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► To cite this version:

Tarek Hattab, Ali Gucu, Ana Ventero, Andrea de Felice, Athanassios Machias, et al.. Temperature strongly correlates with regional patterns of body size variation in Mediterranean small pelagic fish species. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 2021, 22 (4), pp.800. 10.12681/mms.26525 . hal-03607874

HAL Id: hal-03607874

<https://hal.science/hal-03607874v1>

Submitted on 14 Mar 2022

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1 **Published in "Mediterranean Marine Science"**

2 **Temperature strongly correlates with regional patterns of body size variation in**
3 **Mediterranean small pelagic fish species**

4
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25

1 **Abstract**

2

3 In this study, we consider the applicability of Bergmann's rule to the populations of small pelagic fish
4 species in the Mediterranean Sea. Under Bergmann's rule, body size increases with decreasing
5 temperature and increasing latitude. Although this macroecological pattern in body sizes is well
6 established for many taxa of endotherms and ectotherms, it remains not universal and the proposed
7 mechanisms underlying it are multiple and still lack consensus. We explored here the occurrence of
8 geographical body size clines using measurements of average body sizes of 10 species collected in
9 pelagic trawl hauls carried out during acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean Sea. Bergmann's rule was
10 evaluated by correlating body sizes with latitude and temperature for each species while accounting for
11 potential confounding variables and sampling bias. For 5 species, namely anchovy, sardine, Atlantic
12 chub mackerel, bogue and blue jack mackerel, we demonstrate that they follow a Bergmann's rule,
13 with a decline in average body size by about 3.01, 3.43, 3.67, 3.82 and 3.76 % per 1°C of warming
14 respectively, although this did not translate with an increase in size with latitude. The adherence of
15 these 5 pelagic fish to Bergmann's rules strongly suggest that temperature is a major determinant of
16 their body sizes and enables them to act as sentinel species for identifying the drivers and consequences
17 of warming in the Mediterranean ecosystems.

18

19 **Keywords:** small pelagic fish, body size, Bergmann's rule, temperature-size rule, Mediterranean Sea.

1 **Introduction**

2

3 Species traits often vary substantially across geographical gradients (Gaston et al. 2008). Among them,
4 body size is a key functional trait that influences the fitness of organisms (Brown et al. 2004) and is of
5 central importance because it relates directly to several ecological and physiological processes, such as
6 respiration, growth, maturation, reproduction and longevity (Blueweiss et al. 1978; Calder 1996).
7 Geographical gradients of body size are evident across multiple faunal taxa and have been observed in
8 both terrestrial and aquatic environments (Walters and Hassall 2006; Blanck and Lamouroux 2007;
9 Fisher et al. 2010b; Fisher et al. 2010a). Such gradients are thought to rely on a relation between size
10 and temperature. Bergman's rule (Bergmann 1848) states that larger individuals should be favored in
11 cold environment through decreased heat perdition (reduced surface to volume ratio), resulting in a
12 macroecological gradient of increasing size at higher latitudes. While this was originally developed for
13 endotherms, it has quickly expanded to all organisms (Blanckenhorn and Demont 2004). This pattern
14 was particularly prevalent in the strongly body size-structured aquatic communities, such as pelagic
15 fishes and zooplanktons (Blueweiss et al. 1978; Angilletta et al. 2004; Blanchard et al. 2009; Ohlberger
16 2013; Evans et al. 2020). Furthermore, according to temperature-size rule, ectotherms should achieve
17 smaller size at maturity at higher temperature through phenotypic plasticity (Atkinson 1994; Blackburn
18 et al. 1999). Laboratory experiments and meta-analyses have revealed that across a broad range of
19 taxonomic groups (from bacteria to vertebrates), body sizes of aquatic ectotherms strongly co-vary with
20 temperature (Atkinson 1994; Angilletta et al. 2004; Forster et al. 2012; Hoefnagel and Verberk 2015;
21 Horne et al. 2015) and decline by about 3% per 1°C. The general trend for animal sizes to increase with
22 cold temperature or high latitude, has been extensively studied from a biogeographic perspective and
23 has been validated to marine fishes such as blennies (Gilligan 1991), syngnathids (Wilson 2009) and
24 mesopelagic fishes (Saunders & Tarling 2018) at broad taxonomic levels and large spatial scales
25 (Fisher et al. 2010b).

26 Recently, Audzijonyte et al (2020) analyzed the body sizes of 335 reef fish species using a multi-
27 decadal dataset spanning the whole Australian continent and multiple decades confirming that
28 temperature is a major determinant of reef fish body sizes in the wild. Additionally, this study shows
29 that the direction of a species' response to warming through space was generally consistent with its
30 response to warming through time at any given location, suggesting that spatial trends could help
31 forecast fish responses to long-term warming. However, many other studies considering adult body
32 sizes in other marine fish species have found little evidence of Bergmann's rule (Macpherson and

1 Duarte 1994; Choat & Robertson 2002; Smith & Brown 2002), which could possibly be attributed to
2 overfishing through size-selective harvesting that eliminates the faster-growing genotypes (Conover
3 and Munch 2002) and climate change homogenizing latitudinal patterns (Fisher et al. 2010a).

4 In this study, we consider the applicability of Bergmann's rule to the populations of 10 small pelagic
5 fish species in the Mediterranean Sea. These species represent key components of Mediterranean
6 marine ecosystems and fisheries and they have recently experienced a lasting decrease in individual
7 size and weight in several regions (e.g. anchovy *Engraulis encrasicolus* and sardine *Sardina pilchardus*
8 see Brosset et al (2017)), making the study of geographical and temporal patterns of variation of their
9 body size an important study topic to unravel the influences of fisheries and climate change. Indeed, the
10 adherence of small pelagic fish to Bergmann's rule enables such species to act as sentinels for
11 identifying signs and consequences of warming for the Mediterranean ecosystem. Here we employ
12 empirical data on pelagic fish assemblages from a large number of locations to investigate the
13 intraspecific body size structure over a regional scale. Specifically, we aim to: 1) establish whether
14 latitudinal body size clines can be observed on 10 pelagic fish species across the Mediterranean sea; 2)
15 quantitatively examine size-temperature trends in space and their intensities (*i.e.* slope estimates) while
16 accounting for potential confounding variables (*i.e.* extraneous determinant such as bathymetric
17 differences, which could influence both dependent and independent variable) and sampling bias (*i.e.*
18 differences in sample sizes and timing of surveys).

19

20 **Material and methods**

21

22 ***Biological sampling***

23 Small pelagic fish were collected during acoustic surveys carried out on continental shelves of the
24 Mediterranean Sea in the June-September period. The surveys were conducted along acoustic transects
25 over the continental shelf from 15/20 m to 200 m (the border of the continental shelf, where the
26 abundance of most small pelagic fish species drops critically). These surveys enabled us to monitor fish
27 body size in the following geographical subareas (GSA, as established by GFCM 2009): the northern
28 (GSA 01) and southern (GSA 03) Alboran Sea, the northern Spain (GSA 06), the Gulf of Lions (GSA
29 07), the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas (GSA 9-10), southern Sicily and Malta (GSA 16-15), the
30 northern (GSA 17) and southern (GSA 18) Adriatic Sea, the western Ionian Sea (GSA 19), the eastern
31 Ionian Sea (GSA 20), the Aegean Sea (GSA 22) and the south of Turkey (GSA 24). Length-frequency

1 distributions (in terms of abundance and mass) of all species in the pelagic community were measured
2 to 0.5 cm total size classes on board the research vessels. Biological sampling was made using pelagic
3 trawl gears suitable to catch representative samples of the fish population in terms of species
4 composition and size distribution. Trawl hauls were conducted during daytime in all GSAs except for
5 the western GSA 17, GSA 18, 20 and 22 where daytime/ night time sampling was carried out (*i.e.* as it
6 has been shown that there is no significant differences between day and night sampling (Machias et al.
7 2013)). Still, trawl nets were not exactly the same between areas and surveys, e.g. some used a covered
8 codend and accessed smaller fish than others. To obtain comparable size distributions among areas, we
9 consequently set a common minimal total length of 72 mm for all areas (*i.e.* defined as the maximum
10 value of the minimum sizes caught in each survey) above which we kept data.

11 In the present analysis we selected only the most abundant pelagic species in catches (those
12 representing 98% of total catches). Thus, 10 species were selected, namely anchovy (*Engraulis*
13 *encrasicolus*), sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*), Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*), sprat (*Sprattus*
14 *sprattus*), Atlantic horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*), round sardinella (*Sardinella aurita*),
15 Mediterranean horse mackerel (*Trachurus mediterraneus*), Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*),
16 bogue (*Boops boops*), and blue jack mackerel (*Trachurus picturatus*).

17 A georeferenced dataset was compiled and included 1721 pelagic trawl hauls collected in 7 annual
18 surveys carried out between 2012 and 2018 where catch weights and mean body size of all fish species
19 were recorded (Fig. 1).

20 ***Temperature data***

21 Temperature data were extracted from the Mediterranean Sea physical reanalysis system (Simoncelli et
22 al. 2019) which includes 3D monthly fields at 1/16° horizontal resolution (which for the Mediterranean
23 basin ranges from 5 km at 45°N to 6 km at 30°N) and 72 unevenly spaced vertical layers. These
24 reanalyzes include a variational data assimilation scheme of *in-situ* and satellite observations
25 (Simoncelli et al. 2019). These data were averaged vertically by calculating mean temperature value in
26 each grid cell by considering only vertical layers located in the upper 200 meters (*i.e.* the vertical layers
27 covered by survey data) (Fig. 1). A spatio-temporal match-up was subsequently performed between
28 monthly fields of temperature and pelagic trawl hauls based on geographic coordinates of hauls and
29 their corresponding year and month (Fig. 2).

30 ***Statistical analyses***

1 All analyses were conducted using R software (3.6.3).

2 Bergmann's rule is traditionally evaluated by linearly correlating body size with temperature and
3 latitude. Significant negative correlations with temperature or positive correlations with latitude can be
4 interpreted as evidence for Bergmann's rule. Given that body size dataset was compiled from different
5 surveys, there were some limitations that needed to be considered in the analyses. First, even though all
6 surveys were carried out in the same season, they spread over 4 months, between June and September,
7 a variability that might create a source of bias (*i.e.* a four-month period may result in important
8 ontogenetic variations in body sizes of these fast growing and short-lived species). Second, the nature
9 of acoustic surveys prevented from a balanced sampling design. Indeed, hauls number per survey
10 varied across regions and years as this largely depended on fish spatial distribution and abundance.
11 Consequently, some temperature values had a lower or higher sampling probability than others, which
12 could potentially lead to distortions of the outcomes since the considered sample will not be equally
13 representative of all populations' body sizes at all environmental conditions. Finally, the size-specific
14 bathymetric patterns of distribution, frequently observed in pelagic fish, may cause spurious
15 associations in temperature-size relationships because both dependent and independent variables are
16 confounded by depth (*i.e.* given the strong correlation between the mean temperature of the water
17 column and the bathymetry on one side (Fig. S1), and the known ontogenetic differences in the
18 bathymetric distribution between different ages and sizes in pelagic species on the other side). The
19 presence of confounding variables may affect the variables under study so that the results might not
20 reflect the actual relationships.

21 These three limitations could not be tackled simultaneously with a single linear mixed model because
22 the structure of the random effects for such a model was too complex to be supported by the data and
23 produced singular fits which is often an indication of over-fitting. We then addressed these limitations
24 in separate steps using more parsimonious models. First, to account for the variability in the sampling
25 period, linear mixed models were fitted using restricted maximum likelihood estimation, by
26 considering mean body size in trawls hauls as a response variable, temperature and latitude as fixed
27 effect predictor variables, and season (*i.e.* month) as a random effect variable which includes a random
28 intercept and a random slope of temperature. These mixed effects models were fitted using the lmer
29 function in lme4 R package (Bates 2005). By comparing the residual variance and the variance
30 associated with the random effect, we identified species for which survey related variability (*i.e.* month)
31 was not significant, and those were retained for further analyses.

1 Thereafter, in order to verify whether the observed patterns were due to spatial distribution along
2 bathymetric gradient, a second set of linear models were fitted including temperature and depth as
3 predictor variables to control for bathymetric variation that may confound the temperature-size
4 relationships. In these models predictor variables were scaled in order to make the coefficient of each
5 variable indicative of its influence in the regression equation. In addition, collinearity among the
6 predictor variables was checked using the variance inflation factor (VIF), a measure of severity of
7 multicollinearity. VIF values were calculated using the *car* R package (Fox and Weisberg 2019).

8 Finally, to cope with the unbalanced sampling, we implemented as a third step a bootstrap sampling
9 procedure among trawl hauls from over-sampled temperature conditions. The temperature range of the
10 dataset was split into 13 equal bins of 1°C. For each bin we selected a random subsample of trawl hauls
11 so as to get an equal number of observations in all temperature bins. The number of subsamples was set
12 as the minimum number of trawl hauls observed by temperature bins. Resampling was repeated 999
13 times, where at each run a linear model was fitted by considering mean size as the response variable
14 and temperature and depth as the predictor variable.

15

16 **Results**

17 *Biogeographic patterns of body size in 10 small pelagic species*

18 Among the 10 considered species, only bogue showed positive correlation with latitude. Five other
19 species showed an opposite trend, where a significant pattern of decreasing size with latitude was
20 observed for anchovy, sardine, Atlantic chub mackerel, Atlantic mackerel and blue jack mackerel
21 (Table 1).

22 *Size-temperature relationships in 10 small pelagic species*

23 Linear mixed models results indicate that survey related variability did not allow identifying clear
24 spatial patterns of body size variation for sprat, Atlantic horse mackerel and Atlantic mackerel for
25 which no reliable conclusion could be drawn. For example, in the case of sprat, temperature negatively
26 affected body size, lowering it by 0.4 mm. However, the residual variance (*i.e.*, variance outside our
27 measured parameters) was considerably low (132 mm²) in comparison with the random effect of
28 seasonality which accounted for a variance of 446 mm² (Table 1, Fig. 3). Thus only the 7 remaining
29 species were selected for further analysis. Among the latter, only 5 species (anchovy, sardine, Atlantic
30 chub mackerel, bogue and blue jack mackerel) showed significant negative effect of temperature on

1 mean body size with a low random effect of seasonality compared with other possible factors (Table 1,
2 Fig. 3). For round sardinella and Mediterranean horse mackerel, the residual variance was higher
3 compared to the random effect of seasonality, however no significant negative effect of temperature
4 was observed, suggesting that these two species do not follow a temperature-size rule.

5 Among the 5 species showing a negative correlation with temperature, 3 species (anchovy, sardine and
6 bogue) showed bathymetric patterns of distribution with a significant increase in body size with depth
7 (Table 2, Fig. 4) and 1 species (Atlantic chub mackerel) showed a negative correlation between body
8 size and depth. However the negative effect of temperature remained significant for all 5 species when
9 controlling for depth in the model (Table 2), suggesting that the temperature-size rule observed was not
10 an artifact resulting solely from their bathymetric distribution. Indeed, we observed a decrease in size
11 with an increase in temperature at each given depth range (Fig. 5). Even more, the effect size of
12 temperature was stronger than that of bathymetry in all species but bogue (Fig. 4 and Table 2).

13 Finally, the bootstrap-sampling procedure of trawl hauls within over-sampled temperature conditions
14 showed that temperature-body size relationships were relatively stable against the sampling size.
15 Ninety-nine (%) of the slope values were still negative for sardine, Atlantic chub mackerel, bogue and
16 blue jack mackerel while 98 % of the slope values remained negative for anchovy (Fig. 6). The
17 bootstrap results confirmed that body size was affected by temperature, lowering it on average by -
18 $2.07 (\pm 0.09)$, $-1.62 (\pm 0.03)$, $-8.26 (\pm 0.24)$, $-2.74 (\pm 0.04)$ and $-6.80 (\pm 0.25)$ mm. $^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$ for anchovy,
19 sardine, Atlantic chub mackerel, bogue and blue jack mackerel respectively (Fig. 6), corresponding to a
20 decline on the average body size by about 3.01, 3.43, 3.67, 3.82 and 3.76 % per 1°C of warming.

21

22 **Discussion**

23

24 Small pelagic fish are fast growing, migratory and short-lived species relative to most marine fish
25 species, often presenting rapid shifts in distribution related to oceanographic changes (Checkley et al.
26 2009). Consequently, despite the fact that we used in this study a dataset collected during the
27 summertime, the variability associated with the sampling period was relatively high for 3 species out of
28 10 (*i.e.* sprat, Atlantic horse mackerel and Atlantic mackerel) for which no reliable conclusion could be
29 drawn. For round sardinella and Mediterranean horse mackerel, no significant and negative effect of
30 temperature was observed. For the 5 remaining species, we demonstrated that they follow the
31 Bergmann's rule, with larger individuals being more common at lower temperature. In the case of

1 anchovy, these results are consistent with previous investigations of the effect of temperature on their
2 growth which showed a significant negative effect of temperature on asymptotic length (*i.e.* L_{∞} the
3 length at which growth rate is theoretically zero) (Basilone et al. 2004). These negative correlations did
4 not seem to be confounded by the sampling period or by the bathymetric variation of fish sizes. Indeed,
5 when controlling for depth by adding it as a covariate in the model, all negative size-temperature
6 relationships remained significant. Furthermore, except for bogue, the effect of temperature was
7 stronger than the effect of depth. The output of the bootstrap-sampling procedure also showed that the
8 negative correlations between temperature and body sizes were stable against sample-size variation. As
9 a whole, these analyses strongly suggest that temperature is a major determinant of pelagic fish body
10 sizes. The rates of body size changes with temperature through space are in the same order of
11 magnitude as those estimated by Audzijonyte et al. (2020) for reef fishes in the wild (~4% body size
12 change per 1°C change through space) and those measured for marine ectothermic organisms in
13 controlled experiments ($-3.0\% \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$; Forster et al 2012).

14 Several partially competing hypotheses exist regarding the occurrence of thermal size clines in
15 ectotherms (Atkinson et al. 2006; Walters & Hassall 2006; DeLong 2012; Zuo et al. 2012; Audzijonyte
16 et al. 2019). Oxygen limitation was originally proposed as a key mechanism to explain smaller
17 ectotherm body size at higher temperatures (see e.g. Atkinson et al. 2006; Audzijonyte et al. 2019 for a
18 review). The general body size optimization hypothesis “maintain aerobic scope and regulate oxygen
19 supply” states that ectotherms grow to a smaller final body size at higher temperatures to maintain their
20 aerobic scope as oxygen concentrations decline with increasing temperature (Atkinson et al. 2006). For
21 marine fishes, the gill oxygen limitation hypothesis (Pauly 1981) proposes that body size in fish is
22 limited by the inability of gills (whose surface area is limited) to supply enough oxygen to meet the
23 requirements of increasing metabolic costs that scale with body volume. According to Pauly & Cheung
24 (2018), the gill oxygen limitation hypothesis provides the most parsimonious explanation for a range of
25 responses including temperature dependence of maximal attainable body masses in ectotherms,
26 prevalence of small fish in tropical waters, higher sensitivity of larger individuals to temperature, and
27 lower food assimilation efficiency in larger individuals. However, it is important to note that this
28 hypothesis is strongly debated, as recent criticisms were expressed about its validity and universality
29 (see Lefevre et al. 2018; Lefevre et al. 2021; Pauly 2021). Another main hypothesis used to explain the
30 temperature–size rule is the mismatch, or difference in developmental rates versus growth rates thermal
31 responses (Van der Have & De Jong 1996; Forster et al. 2012; Zuo et al. 2012). This hypothesis
32 considers that, temperature responses of growth and development during ontogeny differ. An increase

1 in development rate relative to growth rate at high temperature leads to smaller body sizes as a result of
2 lower somatic growth following earlier sexual maturity (Zuo et al. 2012). Furthermore, resource supply
3 models state that the proximate cause for optimal body size is determined by the temperature-
4 dependent interplay of resource supply from the environment versus demand, leading to smaller body
5 sizes (higher resource demands) at higher temperatures (DeLong 2012). Evidence of abiotic and biotic
6 predictors of body size structure has been obtained from several studies showing that differences in
7 productivity and taxonomic composition contribute to size differences (Jeppesen et al. 2000; Emmrich
8 et al. 2011; Emmrich et al. 2014). Thus, the realized size in marine ectotherms populations integrates
9 growth, mortality, competition, predation risk and food availability simultaneously, and the interplay
10 among these factors (Audzijonyte et al. 2020). Several of these factors are modulated by temperature,
11 which result in the occurrence of thermal body size clines in ectotherms, such as the 5 pelagic species
12 of the present study.

13 Our results indicate that a positive correlation between body size and latitude can be observed only in
14 bogue. The presence of negative correlations between body sizes and latitude can be explained by the
15 geographical gradient of the temperature in the Mediterranean Sea which does not solely follow a
16 latitudinal gradient. The averaged zonal surface temperature gradient over most of the Mediterranean
17 Sea increases from north to south especially in the Gulf of Lions and in the northern Adriatic Sea where
18 the temperature minima are located. However, a meridional gradient of temperature, partly due to the
19 Mediterranean surface circulation, occurs also over the northern Tyrrhenian and the Levantine sub-
20 basins where temperature increases from west to east (Shaltout & Omstedt 2014). Moreover, the annual
21 temperature in the northern Aegean sub-basin is much lower than in the northern Ionian sub-basin,
22 although the two areas are at the same latitude. This is largely due to the input of less saline and colder
23 water of Black Sea origin entering the northern Aegean Sea through the Dardanelles strait. Besides,
24 here, we used a vertically integrated temperature dataset rather than only surface temperature. Thus the
25 local bathymetric variations of temperature may further increase the decoupling between temperature
26 and latitude. The increase in fish body size with increasing latitude, reported in several other studies at
27 larger spatial scales, may thus be partially due to a greater latitudinal gradient of temperature than that
28 encountered in the Mediterranean Sea (e.g. Fisher et al. 2010b; Saunders & Tarling 2018). In addition,
29 it should be noted that, as the Mediterranean is classified as an oligotrophic Sea (d'Ortenzio & Ribera
30 d'Alcalà 2009), primary production can be considered as a limiting factor for fish growth in this area as
31 demonstrated for anchovy (Basilone et al. 2004). Thus the Mediterranean west-east gradient of primary
32 productivity (d'Ortenzio & Ribera d'Alcalà 2009) could also explain the absence of positive

1 correlations between body sizes and latitude observed for planktivorous fish species, namely anchovy,
2 sardine and blue jack mackerel.

3 In addition to the temperature, fishing is also an external driver that may alter the size structure of a fish
4 population (Fisher et al. 2010a; Tu et al. 2018). Fishing represents size-selective removal of larger
5 individuals that can truncate the size structure of a fish population (Berkeley et al. 2004; Barnett et al.
6 2017), which in turn may cause recruitment failure, reduce the reproductive outputs, and increase the
7 size variability of fish populations (Rouyer et al. 2012). This may also lead to evolutionary
8 consequences and selection of slow-growing fish (Heino et al. 2015) that start first maturation at a
9 younger age and smaller size due to both genetic and plastic responses (Conover and Munch 2002; De
10 Roos et al. 2006). Unfortunately, the exploitation status was available only for sardine and anchovy and
11 not in all areas due to the absence of stock assessment for the other 8 species included in this study.
12 The exploitation status of sardines and anchovies in the Mediterranean Sea varies greatly from one area
13 to another. Stocks assessed were either sustainably exploited (for sardine in GSA 9 and anchovy in
14 GSAs 6, 9 and 22) or in overexploitation (sardine in GSAs 1, 3, 6, 16, 17-18 and 22; anchovy in GSAs
15 17-18) or ecologically unbalanced (sardine in GSA 7) or at a low biomass level (anchovy in GSA 7)
16 (GFCM 2019). Although, body size variations can be related to exploitation, we believe that the effects
17 of the spatial patterns of exploitation on body size clines are unlikely to affect our overall conclusions.
18 Fisheries targeting small pelagic in the Mediterranean Sea, which consists mainly of purse seine fleets
19 (and pelagic trawler in GSA 7 and GSA 17), cannot be considered as large size-biased exploitation in
20 comparison to other types of fisheries. For instance, in the Gulf of Lions (GSA 7), where the most
21 drastic decrease in growth, condition and size of the two main exploited small pelagic fish species (e.g.
22 sardine and anchovy) was observed (Van Beveren et al. 2014; Brosset et al. 2017), it has been shown
23 that these decreasing trends did not appear to be mediated by a high fishing pressure (Saraux et al. 2019)
24 but rather by a bottom-up control (Feuilloley et al. 2020).

25

26

27 **Acknowledgments**

28 This study was carried out in the framework of the MEDIAS within the DCF programs of EU and the
29 Directorates of Fishery of the National Ministries. In Croatia it was supported by the Croatian
30 Ministries of Agriculture and of Science and Education (Grant No. 001-0013077-0532). The authors
31 are grateful to all the participants involved in the MEDIAS surveys and to the Captains and crews of

1 the research vessels that carried out the acoustic surveys. We are very grateful to Angelo Bonanno for
2 his help in editing the manuscript.

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1 **Table 1:** Parameter estimates for the linear mixed models relating mean body size to temperature and
2 latitude while considering the season as a random effect variable (including a random intercept and a
3 random slope of temperature). N is number of observations.

Species	Scientific names	Fixed effect				Random effect				
		Predictors	(Intercept)	Latitude	Temperature	Residual variance (mm ²)	Month variance (mm ²)	Temperature (slope)	N	Marginal / Conditional R ²
European anchovy	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	Estimates	206.45	-1.25	-2.07	227.38	62.90	0.07	1303	0.171 / 0.202
		p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001					
		df	1296.00	1296.00	1296.00					
Sardine	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	Estimates	232.55	-1.67	-1.84	456.22	291.13	0.64	1228	0.101 / 0.166
		p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001					
		df	1221.00	1221.00	1221.00					
Atlantic chub mackerel	<i>Scomber colias</i>	Estimates	440.68	-4.42	-3.43	3663.37	0.00	1.35	427	0.075 / 0.170
		p	<0.001	0.001	0.005					
		df	420.00	420.00	420.00					
Sprat	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Estimates	113.05	-0.16	-0.40	132.41	446.75	1.08	423	0.005 / 0.313
		p	<0.001	0.768	0.532					
		df	416.00	416.00	416.00					
Atlantic horse mackerel	<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	Estimates	191.08	-1.42	0.59	2058.11	5117.44	15.38	628	0.007 / 0.123
		p	<0.001	0.061	0.782					
		df	621.00	621.00	621.00					
Round sardinella	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	Estimates	234.86	-2.27	1.05	1830.55	656.15	4.56	235	0.020 / 0.160
		p	<0.001	0.049	0.479					
		df	228.00	228.00	228.00					
Mediterranean horse mackerel	<i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i>	Estimates	243.80	-0.98	-1.18	2865.76	164.66	0.78	542	0.009 / 0.037
		p	<0.001	0.279	0.209					
		df	535.00	535.00	535.00					
Atlantic mackerel	<i>Scomber scombrus</i>	Estimates	310.15	-5.36	4.87	2095.35	4744.51	11.12	482	0.079 / 0.284
		p	<0.001	<0.001	0.017					
		df	475.00	475.00	475.00					

Bogue	<i>Boops boops</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	170.81	1.67	-3.14	875.40	141.75	0.43	474	0.084/ 0.171
		<i>p</i>	<0.001	0.002	<0.001					
		<i>df</i>	467.00	467.00	467.00					
Blue jack mackerel	<i>Trachurus picturatus</i>	<i>Estimates</i>	323.56	-2.64	-4.57	1568.27	191.09	0.60	170	0.094 / 0.096
		<i>p</i>	<0.001	0.057	0.001					
		<i>df</i>	163.00	163.00	163.00					

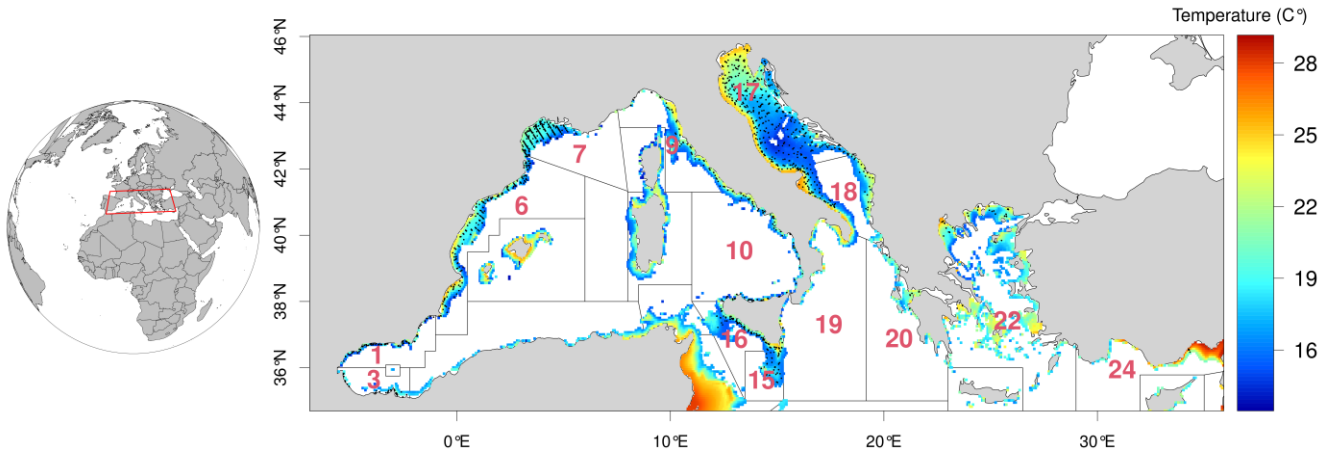
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1 **Table 2:** Parameter estimates for linear models relating mean body size to temperature and depth.

Species	Scientific names		Intercept	Temperature	Depth	Observations	VIF	R ² / R ² adjusted
		<i>Estimates</i>	120.14	-21.35	10.61			
European anchovy	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	<i>p</i>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	1303	1.49	0.128 /
		<i>df</i>	1300.00	1300.00	1300.00			0.126
		<i>Estimates</i>	131.37	-20.29	13.54			
Sardine	<i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	<i>p</i>	<0.001	<0.001	0.001	1228	1.43	0.057 /
		<i>df</i>	1225.00	1225.00	1225.00			0.055
		<i>Estimates</i>	253.16	-131.36	-56.28			
Atlantic chub mackerel	<i>Scomber colias</i>	<i>p</i>	<0.001	<0.001	0.003	427	1.45	0.094 /
		<i>df</i>	424.00	424.00	424.00			0.090
		<i>Estimates</i>	179.58	-31.18	41.53			
Bogue	<i>Boops boops</i>	<i>p</i>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	474	1.25	0.141 /
		<i>df</i>	471.00	471.00	471.00			0.137
		<i>Estimates</i>	167.94	-61.49	-19.01			
Blue jack mackerel	<i>Trachurus picturatus</i>	<i>p</i>	<0.001	<0.001	0.226	170	1.20	0.086 /
		<i>df</i>	167.00	167.00	167.00			0.075

2

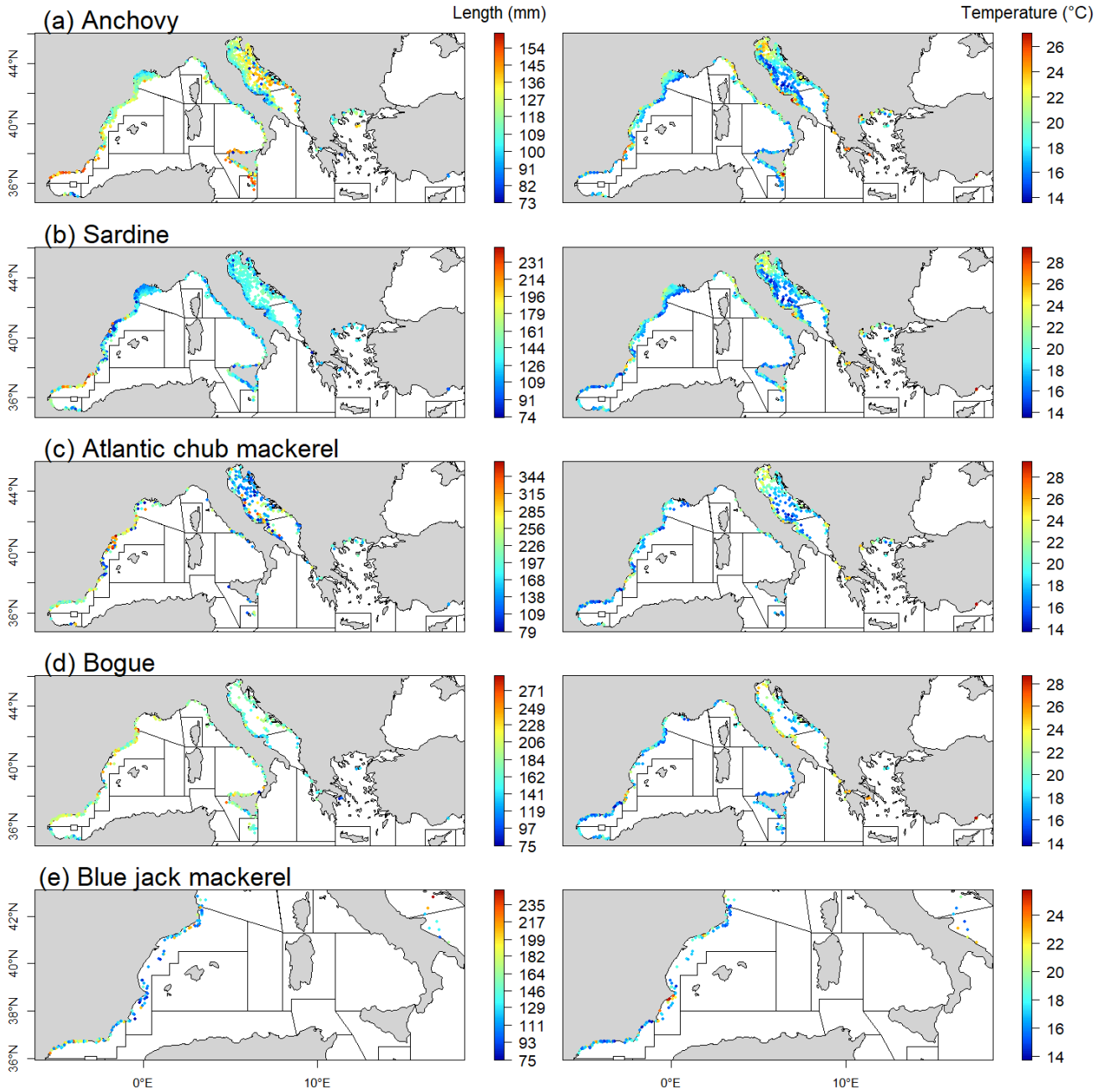
1 **Figure 1:** Map of the Mediterranean Sea geographical sub areas (GSAs): northern (GSA 01) and
2 southern (GSA 03) Alboran Sea, northern Spain (GSA 06), Gulf of Lions (GSA 07), Ligurian and
3 Tyrrhenian Seas (GSA 9-10), southern Sicily and Malta (GSA 16-15), northern (GSA 17) and southern
4 (GSA 18) Adriatic Sea, western Ionian Sea (GSA 19), eastern Ionian Sea (GSA 20), Aegean Sea (GSA
5 22) and the south of Turkey (GSA 24). Black dots represent the location of the trawl hauls. The color
6 scale represents summertime climatology of mean temperature of the water column along the
7 continental shelf (0-200m depth).



8

9

1 **Figure 2:** Maps indicating the location of the trawl hauls and their corresponding temperature value
 2 and showing the geographic patterns of body size for five species. The color gradient indicates the
 3 mean total body size in mm (left panels) and temperature in °C (right panels).

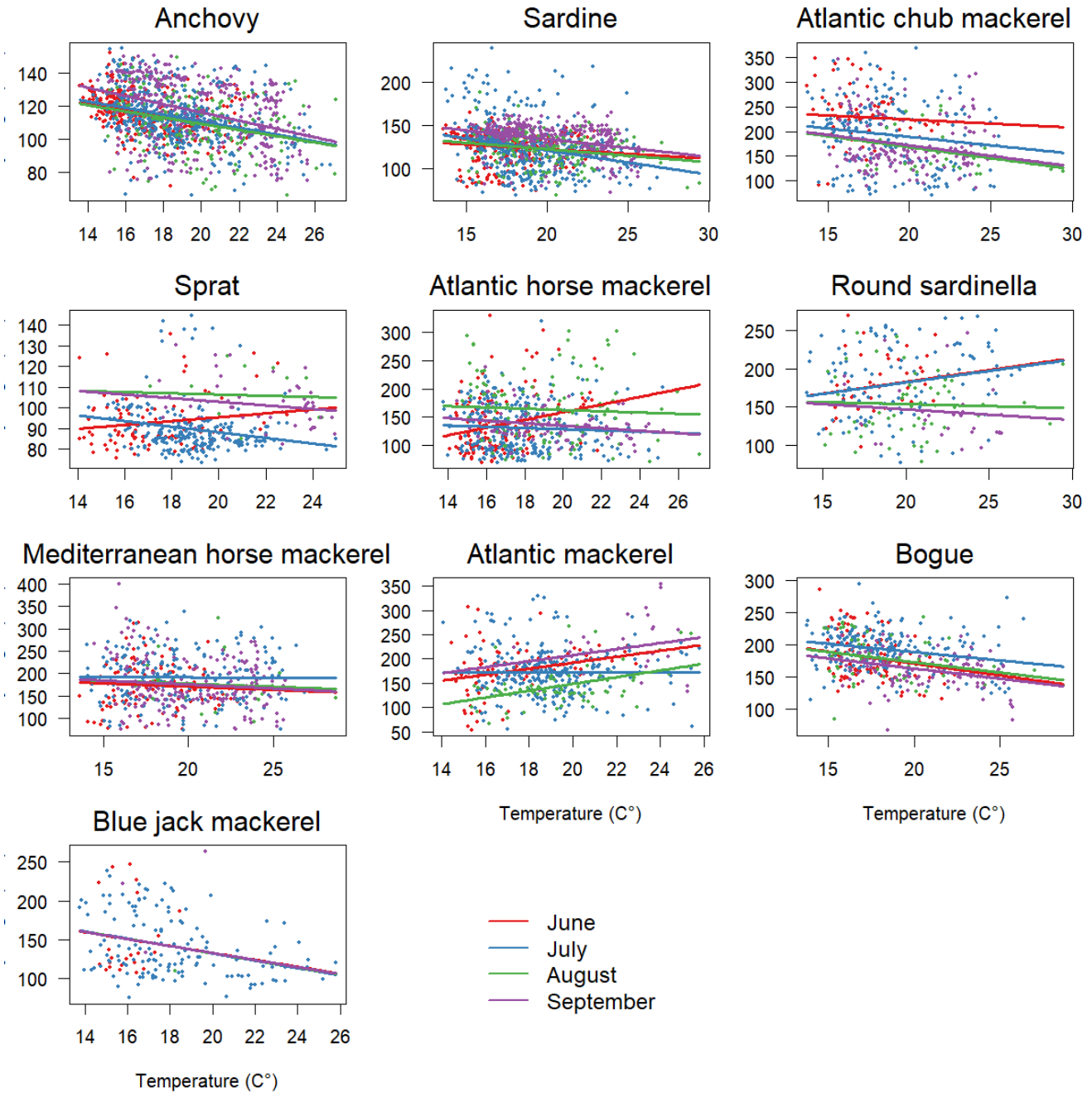


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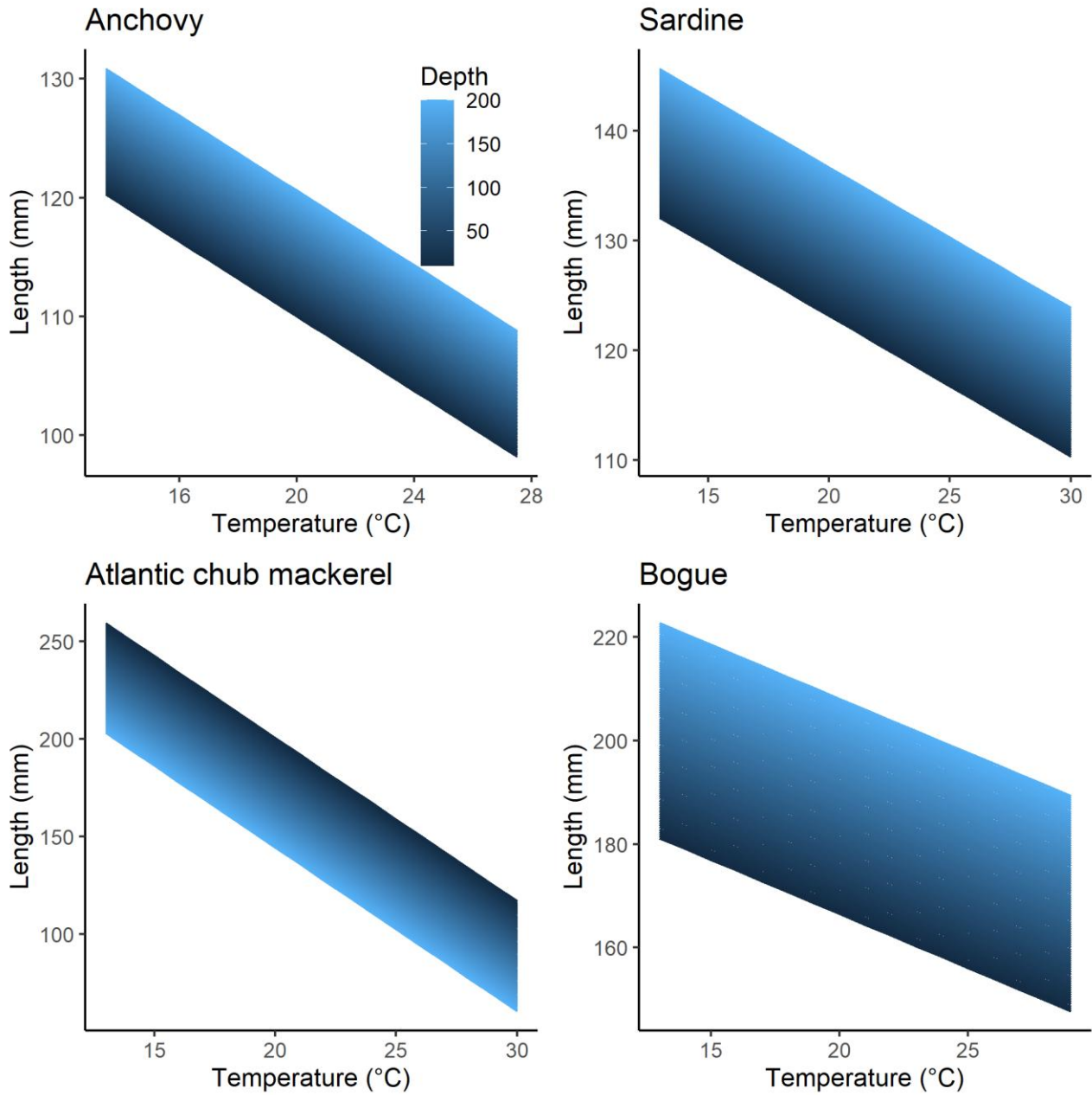
1 **Figure 3:** Effect of survey-related variability on body size-temperature relationship for the 10
 2 considered species. The lines represent predictions based on linear mixed models relating body size to
 3 temperature and latitude while considering the season as a random effect variable including a random
 4 intercept and a random slope of temperature.

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6

1 **Figure 4:** Response surface graph of linear regressions showing the predicted mean body sizes as a
2 function of temperature and depth.

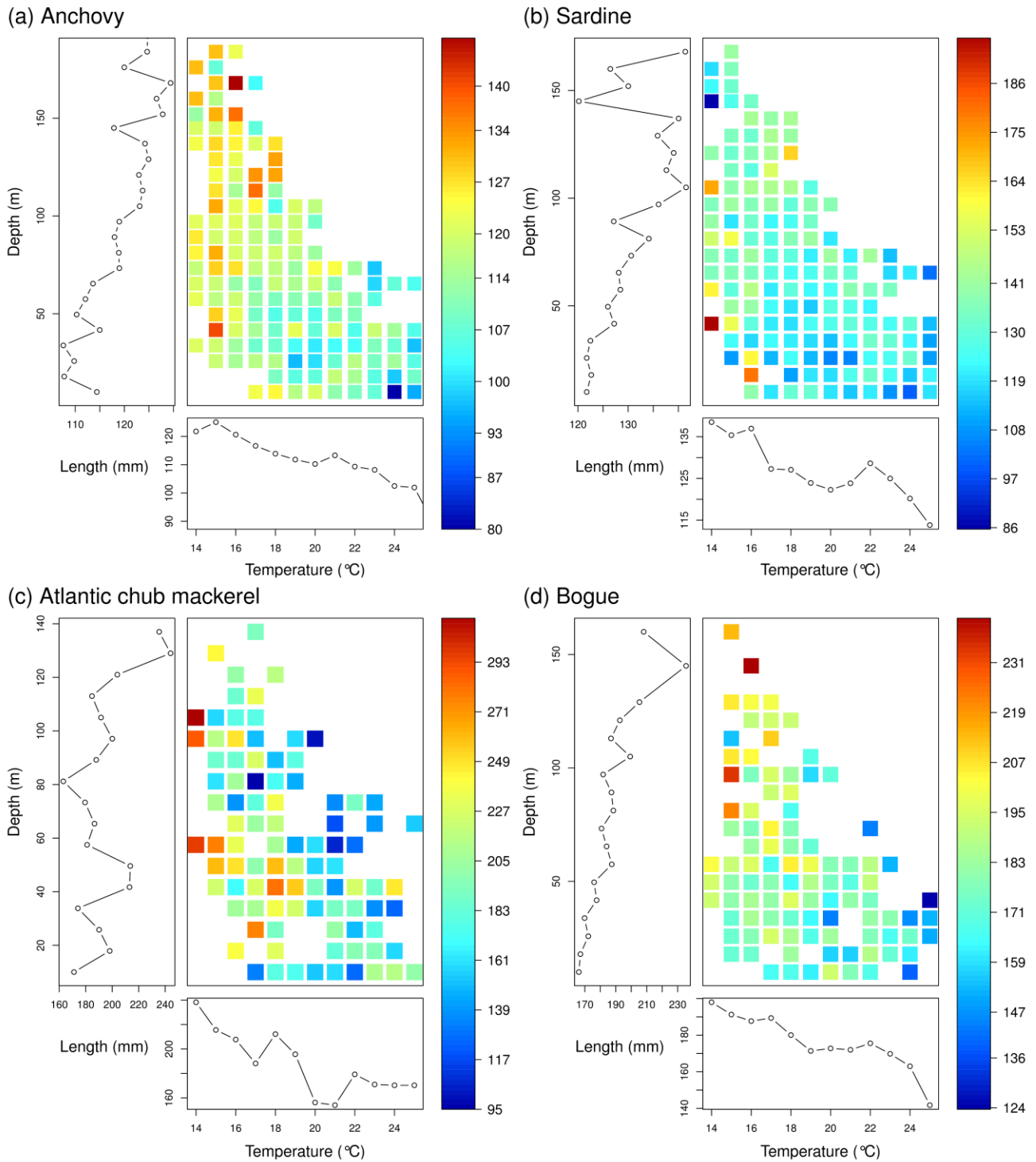


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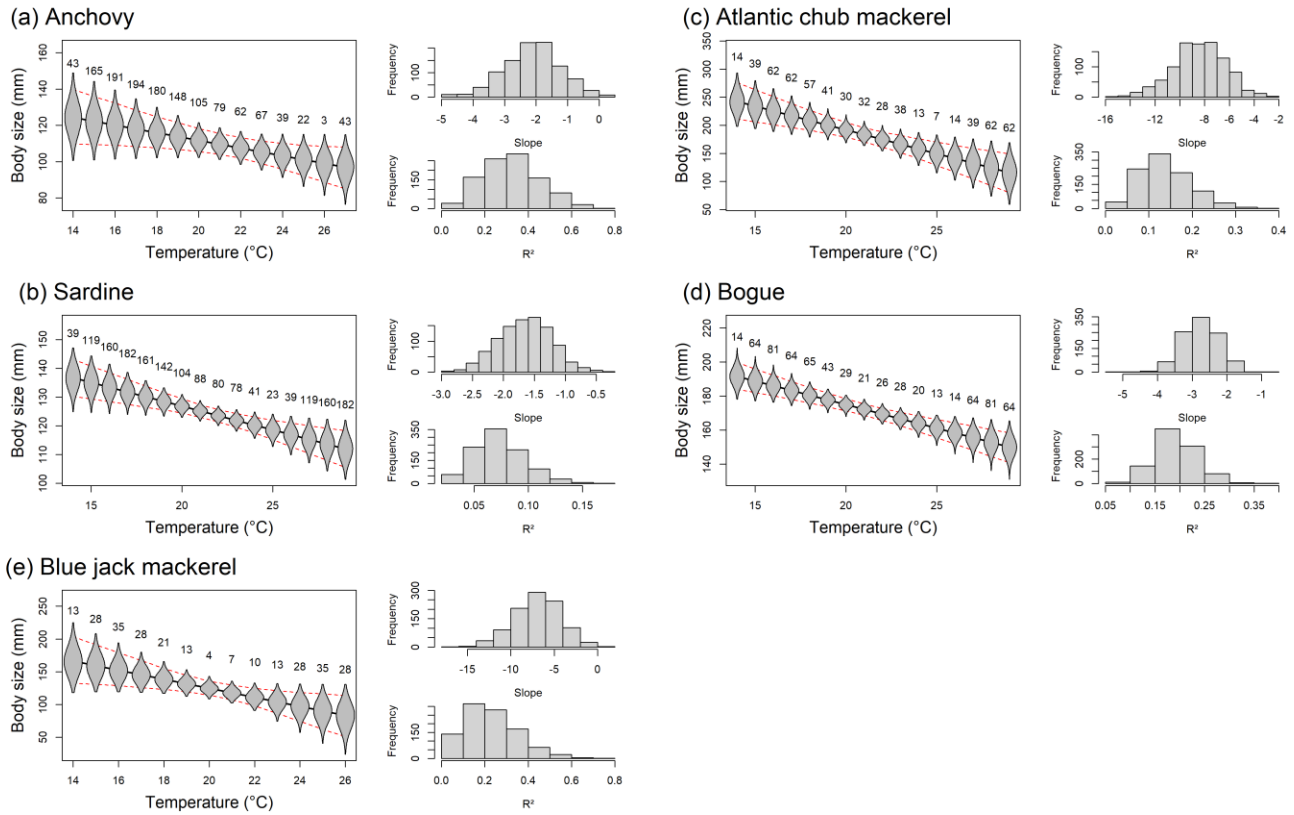
1 **Figure 5:** Patterns of body size variation in relation to temperature and depth. The colour gradient
 2 indicates the observed mean body sizes (in mm) for each combination of temperature and depth values.

3



4

1 **Figure 6:** Effect of sub-sampling on body size-temperature relationships. Violin plots indicate the body
 2 size distributions in each bin of 1 °C. Numbers indicate the sample size (number of trawls) per
 3 temperature bin. The histograms represent the distributions of slopes and the R^2 of the 999 linear
 4 models fitted using the re-sampling procedure.

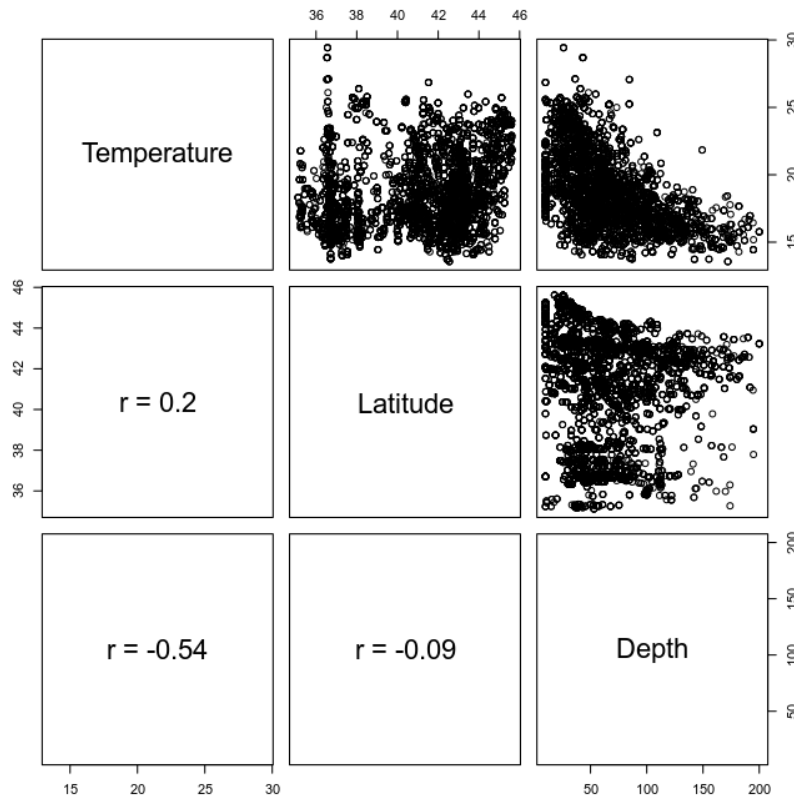


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1 **Supplementary material**

2

3 **Figure S1:** Pearson's r correlation between the mean temperature of the water column, depth and
4 latitude in trawl haul stations.



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