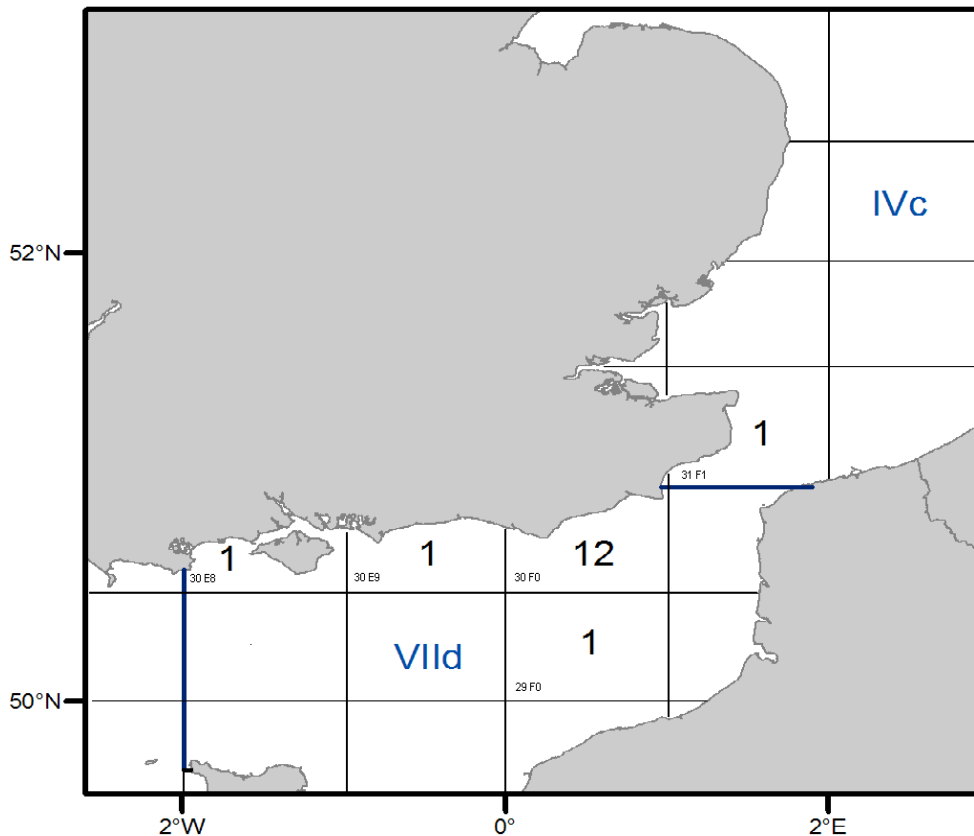


Programme 15: eastern Channel cod

Annex: Recaptures to 19 March 2008.

Of the 229 mature (>50cm) cod that were tagged with plastic marker tags ('Howitts'), 18 (~8%) have been recaptured to date. Due to the small numbers of returns, little more than is already known can be concluded about the movement or behaviour of eastern Channel cod or about the possible interactions between cod in ICES VIId and ICES IVc.

Figure 1: Numbers of tagged cod recaptured by ICES rectangle.

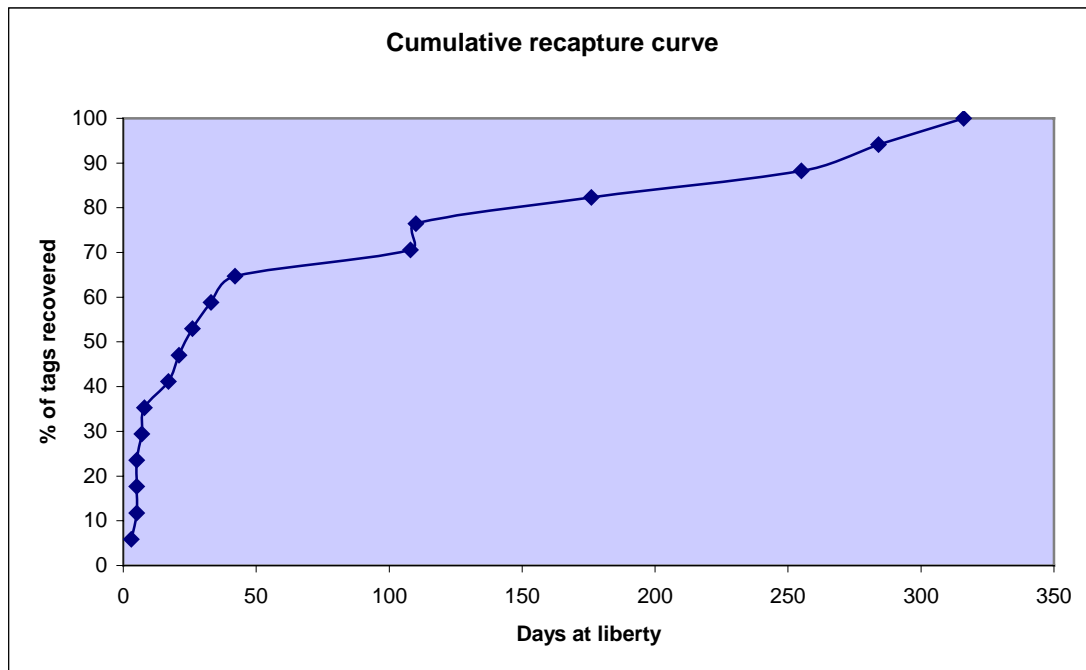


Of the 18 recaptures reported, 12 were made between January and March 2007, and the remaining six between April and December 2007. During the spawning period (January – March), three tagged fish were recaptured in ICES rectangles adjacent to that in which they were released (30 F0), one of which was recaptured in ICES area IVc (Figure 1). The time at liberty ranged from 3 to 316 days (Figure 2), and the age was determined for 12 fish: eight were 2 years old and four were 3 years old at the time of recapture.

For those fish for which the recapture position is known, 16 (Figure 1), 12 were recaptured in the ICES rectangle of their release (30 F0), 9 in January

and February 2007, of which 6 spent <10 days at liberty, and the other three fish were caught later, in May and October 2007 (Figure 1 and 2). This is consistent with previous studies that have shown that cod tagged in spring disperse both eastwards and westwards, and spend the summer on feeding grounds in the western Channel and southern/central North Sea (Pawson, 1995; Righton *et al.*, 2007).

Figure 2: Cumulative recapture curve.



One of the aims of this FSP project was the identification and mapping of possible spawning aggregations of cod in the eastern English Channel. The low return rate (18 fish), combined with the fact that half the recaptures were within one month of release makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about movements or spawning aggregations.

References

Pawson, M. G. (1995) Biogeographical identification of English Channel fish and shellfish stocks. MAFF Directorate of Fisheries Research, Technical Report, **99**. 72 pp.

Righton D, Quayle V, Hetherington S, and Burt G (2007) Movements and distribution of cod (*Gadus morhua* L.) in the southern North Sea and English Channel: results from conventional and electronic tagging experiments. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the UK*, **87**: 599-613.