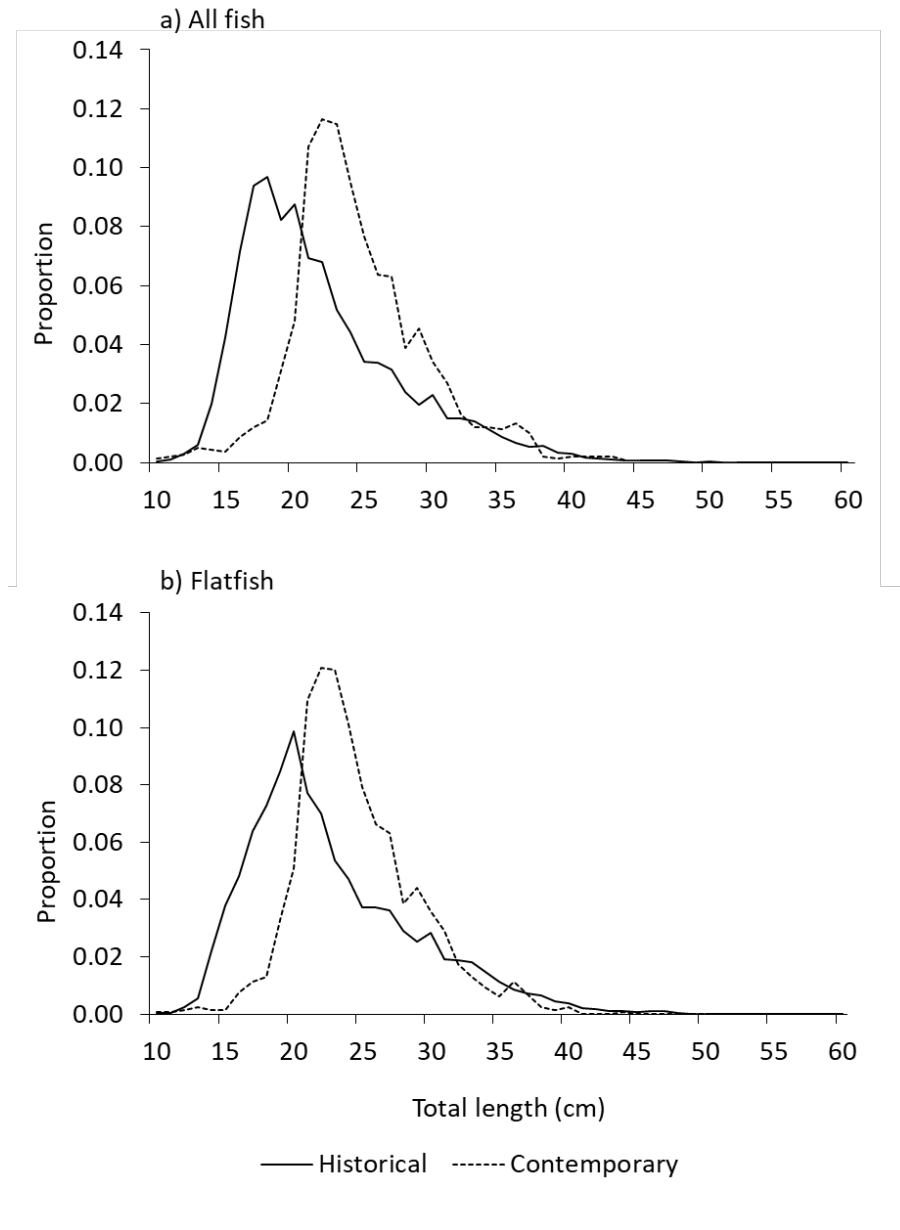**Supplementary Material**

Figure S1. Relative length-frequency distribution of a) all fish and b) flatfish caught in historical (1904-1913) and contemporary surveys (2018-2019).
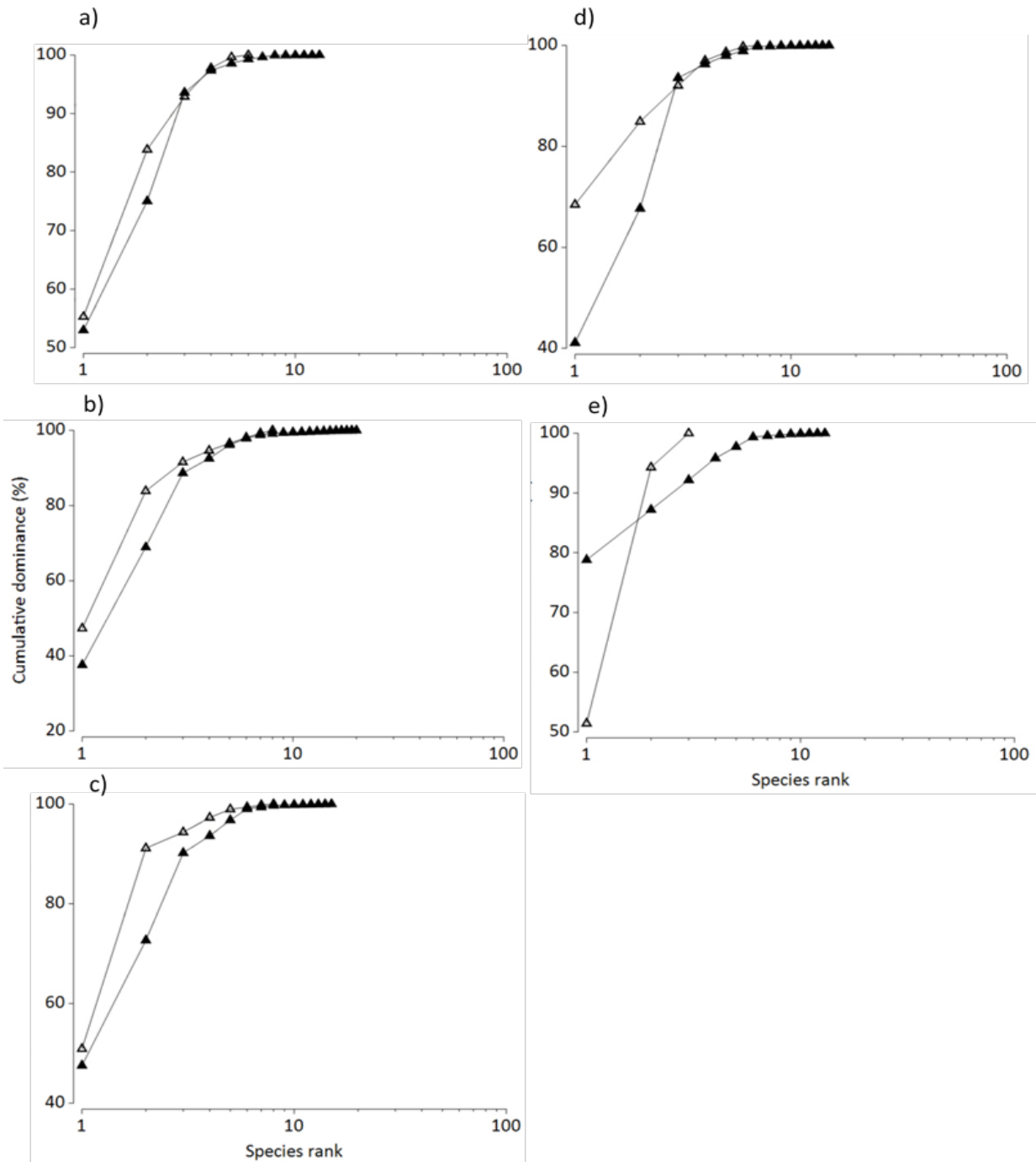
Figure S2. *k*-dominance curves based on the cumulative frequency of numerical abundances of species sampled by historical (▲) and contemporary (△) surveys in a) Alnmouth Bay, b) Blyth Bay, c) Cambois Bay, d) Druridge Bay and e) Skate Roads.

Table S1. Percentage contributions (>1%) of typifying demersal fish species to within-period Bray-Curtis similarity in historical (H) and contemporary (C) surveys by bay using SIMPER analysis.

	Skate roads		Alnmouth Bay		Druridge Bay		Cambois Bay		Blyth Bay	
	H	C	H	C	H	C	H	C	H	C
Plaice	85.1		35.5	12.7	34	20.4	30.4	52.7	52.5	36.5
Dab	8.7	55.2	36.3	42	41.6	68.6	54.6	41.3	33.4	53.3
Grey gurnard	1.3		22.3		19.4		8.8		7.6	
Flounder	3.4	44.8	3.3	36.1		9.4	1.3	3.9	2.9	5.9
Monkfish	1		1.2	7.8	2.2		1.1	1.9	1.6	2.2
Sole			1		1.5		3.5		1.5	1.2
Average within survey similarity	63.6	41	45.1	34.8	52.2	40.3	52.6	50.3	51.5	52.1

Table S2. Percent contributions (%) of demersal fish species to the average within-period dissimilarity in each bay using SIMPER analysis.

Species	Skate roads	Alnmouth Bay	Druridge Bay	Cambois Bay	Blyth Bay
Plaice	64.5	23.8	19.7	13.4	20.1
Dab	7.3	20.5	24.7	20.5	14.7
Grey gurnard	3.4	20.4	18.3	6.4	8.3
Flounder	5.9	7	2.1	4.5	4.1
Monkfish	2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.9
Sole		2	2	4.5	1.8
Turbot	3.1		1		
Average between survey dissimilarity	87.3	78	71.2	51.2	55.9

Table S3. Slopes of the regression of the log numbers against size for all fish, flatfish, dab and plaice in historical (H) and contemporary (C) surveys.

	Period	Slope	S.E.	r^2	Size-range (cm)
All fish	H	-0.07	0.168	0.89	22-87
	C	-0.099	0.144	0.94	22-44
Flatfish	H	-0.09	0.172	0.97	22-60
	C	-0.11	0.15	0.96	22-44
Dab	H	-0.14	0.185	0.97	22-40
	C	-0.21	0.229	0.93	22-33
Plaice	H	-0.085	0.181	0.89	22-63
	C	-0.055	0.094	0.65	22-44