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Annual Report of the European Union to the Scientific Committee

European Union

National report of the European Union to the 2026 SPRFMO Scientific Committee meeting.

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Summary

This report presents the European Union (EU) fishing activity in 2025 in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) Convention area and the observer program implementation in 2025. The data on catches of Jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) by three EU trawlers in 2025 covers the period from June to December. Total catch in 2025 was 32 856 (29 635 CJM) tonnes. Three scientific observers were deployed on two EU fishing vessels in the period from July till December 2025.

A short section on the Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (PFA) self-sampling program has been included in the report, demonstrating the main results of the self-sampling activities that cover all trips by EU vessels in the area. A PFA self-sampling report has been submitted to the SPRFMO SC, in which a description is presented of the fisheries carried out by vessels belonging to members of the PFA within the SPRFMO area from 2017 to 2025. In 2025 three EU vessels have been active in the SPRFMO convention area. In 2025, 9 PFA trips were self-sampled.

During the Jack mackerel Benchmark Working Group (SCW14) it was decided to develop a protocol for inclusion of self-sampling data for the EU fleet for those quarters where no observer trips were carried out. This document describes that protocol and the selection of quarters for which the self-sampling data will be used. For SC12 It is proposed to only use the self-sampling data from 2021 and onwards and only for quarters for which no observer data is present. For 2025 there are samples for two of the quarters when there was active fisheries in the SPRFMO Convention area. It is therefore proposed to use the self-sampling data for the second quarter of 2025.

Exploratory fishing for toothfish has continued to be undertaken by the Spanish vessel Tronio in 2025 in accordance with CMM14e-2024. In this campaign, effort was split across two research blocks: Block A, where all previous fishing (2021-2023) had taken place, and Block B, a previously unexplored section of the research block. In 2025 the TAC of 129t in Block A and 33t in Block B was nearly reached after approximately five weeks of fishing. A detailed survey report of the second year's exploratory fishing, together with an updated stock assessment integrating data from all campaigns between 2021 and 2025, is submitted to the SC.

1 Introduction

The present report refers to the activity of three EU pelagic trawlers: “Margiris” (Lithuania), “Annelies Ilona” (Poland) and “Alina” (Poland), in period from June to December 2025 fishing for *Trachurus murphyi* in the SPRFMO Convention area.

The catch and effort data for 2025 refer to 7 months of fishing activity (June - December). Biological data were collected during the period from July 7th to December 13th, when the observers were on board of two of the three EU pelagic trawlers active in the area in 2025. Three fishing trips of the EU vessels were observed out of a total of 9 fishing trips in 2025.

Data presented in this report cover catch and effort data reported directly by the vessels and the data collected by scientific observers on board of the vessels.

2 Description of the EU Fisheries on Jack mackerel in the Pacific - overall summary

The first EU pelagic trawler arrived in the Pacific in 2005 and it conducted fishing operations for three months in the second half of the year. The following year, the same vessel returned and undertook fishing activities for the whole season from March to October. The number of EU vessels varied from 6 to 9 in the following four years (2007 – 2010). Since 2011, the number of EU vessels decreased as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. EU pelagic trawlers in the Pacific in 2005-2025.

Year	EU Member States and number of vessels
2005	Netherlands (1)
2006	Netherlands (1)
2007	Germany (3), Lithuania (1), Netherlands (2)
2008	Germany (3), Lithuania (1), Netherlands (2)
2009	Germany (3), Poland (3), Lithuania (1), Netherlands (2)
2010	Germany (3), Poland (3), Lithuania (1), Netherlands (1)
2011	Germany (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (1)
2012	no fishing
2013	Lithuania (1)
2014	Germany (1), Netherlands (1)
2015	Netherlands (1), Lithuania (1)
2016	Germany (1), Poland (1)
2017	Netherlands (1), Lithuania (1)
2018	Lithuania (1)
2019	Poland (1)
2020	No fishing
2021	Germany (1), Lithuania (1), Poland (1)
2022	Lithuania (1), Poland (1)
2023	Poland (2), Germany (1), Lithuania (1)
2024	Lithuania (1), Poland (1)
2025	Lithuania (1), Poland (2)

3 Catch, Effort and CPUE Summaries

3.1 Catch composition

The fishery by EU trawlers in the SPRFMO Convention area is targeting *Trachurus murphyi*. Other species make up only a small fraction of the total catch, as shown in Table 2 **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 2.Total catch (tons) and species composition (%) of the EU fleet in 2009 – 2025. Based on landing data provided by the vessels owners.

Year	Total EU catch in tons	Species composition in percentages			
		<i>Trachurus murphyi</i>	<i>Scomber japonicus</i>	<i>Brama australis</i>	Other species
2009	91 336	95.3	4.3	0.4	0.0
2010	34 083	97.2	1.9	0.6	0.3
2011	1 810	98.3	0.2	1.3	0.2
2012	0	0	0	0	0
2013	10 390	97.2	2.2	0.6	0.0
2014	21 431	95.7	3.5	0.3	0.5
2015	27 955	98.1	1.1	0.6	0.2
2016	12 828	91.9	6.3	0.3	1.5
2017	29 652	93.3	6.2	0.3	0.3
2018	10 235	94.0	1.2	2.8	2.0
2019	12 114	97.3	1.0	1.1	0.6
2020	0	0	0	0	0
2021	51 182	77.2	14.4	0.02	8.4
2022	62 809	69,1	30,8	0	0,2
2023	69 072	75.7	24.1	0	0.2
2024	22 380	74.04	25.79	0	0.17
2025	32 856	90.2	4.27	0.01	5.53

The catch in 2025 was approximately 31.9% higher than in previous year due to higher fishing effort.

Similar to the previous years, the species composition of the catch in 2025 was dominated by *Trachurus murphyi* – the target species. This species made up 90.2% of the total catch. The by-catch of other species in 2025 was 9.8% of the total catch, with *Scomber japonicus* reaching 4.27%, *Brama australis* 0.01% and other species 5.53%.

The monthly distribution of the catch in the year 2025 is presented in Figure 1, with the highest catch taken in September.

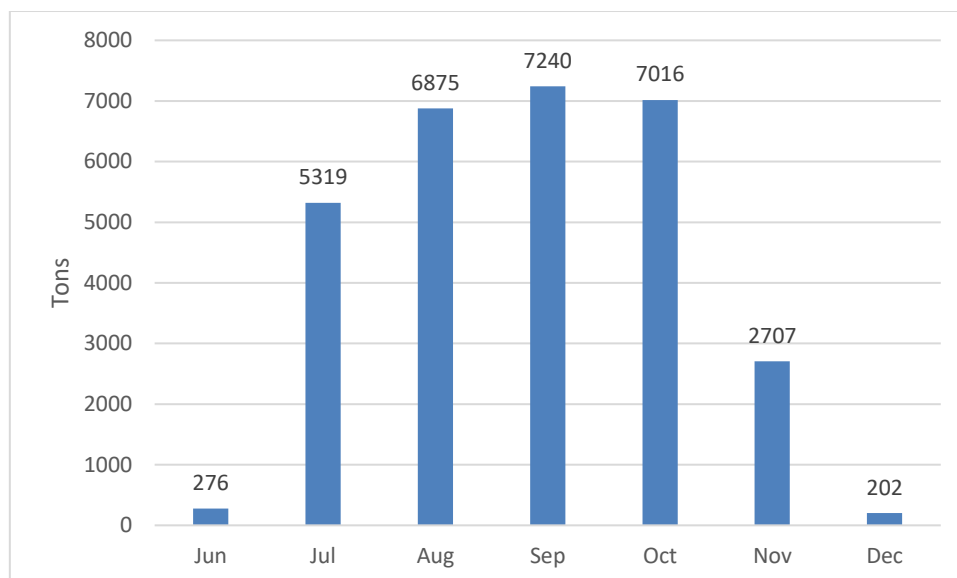


Figure 1. Monthly catch of *Trachurus murphyi* by EU vessels in 2025. Data based on catch reported by the vessels.

3.2 Effort and catch per unit of effort (CPUE)

The series of CPUE (in tons per day) for *Trachurus murphyi* presented in Table 3 is based on catch and effort of the EU fleet. The highest catch in 2025 was taken in September (7240 tons) and was related to CPUE of 108 t/day. The highest CPUE in 2025 was recorded in October (132 t/day). Data for 2025 indicate that the CPUE in that year was low in June, then increased significantly from July reaching a peak in October and November. The CPUE decreases after November with 123 t/day to 29 t/day in December. The average CPUE for EU fleet in 2025 was 110 t/day.

Table 3. Catch and effort of the EU fleet. Fishing days based on data provided by the vessels.

Year	Number of fishing days	Catch <i>Trachurus murphyi</i> (in tons)	CPUE (tons per day)
2005	44	6 187	141
2006	109	33 766	310
2007	401	123 523	308
2008	423	108 174	256
2009	436	87 043	200
2010	274	33 129	121
2011	32	1 779	56
2012	0	0	0
2013	140	10 010	72
2014	231	20 510	89
2015	149	25 504	157
2016	115	11 470	100
2017	273	27 652	101
2018	132	9 620	73
2019	88	11 789	134
2020	0	0	0
2021	209	39 529	189
2022	233	43 370	186
2023	408	52 271	128

2024	139	16571	119
2025	269	29635	110

4 Fisheries Data Collection and Research Activities

Tow-by-tow data on catch and effort were collected directly by the vessel. The observers collected detailed biological information on catch. Information on birds observed around the vessels were also collected.

Position, time and catch composition is provided for each haul. An Excel spreadsheet form was used to record the information at sea ("*SPRFMO-Observer-Trawl-template-2020*"). The information recorded in this spreadsheet corresponds to the data guidelines as set in the SPRFMO CMM on Data Standards.

Biological characteristics such as individual length, weight, sex, maturity stage, stomach fullness and otoliths for age reading were collected for *Trachurus murphyi*. In addition, discards and incidental by-catch of species of concerned were monitored.

Otoliths of *Trachurus murphyi* collected in 2025 have been read by a specialist of the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (Poland) and the information on age/length relationship could be used to convert length distributions into age compositions of the catch. This information could be used subsequently by the Scientific Committee in the stock assessments.

4.1 Observer data

Until 2016 the observer program was organized by the Dutch consulting agency Corten Marine Research (CMR). This agency had been responsible for observer missions on board EU (Dutch, German, Lithuanian and Polish) trawlers in the SPRFMO Convention area since 2007. The coordination of the observer program to collect data from the EU fishing fleet in the SPRFMO Convention during 2017-2024 period was carried out by the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Poland (NMFRI). From 2025 onwards, the EU SPRFMO data collection programme is coordinated by Wageningen Marine Research (WMR), The Netherlands.

As from 2015, the program is financed through the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) and is based on the Multi-lateral agreement for biological data collection of pelagic fisheries in SPRFMO Convention area amongst the responsible institutions of the EU Member States concerned.

In the period 2014-2025, the total number of fishing days with observers on board was 748, which means that 33% of fishing days was observed (Table 3 and Table 4).

In 2025 number of fishing days observed on board was 94, which means that 35% of fishing days was observed (Table 4). Total number of hauls with observer on board "*Annelies Ilena*", during one observed trip, was 72 with 70 observed (97% coverage). 115 hauls were observed out of total 119 hauls during two observed trips by "*Margiris*" which gives 97% observer coverage in terms of hauls. In 2025 EU fishing vessels made 9 fishing trips including 3 observed, which gives 33% observer coverage in terms of fishing trips.

Table 4. Observer missions in 2014 - 2024

Year	Period	Vessel	Observer	Days with observations
2014	20 April – 30 May	Maartje Theadora	Tomasz Raczynski	23
	31 May – 19 August	Maartje Theadora	Co de Klerk	80
2015	29 April - 13 July	Annelies Ilena	Co de Klerk	60
	13 June - 24 July	Margiris	Tomasz Raczynski	28

2016	15 May - 17 June	Janus	Tomasz Raczynski	14
	18 June – 17 August	Maartje Theadora	Tomasz Raczynski	23
2017	15 March – 17 May	Margiris	Tomasz Raczynski	34
	05 April – 17 May	Margiris	Łukasz Dziemian	
	09 August – 20 September	Margiris	Tomasz Raczynski	32
2018	22 March – 02 May	Margiris	Tomasz Raczynski	26
	02 May – 13 June	Margiris	Kamil Kisielewski	27
	02 May – 13 June	Margiris	Piotr Pankowski	
2019	25 March – 13 May	Annelies Ilona	Łukasz Giedrojc	25
	13 May – 24 June	Annelies Ilona	Kamil Kisielewski	22
2020	-	-	-	-
2021	26 March – 24 April	Maartje Theadora	Piotr Pankowski	8
	02 July – 18 August	Annelies Ilona	Michał Szymański	28
2022	15 April – 16 May	Annelies Ilona	P. Pankowski, K. Belej	23
	16 May – 29 June	Annelies Ilona	P. Pankowski	31
	29 July – 16 September	Margiris	M. Szymański	30
2023	27 June – 19 July	Alina	T. Bangma	14
	19 July – 5 August	Alina	T. Bangma	14
	2 August – 26 August	Maartje Theadora	K. Belej	30
	26 August – 15 September	Simonas Daukantas	K. Belej	16
	1 September – 13 October	Annelies Ilona	M. Szymański	35
2024	18 April – 20 May	Annelies Ilona	M. Szymański	5
	18 April – 20 May	Annelies Ilona	K. C. Stolarek	
	25 April – 20 May	Margiris	P. Pankowski	1
	1 November – 2 December	Margiris	K. Belej	25
	1 November – 2 December	Margiris	M. Suski	
2025	2 July – 16 August	Margiris	K. Belej	41
	19 September – 23 October	Annelies Ilona	C. Schulte	24
	3 November – 13 December	Margiris	P. Pankowski	29

The observers collected data on species and length composition of the main species observed in the catch (*Trachurus murphyi*, *Scomber japonicus* and others). Biological characteristics such as individual length, weight, sex, maturity stage, stomach fullness as well as otoliths for age reading were collected for *Trachurus murphyi*. In addition, discards and incidental by-catch of species of concern were monitored. As in previous years, the observers also monitored interactions of sea-birds with the vessel and fishing gear as well as the presence of birds around the vessels.

4.1.1 Observer training

The observers employed by NMFRI and Thunen Institute in the program in 2025 had a wide experience in observer missions at sea: observers are ichthyologists with a University degree who have worked as observers on board Polish and German vessels (pelagic and demersal trawlers, long-liners, gill-netters) in the Baltic Sea and North Atlantic. Two out of three observers served as observers on the EU vessels active in the SPRFMO area in previous years. The third observer joined the pelagic freezer trawler in SPRFMO for the first time. All observers deployed on EU pelagic freezer trawlers in SPRFMO in 2025 are trained observers in accordance with SPRFMO guidelines and hold a current EU observer training certificate.

As a result of the accreditation of the EU observer programme in the SPRFMO Convention Area, observers need to be trained according to the SPRFMO guidelines. For this reason, an EU observer team training has been organized in which observers are specifically trained to collect data according to the SPRFMO data standards when deployed in the SPRFMO Convention Area. The EU observer team training took place in Gdynia in Poland from 20 – 22 November and was hosted by National Marine Fisheries Research Institute. The training was attended by 16 participants in total from five different EU Member States. As part of the EU observer pool, 10 observers from four EU Member States and institutes (DE, LT, NL, PL) participated in this training. The next EU observer training SPRFMO is planned in Q1 of 2027.

Until November 2024, no special training activities were organized for the NMFRI observers as no training needs were identified. The NMFRI observers are very experienced - biological and fisheries data collection is their daily routine under the EU DCF and other fisheries monitoring projects executed by the Institute and they are regularly briefed. Before each deployment of the observer on the vessel operating in the SPRFMO Convention area, observers are briefed on the updated Conservation and Management Measures applicable to the *Trachurus murphyi* fisheries in the SPRFMO area and as regards observer's obligations with respect to the methods and scope of the data to be collected.

At NMFRI an internal policy is in force regarding qualifications and safety requirements of the scientific observers. According to this policy, a two-stage observer training is applied:

- First - general maritime training confirming the ability to work at sea on board fishing vessels, resulting in obtaining relevant certificates in accordance with national rules and the requirements of the STCW Convention - Seaman's Book, Deck Hand Certificate, Basic Safety Training Certificate (incl. Personal Survival Techniques, Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting, Elementary First Aid, Personal Safety). This training lasts one week. Each observer working at sea must at all-time be in possession of all valid basic maritime certificates, including specific Marine Health Certificate.
- Second - practical training on observer's work, both in the lab and in the field and at sea (including species identification, otoliths/scales collection and reading, maturity determination, data recording etc.). Each newly employed observer works under the supervision of Institute's Data Collection Coordinator and, when working in lab or at sea, is trained under direct supervision of an experienced observer. This training lasts minimum 3 weeks.

4.1.2 Program design and coverage

The observer program was designed to meet the requirements of the paragraph 22 of the SPRFMO CMM 01¹, *i.e.* to ensure a minimum of 10% scientific observer coverage of trips for trawlers flying the EU flag and to ensure that such observers collect and report data as described in the SPRFMO CMM 02² (Data Standards) respectively.

Table 5. Fishing activity coverage.

Year	Fishing		Observed		Coverage	
	Trips	Days	Trips	Days	Trips	Days
2017	10	273	3	66	30%	24%
2018	6	132	2	53	33%	40%
2019	3	88	2	47	66%	53%
2020	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	10	209	4	36	40%	17%
2022	19	233	5	84	26%	36%
2023	23	408	5	109	22%	27%
2024	8	139	3	31	38%	22%
2025	9	269	3	94	33%	35%

Three observers were placed on board of two of the three EU pelagic trawlers active in the SPRFMO area in 2025. More details on the observed fishing trips is provided in section 9.

¹ Conservation and Management Measure for *Trachurus murphyi*

² Conservation and Management Measure on Standards for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of Data

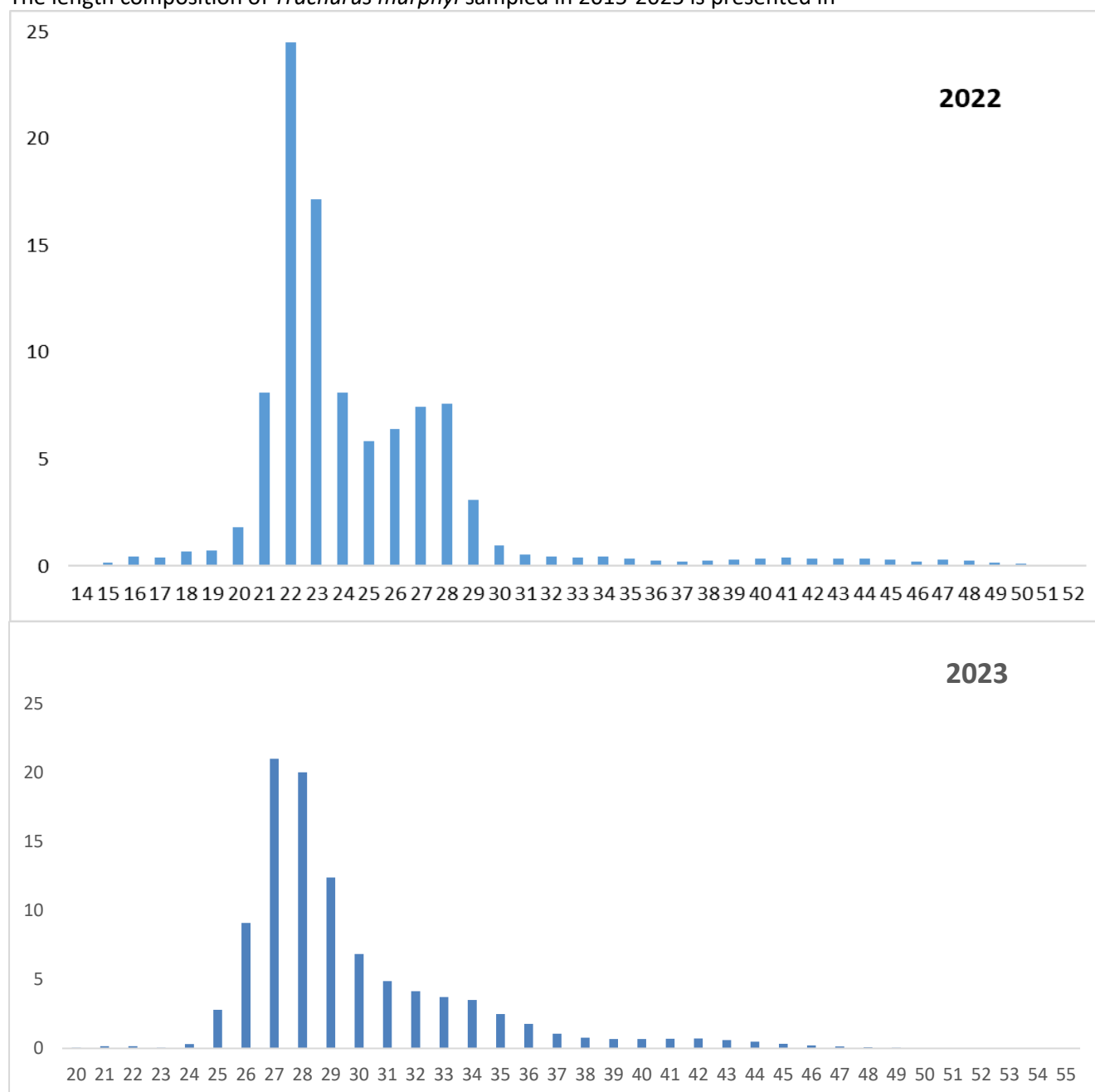
5 Biological Sampling and Length/Age Composition

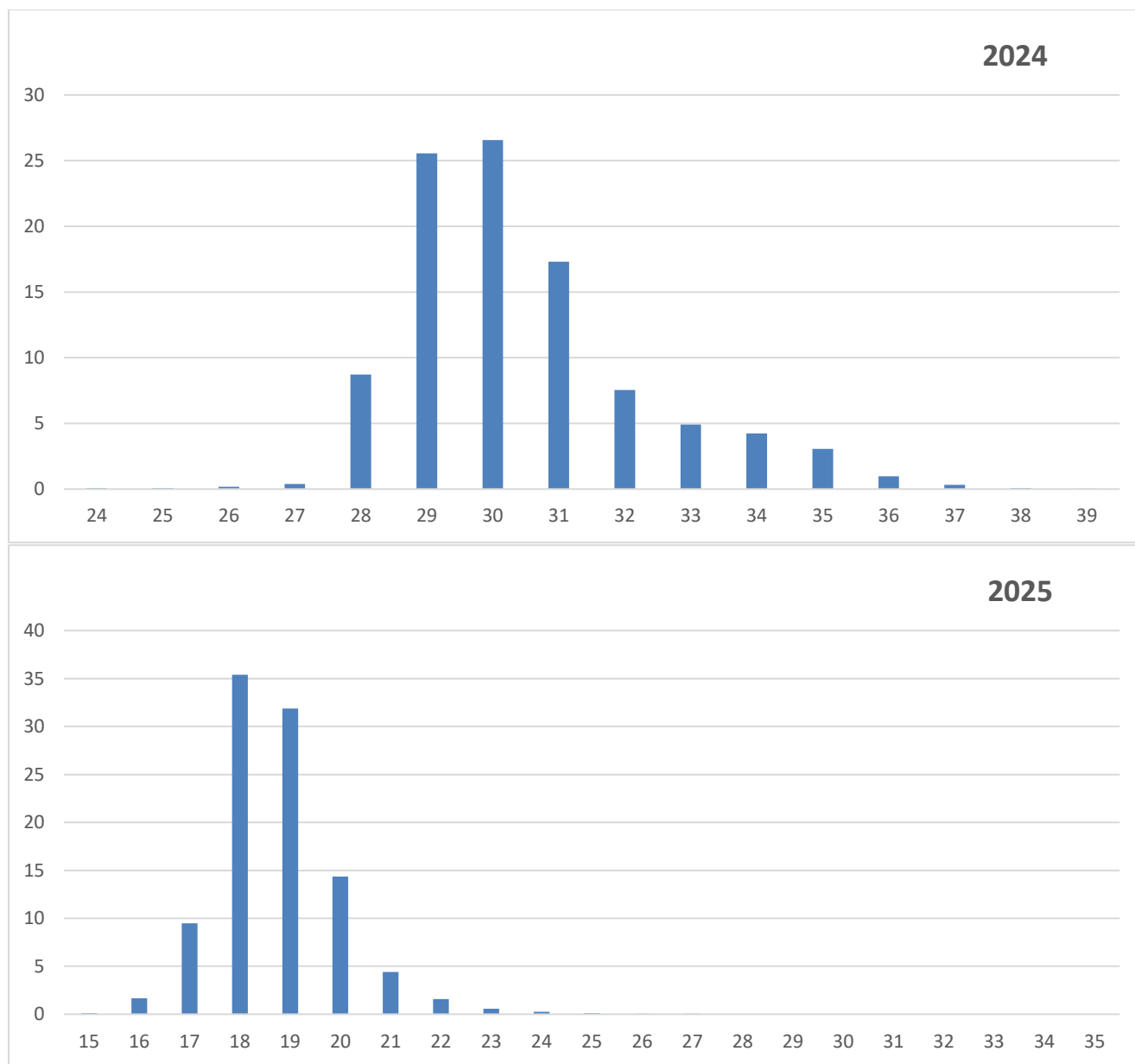
In total 37 703 individuals of *Trachurus murphyi* were measured in 2025 (Table 6). Otoliths from 267 fish were collected for age reading. Samples for length measurements were collected from 185 hauls out of a total of 191 hauls in observed trips (97% coverage). For biological data collection (including sampling for age) for *Trachurus murphyi*, a revised sampling protocol provides that 4-5 individual fish for each length class represented in the catch should be collected per trip, per quarter, per fishing area with the aim to have even representation for all length classes recorded.

Table 6. Number of *Trachurus murphyi* measured by scientific observers during 2008-2025.

Year	Number of <i>Trachurus murphyi</i> measured
2008	28 250
2009	15 744
2010	10 540
2011	2 194
2013	2 727
2014	15 148
2015	17 563
2016	25341
2017	13843
2018	7465
2019	5152
2020	0
2021	5241
2022	20 061
2023	26 608
2024	2853
2025	37 703

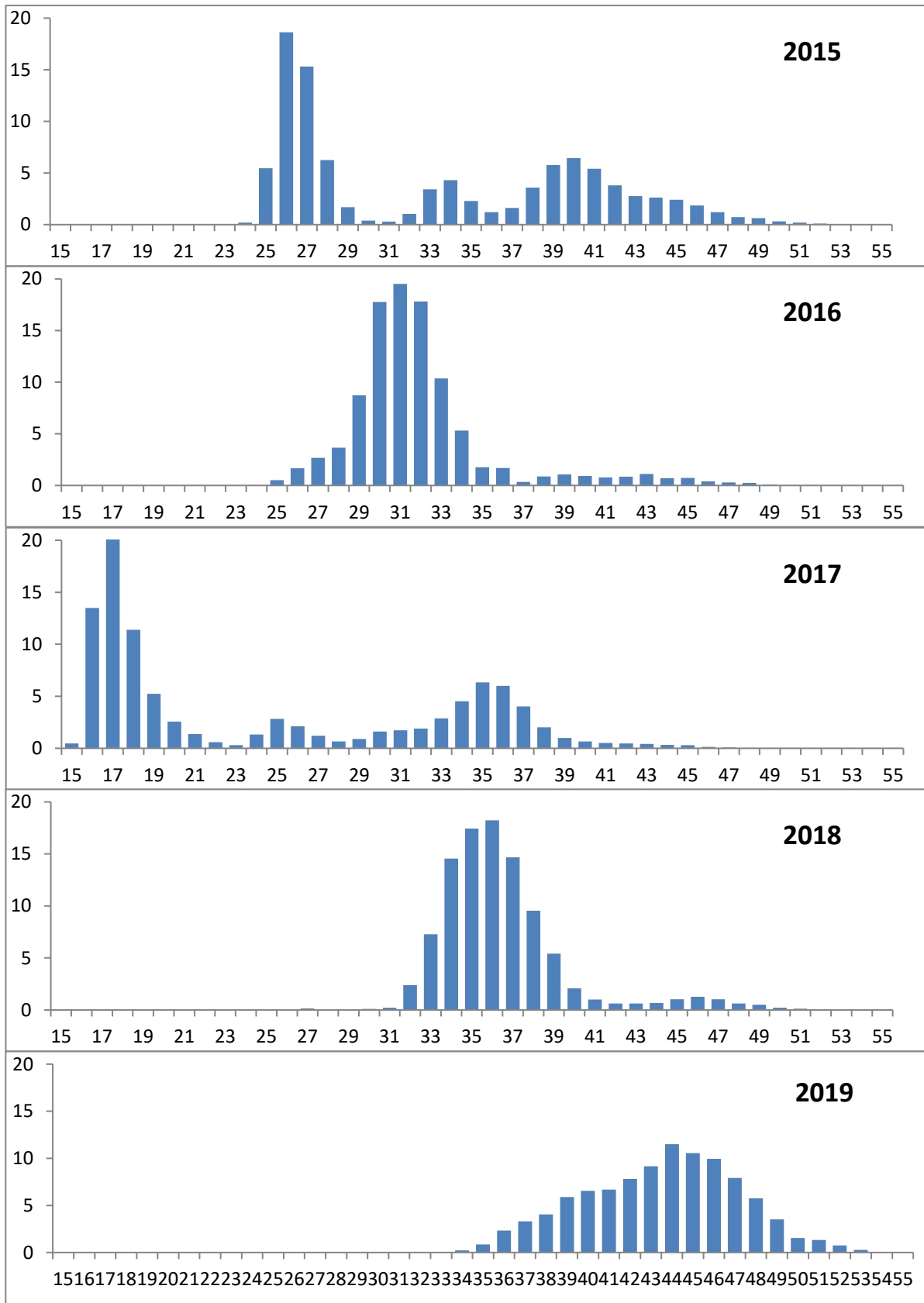
The length composition of *Trachurus murphyi* sampled in 2015-2025 is presented in

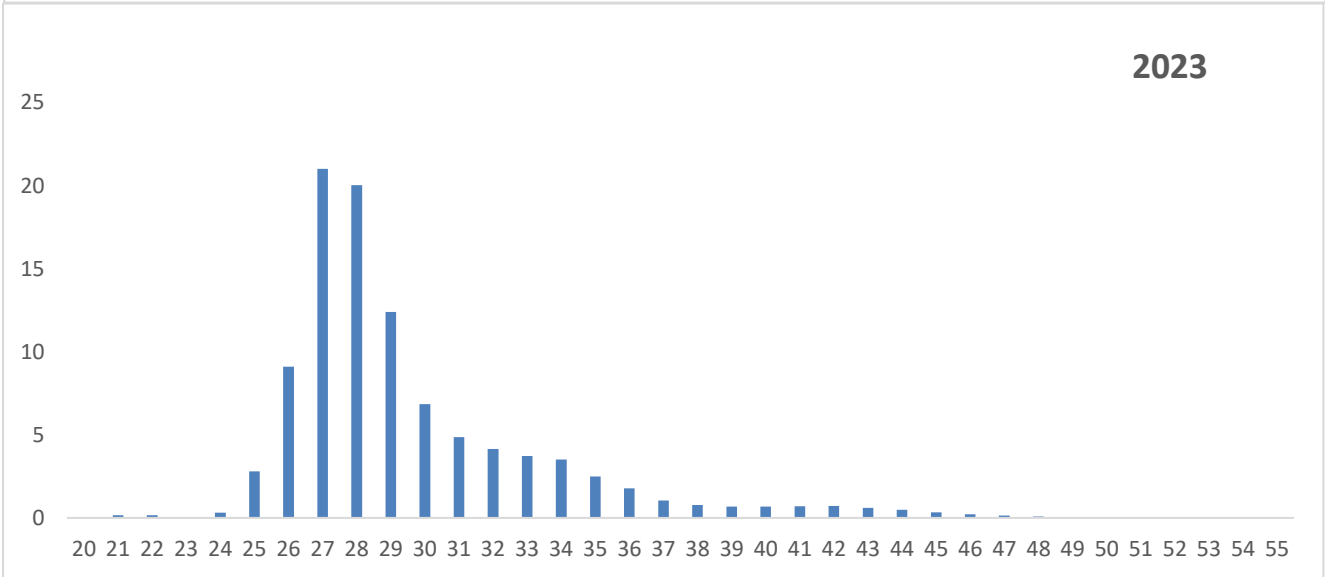
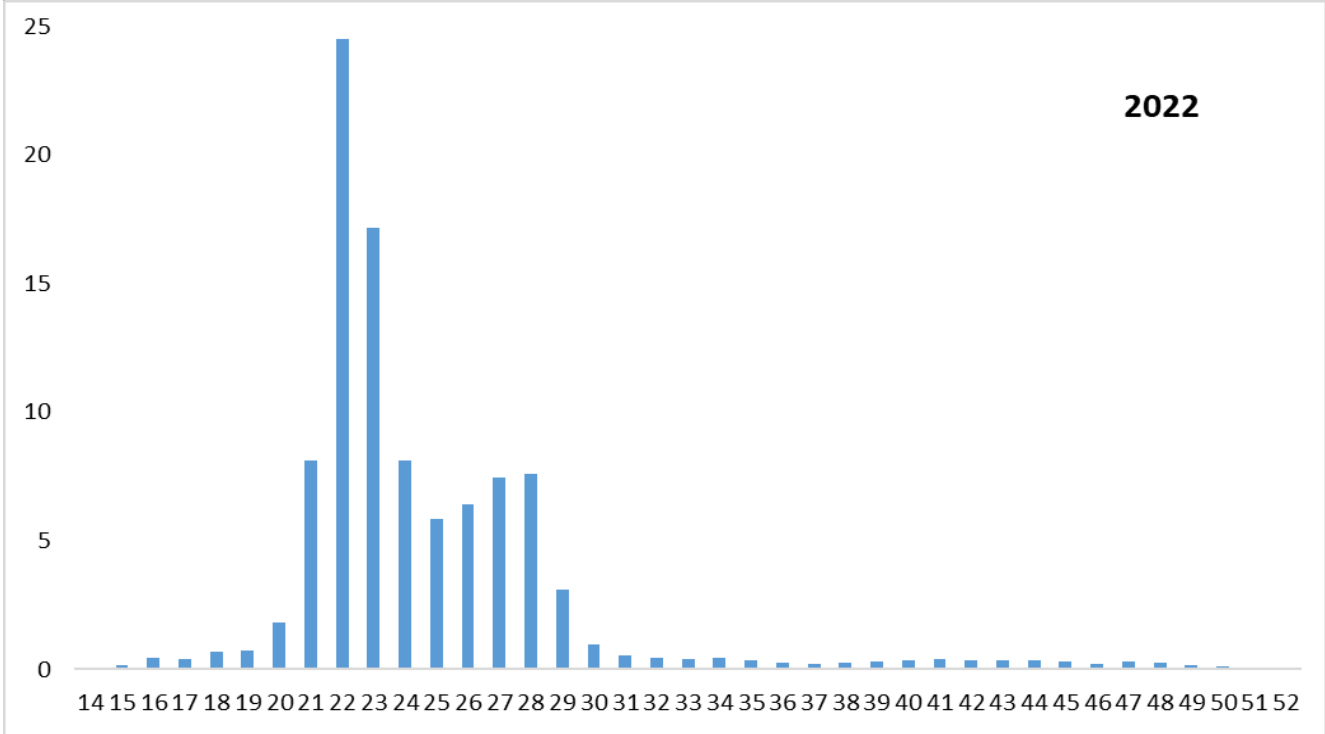
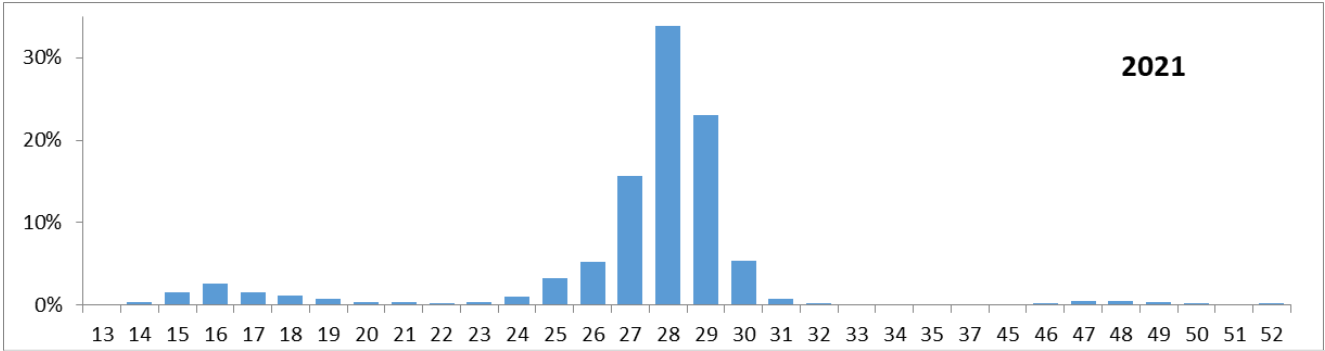


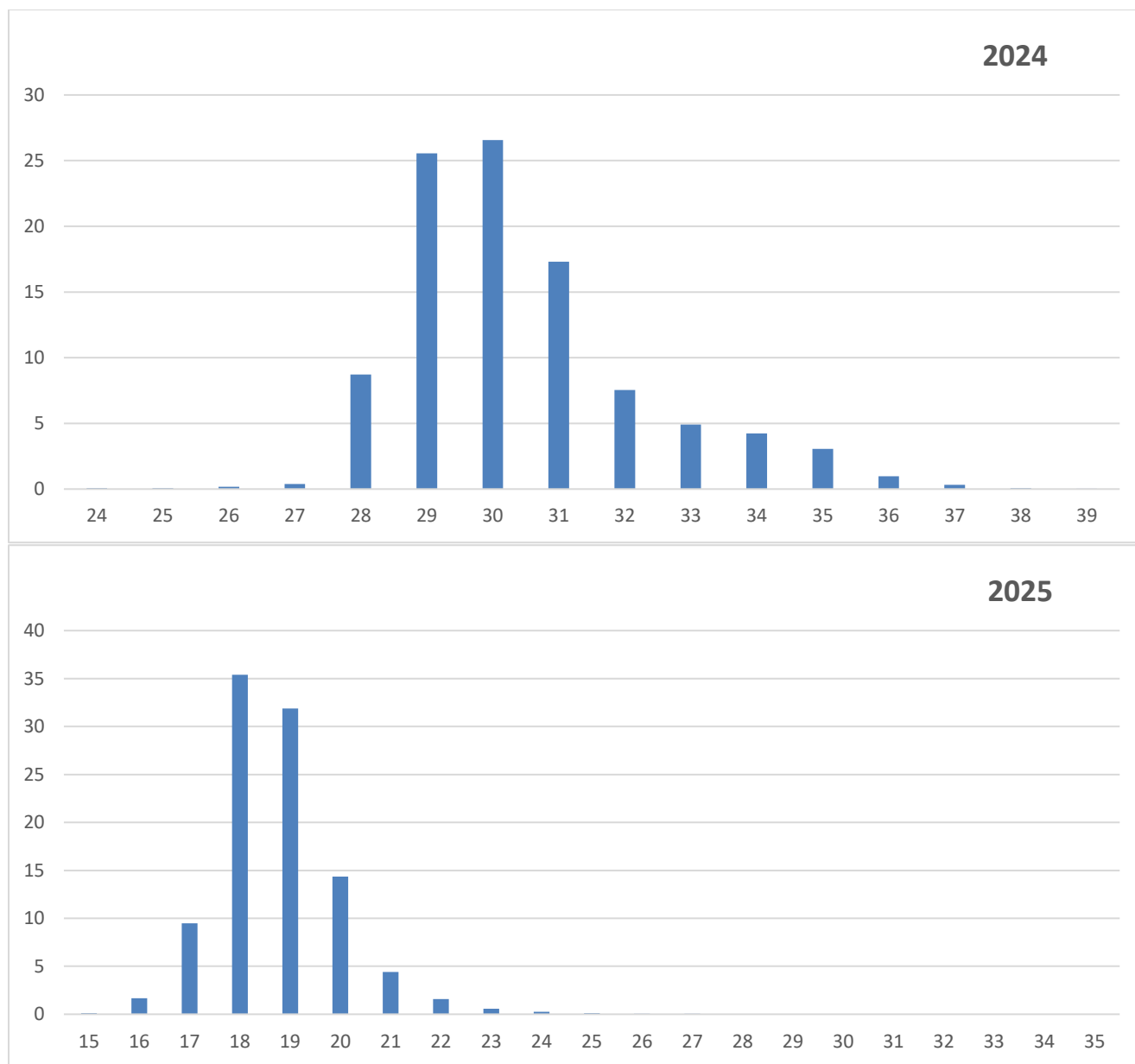


Figure

3.
Age structure for *Trachurus murphyi* sampled in 2025 is presented in Figure 4.







Figure

3. Percentage length composition of *Trachurus murphyi* in EU catch sampled in 2015 – 2025.

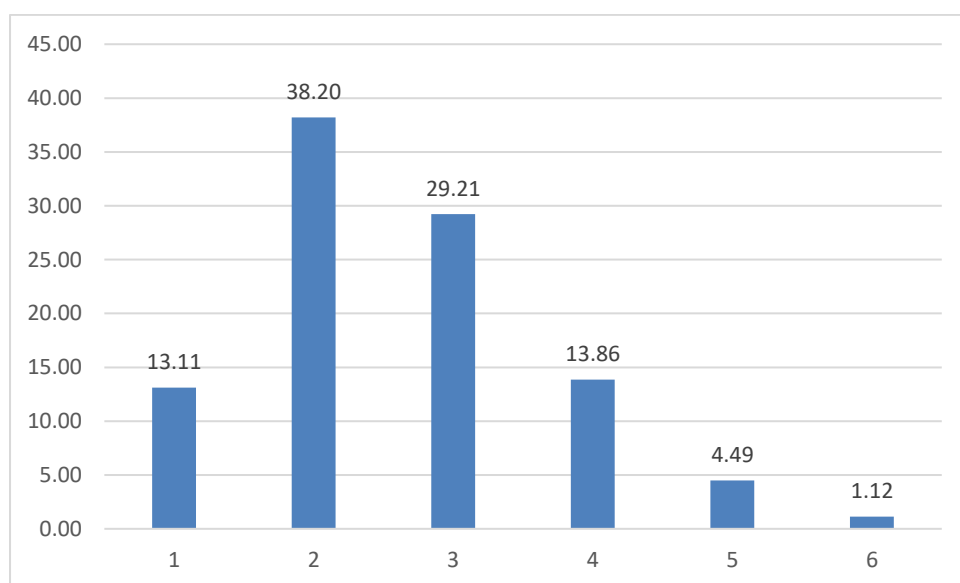


Figure 4. Age-frequency distribution of *Trachurus murphyi* in EU catch sampled in 2025.

6 Ecosystem approach considerations

During the observed trips, interactions of birds with fishing gear were observed in 176 hauls out of total 191 hauls made by the vessels (92% observer coverage). Including the non-observed trips, the observer coverage is 176 hauls out of 700 hauls made by the vessels (25% observer coverage). No mortality or any type of interaction of birds in the fishing gear was recorded during the fishing operations observed.

7 PFA self-sampling data

Since 2015 a full self-sampling program has been initiated on all EU fishing vessels belonging to members of the Pelagic Freezer-trawler association (PFA) and fishing in the SPRFMO Convention area. The self-sampling program covers all trips and all hauls of the vessels that are active in the area and thereby delivers information on spatial and temporal evolution of the fishery, species and length compositions and ambient fishing conditions (temperature and depth).

The relative length compositions by year were estimated from raised catch numbers at length (raised by haul, (Figure 5). The relative length compositions show some deviations from the length compositions derived from the observer trips (figure 3) as incorrect length measurements had been taken on-board two of the three PFA vessels in 2023 and (standard length rather than fork length). The same incorrect measurements had been taken on-board one of the two PFA vessels in 2024. These measurements have been excluded from further use. In 2025 a small (~1cm) difference was noted when comparing observer with self-sampling data. No clear reason for this difference has been found.

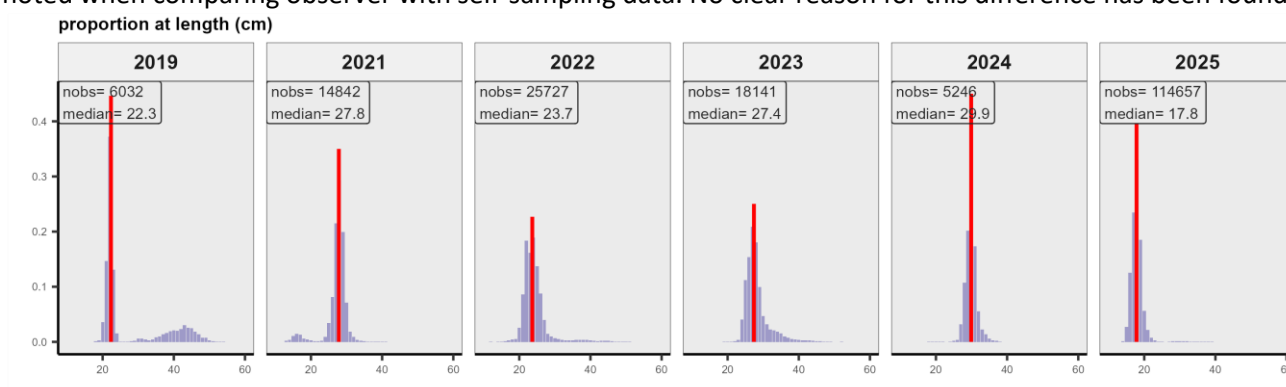


Figure 5. Relative length distributions of *Trachurus murphyi* in the PFA self-sampling program 2017-2024. Nobs indicates the number of length measurements while median indicates the median length (cm).

8 Combination of observer-data and self-sampling data

During the Jack mackerel Benchmark Working Group (SCW14) it was decided to develop a protocol for inclusion of self-sampling data for the EU fleet for those quarters where no observer trips were carried out.

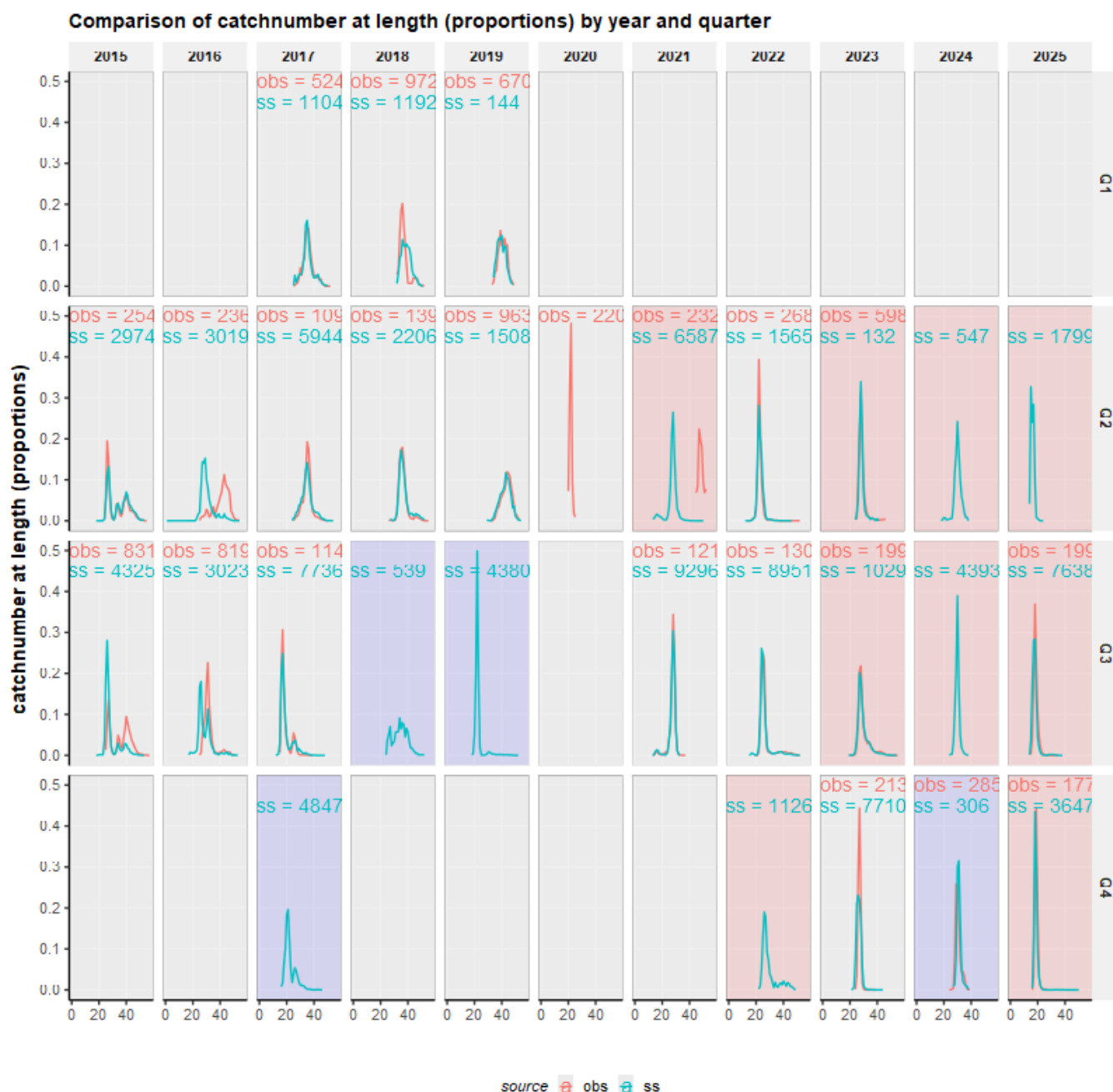


Figure 6. Comparison of relative length distributions of *Trachurus murphyi* in the EU observer program (“obs”) and the PFA self-sampling program (“ss”) by year and quarter. The facets with blue-ish backgrounds refer to the quarters in the past where no observer trips were carried out. The facets with reddish backgrounds refer to the quarters where the length distributions are proposed to be taken from the self-sampling program. These will be added to the EU data submission for 2025 (final data) and 2026 (preliminary data).

In general it is proposed to only use the self-sampling data from 2021 and onwards and only for quarter for which no observer data is present. For 2025 there are only samples for quarter 2, observer data is missing for quarter 2. It is therefore proposed to use self-sampling data for quarter 2 for 2025.

9 General information on European Union (EU) observer activity in 2025

The fishing in 2025 was conducted by f/v “Margiris” (EU, Lithuania), f/v “Annelies Ilena” (EU, Poland) and f/v “Alina” (EU, Poland)(type of vessel: TTF) outside the 200 Nm Chilean EEZ.

Basic information on observers’ activity in three missions in 2025 (July – December) are provided in tables below.

Observer	1	
Vessel	f/v Margiris, KL855	
Start mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-JUL-02	Time: UTC – 21:10
End mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-AUG-16	Time: UTC – 15:30
No. of days on vessel	46	
No. of fishing days	41	
No. of days with observations	41	
Total no. of hauls	75 (66 with observer)	
No. of hauls observed – fish / (coverage)	66 (100%)	
No. of hauls observed for Birds monitoring	66	
Total catch (tons)	2561	
Total catch of Jack mackerel (tons)	2353	
No. of Jack mackerel measured	8105	
No. of Jack mackerel biological samples	126	
No. of otoliths	126	
No. of other species measured	726	

Observer	2	
Vessel	f/v Annelies Ilena, GDY151	
Start mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-SEP-19	Time: UTC – 23:00
End mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-OCT-22	Time: UTC – 19:00
No. of days on vessel	33	
No. of fishing days	24	
No. of days with observations	24	
Total no. of hauls	72	
No. of hauls observed – fish / (coverage)	70 (97%)	
No. of hauls observed for Birds monitoring	70	
Total catch (tons)	5578	
Total catch of Jack mackerel (tons)	5150	
No. of Jack mackerel measured	24326	
No. of Jack mackerel biological samples	91	
No. of otoliths	91	
No. of other species measured	2366	

Observer	1	
Vessel	f/v Margiris, KL855	
Start mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-NOV-04	Time: UTC -02:00
End mission on board of vessel	Date: 2025-DEC-13	Time: UTC – 10:00
No. of days on vessel	44	
No. of fishing days	29	
No. of days with observations	29	
Total no. of hauls	53	
No. of hauls observed – fish / (coverage)	49 (92%)	
No. of hauls observed for Birds monitoring	40	
Total catch (tons)	2878	
Total catch of Jack mackerel (tons)	2674	
No. of Jack mackerel measured	5272	
No. of Jack mackerel biological samples	50	
No. of otoliths	50	
No. of other species measured	1117	

10 Exploratory fishing for toothfish

The exploratory fishery for Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) in the George V Fracture Zone (GVFZ) completed its second year of the 2024-26 campaign under CMM14e-2024. Fishing was again conducted by the Spanish vessel FV Tronio using Spanish double-line bottom longline gear across two research blocks, Block A and Block B. As in all previous campaigns since 2021, only Patagonian toothfish were caught and no Antarctic toothfish (*D. mawsoni*) were recorded.

In 2025, the total allowable catch (Block A – 129t, Block B – 33t) was nearly reached after approximately five weeks of fishing. Block A was fished over 27 days with 56 lines set, landing 128.8 tons, while Block B was fished over 8 days with 16 lines set, landing 32.9 tons. Lines were set between 760m and 2300m depth, and no lines or sections of line were lost. Mean CPUE was 256 kg/km of line in Block A and 249 kg/km in Block B, both slightly below the long-term (2021-2025) average of 273 kg/km. Interannual changes in CPUE across the campaigns were not statistically significant.

The main fish bycatch species was *Macrourus* spp., again amounting to approximately 1% of the total toothfish catch, consistent with previous years. *Antimora rostrata* was the second most frequent bycatch species and was caught consistently in small amounts, with *Lepidion* spp. and Ophidiidae (possibly *Spectrunculus grandis*) taken infrequently. No chondrichthyan (shark, skate or ray) bycatch was recorded. All bycatch was discarded.

Biological sampling continued annually. In 2025, 276 otolith pairs were collected from Patagonian toothfish for production of an age-length key, and 52 tissue samples of *Macrourus holotrachys* were collected for genetic analysis. Median fish lengths were slightly larger in Block A (103cm) than in Block B (100cm), with an overall sex ratio of approximately 60:40 male:female. Most males were in developing or developed maturity stages, while most females were spent (Stage V).

Seabird and marine mammal interactions were monitored throughout, with zero incidental mortalities recorded. Fourteen seabird species were observed (most commonly Cape petrels, black-browed albatross, blue petrel and giant petrel) including three species classified as Endangered by the IUCN. No marine mammals were sighted, consistent with all previous campaigns. There were no interactions with the fishing gear.

Only minor amounts of vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME) indicator taxa were encountered, totaling 2.44 kg across all lines, much of it recovered as dead fragments. The move-on rules were never triggered. Benthic imagery from

eight camera deployments confirmed generally depauperate habitats dominated by sand, gravel, cobble and rock. Notably, sea pens were recorded at one Block B station, a habitat feature not previously observed in Block A. Oceanographic data collected at 22 stations again showed a stratified water column with a mixed surface layer above colder, saltier water consistent with Antarctic Intermediate Water, and a northwest-southeast temperature gradient reflecting the transition between the Subantarctic and Polar Fronts.

Toothfish tagging was carried out at 5 fish per ton, with 649 fish tagged in Block A and 171 in Block B, meeting the minimum 60% length-overlap requirement. In 2025, nine tags were recaptured in Block A (from fish released in 2021, 2022 and 2024), with no recaptures in Block B. Four fish originally tagged on the Macquarie Ridge fishery (2010, 2015 and 2022) were also recovered, providing further evidence of regional connectivity into the GVFZ. A separate stock assessment drawing on all campaigns (2021-2025) produced a Chapman tag-recapture biomass estimate for Block A of 12,149 tons (CI: 7,270–28,069). Block B was excluded owing to the absence of recaptures. The 2025 catch represented approximately 1% of estimated biomass. Given the limited number of fishing years, ongoing exploration of new areas, variability in CPUE and length-frequency, and unresolved questions around immigration and emigration, a precautionary provisional annual TAC of 218t for Block A has been advised for the 2027-2029 proposal.