*, (Hamilton, 1822) and *Toxotes jaculatrix* (Pallas, 1767). Environ. Biol. Fish., 93: 491-503.

Yoraz, A., 2015. Orta Karadeniz Balıkçılığındaki Bazı Pelajik ve Demersal Balık Türlerinin

Sagittal Otolitlerinin Morfometrik Tanımlanması ve Annulus Oluşumunun Görsel Analizi, Doktora Tezi, OMU Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, 407 s.

Zengin M., Düzgüneş E. 2003. Variations on the turbot (*Scophthalmus maeoticus*) stocks in the south-eastern Black Sea during the last decade and comments on fisheries management. Pp. 9–26. In: Öztürk B., Karakulak S. (eds.) Workshop on Demersal Resources in the Black Sea & Azov Sea. 15–17 April Şile, Istanbul, Turkey.

OpenCPN 4.8.0. <https://opencpn.org/OpenCPN/about/ver480.html>

Lowrance. 2018. <https://www.lowrance.com/lowrance/series/hds-carbon/>

SIMRAD. 2018. <https://www.simrad-yachting.com/simrad/series/nso-evo3/>

ReefMaster Software Ltd. 2018. <https://reefmaster.com.au/>



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

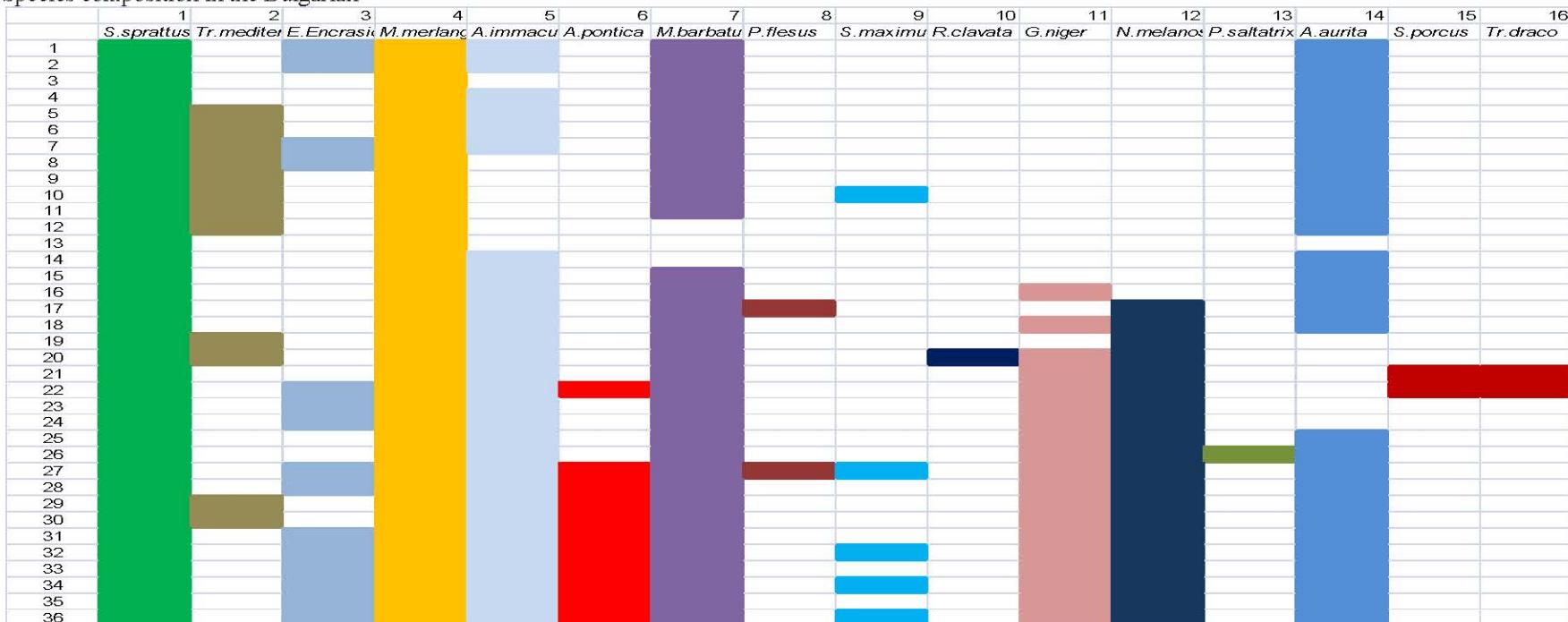
ANNEX I. CPUE kg.h-1 and CPUAkg.km-2 in the Bulgarian part of the Black Sea - sprat

CPUEkg/h	CPUAkg/km <sup>2</sup>
220	2560.14002
400	4654.80003
120	1396.44001
60	698.220004
44	512.028003
100	1163.70001
200	2327.40001
140	1629.18001
240	2792.88002
88	1024.05601
112	1303.34401
152	1768.82401
100	1163.70001
180	2094.66001
488	5678.85604
132	1536.08401
160	1861.92001
240	2792.88002
84	977.508006
88	1024.05601
120	1396.44001
80	930.960006
56	651.672004
200	2327.40001
132	1536.08401
40	465.480003
120	1396.44001
160	1861.92001
200	2327.40001
100	1163.70001
168	1955.01601
128	1489.53601
80	930.960006
48	558.576004
200	2327.40001
132	1536.08401
96	1117.15201



## ANNEX II

### Species composition in the Bulgarian



part of the

Black Sea



ANNEX III Surveys indicator targets and results in 2018 (Bulgarian part)

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

Black Sea	Length @age	market, discards, surveys	2,50%	Survey: 12 427  1250
Black Sea	Weight @length	market, discards, surveys	2,50%	Survey: 12 427  5000
Black Sea	Weight @age	market, discards, surveys	2,50%	Market: 2026 Discard: - Survey: 12 427  1250
Black Sea	Maturity @length	surveys	2,50%	5000 140
Black Sea	Maturity @age	surveys	2,50%	5000 140
Black Sea	Sex-ratio @length	market, surveys	2,50%	Market: 250 Survey: 250  125
Black Sea	Sex-ratio @age	market, surveys	2,50%	Market: 250 250 survey



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## ANNEX IV

### Navigation, bathymetry and hydroacoustics

For more sensitivity interpretation of the results of trawl picture was used navigation software **OpenCPN 4.8.0 [1]** and GPS “**HOLLUX**” (fig. I, II)

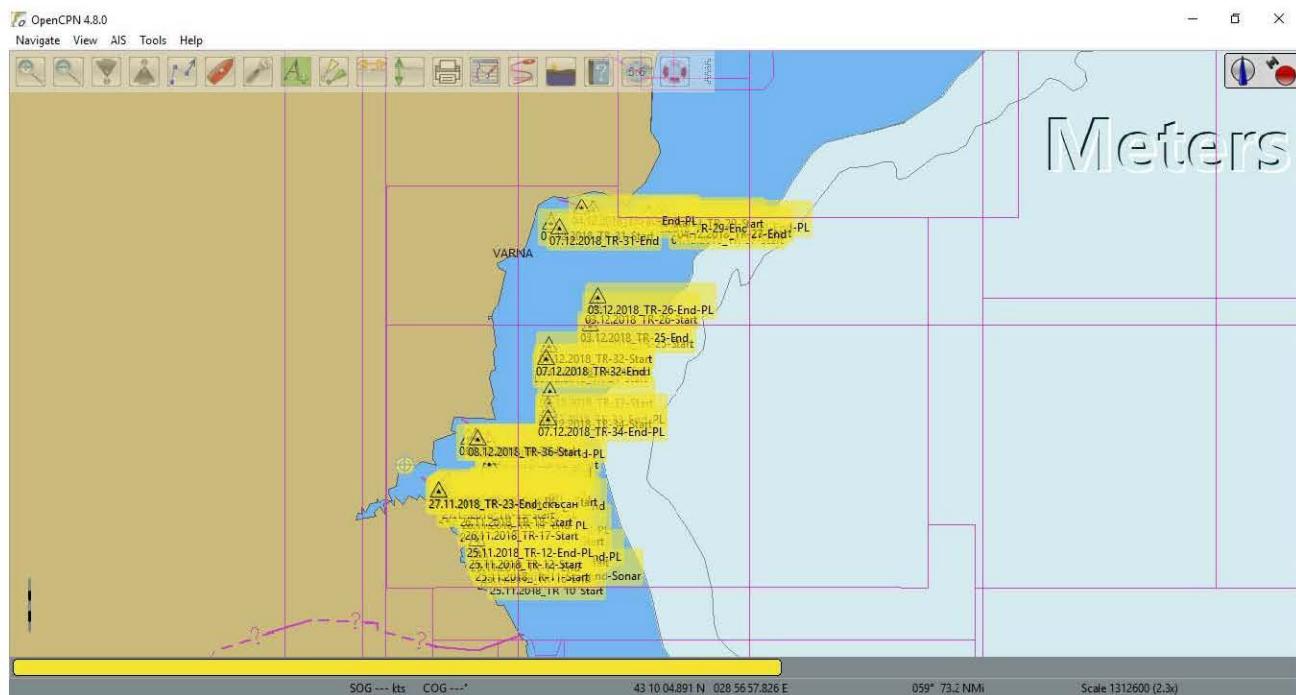


Fig.I. Navigation map of the first expedition 2018 (OpenCPN 4.8.0) [1]



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

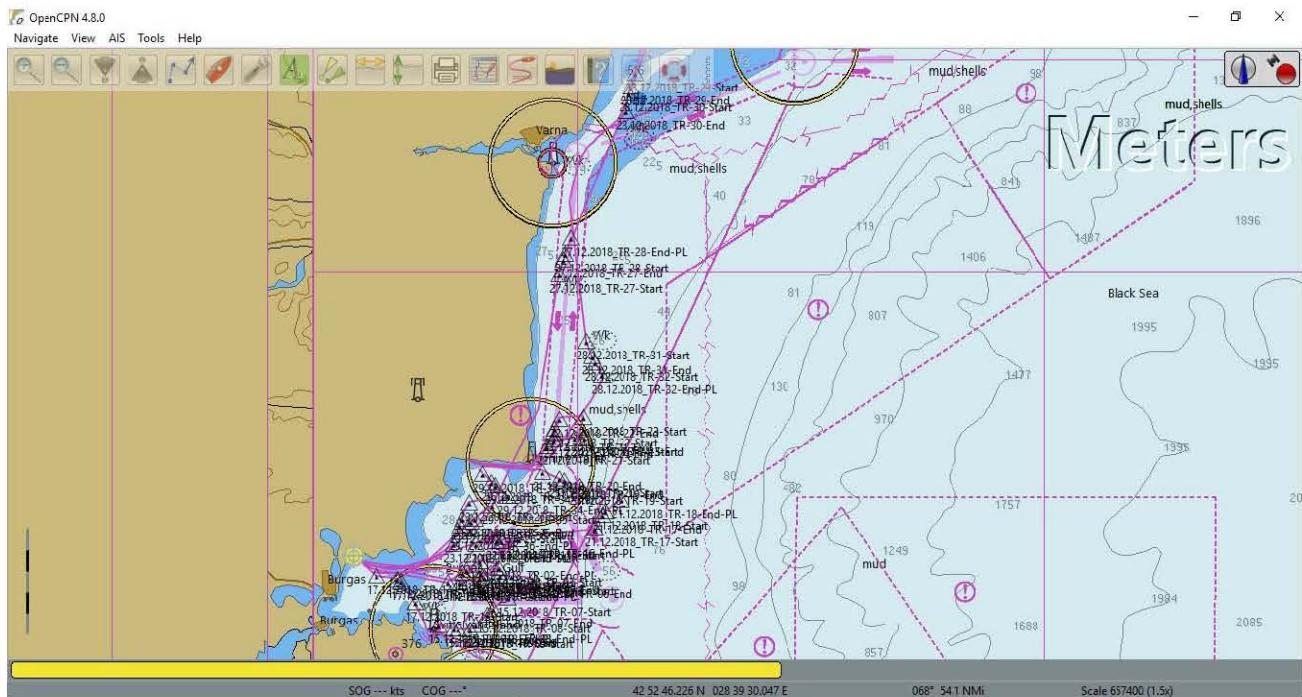


Fig.II. Navigation map of the second expedition 2018 (OpenCPN 4.8.0) [1]



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



For the more detailed depth measurement and determination of the bottom sediments type, was used Hydrographic Survey Echo Sounder "LituGraph 4F" (fig. III)

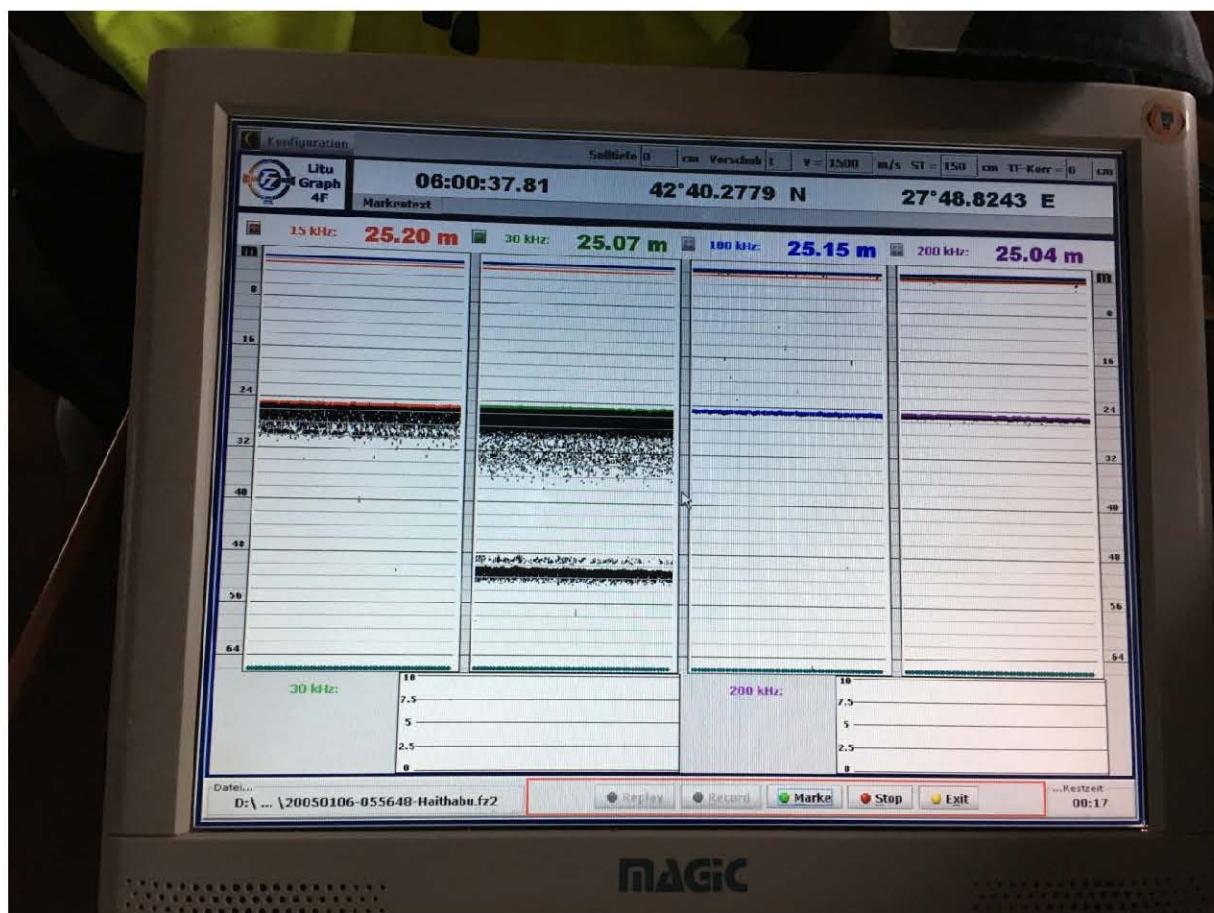


Fig. III. Hydrographic Survey Echo Sounder "LituGraph 4F"



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



For the purposes and tasks of the present study, the hydro-acoustic equipment SIMRAD - NSO evo3 / HDS Carbon / LOWRANCE (Fig. IV, V) was used.



Fig. IV. "SIMRAD - NSO evo3"

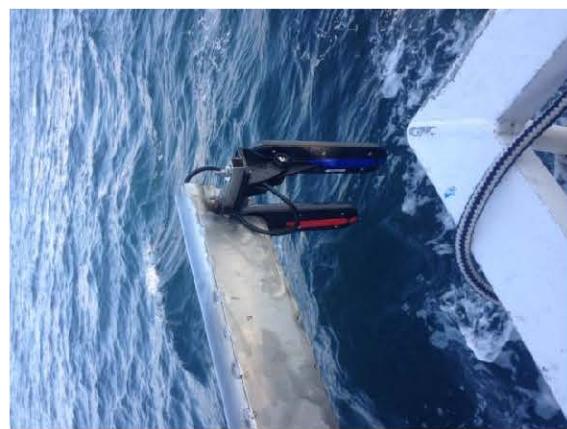


Fig. V. Probe of "SIMRAD - NSO evo3"

[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

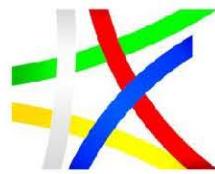
Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО

The hydroacoustic profiles make it possible to determine the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the fish schools in combination with the macroscopic description of the trawl picture taken. Due to the unfavorable autumn-winter weather conditions (strong wind, excitement over 4 balls and low temperatures), 3 profiles were made during the first stage of the expedition. Excitement over 4 bales may cause a sonar probe to break or damage and also is danger for live of crew.

NSO evo3 delivers the ultimate view with an ultra-bright display, available in 16, 19, or 24-inch widescreen sizes. Wide viewing angles keep the screen in view from anywhere in sight, even if you're wearing polarized sunglasses. See more than ever with Full HD resolution, and the option to combine up to six panels in a split-screen layout. Intuitively navigate charts, define waypoints, and take control of connected systems such as autopilot, radar, and sonar with a touch.

The Carbon HDS Series combines side imaging, downscan imaging, dual-channel CHIRP sonar, real-time underwater 3D mapping capabilities and ultra-bright displays to deliver the most advanced and easy-to-use fish finder/chart plotter on the market. The units' touch-screen interface works much like a smartphone with pinch-to-zoom and touch-and-move abilities for fast and intuitive control.

HDS Carbon units also feature the ability to create custom maps using recorded sonar logs. Anglers can add custom color layers, vegetation and bottom-hardness overlays. Each unit supports the most advanced marine technology and is easily updated to the most current software for optimal performance.

Featuring a powerful dual-core, high-performance processor, the HDS Carbon delivers accurate and definitive images with superior target separation. HDS Carbon multi-touch, super bright displays offer a wider viewing angle and feature an advanced

[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

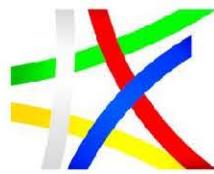
Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО

anti-reflective coating for ultimate viewing in bright sunlight and while wearing polarized sunglasses.

HDS Carbon units remove the hassle of constantly monitoring and repositioning the boat with connectivity to certain autopilot trolling motors and shallow water anchors, freeing up anglers to concentrate on fishing. Both bow-mounted and console sonar can be displayed side-by-side with different zoom levels for a clear and precise view of schools or individual fish.

"SIMRAD - NSO evo3" provides the following data processing capabilities: navigation, map, sonar, radar.

The Sonar feature provides an underwater view of the area, under and around the ship, allowing easy visualization of fish passages and geological - geomorphologic exploration of the sea floor. The format of the files is <\*.sl3>, which includes the Sonar and StructureScan3D options. StructureScan HD provides a 328-meter wide-screen coverage with SideScan, while DownScan™ provides a detailed view of the bottom structure and fish passages directly below the boat up to 92 m. StructureScan 3D is a multi-beam sonar technology that allows you to observe the structure and geomorphological features of the bottom in 3D.

[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.”, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



The "ReefMaster2.0.38.0" software was used to process and interpret hydroacoustic profile data (fig. VI-XI).

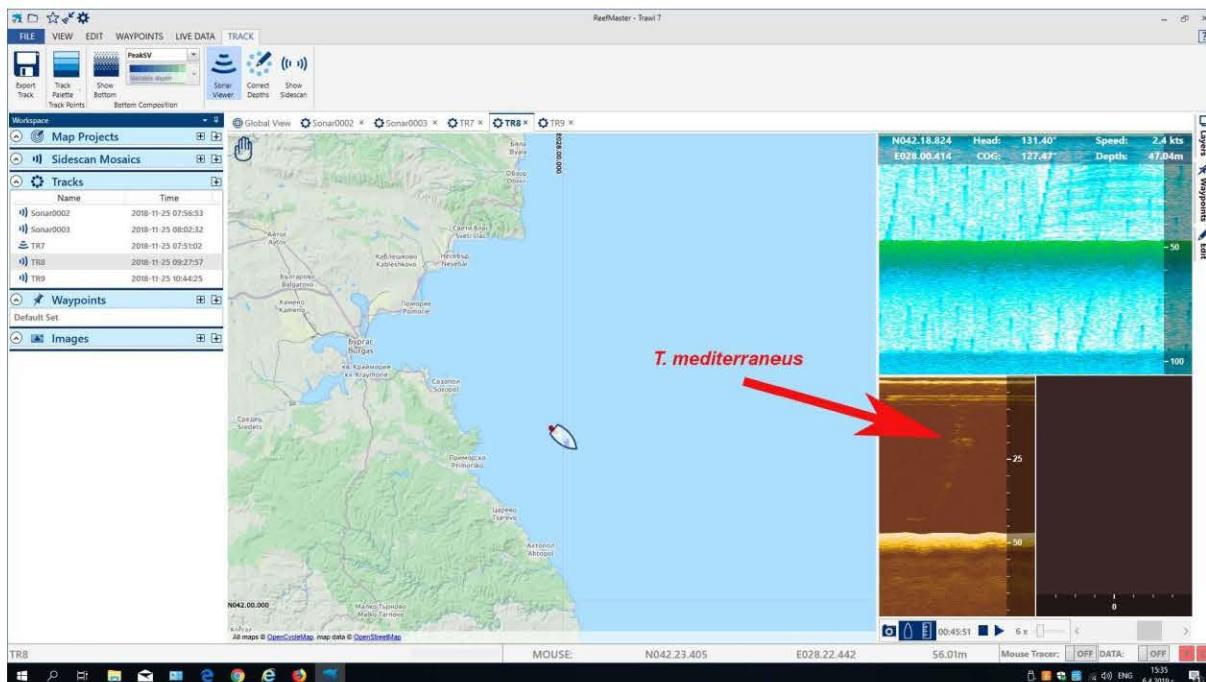


Fig. VI. First Stage of survey



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД, ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## 1. First Stage

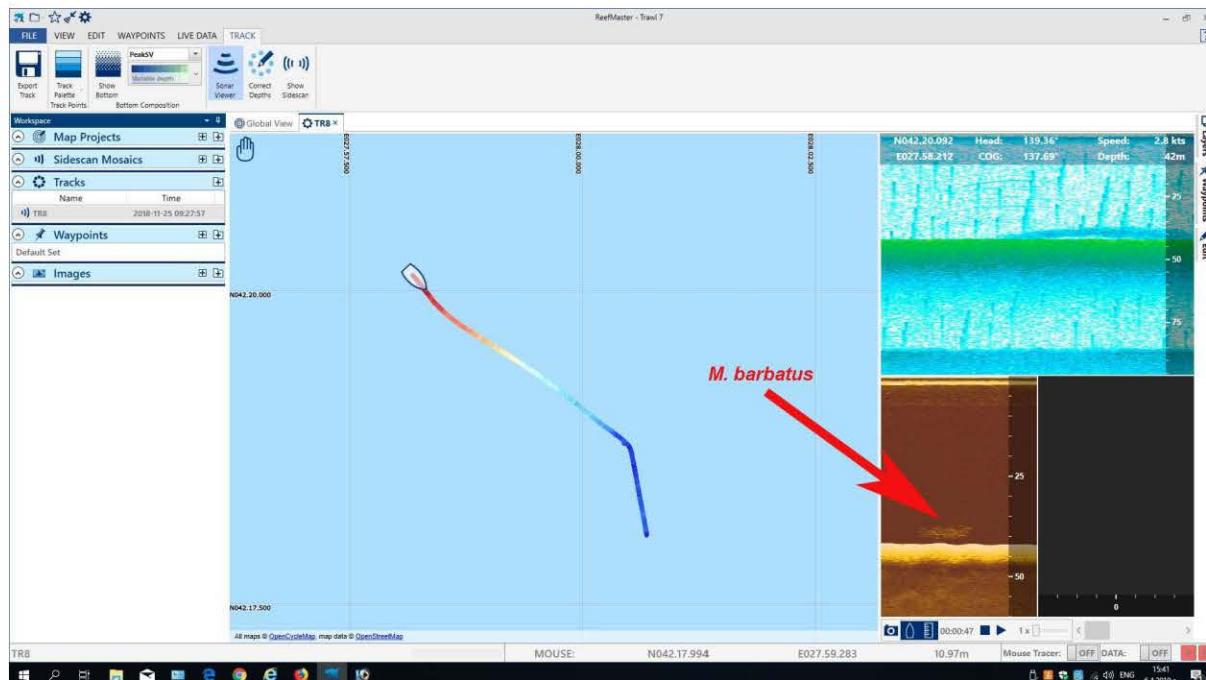


Fig. VII. Trawl 8, situation – 1, start, fish cloud of *M. barbatus*



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО

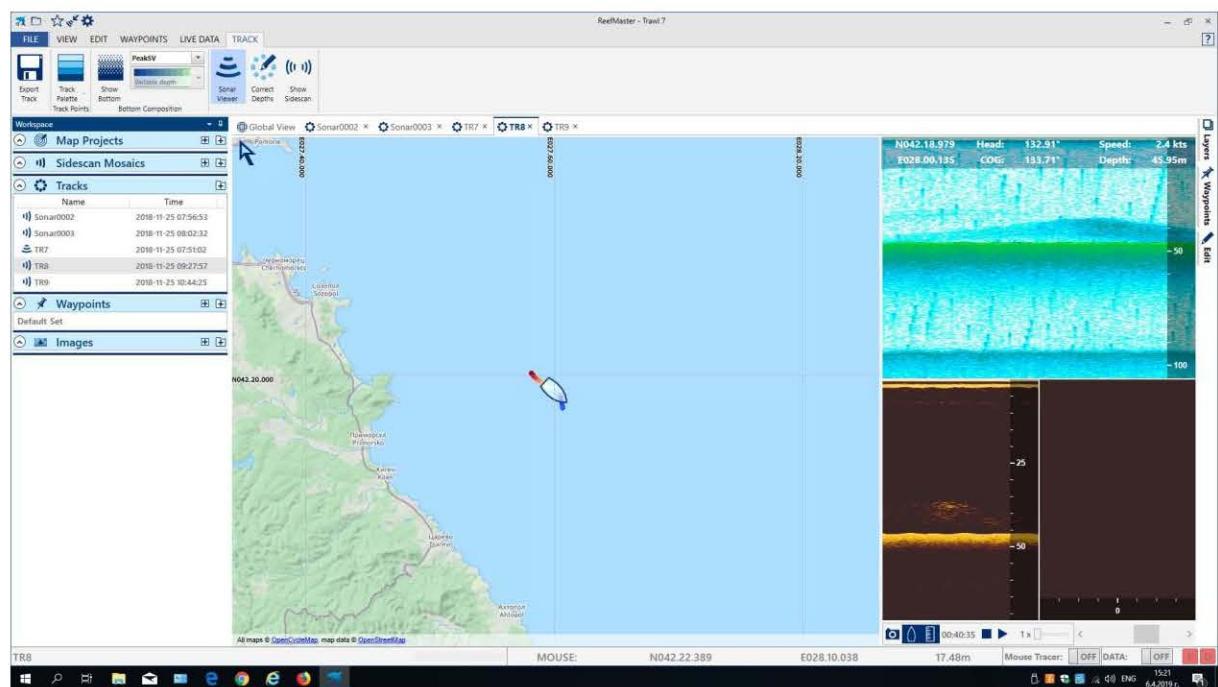


Fig. VIII. Trawl 8, situation – 2



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

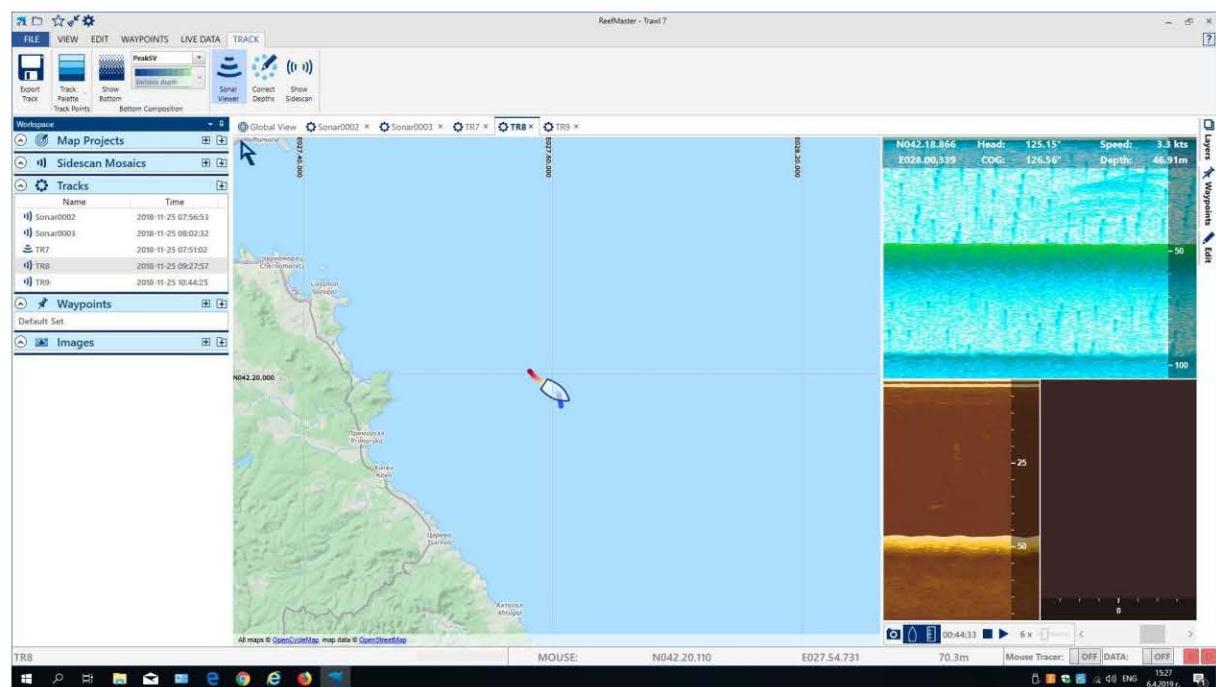


Fig. IX. Trawl 8, situation – 3



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

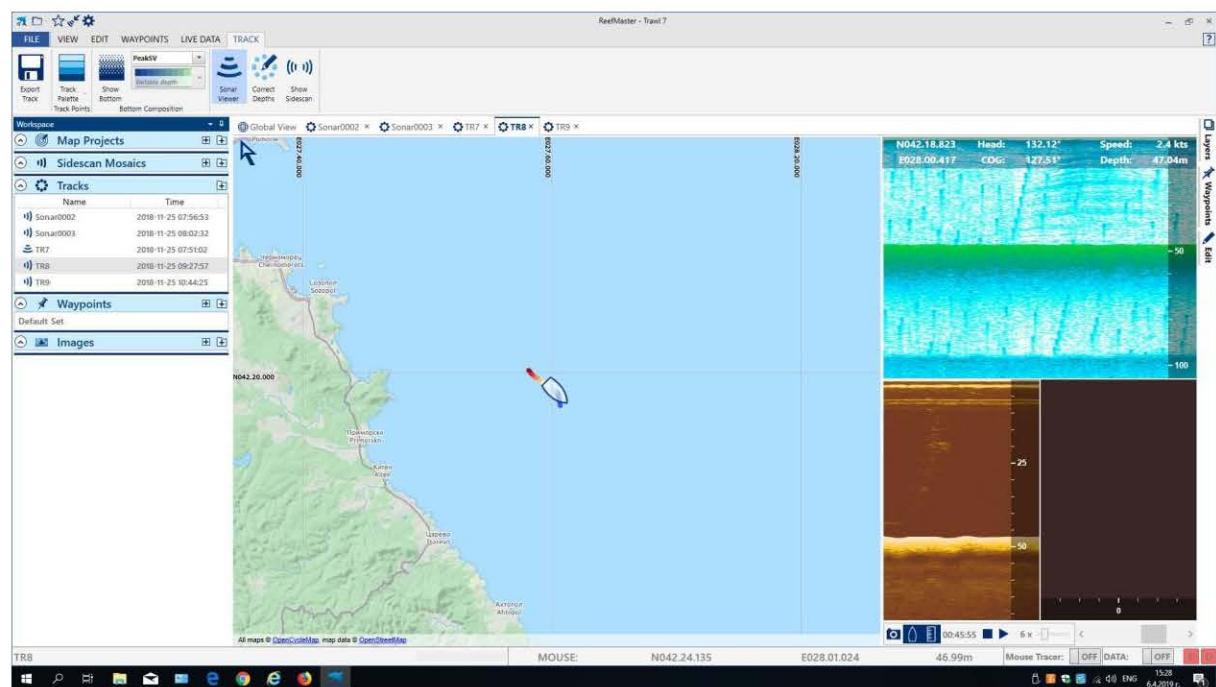


Fig.X. Trawl 8, situation – 4, fish schools of *M. barbatus*, *T. mediterraneus*, *P. saltatrix*



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ

ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО

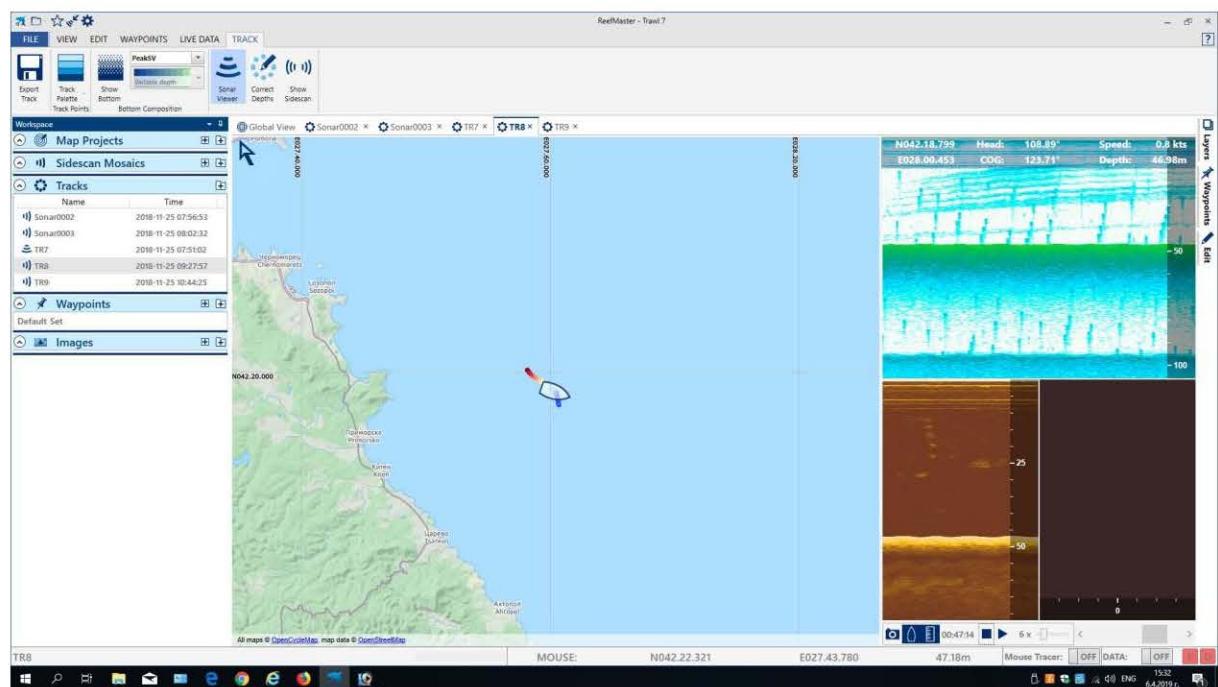


Fig. XI. Trawl 8, situation – 5, end,  
catch - 20 kg *A. aurita*, 60 kg *M. barbatus*, 20 kg *T. mediterraneus*, 8 kg  
*P. saltatrix*



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



## Pictures



[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО



[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

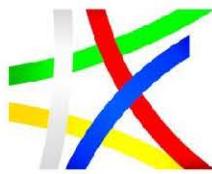
Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И  
РИБАРСТВО



[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
МОРСКО ДЕЛО И РИБАРСТВО



МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕТО, ХРАНИТЕ И  
ГОРИТЕ



[www.eufunds.bg](http://www.eufunds.bg)

Проектно предложение № BG14MFOP001-3.003-0001, „Събиране, управление и използване на данни за целите на научния анализ и изпълнението на Общата политика в областта на рибарството за периода 2017-2019 г.“, финансирано от Програмата за морско дело и рибарство, съфинансирана от Европейския съюз чрез Европейския фонд за морско дело и рибарство.