Trawlmaster investment is well-justified, says owner

The accuracy and benefit of the Trawlmaster net monitoring system became apparent on *Amethyst's* first tow, the boat's partner David West tells *FN*.

"Having always hauled back the middle wire by 12ft to bring the clump in line with the doors on our previous boats, we naturally followed the same practice. Almost immediately the Trawlmaster was indicating that the middle wire should be shortened by a further 3ft.

"New to both the boat and gear, we initially resisted this instruction, while we checked the boats towing performance and engine speed. With the door and clump sensors showing a combined opening of 56 fathoms – a gear spread we were slightly disappointed with, we decided to ignore our experience and see if the Trawlmaster was *right*.

"The result of heaving back another 3ft was remarkable," he says.

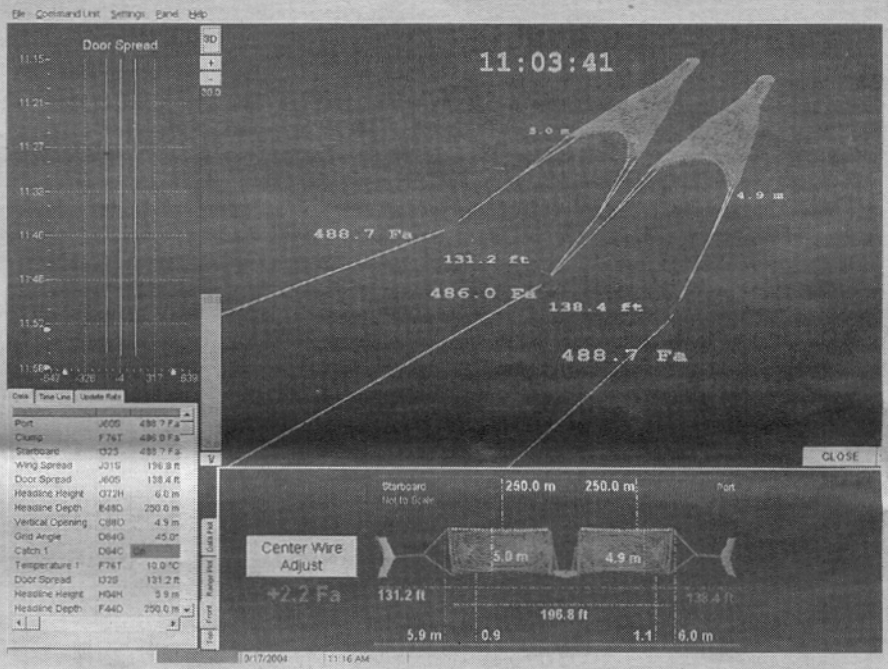
As the gear settled to its new towing position, the door-to-door spread increased steadily to 61 fathoms. Taken over the course of a five-day trip, this adjustment alone will ensure that the gear covers considerably more ground, with consequential catch benefits.

David West believes this, together with the fuel savings these adjustments to warp length will enable, more than justifies the cost of installing the system.

"During our first and second trips, the Trawlmaster system performed consistently well in fairly poor conditions and storm force gales. The picture and data readings continued to work perfectly, with continuous signal contact, which bodes well for the future.

"We couldn't have given the system a tougher test than it has had, so we are delighted with its performance, and ease of operation."

Ralston Johnston and David West



Above: *Amethyst's* is also equipped with the 3D option

Left: The compact sensors are easily incorporated into *Amethyst's* middle roller.

were also impressed monitoring the spread of each net through the distance monitors mounted on each door and the middle roller. The performance of each net could be compared visually and digitally at all times.

As a result, any abnormalities such as a broken sweep or a boulder entering the trawl could be picked up at an early stage, avoiding lost fishing time and associated fuel costs.