

**Biomass and distribution of the red octopus (*Octopus maya*)  
in the northeast of the Campeche Bank**

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Complete List of Authors:	<p>Avendaño, Otilio; Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Unidad Mérida, Recursos del Mar; Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, Tonalá, Chiapas, C.P. 30500, México</p> <p>Velázquez-Abunader, Iván; Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Unidad Mérida</p> <p>Fernández-Jardón, Carlos; Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Vigo, C.P. 36310</p> <p>Ángeles-González, Luis ; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Sisal, Yucatán, C.P. 97356, México</p> <p>Hernández-Flores, Alvaro; 5Universidad Marista de Mérida, Periférico norte tablaje catastral 13941, Carretera Mérida-Progreso. C.P. 97300 Mérida, Yucatán, México</p> <p>Guerra, Angel; Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas (CSIC), Ecology and Marine Resources</p>
Keywords:	Octopus maya, Red octopus, Spatial, Density, Abundance, Continental shelf, Yucatán
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1 **Running head:** Biomass and distribution of *Octopus maya*

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3 **Campeche Bank**

4 Otilio Avendaño<sup>1,2</sup>, Iván Velázquez–Abunader<sup>1</sup>, Carlos Fernández–Jardón<sup>3</sup>, Luis Enrique  
5 Ángeles–González<sup>4</sup>, Alvaro Hernández–Flores<sup>5</sup> and Ángel Guerra<sup>6</sup>

6 <sup>1</sup>Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, CP 97310, Mérida, Yucatán,  
7 México, <sup>2</sup>Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, Tonalá, Chiapas, C.P. 30500,  
8 México, <sup>3</sup>Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Vigo, C.P.  
9 36310, Vigo, España, <sup>4</sup>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Sisal, Yucatán, C.P.  
10 97356, México, <sup>5</sup>Universidad Marista de Mérida, Periférico norte tablaje catastral 13941,  
11 Carretera Mérida-Progreso. C.P. 97300 Mérida, Yucatán, México and <sup>6</sup>ECOBIOMAR,  
12 Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas (IIM-CSIC), C.P. 36208, Vigo, España.

13 **Author for correspondence:**

14 Iván Velázquez–Abunader, E-mail: [jvelazquez@cinvestav.mx](mailto:jvelazquez@cinvestav.mx)

## 15 **Abstract**

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17 allowable catches (TAC), which are based on studies conducted on the population that  
18 occurs in shallow waters. In fact, most of the biological studies of this species refer to the  
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25 octopuses captured, the total weight of the catch, and the individual weight of octopuses  
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28 area. The four methods provided consistent results. The distribution pattern of species was  
29 in patches, although before the fishing season started it was more homogeneous. The  
30 fraction of the population that occurs between 30 m and 60 m deep consisted mostly of  
31 adult organisms, so it could be contributing significantly to the recruitment of the entire  
32 population, even to the fraction that is exploited.

33 **Key words:** *Octopus maya*, Red octopus, spatial, density, abundance, continental shelf,  
34 Yucatán.

## 35 Introduction

36 The octopus stocks that occupy the western and northern coasts of Yucatan Peninsula are  
37 considered by far one of the most important resources for small-scale fishers from Mexico  
38 due to its high productivity, economic value and international demand (Cabrera-Vázquez *et al.*,  
39 2012). Records show that two species are exploited namely red octopus, *Octopus maya*,  
40 Voss & Solís-Ramírez, 1966 and the common octopus, *O. "vulgaris"* type I (Cuvier, 1797;  
41 Jereb *et al.*, 2014). However, new studies suggest that the latter corresponds to *O. insularis*  
42 (Lima *et al.*, 2017).

43 *O. maya* contributes more than 60% to the fishing production of octopus in the  
44 region (Velázquez-Abunader *et al.*, 2013). It is an endemic species of the continental shelf  
45 of the Yucatan Peninsula. Although it has been observed to be abundant both in shallow (<  
46 30 m) and deeper waters (up to 60 m), but more abundant in shallow waters (DOF, 2016).  
47 The species displays a heterogeneous distribution, having the greatest abundance in the  
48 coasts in front of the State of Campeche, predominantly composed of small individuals,  
49 while the largest individuals are found in front of the State of Yucatan (Cabrera-Vázquez *et al.*  
50 2012; Gamboa-Álvarez *et al.*, 2015). A more recent study suggests that perhaps two  
51 closely related sub-stocks of *O. maya* exist in the region: the first occupies the western  
52 coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, where reproduction exhibits a clear seasonality with a peak  
53 during the winter and, a second stock located at the north of the Yucatan peninsula, where  
54 spawners can be found all year round (Ángeles-González *et al.*, 2017).

55 The most recent stock assessment indicates that *O. maya* is exploited at the  
56 "maximum level" (i.e. close to the maximum sustainable yield) with annual landings of

57 more than 10,000 tones (Jurado-Molina, 2010). In order to maintain production levels, the  
58 authority established the minimum legal size of 11 cm mantle length, a closed fishing  
59 season (from January to July), and total allowable catch (TAC). The TAC is obtained from  
60 biomass estimations using surplus production models based on the catch landings reports  
61 (DOF, 2016).

62 *Octopus maya* is captured by two fleets: a small-scale fleet (boats of 5 to 12 m  
63 length) that operates in shallow waters (up to 20 m depth) and a medium-scale fleet (boats  
64 from 15 to 25 m length) that operates in areas deeper than 20 m. Both fleets use small boats  
65 4 m in length (locally known as "alijos") which are drifted by the currents to catch octopus  
66 (Salas *et al.*, 2008). These fleets use the same fishing gears and operate in different fishing  
67 grounds but sometimes overlap due to the accessibility and high abundance of the resource  
68 in those areas (Salas *et al.*, 2008; Gamboa-Álvarez *et al.*, 2015). Likewise, as a result of  
69 easy access and low monitoring costs, most of the studies on biology and stock assessment  
70 for *O. maya* refers to animals found in the shallow waters of those fishing grounds (<30 m)  
71 (Cabrera-Vázquez *et al.*, 2012; Velázquez-Abunader *et al.*, 2013; Avila-Poveda *et al.*,  
72 2016; Ángeles-González *et al.*, 2017; Duarte *et al.*, 2018), however, producing a dearth of  
73 information on the fraction of the population that occupies areas from 30 m to 60 m depth.  
74 The private sector of Mexico has expressed its intention to expand the fishing grounds for  
75 the medium-scale fleet to deeper waters in view to its economic importance (DOF, 2016). It  
76 is for that reason that the objective of this study is to evaluate the available biomass of *O.*  
77 *maya* and learn more about its distribution in coastal areas in the Campeche Bank where the  
78 depth is between 30 m and 60 m, to provide basic information for its management.

## 79 **Material and methods**

### 80 *Study area*

81 The study area, known as the Campeche Bank, is located in the coastal zone at the northeast  
82 of the Yucatan Peninsula, between 30 m and 60 m depth (Figure 1). The area is strongly  
83 influenced by the Yucatan current, which produces a stationary upwelling, from May to  
84 September, but there is vertical mixing during winter due to strong north winds from 70 km  
85  $\text{h}^{-1}$  to more than 100  $\text{km h}^{-1}$  (from October to January) (Enriquez *et al.*, 2010; Salas-Pérez *et*  
86 *al.*, 2012). The average temperature is 20° C but and a range of 17° C to 30° C. The  
87 upwelling enhances the concentration of nutrients resulting in a high biological  
88 productivity.

### 89 *Field work*

90 Four research cruise ships independent of the fishery were conducted from May 2016 to  
91 January 2017. Each cruise was made on board of a vessel of the medium-scale fleet with  
92 landing port in Progreso, Yucatan. An average of 29 ( $\pm 2$ ) sampling sites were surveyed per  
93 cruise ship; the distance between sampling sites was 28 km in May-June, and 14 km in the  
94 other cruises (Figure 1). Sampling sites were systematically aligned in the study area, using  
95 *spsample* function of *sp* package (Pebesma & Bivand, 2005) of the programming language  
96 R (R Core Team, 2017). During the season closed for fishing, two cruises were carried out,  
97 May-June 2016 and July 2016, just when the fishing seasons started. Two additional cruises  
98 were placed on December 2016 and January 2017, to represent the end of the fishing  
99 season.

100 The survey and collection of organisms were done through regular fishing  
101 operations. The vessel was a mother ship of five “alijos” (4 m length); each carrying two  
102 rustic poles made of bamboo of approximately 8 m length, one in the bow and other in the  
103 stern of the boat. Each pole had 2 nylon lines tied with fishes (*Diplectrum sp* and *Haemulon*  
104 *sp.*) as bait, which were dragged at the sea floor as the boat drifted at sea (Jurado-Molina,  
105 2010; Velázquez-Abunader *et al.*, 2013; Gamboa-Álvarez *et al.*, 2015; Markaida *et al.*,  
106 2017). Each “alijo” had a global positioning system (GPS) to track the course and thus  
107 measure the swept area. The initial and final times were recorded to standardize the  
108 effective fishing effort in three hours and the sampling effort in five "alijos" per sampling  
109 site per day. In each sampling site, the total number of octopuses captured ( $N_i$ ), the total  
110 weight of the catch ( $TW$ ) and the individual weight of octopuses ( $W_i$ ) were recorded.

#### 111 ***Area of influence of sampling sites***

112 In order to have a better approach to the potential area of influence of each sampling site,  
113 Thiessen (or Voroni) polygons were deployed (Brassel & Reif, 1979), to calculate the area  
114 of each polygon and, finally, obtain the representative area of each sampling site in relation  
115 to the total sample area. Thiessen polygons and the area of each polygon were calculated  
116 with the ArcMap 9.2 software (Sawatzky *et al.*, 2009).

#### 117 ***Biomass assessment***

118 Four methods were used to calculate the *O. maya* biomass per research cruise: stratified  
119 random method (Cochran, 1980; Scheaffer *et al.*, 1987), swept area method (Pierce &  
120 Guerra, 1994), geo-statistical biomass model (Rivoirard *et al.*, 2008), and an unpublished  
121 method of weighted swept area, whose advantage is that it does not assume *a priori*



122 homogeneous distribution of the resource in the whole area, as the traditional swept area  
 123 method does (Pierce & Guerra, 1994).

124 The stratified random method uses the frequencies distribution of total weight of the  
 125 catch, which is classified by strata (Cochran, 1980). This method requires to calculate the  
 126 number of strata (expressed in kg) by means of the Sturges rule (Nevárez-Martínez *et al.*,  
 127 2000) which calculates the number of intervals of the catch, starting from the minimum and  
 128 maximum catches recorded in each cruise. Equations to calculate biomass were the  
 129 following. The average counting (expressed in kg) in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  stratum ( $\bar{y}_i$ ) was:

$$130 \quad \bar{y}_i = \frac{1}{N} \sum y_{ji} \quad (1)$$

131 The variance estimator for  $\bar{y}_i$ :

$$132 \quad \hat{V}(\bar{y}_i) = s_i^2 = \frac{1}{N_i} \sum_{j=1}^L (y_{ji} - \bar{y}_i)^2 \quad (2)$$

133 The estimator of the total size of the population expressed in kg:

$$134 \quad N\bar{y}_{st} = \sum_{i=1}^L N_i \bar{y}_i \quad (3)$$

135 The variance estimator for the total population size  $\hat{V}(N\bar{y}_{st})$ :

$$136 \quad \hat{V}(N\bar{y}_{st}) = \sum_{i=1}^L N_i^2 \left( \frac{N_i - n_i}{N_i} \right) \left( \frac{S_i^2}{n_i} \right) \quad (4)$$

137 The confidence interval ( $p = 0.95$ ) for the population size:

$$138 \quad N\bar{y}_{st} \pm 2 \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^L N_i^2 \left( \frac{N_i - n_i}{N_i} \right) \left( \frac{S_i^2}{n_i} \right)} \quad (5)$$

139 where  $N_i$  is the total number of sampled units ( $\text{km}^2$ ) in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  stratum,  $L$  is the number of  
 140 strata,  $n_i$  is the number of sampling units ( $\text{km}^2$ ) in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  stratum,  $y_i$  is the average weight in  
 141 the  $i^{\text{th}}$  stratum, and  $S_i^2$  is the variance of the counting in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  stratum.

142 The swept area method considers the catch in weight (biomass) obtained from the  
 143 area swept by the “alijos”, assuming a homogeneous distribution of the resource in the  
 144 study zone, with a single estimate for the whole area sampled.

145 Total biomass ( $B_T$ ) was calculated with the next equation (Pierce & Guerra, 1994):

$$146 \quad B_T = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( Y_t \frac{A_t}{a_t} \right) \quad (6)$$

147 with variance:

$$148 \quad \hat{V}(B_T) = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{A_t^2 m_t S_t^2}{a_t^2} \right) \quad (7)$$

149 where  $Y_t$  is the total catch in the study area,  $A_t$  is the total area of study,  $a_t$  is the cumulated  
 150 area swept of the five “alijos”,  $S_t^2$  is the variance of the total catch in the study area,  $m_t$  is  
 151 the number of fishing trials and  $\hat{V}(B_T)$  is the variance of the total biomass. In this case,  $a_i$   
 152 represented the area swept by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  “alijo”. Therefore, the total swept area  $a_t$  (expressed in  
 153 km<sup>2</sup>) for each fishing trial was calculated as:

$$154 \quad a_t = \sum_{i=1}^5 a_i \quad (8)$$

155  $a_i$  was calculated with the following equation:

$$156 \quad a_i = D_i \times LJ_i \quad (9)$$

157 where  $D_i$  is the distance traveled by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  “alijo”, obtained from the track recorded by the  
 158 GPS and  $LJ_i$  is the length between the extreme tips of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  “alijo’s” bamboo poles ( $LJ_i = 8$   
 159 m). Finally, total abundance ( $N_T$ ) for each cruise ship was calculated with the equation:

$$160 \quad N_T = \frac{B_T}{TW} \quad (10)$$

161 where  $\overline{TW}$  is the average weight of the octopus as obtained from the biological sampling.  
162 For the estimation of  $B_T$  the assumptions were the same as for the swept area method  
163 (details of the method are contained in Csirke 1989).

164 In order to estimate the biomass using the geo-statistical biomass model, we  
165 proceeded to calculate the catch per unit of area (CPUA, expressed in number of octopuses  
166 per km<sup>2</sup>), obtained by dividing the number of octopuses captured by the corresponding area  
167 at each sampling site. The spatial correlation of CPUA was calculated by means of  
168 omnidirectional empiric variograms, which measures the correlation between the variance  
169 generated by all the differences of the data pairs separated by a distance previously  
170 established, with that distance ( $h$ ) (Hernández-Flores *et al.*, 2015). Thereafter, a kriging  
171 interpolation technique was applied to obtain the densities throughout the interpolation  
172 nodes between the neighboring values (Cressie, 1992) and produce a spatial structure that  
173 depends on the spatial arrangement of the population (Webster & Oliver, 2007).

174 The empirical variograms were obtained with the equation:

$$175 \quad \gamma(h) = \frac{1}{2N(h)} \sum_{i=1}^{N(h)} [C(x_i) - C(x_i + h)]^2 \quad (11)$$

176 where  $\gamma(h)$  is the variance for  $h$  distance,  $N(h)$  is the number of paired observations  
177 separated by distance  $h$ ,  $C(x_i)$  is the CPUA observed at site  $x_i$  and  $C(x_i + h)$  is the CPUA  
178 observed at any another site separated  $h$  distance from site  $x_i$ . The obtained interpolations  
179 were divided into CPUA intervals, obtaining an average value for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  interval ( $\overline{CPUA}_i$ ).  
180 The total abundance of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  interval ( $N_i$ ) was obtained from multiplying the ( $\overline{CPUA}_i$ ) by  
181 total area covered by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  interval, so the total abundance ( $N_T$ ) was obtained with the  
182 equation:

$$183 \quad N_T = \sum_{i=1}^n \overline{CPUA}_i \times A_i \quad (12)$$

184 and the biomass was obtained with the equation:

$$185 \quad B_T = N_T \overline{TW} \quad (13)$$

186 The weighted swept area method, proposed in this study, consisted in analyzing the catches  
 187 registered by the five “alijos” that operated at every  $i^{th}$  sampling site ( $a_i$ ) as the only datum  
 188 for that site. The total biomass was obtained by adding the individual biomass estimated in  
 189 each sampling site. Thus, the biomass was obtained with the next equation:

$$190 \quad B_T = \sum_{i=1}^n Y_i \left( \frac{A_i}{a_i} \right) \quad (14)$$

191 With standard deviation:

$$192 \quad \widehat{SD}(B_T) = \sqrt{\sum (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2} \left( \frac{A_i}{a_i} \right) \quad (15)$$

193 where  $Y_i$  is the total catch in the  $i^{th}$  stratum,  $Y$  is the average catch in the study area,  $A_i$  is the  
 194 total area in the  $i^{th}$  stratum,  $a_i$  is the swept area in that stratum and  $\widehat{SD}(B_T)$  is the standard  
 195 deviation of total biomass. Abundance was again calculated with equation 10.

196 For the interpretation of the weighted swept area method, it was necessary to  
 197 modify the assumption of densities homogeneity, so the total catch  $Y_i$  of the distribution  
 198 area  $A_i$  was specific for every sampling site. Another assumption was that each “alijo” had  
 199 the same probability of catching the octopus at a fixed radius of action such that the  
 200 sampling effort could be extrapolated to a constant area  $a$ . The swept area is considered as  
 201 the area covered by each “alijo” drifting at each sampling site. Finally, within the area, each

202 unit of sampling effort has the efficiency to catch octopuses every moment only a fraction  
 203 of the population.

#### 204 *Spatial distribution pattern*

205 To describe the type of pattern distribution of *O. maya*, the equation proposed by Guerra  
 206 (1981) was modified. The average probability of octopus presence per sampling site was  
 207 estimated, as well as the type of distribution. Then, the parameters  $p$  and  $k$  of the negative  
 208 binomial distribution were estimated.

$$209 \quad P(x/k) = \left( \frac{k(k+1)(k+2)\dots(k+x-1)}{x!} \right) p^x q^k \quad (16)$$

210 To demonstrate if octopus's distribution was random (i.e. homogeneous in the study  
 211 area) or if it formed patches (i.e. aggregate in some places), a simple random distribution  
 212 was created assuming the negative binomial distribution. According to this method, the  
 213 estimation of the parameter of the negative binomial distribution ( $k$ ) could be:  $K_1 = \bar{x}^2/S^2 -$   
 214  $\bar{x}$ , testing some of the following conditions: if  $\bar{x}$  value was low, then  $K/\bar{x} > 6$ , if  $\bar{x}$  was high  
 215 then  $K > 13$ , and if  $\bar{x}$  value was moderate then  $\left( \frac{(k+\bar{x})(k+2)}{\bar{x}} \right) \geq 15$ .

216 If none of these conditions occurs,  $K_1$  is inadequate then, it is calculated with:

$$217 \quad K_2 \log_{10} \left( 1 + \frac{\bar{x}}{K_2} \right) = \log_{10} \left( \frac{N}{f_0} \right) \quad (17)$$

218 in any case,  $p = \bar{x}/K$  (19)

219 Once the parameters were calculated, to verify if the distribution was in patch, a  
 220 goodness-of-fit test was applied between the distribution function of the total sample and  
 221 the theoretical negative binomial distribution (Zar, 1999).

## 222 **Results**

### 223 ***Biomass***

224 The coefficient of variation (CV) for the biomass obtained with the four methods was lower  
225 for the cruise ship of May-June (CV = 0.12) and higher for January (CV = 0.26). The areas  
226 of influence for each sampling site determined by the Thiessen polygons ranged from 60 to  
227 940 km<sup>2</sup> with an average of 242 km<sup>2</sup>. The lower biomass was calculated for the cruise ship  
228 of May-June (47.3 ± 6.8 t), while the highest was estimated for December (141.22 ± 12.7 t)  
229 (Table 1). Of the four models, the geo-statistical biomass model consistently resulted in the  
230 lowest values in the four cruise ships, while the other three methods produced results more  
231 alike. This is so because geostatistic analysis assumes a heterogeneous distribution pattern  
232 generated by the parameters of the semivariogram, through which the minimum size of  
233 each pixel is calculated. On the other hand, the other methods extrapolate the average  
234 values of biomass to units of areas wider than those of the geostatistical model. The  
235 precision of the geostatistic method will depend on how well it represents the real spatial  
236 distribution of the abundance within a reduced coverage relative to the other methods. The  
237 geo-statistical biomass model estimations were between 22 % and 47% lower than that of  
238 the other models (Table 1). Similar pattern was observed for densities; however, the  
239 increases from one month to the next were not as marked as in biomass. The highest  
240 densities were recorded in the cruise ships of May-June and July 2016 (13.4 and 20.5  
241 octopus km<sup>2</sup>, respectively), while the lowest densities were observed in the cruise ships of  
242 May-June 2016 and January 2017 (7.6 and 10.3 octopus km<sup>2</sup>, respectively). Similarly, the  
243 geo-statistical biomass model resulted in the lowest values of density in the four cruise  
244 ships and the weighted swept area method produced the highest values (Table 1).

## 245 **Distribution**

246 The value of the parameters  $p$  and  $k$  ( $k_2 = 2$ ,  $p = 0.5$ ) of the negative binomial distribution  
247 showed that *O. maya* presented a patchy distribution (Figure 2), suggesting that the  
248 abundance increases according to distance in an area specific and then begins to decrease at  
249 higher distances. This is plausible if we consider that the study area deepens as the latitude  
250 increases. So, in the shallower water the abundance increases.

251 The cruises made before the fishing season (May-June and July 2016) recorded the  
252 highest densities and abundances in the south and southwest of the study area (Figure 3).  
253 The octopuses displayed a heterogenous distribution throughout the study area with lower  
254 CPUE overall in the cruises carried out at the end of the fishing season (December 2016  
255 and January 2017); nevertheless, areas of aggregation continued appearing in the analysis,  
256 although with lower densities than in May-June and July of 2016 (Figure 3).

## 257 **Discussion**

258 Many cephalopod fisheries are managed through total allowable catches, which are usually  
259 based on the evaluation of the biomass before the start of each fishing season (Nevárez-  
260 Martínez *et al.*, 2000). This is the case of *O. maya*, although frequently the TAC is  
261 exceeded in some seasons (Jurado-Molina, 2010). This is mainly due to their reproductive  
262 strategies that in many cases are semelparous, as well as their short longevity and rapid  
263 growth. These biological characteristics make the structure of populations to consist of  
264 intra-annual cohorts that are replaced year after year (Hernández-Herrera *et al.*, 1998;  
265 Arreguín-Sánchez *et al.*, 2000). That is why it is important to calculate the biomass of  
266 exploited cephalopods at different moments during the fishing season, since this will reveal

267 the stock size, recruitment periods and the time when the biomass increases (i.e. stock  
268 reduction analysis and proportional escapement analysis) (Rosenberg *et al.*, 1990).

269 This was the first study to determine the biomass and distribution of the *O. maya*  
270 carried out in the north eastern zone of the Campeche Bank between 30 m and 60 m depth.  
271 Most techniques to calculate biomass use catch and fishing effort data, which are not  
272 always available as is in the case of *O. maya* fishery. However, this study used a systematic  
273 sampling design, independent of the fishery, which has the advantage of covering a larger  
274 distribution area, controlling the sampling effort (Pierce & Guerra, 1994; Hernández-Flores  
275 *et al.*, 2015).

276 Given that there are no previous studies on the biomass of octopus for the fraction  
277 of the population that occurs more than 30 m deep in the study area, this study used four  
278 methods to analyse the data, with particular characteristics and assumptions. Our results  
279 show that differences in the biomass estimates from each of the four methods (CV < 26.5%  
280 per cruise) could be biologically relevant and important consideration for managers (Pierce  
281 & Guerra, 1994). These differences in the results could be related to factors such as the  
282 distribution pattern of the resource and the sampling design; for example, in the swept area  
283 method, the weighted swept area method and the geo-statistical biomass method, the  
284 distance between sampling sites is key so as not to exceed the area of extrapolation per  
285 sampling site, while in the stratified method the number of intervals is key in the estimate.  
286 It is instructive to apply the Sturges rule from the start of the analysis (Labastida, 1991).  
287 The assumption of heterogeneous distribution of the resource is perfectly applicable to the  
288 benthic organisms that remain in the same habitat as long as the conditions are favourable,  
289 and that present a patchy distribution, such as was the case of *O. maya*.



290 In resources such as the jumbo squid from the Gulf of California, biomass has been  
291 calculated through the stratified random method and the swept area method, showing  
292 significant differences in the results of both (Nevárez-Martínez *et al.*, 2000). These  
293 discrepancies were attributed to the type of stratification used in each method, since the  
294 randomized method stratified the catch data, while the swept area method stratified the data  
295 spatially (Nevárez-Martínez *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, in addition to the method, it is  
296 important that fisheries managed with total allowable catches apply the precautionary  
297 approach considering the most conservative result (Nevárez-Martínez *et al.*, 2000), which  
298 in the case of the *O. maya* should be applied when estimating in the fishing grounds. This  
299 precautionary approach should be applied in the areas with the greatest fishing effort.

300 The distribution of the *O. maya* has not been thoroughly studied; most studies have  
301 covered the immediately coastal zone with the highest concentration of octopuses between  
302 0 and 30 m depth. Some studies have suggested that the *O. maya* has a heterogeneous  
303 distribution in the shallow waters of the Campeche Bank (< 30 m depth) (Solís-Ramírez &  
304 Chávez, 1986; Gamboa-Álvarez *et al.*, 2015) as a response to changes in the environment  
305 like the effect of the wind during winter or the type of substratum. Cephalopods are  
306 organisms highly sensitive to environmental changes, so they can carry out active  
307 migrations in search of favourable conditions to continue their life cycle (Pierce *et al.*,  
308 2008). In this study, although in general, *O. maya* showed a patchy distribution, during the  
309 December and January cruises it was more randomly, with few aggregations of low CPUA  
310 values. This type of distribution has been reported by Gamboa-Álvarez *et al.* (2015) in the  
311 shallow waters of the Yucatan Peninsula, probably due to the dynamics of the ocean in the  
312 region that includes significant changes in temperature (Enriquez *et al.*, 2010), which is a

313 key factor for the biological processes of the species (Ángeles-González *et al.*, 2017). In  
314 this sense, it has been reported that *O. maya* has a low capacity to adapt to high variations  
315 of temperature, producing a significant negative impact on its survival rate and abundance  
316 (Noyola *et al.*, 2013). As shown by Hermosilla *et al.* (2011), there is a negative correlation  
317 between sea bottom temperature and abundance of *O. vulgaris* in the Mediterranean Sea. In  
318 consequence, temperature changes limit octopus distribution in deeper waters, which seems  
319 to be the origin of the distribution observed in this study.

320 As occurs in other cephalopods like inshore squids and some octopod species  
321 including the common octopus (*O. vulgaris*), *O. maya* shows a great plasticity in its life  
322 cycle, which gives it a great ability to adapt to the prevailing conditions where it lives (Pecl  
323 and Jackson 2008; Ramos *et al.*, 2008; Otero *et al.*, 2009), but there are no studies that  
324 correlate environmental variables with the biomass and distribution of *O. maya*. Therefore,  
325 it seems that the home range of this species should be well specified, which could be a  
326 priority for future research. However, spatial differences in population structure of this  
327 species have been evaluated. Authors such as Velázquez-Abunader *et al.* (2013) indicated  
328 that the landings of the medium-scale fleet (which fishes in deeper waters than the small-  
329 scale fleet) were mainly composed of large organisms, so that the stratum of the population  
330 that occurs in deeper waters could be composed mostly of mature individuals of the  
331 spawning stock. Thus, this fraction of the stock could contribute significantly to the  
332 recruitment of the entire population, even to the fraction that is currently exploited (< 30 m  
333 depth), so it is suggested to avoid the exploitation of this resource in deeper areas. In  
334 addition, the methods used in this study could be applied to calculate the biomass in the  
335 most intense fishing areas, as long as a stratified sampling design is applied. Therefore,

336 future work should make an assessment of the biomass and distribution of *O. maya* in  
337 shallower fishing areas.

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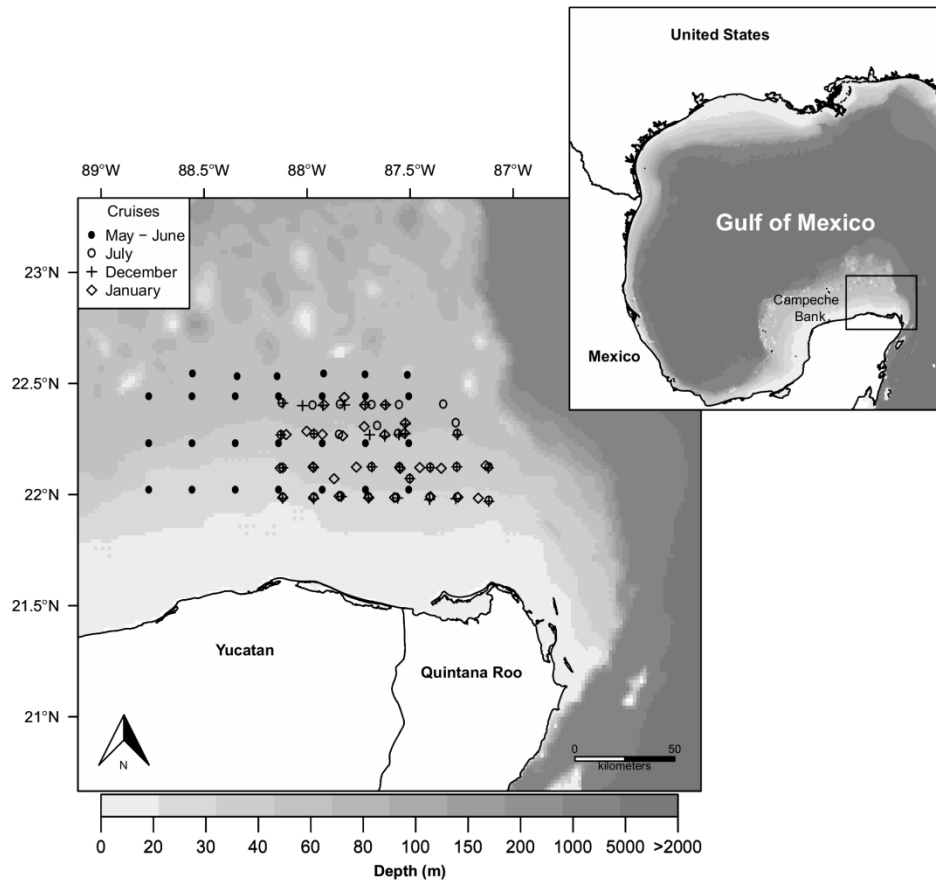
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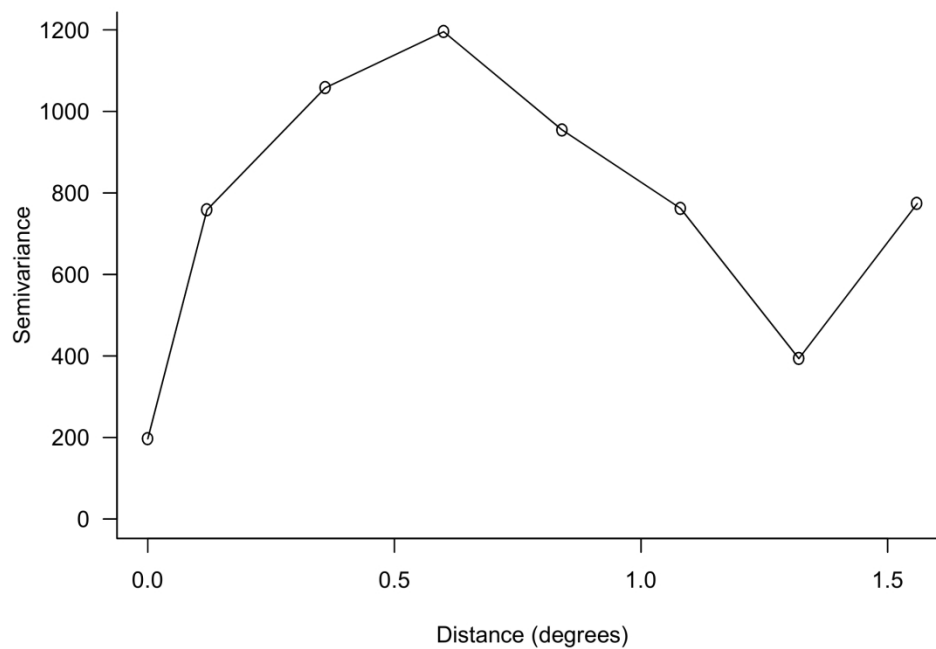
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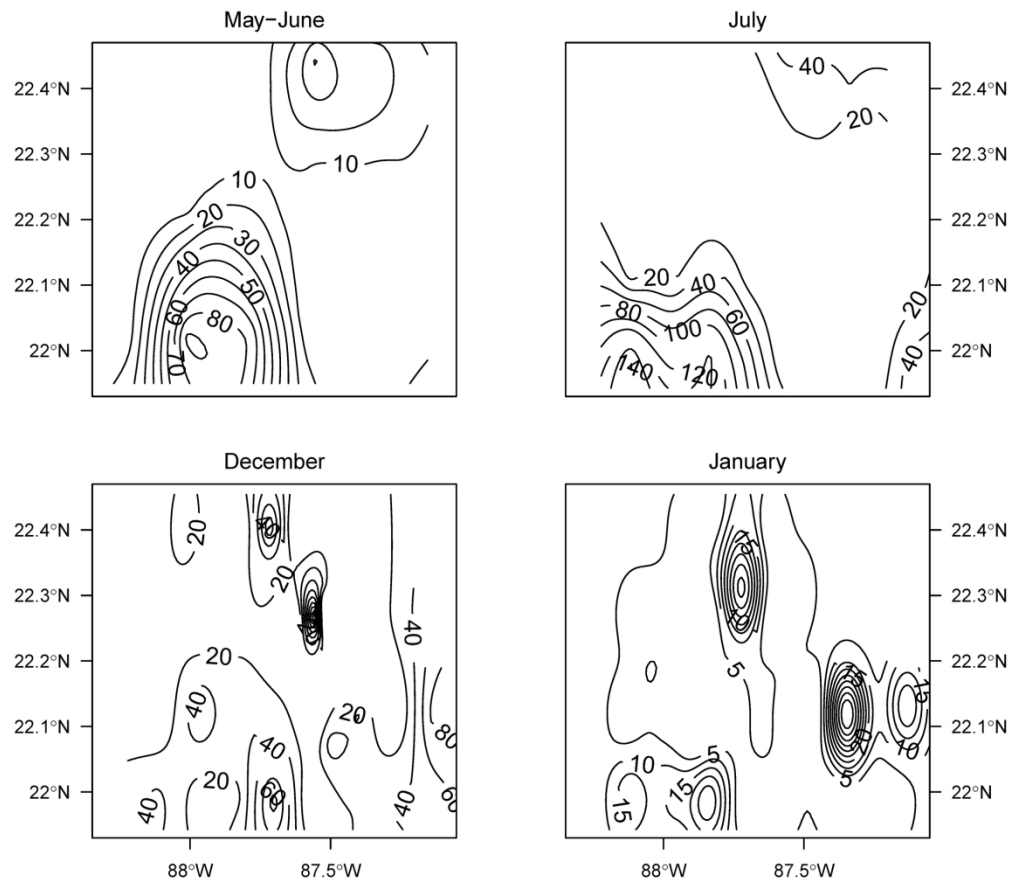
Study area for fishing of the Red octopus (*Octopus maya*) to the East of Campeche Bank, Mexico.

182x173mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Semivariogram analysis of the abundances (CPUA; Org./km<sup>2</sup>) of the Red octopus (*Octopus maya*) in the north eastern Campeche Bank, Mexico. The behavior indicated a grouped type distribution

185x144mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Spatiotemporal distribution of the Catch Per Unit Area (CPUA: Org./km<sup>2</sup>) of the Red octopus (*Octopus maya*) in the north eastern Campeche Bank, Mexico

192x168mm (300 x 300 DPI)

**Table 1.** Estimated values of the biomass per cruise  $\pm$  standard error (SE) and the density  $\pm$  standard error (SE) of the Red octopus (*Octopus maya*) in the north eastern Campeche Bank. The biomasses were standardized to a total area of 5000 km<sup>2</sup>. CV: coefficient of variation of the estimates by cruise of the four methods.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Biomass (tonnes)</b>	<b><math>\pm</math> SE</b>	<b>Density (Org./km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b><math>\pm</math> SE</b>
May-June 2016	CV = 12.5%		CV = 12.5%	
Stratified	47.7	1.0	9.5	0.2
Swept area	50.0	8.8	9.7	1.7
Geostatistic	39.0	8.6	7.6	1.6
Weighted	52.8	9.0	10.3	1.7
July 2016	CV = 18.3%		CV = 17.7%	
Stratified	103.2	0.9	19.8	0.2
Swept area	94.8	12.5	18.4	2.4
Geostatistic	68.3	12.5	13.4	2.4
Weighted	105.6	15.3	20.5	2.9
December 2017	CV = 19.3%		CV = 19.5%	
Stratified	149.5	14.1	22.5	2.1
Swept area	161.1	13.7	24.0	2.0
Geostatistic	100.8	10.4	15.0	1.5
Weighted	153.4	12.6	22.9	1.9
January 2017	CV = 26.3%		CV = 25.4%	
Stratified	71.1	14.5	10.2	2.0
Swept area	70.0	9.9	9.5	1.4
Geostatistic	37.7	9.6	5.4	1.3
Weighted	70.9	11.2	9.6	1.5