

represent stages prior to the fully grown leptocephalus, the five lower figures representing stages of the "metamorphosis." Without entering into the voluminous literature of the subject, we may state that we found a certain regularity as regards the geographical distribution of the various stages. Measuring the forty-four specimens taken by the "Michael Sars," and arranging them according to size (see Fig. 551), we see that they may be divided into two groups, one ranging from 41 to 60 mm., and

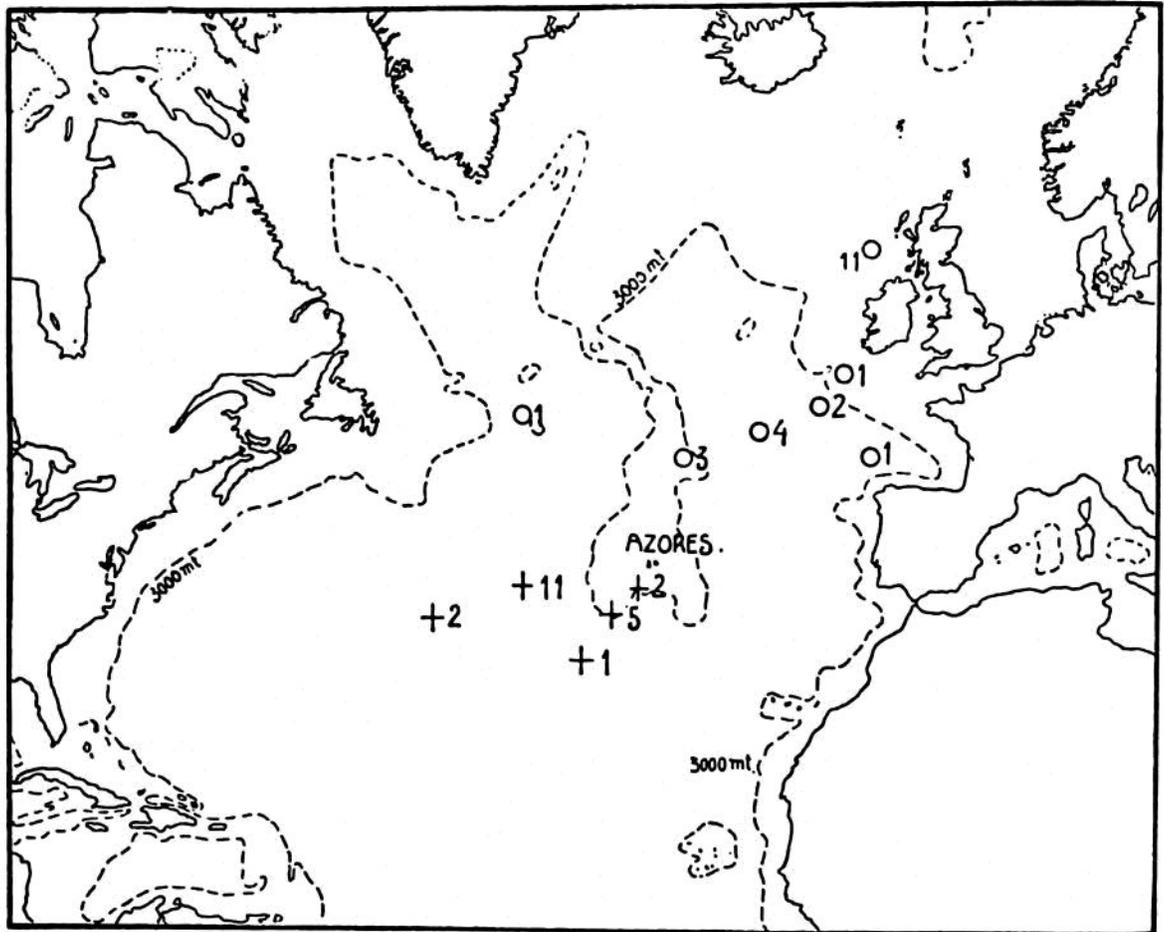


FIG. 552.—NUMBER OF LARVÆ OF THE COMMON EEL CAUGHT DURING THE EXPEDITION.  
 ○ full grown larvæ ; + smaller larvæ.

the other exceeding 60 mm., in length. All the individuals of the former group were taken south of the Azores as denoted by crosses in Fig. 552, while all the specimens longer than 60 mm., *i.e.* the full-grown leptocephali, were taken north of the Azores as denoted by circles.

I presume that this peculiar distribution can only be explained by supposing that the eel spawns south of the Azores, and that the eggs and larvæ pass through their early stages there, being later carried into the northern North Atlantic and towards the coasts of northern Europe by the Gulf Stream. If this be correct, the majority of the young eels found in Europe