
Assessment of Ecosystem Function following marine aggregate dredging

Client: CEFAS
Project duration: 6 months



Project description:

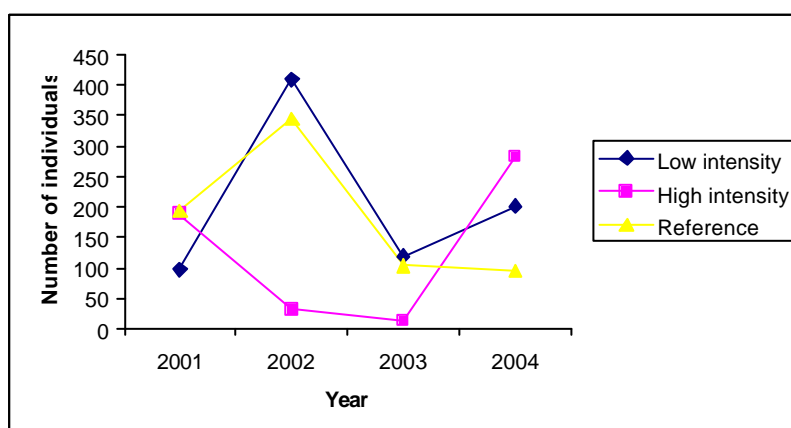
In 2001-2004, a research programme was established to investigate the recovery of 3 aggregate extraction sites: Hasting Shingle Bank, Thames Estuary and an area off the Humber Estuary. The biological recovery of these sites was assessed in the traditional way: by return of the same species and in similar numbers to match the assemblage at the site prior to the disturbance, or in comparison with a suitable reference site. However, research has shown that this form of 'recovery' may not always be a realistic prospect. Instead, a concept that allows for a system to be altered without the immediate conclusion that it has been damaged may be legitimate given the natural variability of

assemblages and related habitats, and may also serve managers better.

A number of indices designed to assess ecosystem function were applied to an existing macrofaunal dataset. Some indices suggested a faster recovery rate than others

Key elements:

Within this programme, SERG:ES was responsible for a literature review that identified relevant indices and techniques that could be used to analyse data. SERG:ES was also involved in data analysis, workshop attendance and workers co-authored a peer-reviewed publication in the Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology.



Changes in the number of individuals at sites of differing dredging intensity
