

4.3.2. Spatial distribution and biomasses

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In 2014, MOCNESS sampling intensity in the Norwegian sector was increased. We have excluded sampling from 100- 0m by the WP2 gear and concentrated only in taking bottom to surface samples. In addition, the number of WP2 stations was also reduced to allow more MOCNESS hauls as it provides valuable biomass depth distribution profiles. The Russian sector was monitored by Juday plankton net. Previous investigations show that the total zooplankton biomass by the three gears is comparable

Biomass distribution based on PINRO/IMR joint survey in autumn 2014 is shown in Figure 4.3.2.1. The northern areas are not monitored in 2014 due to ice cover. The average biomass value for 2014 (6.7 gm^{-2} (232 stations)) is not directly comparable with 2013 (5.16^{-2} dry wt.) as the area cover differed in the two years. The general biomass distribution pattern however, is rather similar in both years except for the higher biomass ($>10 \text{ gm}^{-2}$ dry wt.) in the west in 2014. There are large areas with very little plankton ($< 2 \text{ gm}^{-2}$) in 2014, somewhat similar to observed in 2013. The low biomass could be due to several reasons, among other, due to high predation pressure from the capelin stock, which has unusually remained high (>3 million tons) for the last 7 years.

Results on *Calanus* abundance from the Fugløy-Bjørnøya section from the western entrance to the Barents Sea seem to indicate a much higher *Calanus finmarchicus* abundance in 2014 compared to 2013, likely contributing to the high biomasses observed in the west.

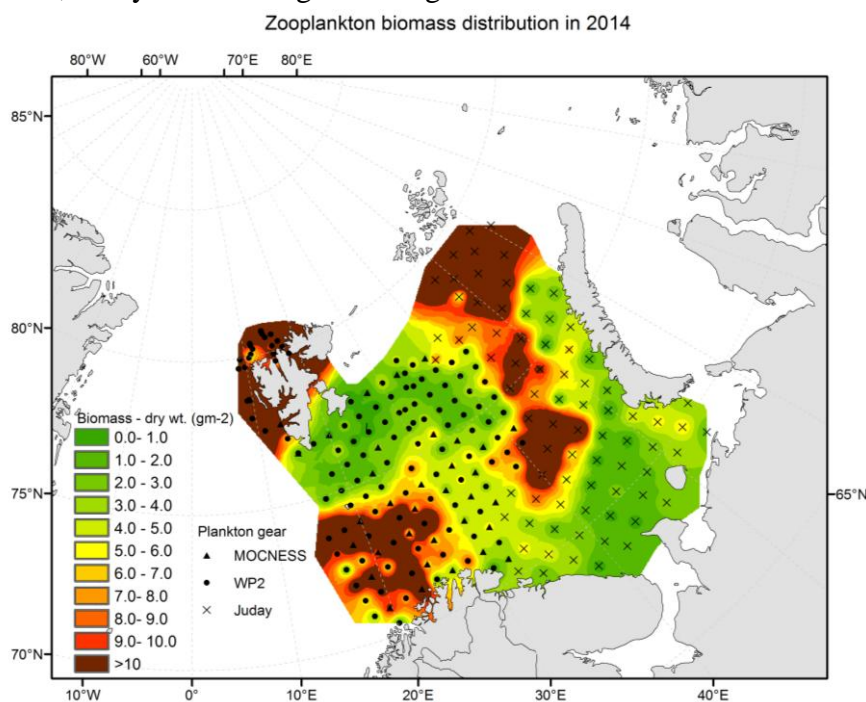


Figure 4.3.2.1. Distribution of zooplankton dry weight (g/m^{-2}) from bottom-0 m in 2014.