CRUSTACEA

Belgium - Belgique

(F. Redant)

Crangon crangon

Biannual sampling (in spring and autumn) of the brown shrimp stock and its predators and competitors in the Belgian coastal waters was continued in 1986. Samplings consisted of 15 minutes' hauls with a small meshed beam trawl on about 35 fixed stations. The investigations included qualitative and quantitative analyses of the epibenthic and demersal fauna, and measurements of the length composition of the shrimp stock.

A study on long term changes in the exploitation pattern of the Belgian brown shrimp fishery, covering the period 1967-1986, was started. These investigations, which are intended to continue in 1987, included the assessment of long term trends in catches, effort and cpue, and their relationship with physical, biological, technical and economic parameters.

Nephrops norvegicus

The sampling of commercial Nephrops landings was continued in order to monitor possible long term changes in the catch composition and the exploitation pattern of the Norway lobster stock in the Central North Sea (Botney Gut - Silver Pit stock). Up to 1986 no major changes in the average length composition of the landings could be detected, except for the "smalls", whose average length appeared to have decreased by about 3 mm carapace length.

A preliminary study, covering a one year period, on the reproductive cycle of female Nephrops and on the seasonal behaviour pattern of both male and female Nephrops was completed in March 1986. The results of these investigations are to be confirmed by a complementary series of observations which will continue until mid-1988.

Canada

(G.P. Ennis)

Homarus americanus

Studies on the ecology of lobster larvae have shown that Stage I larvae were most frequently caught between 15 m and 30 m depths during daylight but were rarely caught below 10 m at night. Stage II larvae were more scarce than Stage I larvae but appeared to have a similar day-night pattern. Stage IV larvae were caught almost entirely at the surface, both day and night. Stage III were rarely caught; the few