



SCIENCE UPDATE

Fishers' knowledge questionnaire: December 2014

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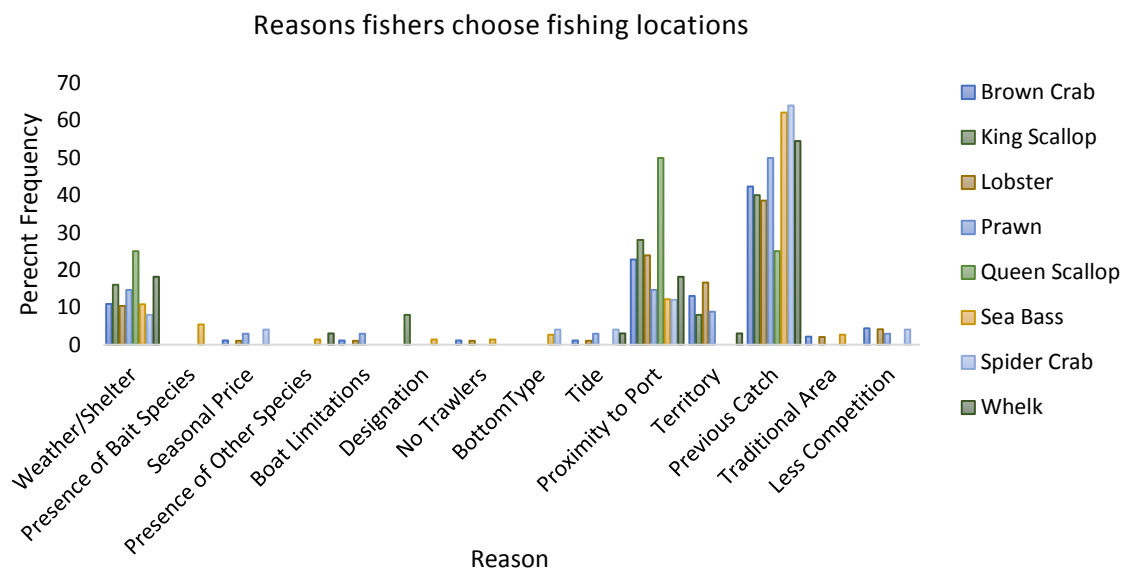
Fishers' Knowledge Questionnaire

Method

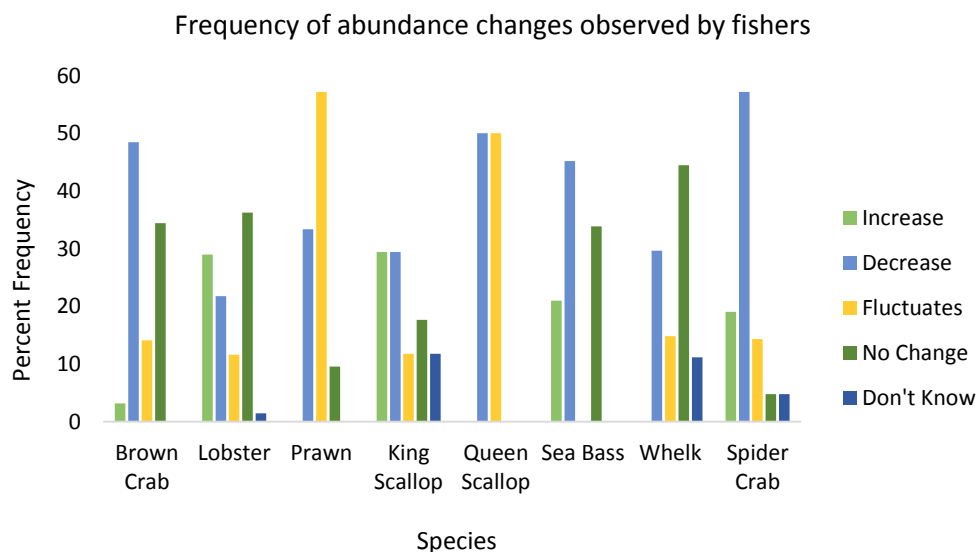
We have completed fishers' knowledge questionnaires with 64 fishers across Wales, which consists of data for 78 vessels. This data pertains to 33 vessels in North Wales, 16 vessels in Mid Wales, and 29 vessels in South Wales. This equates to 9944.36 km² of the Welsh seas being used for fishing practices.

Preliminary results

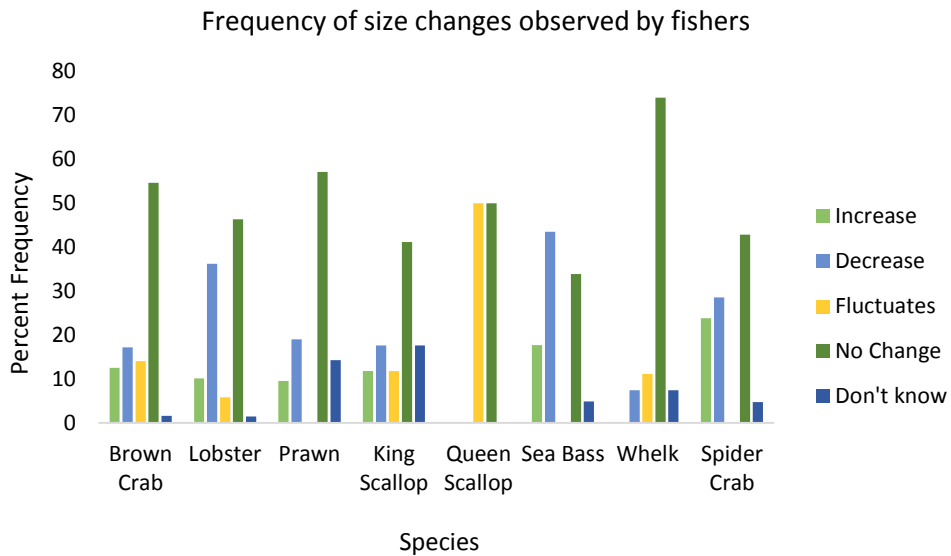
The following graphs are a sample of the information obtained from the questionnaire:



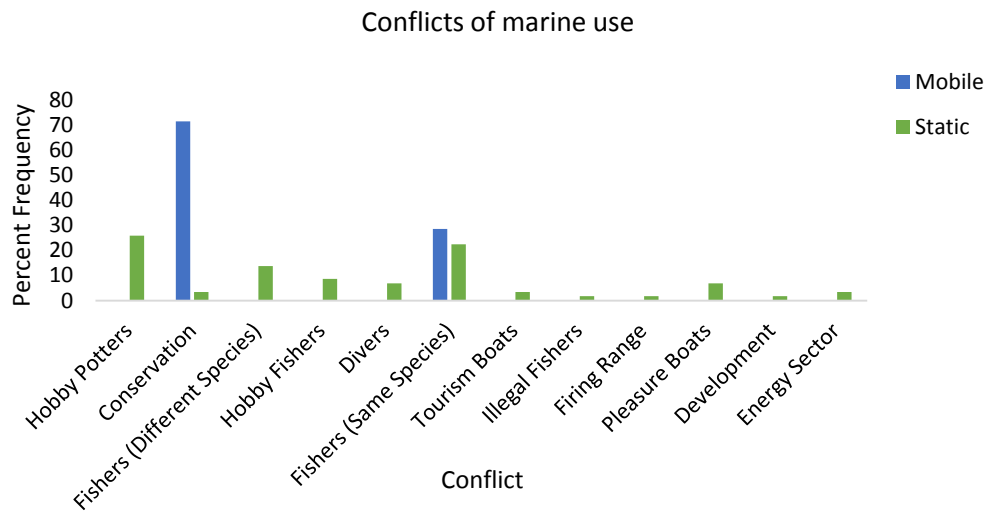
Previous catch levels, proximity to port, and weather/shelter were the most frequent answers when fishers were asked why they fish in their specific locations. This was consistent amongst all fisheries.



Decreases in abundance have been observed in all eight species; however, increases in abundance were also observed by many fishers with regards to lobsters and king scallops. No fishers have observed an increase in the abundance of prawns, queen scallops or whelks.



Most fishers have not observed any changes in species size for all eight species. Some fishers however, have observed decreased size in lobsters, sea bass and spider crabs.



Fishers were asked if there were any areas of conflict with other marine users and 65 areas of conflict were identified comprising 3278.12 km² of the Welsh seas. The most frequent conflicts for fishers with static gear are with hobby potters and fishers of the same species. The main issues surrounding the conflicts with hobby potters are that they are fishing more pots than their permits allow, they are not complying by minimum landing size legislation, they are lifting the pots of commercial fishers, and they are stealing commercial pots. In some areas, this conflict has been ongoing for over 20 years.

Mobile gear fishers appear to encounter less marine use conflicts, only stating conservation regulations and fishers of the same species as conflicts. The conservation conflicts are pertaining to closed scallop areas and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) where scallop fishing is prohibited.

In the future

We will continue to conduct questionnaires with the hope of filling in some of the geographical gaps and attaining a more representative sample of the different fishing metiers. We are especially looking to conduct questionnaires with more scallop fishers and fishers in Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. If you are willing to be interviewed or know someone else that is, please contact Julia Pantin by phone (01248 382607) or email (j.pantin@bangor.ac.uk). All participants in the questionnaire have a chance to win Guy Cotten Bib and Brace Trousers or a subscription to “The Fishing News”.