

Biology and population dynamics of Picarel (*Maena smaris* L), Family Centranchidae, in the waters of Cyprus

R.J. LIVADAS
Department of Fisheries, Nicosia (Cyprus)

Introduction

Maena smaris L. is one of four species of the family Centranchidae inhabiting the seas of Cyprus. It is one of the most important commercially species landed by the fishery in Cyprus. The study of this species was undertaken for the purpose of obtaining its biological parameters and other data necessary for the rational exploitation and management of its stocks.

Materials and Methods

A total of 46678 fish were measured for length distribution on board commercial trawlers and inshore fishing boats during 1966-1984. A further lot of 1530 specimens were examined for population analysis in the laboratory. Total length (LT) was taken to the 1/2 or 1-cm below. Age determination was done from otolith and partly from scale readings. For determination of maturity stages, the 8-stage Classification scale by Maier was used. (Laevastu 1965).

Age designation: This is shown below:

Age-group	0	I	II	III
Months old	0-9	10-22	23-35	35-47
Year-rings	0	1	2	3

The above designation agrees with the age-designation by Chugunova (1959) and Williams & Bedford (1973).

Results

Length-weight relation. $M+F \quad W = 1.45715 \times 10^{-2} \times L^{2.85}$

V. Bertalanffy's Growth Formula parameters.
 $M+F \quad L_{\infty} = 22.2 \text{ cm} \quad K = 0.24 \quad t_0 = -1.0 \quad W_{\infty} = 100 \text{ g}$

Maximum age: 3.2 years

Sexual inversion: In *Maena smaris* appears the phenomenon of sexual dimorphism (proterogynous hermaphroditism) at the age of 2 years old. *Maena smaris* matures genetically at a length of about 10cm in its first year of life (11-12th month). Spawning starts at the end of March and is completed by the end of May. Female fish precedes male in the spawning process by 3 weeks at least. The catch of the trawl fishery consists of 4 age-groups, 0-III, of which age-groups I and II are the most important, providing the bulk of the trawlers' landings. The catch of the inshore fishery consists mainly of age-groups II and III, the most important being age-group II. Age and length of recruitment to the trawl fishery:

$t_e = 6-7$ months old $l_e = 6-7$ cm

and for the inshore fishery $t_e = 2$ years old $l_e = 12-13$ cm

Total mortality (Z) and Fishing mortality (F) for the period 1966-1984, fluctuate for the trawl fishery between:

$Z = 0.37-0.70 \quad F = 0.07-0.40$

and for the inshore fishery:

$Z = 0.58-0.99 \quad F = 0.28-0.69$

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Natural History of Sole (*Solea vulgaris* L. 1758) in the Amvrakikos Gulf (Greece)

C. PAPAICONSTANTINOY, G. PETRAKIS and E. CARAGITSOU
National Centre for Marine Research, Hellenikon, Athens (Greece)

INTRODUCTION

Sole, *Solea vulgaris* L., is an important commercial species of flat-fish, which contributes to the fisheries in estuaries, backwaters and inshore areas. It ranges from Senegal to Norway, along the eastern coast of the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the southwestern Black Sea (Whitehead et al., 1986). The species is very common in Greek seas, living on soft bottom at depths ranging from 5 to 80m, and it is actively exploited, mainly by coastal fisheries. Several authors have summarized and discussed the occurrence and life history of the species in the Mediterranean Sea, but no relative information is available of Greek seas. The purpose of this work was to investigate certain aspects of the life history of sole in the Amvrakikos gulf (Greece).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Between December 1986 and March 1987, monthly samples of sole, amounting to 237 specimens, were obtained from trammel net catches. All nets were 1.2m deep by 200-250m long and had 3 panels of mesh 40-(16-17)-40mm from knot to knot. The duration of fishing varied between 10 and 14 h. Total length (TL) to the nearest mm, weight to the nearest g, sex and gonad maturity, when possible, were recorded. Age was determined by otolith reading. Mortality estimates were calculated by the catch curve method of Pauly (1983).

RESULTS

A length-frequency distribution of 237 soles based on the total length at capture, over the study period, is illustrated in Fig.1. Since the size of the sample and the sampling period were small, all data were combined. Both sexes were combined, since no difference in length was found between them. The TL distribution ranged from 9.0 to 35.0cm, whilst the major peak of abundance was in the length range 21.0-31.0 cm. The

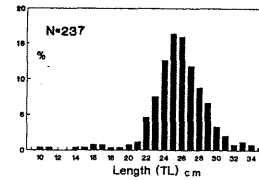


Fig. 1. Length frequency distribution of sole (1986-1987)

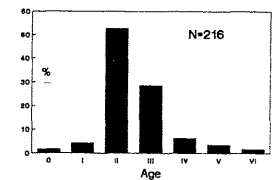


Fig. 2. Age distribution of sole in the Amvrakikos Gulf (1986-1987)

presence of young sole, 9.0-21.0cm, representing age group 0+ and I+, was very low, not exceeding 13%.

The age distribution of sole, presented in Fig.2, shows that the largest size grouping included fish with ages ranging from 0 to VI years, whilst the age groups II and III were represented by over 80%. The scarcity of <I+ can be attributed to the selective action of the trammel nets used and to the dispersal of fish according to maturity or their ecology in different parts of the gulf.

The relationship between total length (TL) in mm and otolith radius (R), obtained with 211 individuals, was: $TL=66.2+3.66XR$ (correlation coefficient 0.954).

TABLE I. Back-calculated TL in mm of sole from the Amvrakikos Gulf

Age group	Number of individuals	Calculated length at end of year					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
I	10	180.9	164.3				
II	113	241.6	171.7	221.5			
III	62	266.1	170.4	223.2	250.9		
IV	14	283.9	168.8	219.2	250.8	296.6	
V	7	299.9	172.9	227.3	258.6	282.2	296.3
VI	5	330.0	173.1	228.0	262.4	291.7	312.2 326.8
Average length		170.8	222.2	252.1	277.2	302.9	326.9
Number of individuals		211	201	88	26	12	5

The growth parameters were obtained from the length at time of capture for all fish aged 0-VI (sexes combined) and used to calculate the von Bertalanffy equation. The asymptotic length was found 348.8 mm, the growth coefficient (K) was 0.38, and the 'age' at which the fish would have length zero if they always grew according to the equation (t_0) was equal to -0.41.

The length-weight relationship was developed using the general equation $W=aL^b$, where W weight in g, and L length in mm. No significant differences was found between sexes (analysis of covariance test). During the course of the survey, a total of 237 fish was weighed and the computed length-weight relationship (sex combined) was $a=0.000003$ and $b=3.172$.

As sampling was not representative over the whole year, the estimated mortality refers to the winter months, which are also those of the reproduction. A length converted catch curve based on the total catch was used to calculate total mortality (Z) = 0.769 (Pauly, 1983). An empirical estimate of the natural mortality (M) = 0.26 was obtained using Pauly's equation (1983). Thus, the exploitation ratio was computed, $E=0.75$, indicating that the fishing pressure on the sole stock in the area was rather high. The reproduction in the Amvrakikos Gulf takes place between December and March. Some immature individuals were caught in summer.

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