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Status of the Cod Stock in Division 3M

by

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Recent TACs and nominal catches are as follows:

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
TAC (000 tons)	40	25	40	40	13	12.75	12.4 <sup>1</sup>	12.4 <sup>1</sup>
Catch (000 tons)	22	27	33	33	10	14	14 <sup>2</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Excludes estimated catches by Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Provisional data.

Few data for recent years were available for catch rate analysis. Norwegian longline catch rate data show a decline from 1979 to 1981 and a recovery in 1981 to the 1979 level (Table 1).

Age and length sampling consisted of one age length key taken from Faroes longline catches in the fourth quarter of 1982 (184 otoliths) and three length frequencies, Faroes longline in October and November and Portugal otter trawl in June (1176, 2168, and 911 measurements respectively). Comparison of the length frequencies (Fig. 1) shows that the otter trawl fishery caught proportionally more of the smaller fish. The age composition for the longline fishery indicates that the 1977 year-class is dominant and the 1980 year-class appears relatively strong. The average weights at age (Table 2) continue to show an increasing trend in 1982.

These results confirm previous indications of good recruitment, however it appears that the otter trawl fishery is already harvesting these recruiting year-classes at high levels.

Table 1. Commercial catch rates of Norwegian long lines, tonnage class 4, for cod in Division 3M

Month	1979	1980	1981
January	0.34	0.22	0.31
February	0.20	0.16	0.25
March	0.32	0.16	0.23

Table 2. Average weight at age for the commercial catch of cod in Division 3M. The average weight at age for 1982 is for the Norwegian long line fishery only.

Age	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
4	0.60	1.07	1.14	1.24	2.39
5	1.10	1.48	1.75	1.79	3.16
6	1.58	2.45	2.47	2.63	-
7	2.65	4.35	3.17	3.13	4.62
8	3.56	5.34	4.42	4.72	6.07

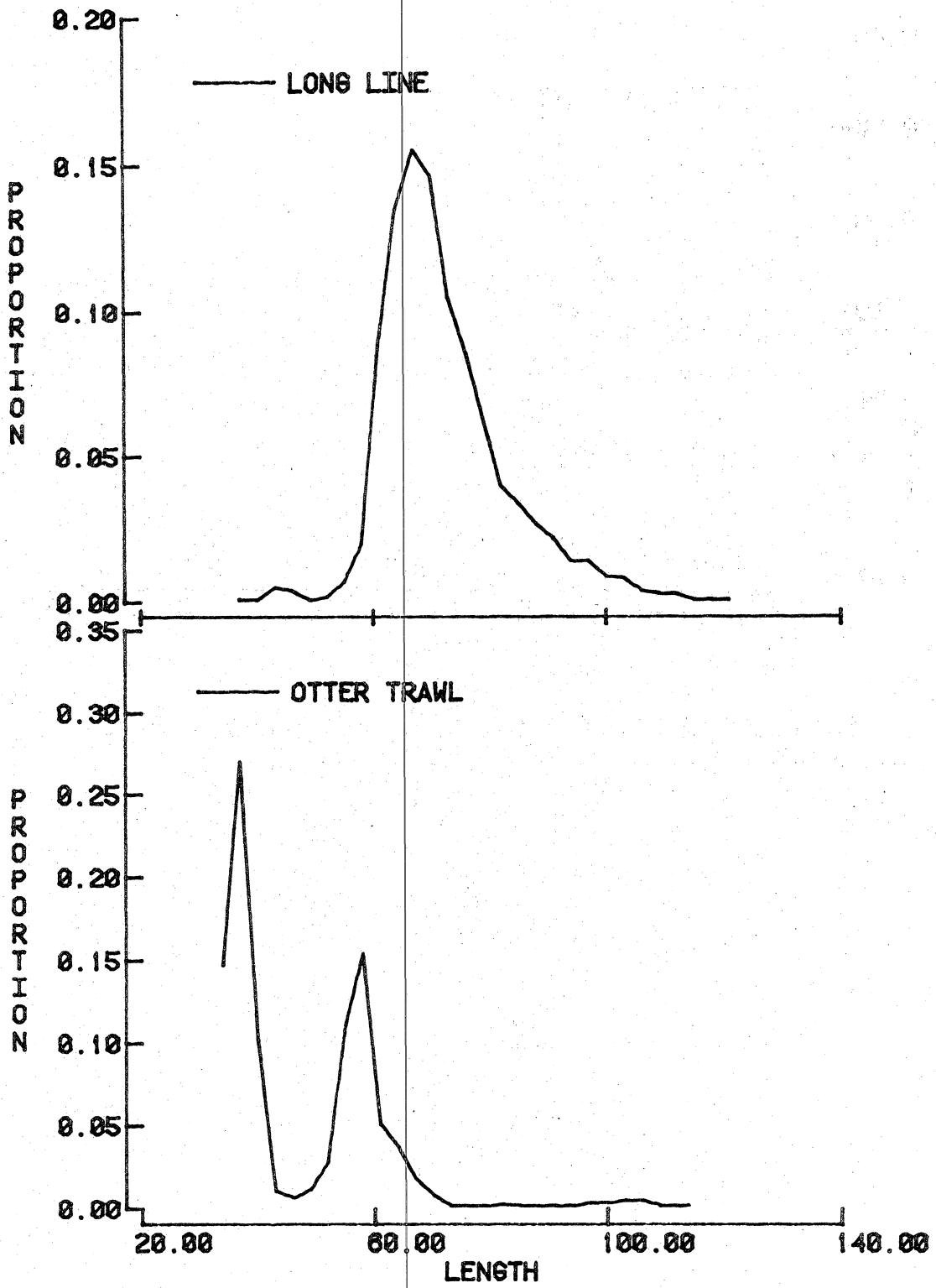


Fig. 1. Length frequencies from the commercial catch of cod in Division 3M

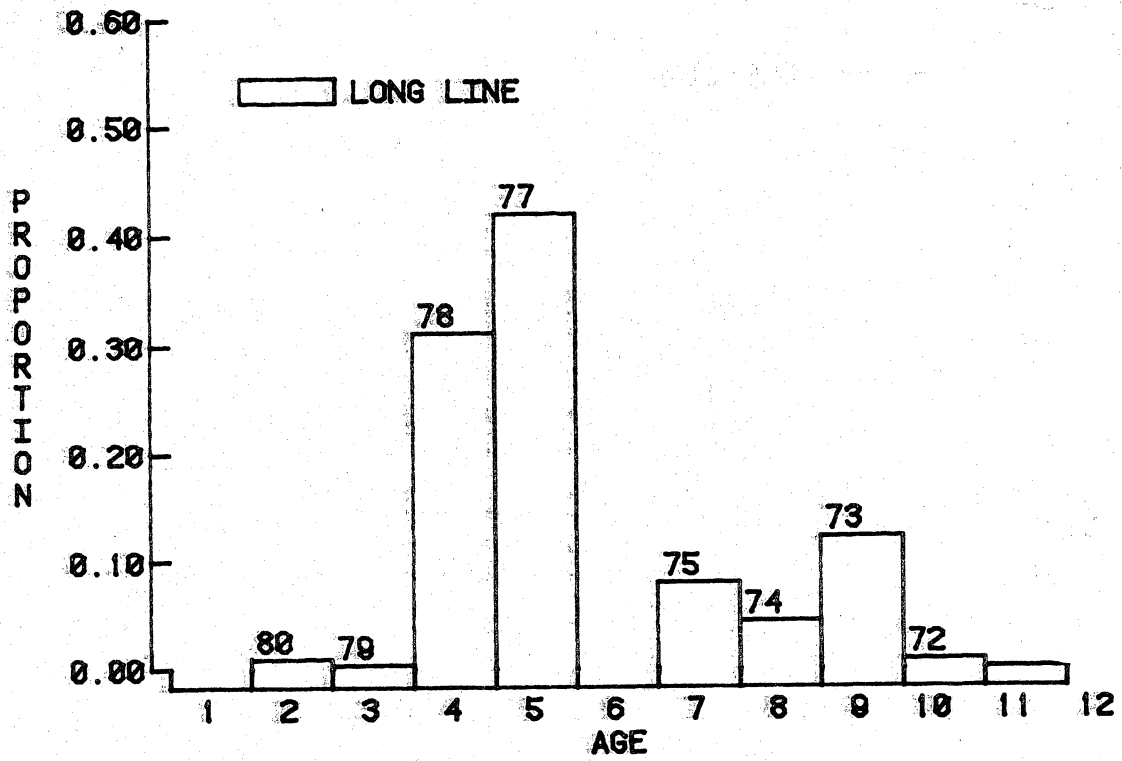


Fig. 2. Age composition from the commercial catch of cod by the long line fishery in Division 3M.