

Recent Excursions of Capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) to the Scotian Shelf and Flemish Cap During Anomalous Hydrographic Conditions*

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Abstract

Capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) are not normally encountered on the Scotian Shelf (Div. 4VWX) or Flemish Cap (Div. 3M), however, recent evidence from research vessel surveys and by-catch in commercial fisheries indicates capelin are occurring more frequently in these areas. Spring and summer research vessel surveys show a progressive increase in capelin abundance in Div. 4VW since the late-1980s. The only comparable peak in abundance was during the early-1970s.

On the Flemish Cap, capelin have been reported to NAFO as by-catch during 1990–92. Capelin also frequently occurred as by-catch in Canadian shrimp catches in 1993. Capelin had been previously reported as by-catch in this area only during 1973. No capelin were reported as by-catch in bottom trawl surveys in Div. 3M prior to 1992 and 1993, when Spanish surveys caught capelin. The historical and more recent occurrences of capelin on Scotian Shelf and Flemish Cap coincided with periods of below normal water temperatures. Capelin have not appeared in these areas during average or above-average temperature conditions.

Key words: Capelin, distribution, Flemish Cap, temperature, Scotian Shelf

*The full report of this study will be found in:

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