



Fisheries & Conservation Science

## SCIENCE UPDATE

# Lobster escape hatch study: 2nd December 2013

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Funded by:

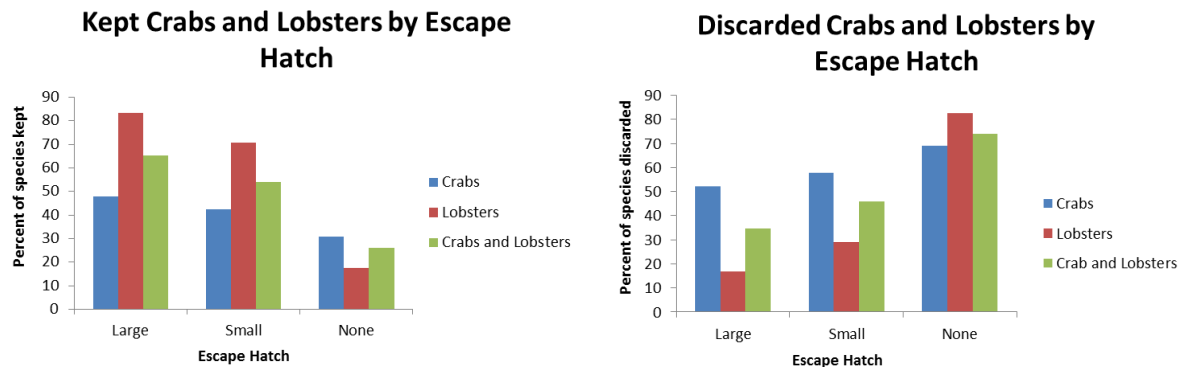


Y Gronfa Pysgodfeydd Ewropeaidd:  
Buddsoddi mewn Pysgodfeydd Cynaliadwy  
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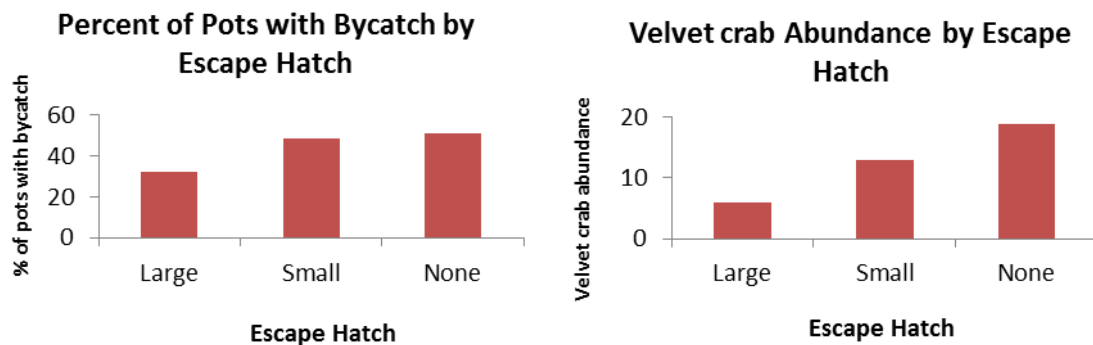
Llywodraeth Cymru  
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Very preliminary results have been collected and are based on data collected by 3 fishers over 8 fishing days using 110 pots. Each fisher was given 5 pots with 45x80mm escape hatches, 5 with 47x80mm escape hatches and 5 with no escape hatches.



**The percentage of lobster/crab that were kept and the percentage that were discarded by type of escape hatch.**

The preliminary results indicate that there are more lobsters of legal size found in pots with the largest escape hatch, however the difference between escape hatch and no escape hatch is more pronounced than between large and small escape hatches.



**The percentage of pots with bycatch and the abundance of velvet crabs in pots with differing escape hatches.**

Preliminary results on bycatch indicate that pots with no escape hatches may capture more bycatch, however the difference in bycatch between pots with small escape hatches and pots with no escape hatches is very small. With respect to velvet swimmer crabs, the preliminary results indicate that the abundance of velvet crabs decreases with the use of escape hatches; raising concerns that escape hatches may reduce the catch for this species. Further investigation is needed to determine whether the increase in legal sized lobsters compensates for the loss in velvet swimmer crabs.