

# Age estimation of the saithe from the North Sea

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Saithe  
*Pollachius virens*

Saithe is found in the North East Atlantic, from Greenland to the Celtic Sea.

This demersal fish lives from the coast to 200 m in depth.

Saithe acquires its sexual maturity between 5 and 10 years old and its longevity is estimated at 25 years at least.



Concave and convex sides of the otolith

Otoliths embedded in polyester resin



Dorso-ventral cut



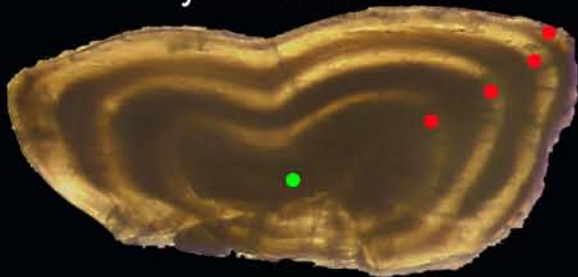
High speed diamond saw



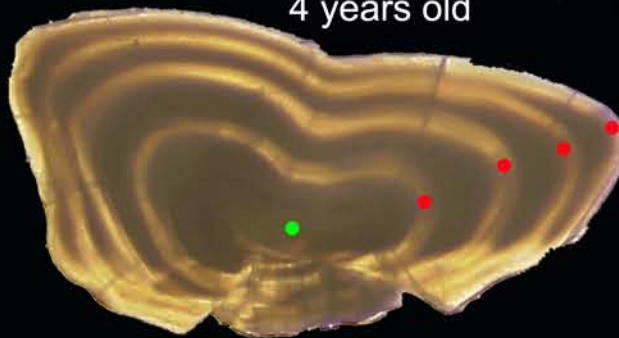
Reading otolith transversal thin section



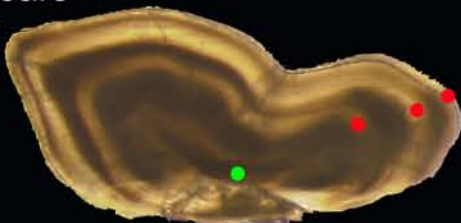
4 years old



4 years old

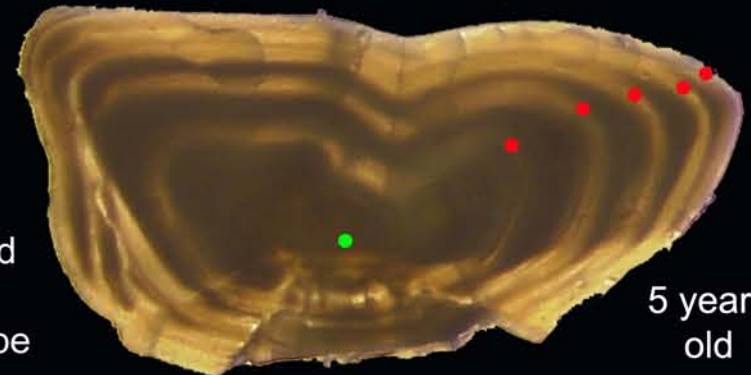


3 years old



**Preparation and observation technique :**

Individual otoliths are embedded in resin, then cutted with an high speed diamond saw. Otolith thin section are examined under a microscope with transmitted light for age estimate.

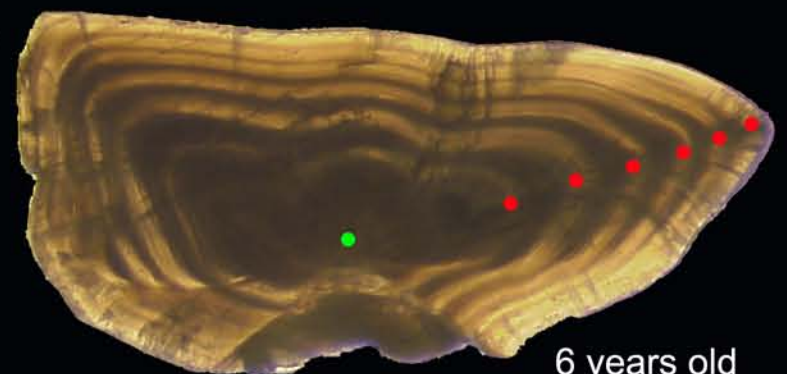


5 years old

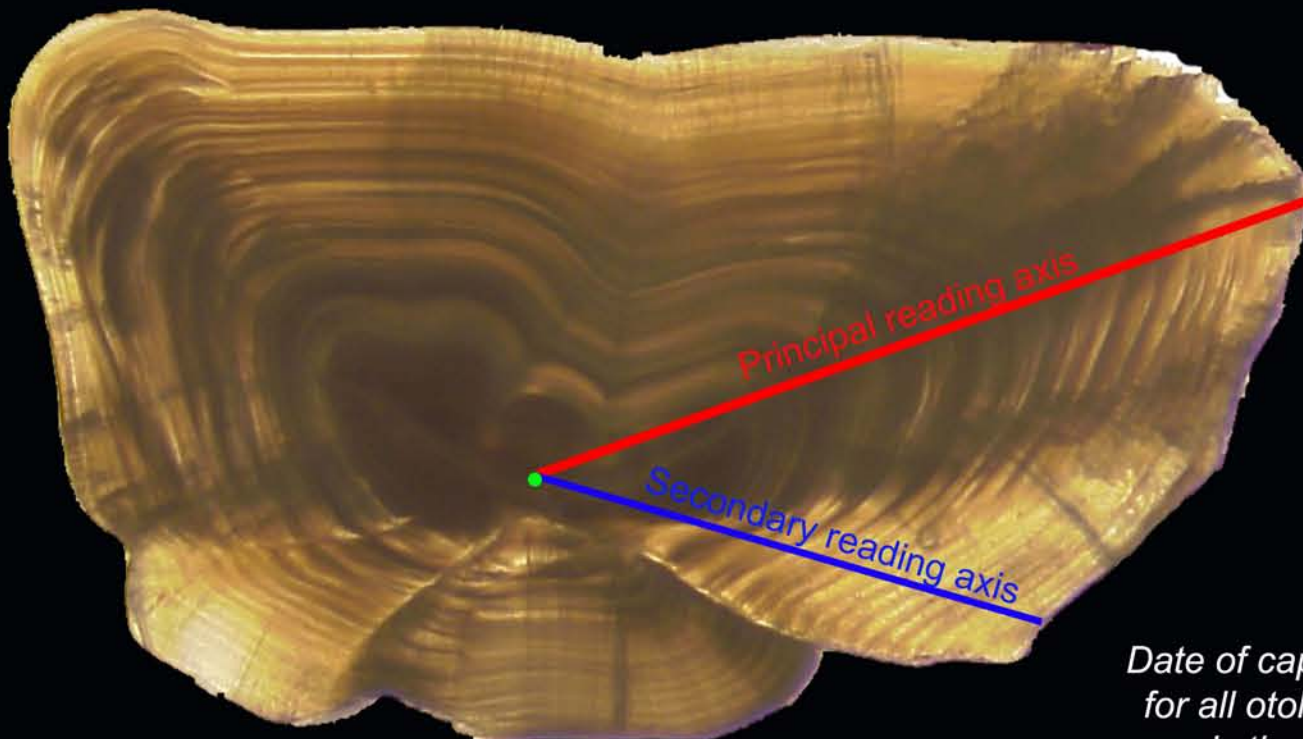
**Age estimation :**

Age is estimated by counting the number of translucent increments, while taking into consideration the unknown date of birth and the date of capture.

By convention in the north-east Atlantic, birth date is fixed at the first January. If the capture date is contained between the 1st January and June 30, marginal translucent increment is counted as an annual increment.

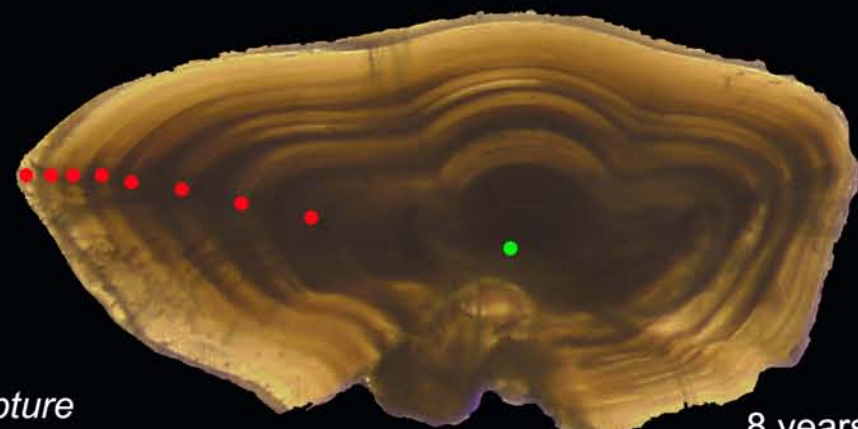


6 years old



13 years old estimated fish otolith

Date of capture for all otoliths is the first quarter.



8 years old