

The diet of whiting *Merlangius merlangus* in the western Baltic Sea - DTU Orbit (08/11/2017)

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The diet of whiting *Merlangius merlangus* in the western Baltic Sea was investigated and compared to the diet in the southern North Sea. Clupeids were important prey in both areas, but especially in the western Baltic Sea where they constituted up to 90% of the diet of larger individuals. Gobies, brown shrimps and polychaetes were the main prey of juveniles in the western Baltic Sea, while a wider range of species were consumed in the North Sea. The shift to piscivory occurred at smaller sizes in the western Baltic Sea and the fish prey consumed was proportionately larger than in the southern North Sea. Estimates of prey abundance and food intake of *M. merlangus* are required to evaluate its predatory significance in the western Baltic Sea, but its diet suggests that it could be just as significant a fish predator here as in the southern North Sea

General information

State: Published

Organisations: National Institute of Aquatic Resources, Section for Ecosystem based Marine Management, Section for Marine Living Resources, Section for Marine Ecology and Oceanography

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Pages: 1965-1988

Publication date: 2016

Main Research Area: Technical/natural sciences

Publication information

Journal: Journal of Fish Biology

Volume: 88

Issue number: 5

ISSN (Print): 0022-1112

Ratings:

BFI (2017): BFI-level 1

Web of Science (2017): Indexed yes

BFI (2016): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2016): CiteScore 1.57 SJR 0.741 SNIP 0.882

Web of Science (2016): Indexed yes

BFI (2015): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2015): SJR 0.951 SNIP 0.935 CiteScore 1.64

Web of Science (2015): Indexed yes

BFI (2014): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2014): SJR 0.944 SNIP 0.934 CiteScore 1.76

Web of Science (2014): Indexed yes

BFI (2013): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2013): SJR 1.049 SNIP 1.118 CiteScore 1.98

ISI indexed (2013): ISI indexed yes

Web of Science (2013): Indexed yes

BFI (2012): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2012): SJR 0.93 SNIP 1.035 CiteScore 1.88

ISI indexed (2012): ISI indexed yes

Web of Science (2012): Indexed yes

BFI (2011): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2011): SJR 0.895 SNIP 0.946 CiteScore 1.66

ISI indexed (2011): ISI indexed yes

Web of Science (2011): Indexed yes

BFI (2010): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2010): SJR 0.774 SNIP 0.834

Web of Science (2010): Indexed yes

BFI (2009): BFI-level 1

Scopus rating (2009): SJR 0.773 SNIP 0.891

Web of Science (2009): Indexed yes

BFI (2008): BFI-level 2

Scopus rating (2008): SJR 0.883 SNIP 0.968

Web of Science (2008): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2007): SJR 0.996 SNIP 1.06
Web of Science (2007): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2006): SJR 0.897 SNIP 1.051
Web of Science (2006): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2005): SJR 0.827 SNIP 0.898
Web of Science (2005): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2004): SJR 0.945 SNIP 1.148
Web of Science (2004): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2003): SJR 0.937 SNIP 1.096
Web of Science (2003): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2002): SJR 0.949 SNIP 1.056
Web of Science (2002): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2001): SJR 0.874 SNIP 1.1
Web of Science (2001): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (2000): SJR 0.751 SNIP 0.993
Web of Science (2000): Indexed yes
Scopus rating (1999): SJR 1.025 SNIP 1.176
Original language: English
DOIs:

10.1111/jfb.12959

Source: FindIt

Source-ID: 2303100363

Publication: Research - peer-review › Journal article – Annual report year: 2016