

University of Plymouth Project ROPE update

04/09/2020

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 restrictions on University field work, our Project ROPE has made excellent progress in achieving the goal of deploying acoustic receivers to the offshore mussel farm and we have tagged, measured and named 49 lobsters, 22 brown crabs and 2 spider crabs. One is even named Mandy! and others are named after local personalities from past and present. This movement tracking phase of the project is mainly taking place at the offshore mussel farm. We have also collected small tissue samples from some animals for chemical analyses that will tell us what they are eating and how much the blue mussels are contributing to their diet. Next week, weather permitting, the bass fishing will begin and we plan to catch and tag more than 50 bass to track their movements inside and outside of the farm. Our initial data download from acoustic receivers at the farm revealed that several bass that were tagged and released in Devon estuaries had visited and hung around at the farm. We are excited to see and share more results in the near future.

This project could not have been achieved without the commitment of our team of researchers, local fishermen and the staff of Offshore Shellfish. If you are lucky enough to catch one of the tagged brown crab or lobster then please do report your tag identification code along with a time and location of catch and then drop him/her back where caught so we can continue to collect data on their whereabouts. Send a photo too if you can. Please email tags found to: reportmytag@plymouth.ac.uk or let Mandy know and she will pass on the info to Project leader Dr Emma Sheehan.

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