

## **ANNUAL CYCLE OF SMALL PELAGIC FISHES IN THE CANARY ISLAND WATERS**

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The annual cycle of pelagic fishes *Scomber colias*, *Trachurus picturatus*, *Sardinella aurita* and *Sardina pilchardus* around the island of Gran Canaria (Canary Islands) was studied from February 2005 to January 2006. We analyzed 1952 specimens of Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*) ranging from 8-40.2 cm in total length (TL). Its reproductive period was short and extended from January to February. A total of 398 specimens of *T. picturatus* (blue jack mackerel) in the size range of 8-30 cm TL were also studied. Its reproductive period extended through the winter months with a peak in March. *S. aurita* (round sardinella) showed a size range of 6-31 cm TL (401 specimens). This species showed a small variability in the gonadosomatic index (IGS), which was constant from December to July, decreasing from August to November. *S. pilchardus* (European pilchard) appeared in a very low number (only 33 individuals captured) in the size range of 8.5-20.5 cm TL. It is remarkable that *Sardina pilchardus* did not show clear evidences of being reproducing in the Canary Archipelago, since during the annual cycle studied low numbers of specimens were caught and those always showed the gonads not developed. The other species seemed to be positively reproducing around the islands. Compared to previous studies during the 80s and 90s our results suggest a replacement of *S. pilchardus* by *S. aurita*.