# A Computer Program to Assess Egg 

 Production Per Recruit in a Lobster (Homarus americanus) PopulationG.P. Ennis and P.W. Collins

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by
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ABSTRACT

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A computer program which estimates the numbers of eggs produced per female recruit in a lobster population is described. The layout of the input file and an explanation of the parameters, a listing of the program and a sample of the output are provided as appendices. The program is run with various combinations of recruitment length (minimum legal size) and fishing mortality (exploitation rate) thereby providing a basis for assessing the impact of changes in size limit and/or exploitation rate in a lobster fishery on the production of eggs in the population.

Key words: lobster, egg production per recruit, assessment

> rÉSUMÉ

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Le présent rapport décrit un programme informatisé pour l'estimation du nombre d'oeufs produits par femelle dans une population de homards. Le topogramme du fichier d'entrée, une explication des paramètres, un listage du programme et un état imprimé type constituent les annexes. Le programme est exécuté avec diverses combinaisons de longueurs au recrutement (taille légale minimum) et de mortalités par pêche (taux d'exploitation), générant ainsi une base pour l'évaluation de l'incidence des changement de la limite de taille ou du taux d'exploitation au cours de la pêche du homard sur la production d'oeufs dans la population.

## INTRODUCTION

The basic management tools commonly employed in lobster (genus Homarus) fisheries are a minimum legal landing size (size limit) and effort limitation as a means of controlling exploitation rate. In theory at least, MSY can be realized from a population of lobsters if such regulatory measures are properly applied. However, it appears that the situation in most lobster fisheries can be represented by a point well to the right of MSY on a general production curve (i.e current landings are well below MSY and fishing effort is well in excess of that at MSY).

There are two facets to achieving MSY from a population. One is to maximize yield per recruit, the other is to maximize recruitment. Lobster fisheries are characterized by high exploitation rates and assessments have clearly demonstrated that, with existing size limits, yield per recruit is substantially less than maximum (Anon. 1977, 1979; Anthony and Caddy 1980). In addition, existing size limits are generally below the size at which most females lay eggs for the first time and with the excessively high exploitation rates that prevail in most areas, widespread recruitment overfishing is a distinct possibililty. In fact, recruitment overfishing appears to be the cause of stock collapse in certain areas of Eastern Canada (Robinson 1979).

Stock-recruitment relationships as such are poorly known for the genus Homarus, however, since current levels of landings are well below historical Tevels in most fisheries, it is reasonable to assume that, within the limits of habitat carrying capacity, increased egg production will result in increased recruitment. While it is clear that increasing the minimum legal size and/or reducing exploitation rates will result in greater numbers of eggs produced, it is only in very recent years that the detailed biological information required to properly assess the impact of changes in these fishery regulatory measures on egg production within a population have become available.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a computer program which has been written in order to carry out egg production per recruit analyses using the kind of information being obtained from studies of lobster population biology in Newfoundland waters.

## BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE ANALYSIS

The biological concepts on which this egg per recruit program is based are very similar to those developed by Caddy (1979) in his relative population fecundity analysis. In the two analyses, however, there are different approaches to the way mortalities and growth are handled. Also, in the program presented here, there is provision to account for egg loss over and above that due to normal attrition as well as for those females which molt and extrude eggs in the same molting/spawning season.

The analysis is carried out as a chronological sequence of annual life history and mortality events which begins subsequent to the annual spring
fishing season and just prior to the annual molting/spawning period in summer. Initially, 1000 non-ovigerous females are distributed evenly at 1 mm size intervals over the $71-80 \mathrm{~mm}$ carapace length range and the sequence of life history and mortality events is repeated until these have disappeared from the population as a result of fishing or natural mortality. The analysis begins by estimating the number of individuals at each 1 mm CL that will extrude eggs during the molting/spawning period in year one. This estimate is obtained using a proportion derived from a functional sizematurity relationship (logisitc equation relating \% mature and CL) which is based on detailed examination of pleopod cement glands done prior to the molting/spawning period as a means of determining whether individual animals will extrude eggs that year (Ennis, in press ${ }^{1}$ ). This relationship is represented by a sigmoid curve which sometimes does not fit the data very well at the upper and lower ends of the size range. In this analysis $100 \%$ maturity is assigned to those sizes at and above which the data indicate this to be the case, instead of assigning a lower percentage derived from the equation.

Some female lobsters molt prior to extruding eggs during the same annual molting/spawning period (Aiken and Waddy 1976, 1980). In annual (since 1975) shell condition sampling done at Arnold's Cove, Newfoundland following the molting period, the number of ovigerous females with new shells has ranged from 6.5 to $38.5 \%$ of the total number of ovigerous specimens examined (Ennis 1980). These have generally been smaller animals within the overall size range of ovigerous specimens and it was suggested that those females which molt and extrude eggs in the same year are spawning for the first time. These data have been examined in some detail and it has been found that the incidence of molting and spawning in the same year declines with increasing size. The data were subjected to probit analysis and a good fit obtained ( $P>$. 99). The resulting equation ( $Y=27.751-0.3072 X$ ) is used to determine the number of those females which will extrude eggs in year one that molt before doi ig so. The number of eggs produced by these females is determined from the size-fecundity relationship using their postmolt length.

Estimates of proportions molting amongst those females which do not extrude eggs in year one are obtained from a relationship derived from molt predictions based on pleopod examination early in the molting/spawning period for non-ovigerous females but excluding those females whose pleopod cement glands indicate egg extrusion to be imminent. A quadratic regression was fitted to such data obtained from sampling at Arnold's Cove during June 9 to July 15, 1983 and the following equation obtained:

$$
Y=-330.3593+13.5685 X-0.1073 X^{2} \text { with } R^{2}=.99 .
$$

The postmolt sizes of lobsters that molt are determined from a premoltpostmolt carapace length relationship obtained from sphyrion tagging (Ennis 1972, 1978).

No reliable estimates of natural mortality in lobsters are available but the general consensus reached by the ICES Working Group on Homarus Stocks is that it can be expected to be less than $10 \%$ annually for lobsters at sizes around the existing minimum legal sizes (Anon. 1977). One would expect most
natural mortality in lobsters to be associated with molting and in this analysis a $10 \%$ natural mortality rate is applied only to those lobsters that molt. Lobsters not molting in a particular year are subjected to a $5 \%$ rate of natural mortality.

Sphyrion tagging at Arnold's Cove in summer 1981 revealed that around $15 \%$ of the females which extrude eggs loose practically all of them over the incubation period (Ennis, in press ${ }^{2}$ ). Accordingly, the numbers of females which were estimated would extrude eggs were reduced by $15 \%$ to account for this egg loss. This percentage was applied uniformly with respect to size. Normal attrition of eggs over the 9-12 month incubation period has been estimated at around 36\% (Perkins 1971). This egg loss is accounted for in the analysis by virtue of the fact that the size-fecundity relationship used to estimate the numbers of eggs produced is based on egg counts for ovigerous females taken near the end of the incubation period (Ennis 1981).

In addition to attrition of eggs over the incubation period, some female lobsters molt shortly after extruding thereby loosing the entire clutch of eggs (Ennis, in press ${ }^{2}$ ). This egg loss is accounted for in the functional size-maturity relationship. In a tag-recapture validation of egg extrusion predictions (based on cement gland staging), the only incorrect predictions recorded were for 2 out of 9 ( $22 \%$ ) females with stage 2 cement glands (for which egg extrusion was predicted) which were not egg-bearing (but had molted) when recaptured prior to the following molting/spawning period. It is assumed that these two lobsters extruded eggs as predicted and lost them when they molted soon afterwards. Accordingly, in the data on which the functional size-maturity relationship is based, $22 \%$ of the animals with stage 2 cement glands were considered immature (Ennis, in pressi).

So far the analysis has proceeded to the spring of year two and an estimate derived of the number of eggs extruded in year one that remain in the population and from which larvae will hatch during the summer. Except for those at the 71 and 72 mm carapace length intervals, most lobsters that molted in year one would have grown to or beyond the minimum legal size ( 81 mm CL ) and at this stage in the analysis, except for those that laid eggs shortly after molting or were lost as a result of natural mortality, are subjected to fishing mortality. Egg-bearing females are protected from exploitation. In this analysis those females (15\%) which loose their eggs over the incubation period are protected from exploitation as well because the presence of even very small numbers of eggs would make them illegal. All of these egg-bearing females (including those that loose their eggs) molt during the molting/spawning period in year two, are subjected to $10 \%$ natural mortality, and the survivors are subjected to fishing mortality during the fishing season in year three. For all other females remaining following the fishing season in year two, the initial stage in the analysis (i.e determining numbers that will extrude eggs during the upcoming molting/ spawning season) is now repeated and followed by the subsequent steps in the analysis.

The foregoing sequences are repeated until the 1000 individuals with which the analysis started have been removed from the population. The numbers of eggs produced and carried through the incubation period are then totalled.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The program is written in Fortran IV and is very similar to the one developed by Ennis and Akenhead (1978) to assess yield per recruit in Newfoundland lobsters. Each component of the annual cycle of life history and mortality events is handled separately and in chronological order. Provision is made for different natural mortality rates for molters and nonmolters, for the protection of egg-bearers from fishing mortality, for different growth rates for egg-bearers and non-egg-bearers, and for egg loss over the incubation period in excess of that due to normal attrition. In addition, special treatment is provided for females that molt and lay eggs in the same year.

The organization of the program is shown schematically in Fig. 1. The layout of the input file and an explanation of the parameters are provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 is a listing of the program.

## APPLICATION OF THE PROGRAM

The program is run with various combinations of recruitment length (minimum legal size) and fishing mortality (exploitation rate) thereby providing a basis for assessing the impact of changes in size limit and/or exploitation rate in a lobster fishery on the production of eggs in the population. The output (sample provided as Appendix 3) includes an estimate of the number of eggs carried to hatching produced by the 1000 females with which each analysis begins over the period that they remain in the population with a given combination of size limit and exploitation rate. Also included is an estimate of the numbers of eggs produced by these females at sizes smaller than the minimum legal size being considered.

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Year 1


Year 2


Fig. 1. Diagram showing organization of the program.

APPENDIX 1: INPUT FILE LAYOUT AND EXPLANATION OF PARAMETERS

RECORD LENGTH: 80 columns - card image

| Card No. | Parameters | Format |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | LIST (20) | 20A4 |
| 2 | SLEN, FLEN, AMORT, BMORT CMORT, EGLOS, AFEC, BFEC AGR, BGR, IRUN | $\begin{aligned} & 2 F 3.0,4 F 5.0 \\ & 4 F 10.0,13 \end{aligned}$ |
| 3 | GOIST (10) | 1058.0 |
| 4 | FSTRT, FSTOP, FINCR, RECLEN (5) | 8 F 8.0 |
| 5-12 | Prolay (80) | 10 F 8.0 |
| 13-20 | Promlt (80) | 10F8.0 |
| 21-28 | GROLAY (80) | 10F8.0 |
| 29-36 | PINIT (80) | 10F8.0 |

1) LIST - Header of input file.
2) SLEN - Starting carapace length (mm).

FLEN - Last carapace length (mm).
AMORT - Proportion of molting component surviving natural mortality.
BMORT - Proporiton of laying component surviving natural mortality.
CMORT - Proporiton of old shells (i.e. those which neither molt not lay) surviving natural mortality.
EGLOS - Proportion of successful layers that eventually lose all eggs before hatching.
AFEC - Intercept of length-fecundity regression ( $\log _{10}$ ).
BFEC - Slope of length-fecundity regression ( $\log _{10}$ ).
AGR - Intercept of premolt-postmolt regression (arithmetic). BGR - Slope of premolt-postmolt regression (arithmetic). IRUN - Number of years (cycles).
3) GOIST - Distribution of growth scatter around postmolt mean length, derived from deviation around growth regression.
4) FSTRT - Starting exploitation rate.

FSTOP - Final exploitation rate.
FINCR - Increment of change for exploitation rate.
RECLEN - Recruit carapace lengths (mm) (maximum of five for each run).

5-12) PROLAY - Proportion of population laying eggs each length, derived from logistic equation relating \% mature and CL based on pleopod cement gland development (see Ennis, In press).

13-20) PROMLT - Proportion of nonlaying component molting each length, derived from quadratic equation relating ${ }_{0}^{\circ}$ molting amongst non-ovigerous females not going to lay egs and CL.

21-28) GROLAY - Proportion of laying component that also molt in same year each length, derived from probit equation based on incidencce of new-shelled ovigerous females in relation to size from fall sampling.

29-36) PINIT - Initial population numbers each length (start with 100 each length 71-80 mm).



| FORTRAN | IV G LEVEL | 21 MAIN |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | C | IF NONE RETURN FOR NFW DATASET ANO REINITIALITE |
| 0059 |  | $1 \mathrm{CNTR}=0$ |
| 0060 | 198 | CONTINUE |
| 0061 |  | ICNTR＝ICNTR +1 |
| 0062 |  | IF（ICNTR．GT．5）GOTO 300 |
| 0063 |  |  |
| 0064 |  | LR＝IFIX（RECLEN（ICNTR）） |
| 0065 |  | FMORT $=$ FSTRT - FINCR |
| 0066 | 200 | $F M O R T=F M O R T+F I N C R$ |
| 0067 |  | IF（FMORT．GT．FSTOP）GOTO 19R |
|  | $\stackrel{C}{C}$ | SET UP FOR LOOP THRU YFARS |
| 0068 |  | TEGGS＝1•E－10 |
| 0069 |  | TNUM $=0$. |
| 0070 |  | TC＾T $=0$ ． |
| 0071 |  | TPQEG＝1•E－10 |
| 0072 |  | THAT $=0$ ． |
| 0073 |  | DO 2？$I=1$ ，NUMLEN |
| 0074 |  | HATCHS（I）＝0． |
| 0075 |  | POPLAY（I）$=0$ 。 |
| 0076 |  | JUSLAY（I）$=0$. |
| $-0077$ |  | NAOTM $(I)=0$ ． |
| 0078 |  | NFGGS（I）$=0$ ． |
| 0079 |  | PREG（I）$=0$ ． |
| 0080 |  | NONLAY（I）$=0$ ． |
| 0081 |  | LOSERS（I）$=0$ 。 |
| $008 ?$ |  | LOST（I）＝0． |
| 0083 |  | MOLTER（I）$=0$ 。 |
| 0084 |  | NOMOLT $(1)=0$ |
| 0085 | 22 |  |
| 0086 |  | WRITF（K，16）FMORT，LR |
| $0087$ |  | IF（LIST（20）NF－D）GOTO 33 |
| $0088$ $0089$ |  | WRITF (A, 1B) |
| 0089 | $c^{23}$ | CONTINIFE |
|  | C | LOOP THRU IRUN NUMPER OF YEARS |
| 0090 |  | กO 100 IY $=1$ ，IRUN |
|  | $\stackrel{c}{c}$ | SET UP FOR LOOP THRU LENGTHS |
| 0091 |  | SEGGS $=0$ ． |
| 0092 |  | SUMA $=0$ 。 |
| 0093 |  | $C 5 \cup M=0$ ． |
| 0094 |  | SPREG $=0$ ． |
| 0095 |  | SHOI， $\mathrm{D}=0$ ． |
| 0096 |  | SHAT $=0$－ |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \mathrm{C} \\ & \mathrm{C} \end{aligned}$ | LOOP THPU LENGTHS |
| 0097 |  | ก0 30 IK $K$ ，NUMLEN |





APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE OF .PROGRAM OUTPUT

Exploitation rate: 0.80
Population numbers:
Total catch:
Total ovigs:
Total eggs:
Prerecruit eggs:
Egg yield/recruit:
Prop. recruit eggs:
Prop. prerecruit eggs:

Recruit length: 81
509.79
893.07
434.71
5076735.
2463943.
5077.
0.5147
0.4853

