

New semi-pelagic doors net good catches, save fuel

GLOUCESTER, MA – Jim Ford, owner/operator of the 56' Newburyport-based steel dragger Lisa Ann II, has always been ahead of the game in the groundfish fishery. Now, the East Kingston, NH resident has done it again with a pair of Thyboron Type 14 semi-pelagic bottom trawl doors purchased through Trawlworks Inc. in Narragansett, RI.

"I'm not afraid to try something new," said the 37-year-old highline captain. "Two other boats have them, but I'm the only one around here using them."

Ford said he first found out about the doors through articles he read in the European trade journal *Fishing News International*.

"I will never, never tow a set of bottom doors again," he said.

Incredibly, these vertical-shaped steel doors work just off the bottom under tow, yet they still spread the net and its associated ground and scissor cables behind them and keep them on the bottom, even at different towing speeds or with varying amounts of towing wire paid out.

"The doors also don't lay over with really sharp turns," Ford added.

One of Ford's biggest concerns with the new gear was whether he'd be able to catch flounder with the doors off the bottom.

However, the Lisa Ann II, which is also crewed by Acardi Petkuns and Igor Makasins, had excellent flounder catches during its first trip with the new doors.

Ford's catches were even slightly better than those of good friend Carl Bouchard of Seabrook, NH, whose dragger, Stormy Weather, fished alongside. Bouchard and another fisherman friend, Dennis Robillard from York, ME, have already inquired about obtaining the new doors for their vessels.

"I was at a loss for words during their maiden trip," Ford said of the doors. "I just couldn't believe how well they worked."

Other advantages

These doors are also equipped with trawl sensing monitors that help verify how the gear is working.

Peter Klenk of Trawlworks said that the two other vessels using the new doors are homeported in Point Judith, RI and Montauk, NY.

"The three boats have all seen significant fuel consumption reductions," Klenk said. "They're burning less fuel,

and they're also able to tow at higher speeds than with conventional doors and still maintain good performance."

Ford said the new doors tow easier and are more bottom-friendly than his previous set of Thyboron Type 4 doors. They also don't hang down on the hard bottom when rock hopping, won't require \$350 shoe replacements every three to four months, and can even be used for midwater trawling.

Each of the new doors weighs approximately 880 pounds, which is about 180 pounds each less than the Type 4 doors. According to Trawlworks, the cost for a set of Thyboron Type 14 doors of this size ranges from \$10,000 to \$11,000.

"They cost slightly more than the conventional set of bottom trawl doors, but the extra money you save on fuel and shoes will pay for them," Ford said with confidence. "I think these will really take off."

More info on the Thyboron Type 14 doors is available online at <www.thyboron-trawldoor.dk>. Click on the British flag in the upper left-hand corner for the English language version of the site. Or call Trawlworks at (401) 789-3964.

Peter K. Prybot



Peter K. Prybot photo

Capt. Jim Ford alongside one of the pair of Thyboron Type 14 semi-pelagic trawl doors that he now fishes. The Danish-made doors are supplied by Trawlworks Inc. of Narragansett, RI.



Capt. Jim Ford at the command station of his Lisa Ann II.

The 56' Lisa Ann II is based out of Newburyport, MA.



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