

{rokbox title=|Engraulis encrasicolus :: Foto: Alessandro Duci (FishBase)|
thumb=|images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-anchoa-magdalena-iglesias-lopez-lopez-et-al-2012-thumb.jpg|}images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-anchoa-magdalena-iglesias-lopez-lopez-et-al-2012.jpg{/rokbox}

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[Is juvenile anchovy a feeding resource for the demersal community in the Bay of Biscay? On the availability of pelagic prey to demersal predators](#)

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Abstract: The role that juvenile anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) play as a food resource for the demersal community in the southern Bay of Biscay is assessed using 21 years of anchovy abundance data and demersal predator diets. During the study period, a total of 26 fish and elasmobranch species preyed on anchovy either frequently or occasionally. Predators with a crustacean-based diet targeted the smaller anchovy individuals. The size range of anchovy juveniles (centred at 7.5–8.9 cm) was comparable to that of the largest nektonic–benthic crustaceans, but generally smaller than other demersal and pelagic fish prey. Hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*) were the predators that consumed the highest number of anchovy, one of the main prey items driving the variability of their diets. Anchovy consumption conformed only partially to the abundance of anchovy in the southern Bay of Biscay, suggesting that factors other than abundance might condition its availability to demersal predators. Prey size could be one of them, as the size of the anchovy preyed on proved to be significantly smaller than the individuals collected with bottom trawls. However, other factors, such as the vertical position of the shoals of anchovy juveniles, could also constrain anchovy availability to demersal predators.

Keywords: anchovy, Bay of Biscay, demersal predator, diet variability, hake, megrim, prey availability