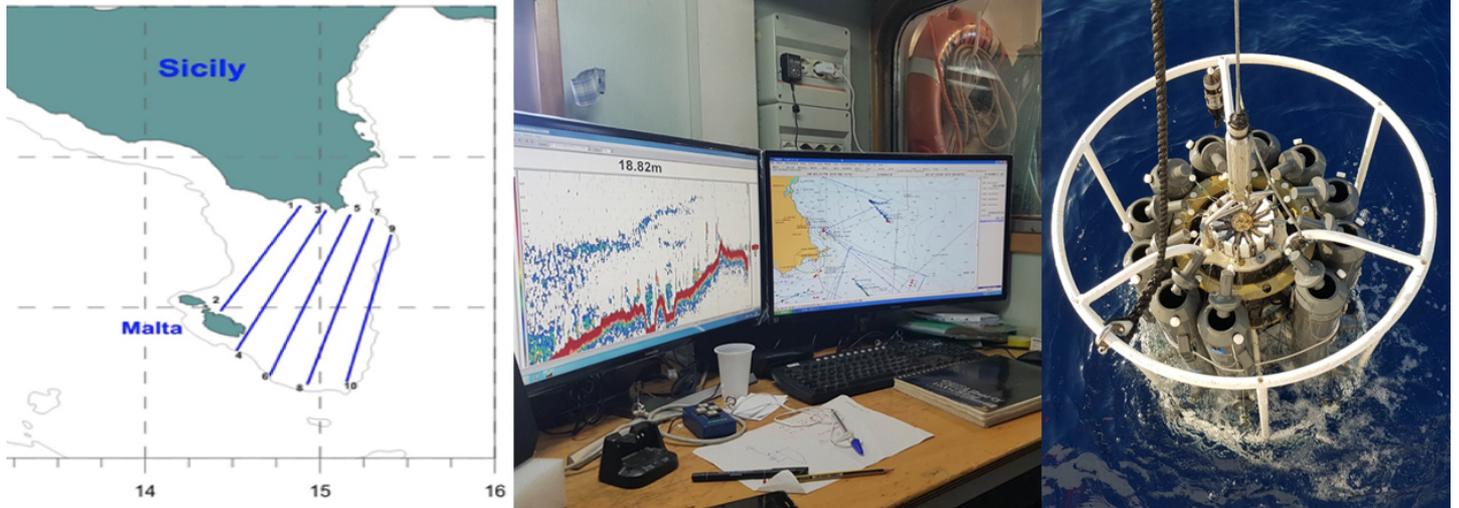




Pelagic Acoustic Fish Survey in the Malta Channel

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left to right: Survey tracks ANCHEVA 2018; Displaying the presence of fish by echo sounding; CTD and Rosette lowered for profiling and sampling in the sea

Scientists on board R/V DALLAPORTA are engaged this week in an intensive oceanographic survey, 'ANCHEVA 2018', to mainly evaluate the spatial distribution and abundance of small pelagic fish resources in the stretch sea between Malta and Sicily. The survey is linked to the Mediterranean International Acoustic Survey (MEDIAS) and the CALYPSO South project coordinated by Prof. Aldo Drago.

The Physical Oceanography Research Group (PO.Res.Grp) of the University of Malta (Department of Geosciences) is collaborating in this activity with the Interdisciplinary Oceanography Group from IAMC-CNR (U.O.S. of Capo Granitola).

A Simrad EK60 scientific echosounder is employed for the acquisition of acoustic data along the five transects shown in the map; fish sampling is done through a pelagic trawl net; other measurements include the collection of ichthyoplankton samples, acquisition of physico-chemical parameters of the water column (temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH etc) and underwater noise soundings using hydrophones.

Dr Adam Gauci, an academic staff from the PO.Res.Grp, joined the Italian crew in this effort. Besides the small pelagic fish biomass estimation, the survey is of particular interest to the correlation of hydrographic data and of sea surface current patterns from the CALYPSO HF radar system to the presence and distribution of fish in the region.

The CTD data collected in the survey will furthermore enhance the water mass characterisation in the marine domain of the Maltese Islands, a study which is currently being conducted by Prof. Aldo Drago, leader of the PO.Res.Grp.