

Interactive comment on “A new compilation of stomach content data for commercially-important pelagic fish species in the Northeast Atlantic” by J. K. Pinnegar et al.

J. K. Pinnegar et al.

john.pinnegar@cefas.co.uk

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Response to Technical Comments from F. J. Fife (Referee #1)

(C1) page 199 line 4 COM(2011) is listed as EC in references (C2) page 207 line 22 Parathemisto abissorum - Themisto abyssorum

- Both of these comments are easy to address and will be rectified in the revised manuscript.

(C3) page 212 line 8 could not find Goni 2014 in text of paper (C4) page 213 line 27 could not find Pinnegar et al 2013 in text

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- These references refer to the underlying datasets held in PANGAEA, and were added when the document was type-set (i.e. not by the authors). Both references will be removed from the reference list in the revised manuscript.

(C5) page 214 line 1 Prokophuk is after Pusineri (out of alphabetical order)

- This comment is very easy to address and will be rectified in the revised manuscript.

Response to Comments from Anonymous Referee #2

(C6) it would be informative to have a table or figure that shows during which months of the year and at which time of day the samples have been collected. This way the reader can easily tell if the data may be biased by only collecting samples at a certain time of the day or during a certain season.

- It will be relatively straightforward to add months to table 1 and to table 3, although it should be noted that some of the data included in the 'Cefas historical' dataset are from many years ago, and hence only very sketchy information available. We would prefer not to add time of day to the tables as there are often many hauls throughout a particular day, such that – including these times in table 1 and 3 would be largely meaningless. However, the original times and dates are included in the underlying PANGAEA datasets that are freely available to the public. A sentence to this effect will be added in the revised manuscript.

(C7) could a database be composed that not only informs us what the predators eat, but also what there is for them to eat? Is what they have in their stomachs their choice or do they have to be highly opportunistic? Information on prey preferences from predator fish might give more insight into the marine ecosystem. Does such a database already exist?

- While we agree that it would be very desirable to include information on prey availability within the database, such an addition is simply not feasible. The data included spans more than a century and in most cases the scientists involved did not collect

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zooplankton information at the same time as sampling fish stomachs. Unfortunately it is not possible to go back in time and supplement the data collected. For the most recent data on herring, blue whiting and mackerel, one might try to match the sample location, dates and times with corresponding information from the north Atlantic-wide Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) survey, but this would be a very complicated task to achieve, and would require a separate research paper/analysis – and entail considerable extra effort. For some of the earlier datasets (included in the ‘Cefas historical’ sub-set), plankton data were collected, but this was largely qualitative in nature and was not digitised as part of the DAPSTOM initiative. Therefore we would argue that it is unreasonable to expect the authors to address this comment in any detail, although a sentence will be added in the discussion section of the revised manuscript, highlighting the various options for trying to re-construct prey availability.

(C8) The only comment I have on the Introduction is that the paragraphs are not well-connected.

- This comment is easy to address and will be rectified in the revised manuscript.

(C9) Figure 2 could be enlarged and to me it seems that the maps are viewed with an angle, while a view from above might be clearer.

- We will endeavor to provide a new version of the maps in the revised manuscript, that is clearer, and looks less distorted.

Interactive comment on Earth Syst. Sci. Data Discuss., 7, 197, 2014.

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