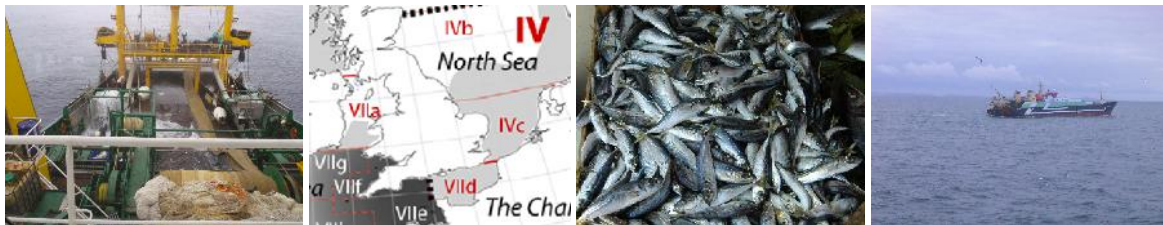


## Can fishers make the difference? Distinguishing different types of horse mackerel on the basis of detailed vessel logbook data

Ref 2015/01 (18/5/2015)

### Introduction

Horse mackerel is a pelagic fish species that is of substantial importance to the PFA fleet. Three different stocks of horse mackerel are distinguished: North Sea horse mackerel, Western horse mackerel and Southern horse mackerel. The boundary between the North Sea and Western horse mackerel has been redrawn in 2008 based on recommendations from a European scientific study. However, the knowledge base on the main mixing area in the eastern and western Channel was relatively weak. Members of the PFA hold information that could be of interest to the understanding of where and when mixing between western and North Sea horse mackerel takes place (or not). The thesis subject is aimed at improving the understanding of the mixing of horse mackerel in the Channel area.



### Research questions

- How do skippers and quality managers on board of pelagic trawlers understand and describe the differences (or not) between North Sea and Western horse mackerel?
- What type of information on the detailed catch compositions of horse mackerel is held by the different companies (level of detail, length of time series, form of storage)
- Generate a dataset of detailed catch compositions of horse mackerel from commercial records.
- Analyse detailed catch compositions of horse mackerel on the level of mixing between North Sea and Western horse mackerel by area, season and any other relevant factors.

**Type of student work:** thesis

**Required background:** fisheries science

**Period:** 5 months. Starting as soon as possible.

**Comment:** May be carried out in conjunction with project on horse mackerel indicator of abundance.

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**Organization:** The Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association represents the interests of 9 European pelagic freezer-trawler companies. PFA members are responsible, family-run companies, mostly going back to the late 19th century, who benefit from several generations of fishing experience, and operate a combined fleet of 19 vessels. They are vertically integrated companies involved in the catching, processing, distribution and export of pelagic fish. The association currently has members in France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK.

