

Standard Operating Procedures

Wrasse surveys from onboard D&S IFCA vessel

Updated July 2021

This SOP was initially drawn up as required for provision of wrasse surveys under covid-19 restrictions and has been adopted as standard practice for the 2021/22 wrasse fishing season. All operations should be conducted in line with covid-safe working practices (defined in risk assessment RA16, accounting for up-to-date Government guidance). This may include the use of face masks on board, particularly when transferring loads between vessels, the use of gloves when handling items that are passed between people, and following appropriate disinfection/hygiene routines before, during and after the survey.

General equipment	Survey-specific equipment
Yellows (drysuit and undersuit from October)	Survey forms & weather-writer
Steel wellies/riggers	Pencils and sharpener
Life jacket each	Measuring board
EPIRB each	Four bongos for fish storage and transfer
Food	Bungees to secure bongos
Water	Hand nets to retrieve fish from bongos
Mobile phone	Gloves – optional (but recommended)
Weather-relevant PPE (e.g. suncream)	Hand-held GPS & spare batteries
	Wrasse ID cards

Pre-survey on-board activity

- **All persons to remain seated at all times unless instructed by the coxswain**
- Coxswain will assess and evaluate the vessel and determine the safest method of coming alongside and transferring loads.
- Coxswain will brief all crew on the preferred procedure for coming alongside and transferring loads
- Any queries or concerns around the procedure should be raised and discussed at this time
- Establish communication with the fishing vessel. Where appropriate, identify VHF channel for communications (working channel)
- Fully inform fishing vessel of our intentions, and pass any necessary instructions (ie. Course change/equipment preparation etc.). Confirm with fisher the sizes & species of wrasse to be retained (see page 2), and what to do with damaged fish (wrasse with obvious scale loss or other damage are often not kept). Confirm that fisher should only place wrasse (not entire catch including e.g. crustaceans, other fish) into bongo for transfer to IFCA vessel.
- Survey officer to prepare survey equipment and containers for storing wrasse: two bongos held onboard on aft deck space, each half-full of seawater (not so full that they cannot be comfortably lifted to ditch the seawater) and secured with bungees as appropriate; two bongos to be transferred empty to the fishing vessel to enable transfer of wrasse after each string.
- Coxswain starts approach to the vessel and engages friction lock
- Coxswain to confirm that friction lock established
- Survey officer to make way around seaward side of the wheelhouse listening for any instructions from Coxswain
- Coxswain to instruct officer in transfer timings as appropriate
- Once all load has been transferred, Coxswain to break friction lock and safely move away from vessel to holding position, ideally in visual contact with the vessel.

Survey outline

The survey officer will typically operate from the aft deck space, unless otherwise instructed. Where other responsibilities allow, the Coxswain may be able to record data called out by the survey officer. This is to be agreed between those on board, and may change during the course of a survey.

1. Once empty bongos have been transferred to fishing vessel, identify start point of first string of pots to be hauled. Survey officer/Coxswain to record GPS location of start of each string, then the location of the end of each string at the end of hauling. Where possible, check locations against known voluntary closed areas and inform fisher of any incursions into these areas.
2. After string has been hauled, Coxswain to bring IFCA vessel alongside fishing vessel as outlined above (before or after the fisher re-shoots the pots, in agreement with fisher); survey officer to receive bongo containing seawater and wrasse.
3. Bongo secured in aft deck space. IFCA vessel moves off to safe distance.
4. Survey officer/Coxswain to record GPS location of the start of the next string of pots; measuring and recording of wrasse can then commence while the fisher hauls the next string.
5. Survey officer/ Coxswain to record date, observer initials, sheet number, string number and string start/end locations on each survey sheet.
6. Survey officer to individually remove wrasse from bongo for species identification and measurement (to nearest 0.5 cm); these details are to be recorded on the survey sheet under the correct string number (by survey officer/Coxswain as appropriate).
7. After measuring, each wrasse should be transferred to one of two on-board bongos as appropriate: one bongo for wrasse that are to be transferred to the fisher (in-size wrasse), one bongo for wrasse to be returned to the sea at the end of each sampling session (string). The following are the “landable” wrasse:
 - ✓ Ballan wrasse 15 – 23 cm (this may change to 18 – 26 cm after B&PSC meeting; fishers may voluntarily retain only 18 – 23 cm wrasse until then, please confirm their choice pre-survey)
 - ✓ Corkwing wrasse 14 – 18 cm
 - ✓ Cuckoo wrasse 15 – 23 cm (check with fisher, they often don't retain these)
 - ✓ Goldsinny wrasse 12 – 23 cm
 - ✗ Rock cook wrasse must all be returned to the sea

See Annex 1 for species identification guide

8. Return fish to sea as appropriate, preferably close to where they were fished from, and following a period of recovery to allow swim bladder function to return to normal. Be mindful of potential predation by gulls.
9. As fisher approaches end of next string, survey officer/Coxswain to record its end coordinates.
10. In agreement with the fisher, Coxswain to bring IFCA vessel alongside fishing vessel as above. Survey officer to transfer bongo of landable wrasse back to fisher, and receive bongo of wrasse to be measured. Repeat as above from step 3.
11. After surveying the final string, transfer bongo of landable wrasse to fisher and wait for all bongos to be returned to IFCA vessel.
12. Once survey is complete, survey officer is to return to their seat for safe passage to port/ commencement of patrol activity as required.

Post-survey activity (Plymouth)

- Return to land/ conduct patrol activity as required.
- Make good vessel, as instructed by coxswain.
- Clean, stow and secure equipment as required (bongos, nets typically remain on board).
- Survey officer to check details on all survey forms, confirm any uncertainties in recording with coxswain.
- Debrief the process for any lessons learned.

Post-survey activity (Home/office)

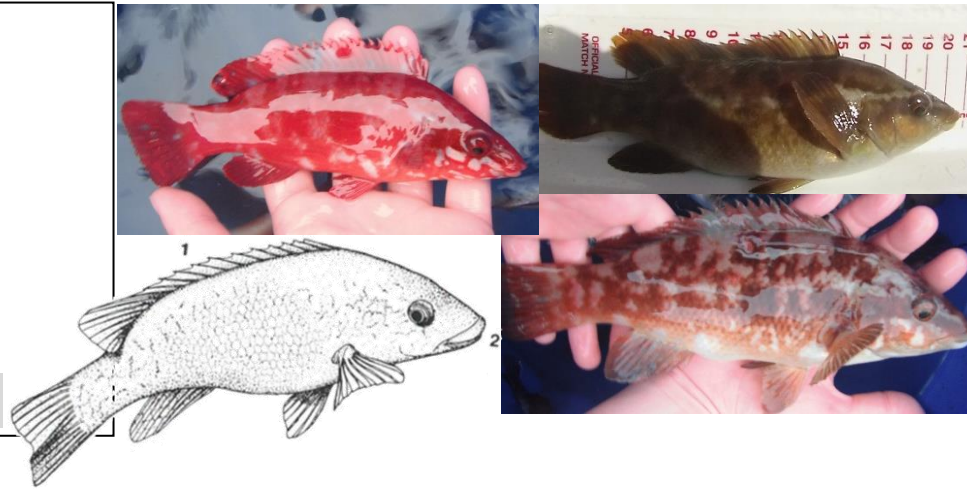
- Confirm with project lead if any equipment has been returned to the office rather than left onboard, whether additional survey sheets are required, whether there are any notable survey/equipment issues to be aware of prior to next survey.
- Confirm with project lead if any incursions into voluntary closed areas are known to have occurred.
- Enter data into wrasse observer survey spreadsheet. Return hard-copy sheets to project lead/office.
- Update metadata file with required information as requested by project lead.
- Debrief the process for any lessons learned.
- Project lead to plot start & end locations of strings to check for incursions into voluntary closed areas.

Annex 1: Wrasse species identification guides

Ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta*

1. Single, long dorsal fin.
2. Small mouth, does not reach eye level
3. Thick lips
4. Various colourations, some spotted
5. No obvious difference between sexes

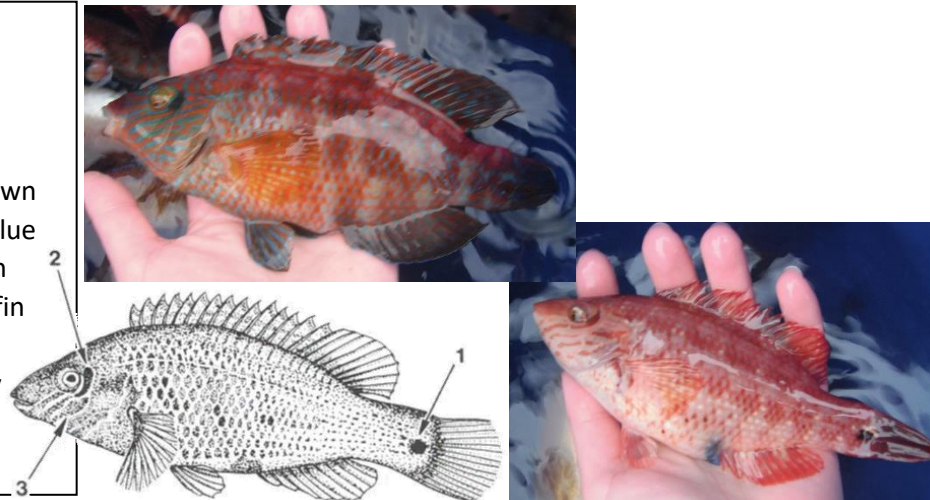
CRS 15cm (16cm Salmon Farm) – 23 cm



Corkwing wrasse *Crenilabrus melops*

1. Black spot in middle of tail stalk
2. Comma-shaped spot behind eye
3. Lines on head and gill covers. Females brown and pale blue, males bright green or blue
4. Females (and 'sneaker' males) can be seen with blue egg laying papilla near anal fin during breeding season
5. Males generally more colourful, especially during breeding season

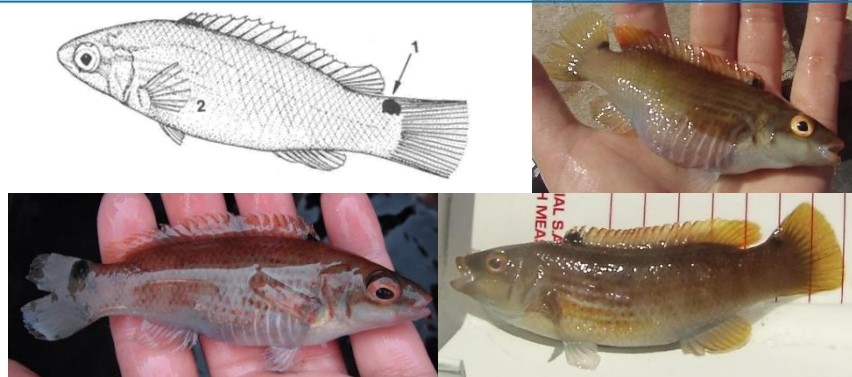
CRS 14 cm - 18 cm



Goldsinny *Ctenolabrus rupestris*

1. Black spot on top side of tail stalk
2. Dusky spots on dorsal fin membrane between 1st and 5th spines
3. Golden colour
4. No obvious difference between sexes
5. Behaviourally, often very "fighty" on measuring board –

CRS 12 – 23 cm



Rock cook *Centrolabrus exoletus*

1. Dark bar across tail fin
2. Males have blue lines on head
3. Males have blue spots on vertical fins

All must be returned to sea



Cuckoo wrasse *Labrus mixtus*

1. Pointed head
2. Females with 3 black blotches on back
3. Males with blue head and lines

CRS 15cm – 23 cm

