

Cattewater Wreck

Methods

The fish remains were identified using the extensive reference collection held at in the Fishlab, Department of Archaeology, University of York. Sizes were estimated based on comparison with modern specimens of known length.

Bone condition was variable, but only moderate to good in most cases; exceptions are described below. Most samples showed evidence of recent breakage after excavation.

Bag by bag summary

AR.1985.24 ?

This sample contains about 20 fragments, with more tiny fragments, suggesting recent breakage. Identifiable fragments included the anterior edge of a small portion of the middle of a left cleithrum, from a cod of about 80-90cm TL (total length); the posterior portion of the dorsal tip of a right cleithrum, from a cod of about 80-90cm TL; and a few fragments of neural or haemal spine from a large cod vertebra.

All are highly fragmented so are probably not ideal for sampling. Not photographed.

AR.1985.24 CW78 318

Three cod caudal vertebrae (group 1) were contained in this sample. All were in good condition. One was from a cod of about 100-105cm TL and the other two were from fish of about 90-100cm TL.

One vertebra from each size could be sampled. Photographed (scale 1cm).



AR.1985.24 CW78 319

This sample contained a single right cod cleithrum from a fish of about 80-85cm TL. Only the dorsal half remains. Although showing signs of surface lamination, a small shallow knife mark is probably present on the lateral side, made diagonally.

This could be sampled. Photographed (scale 1cm).



AR.1985.24 CW77 134 ?

This sample contained the dorsal tip of a cod left cleithrum, from a fish of about 80-90cm TL. This was recently fragmented, as evidenced by breakage removing part of an acquisition number. A note in the bag identified this as a supra cleithrum, but this is clearly a cleithrum fragment.

This may be suitable for sampling, but is quite small. Not photographed.

AR.1985.24 CW77 140

This sample contained four cod caudal vertebrae (group 1). One vertebra was from a fish of 100-110cm TL. A very small knife mark was present on the left side of the centrum; this was cut in the transverse plane, done when the bone was fresh. Three others were from cod of about 80-90cm TL. A few other small fragments were consistent with these vertebrae.

One vertebra from each size class could be sampled. Photographed (scale 1cm); inset shows butchery detail.



AR.1985.24 CW77 163

A single cod right cleithrum was found, recently broken into two large sections and a number of tiny fragments. This was from a fish of about 95-105cm TL. Only the dorsal half was found. Three larger butchery marks were observed, on the anterior edge and extending onto the lateral side, in the frontal plane and angled slightly towards ventral, and extending about 2mm into the bone. Another sequence of about seven or eight very faint, shallow butchery marks were found parallel but ventral to these three.

This is suitable for sampling. Photographed (scale 1cm); inset shows butchery detail.



AR.1985.24 CW78 273

A single right cod cleithrum was found, from a fish of about 90-100cm TL. Only the dorsal top third remains.

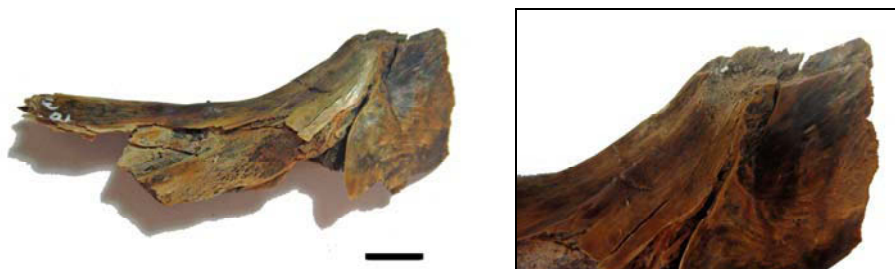
This is suitable for sampling. Photographed (scale 1cm).



AR 1985.24 CW78 321

A single left cod cleithrum was found, in very poor condition and highly fragmented. Only the middle half of the cleithrum was found, missing both the dorsal tip and the ventral third. This was from a fish of about 95-105cm TL. This bone was butchered in three places. A substantial chop in approximately the transverse plane removed the dorsal tip. Two small knife marks extended a few millimetres into the bone below this chop mark, and parallel to it; these indicated the direction of butchery was from ventral towards dorsal. A chop mark in the sagittal plane removed a very small sliver of bone from the lateral side in the middle of the cleithrum. Contrary to the note contained within the sample bag, this specimen is definitely from the left side of the fish and not the right.

This is suitable for sampling, although in very poor condition. Photographed (scale 1cm) with inset showing detail of butchery.



AR.1985.24 CW78 286/CW78 289

This sample contained three cod vertebrae, two in good condition and one in two fragments, with a number of other small fragments consistent with these identifications. All three were caudal (group 1) vertebrae, from fish of about 80-90cm TL.

One could be sampled. Photographed (scale 1cm).



Summary

This small assemblage of hand collected fish consists entirely of large cod remains. Only vertebrae and cleithra were found. This assemblage most likely represent the remains of preserved cod, processed elsewhere to remove the heads. The elements, sizes and butchery observed are all typical of preserved cod found in medieval English assemblages, although rarely are assemblages as constrained as this. As described in earlier publications, these cod were probably provisions or cargo on board the ship. Isotopic sampling can indicate the origins and consumption sites of preserved cod from several regions around the North Atlantic. Recent work on butchery patterns suggests slight change through time that may or may not be linked to different processing and sourcing of preserved cod. Without isotopic sampling, it is difficult to say much about these fish, but more precise dating in conjunction with sampling of at least three or four specimens may provide a point of origin and thus some indication of trade networks.

Potential for sampling

Many of the cod bones recovered could be sampled, although the smaller ones and those in poor condition probably wouldn't give a good result. Given the budgetary constraints, it would make sense to sample at least the three right cleithra (thus never sampling the same fish twice), and one or two of the vertebrae, including the butchered specimen.

Cleithra for sampling

The single butchered right cleithrum from 163 could be sampled; 95-105cm TL.

The single butchered right cleithrum from 319 could be sampled; 80-85cm TL.

The single right cleithrum from 273 could be sampled; 90-100cm TL.

Vertebrae for sampling

Two of the four vertebrae from 140 could be sampled, one butchered from a fish of 100-110cm TL, and one of the three from fish of 80-100cm TL.

Two of the three vertebrae from 318 could be sampled, one from 100-105cm TL and one of the two from fish of 90-100cm TL.

One of the three vertebrae from 286/289 could be sampled; from fish of 80-90cm TL.

Probably best not sampled

The single left cleithrum from 321 could be sampled but is in very poor condition and might not give a result. This was butchered and from a fish of about 95-105cm TL.

The small tip of a left cleithrum from 134? is quite small and may not be sufficient weight for sampling, but could be attempted if desired.