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RV CORELLA

Report for Cruise 16/69

Staff:

R C A Bannister
M J Holden
M Macdonald
C L Whiting
D J Peek

Duration:

17-29 October

Aims:

1. Routine trawl survey of North Sea plaice grounds.
2. Dab population investigations.
3. Completion of preliminary studies of comparative feeding of dab and plaice.
4. Completion of plaice liver quality studies.
5. Collection of cod pituitary material for Dr Purdom.
6. Collection of water samples and cod blood for Mr Dutton (Radiobiological Laboratory).
7. Collection of live plaice for Mr Barker (Radiobiological Laboratory).

Narrative

CORELLA left Lowestoft at 1250 hours, 17 October, for the Inner Shoal but almost immediately diverted to investigate distress signals reported from the vicinity of the Cross Sands light vessel. After a fruitless three hour search in hazy conditions in conjunction with the Gorleston lifeboat, CORELLA resumed her previous course. Bottom trawling began at the Inner Shoal at mid-day, 18 October. Between 19 and 23 October fishing continued in calm weather on the following grounds:-

Outer Rough
Tail End

White Bank
P Buoys

Lower Scruff
Clay Deeps

Middle Rough
Bruceys Garden

Weed patches in the area of the north east Dogger prevented work at the Coffee Soil. CORELLA then encountered gale conditions north of the Easternmost Rough on October 24 and dodged for twenty hours but steadily improving weather later permitted work on the following grounds on 25 and 26 October: -

Silver Pit

Cleaver Bank

Botney Gut

Mud Hole.

On 27 October CORELLA entered IJmuiden, where the N.I.C. visited the Dutch laboratory. On the following day trawling at West Hole and Smiths Knoll completed a successful cruise and CORELLA returned to Lowestoft to secure

alongside at 1030 hours, 29 October.

Results

Aims 1 & 2. Plaice and dab population investigations were completed satisfactorily. All plaice and appropriate samples of cod end and cover dabs were counted and measured. Approximately 1000 otoliths were collected for each species.

Aims 3 & 4. At selected stations plaice gonads, gut contents and livers were weighed and preserved, comparable samples from dabs being deep frozen for similar laboratory routines. Although a variety of organisms are distinguishable in the stomach contents of feeding dab and plaice, newly spatted *Macrura* and ophiuroid species are clearly dominant food organisms on many grounds at this time of the year.

Aims 5, 6, 7: Cod pituitary, cod blood, water samples and live plaice were all obtained satisfactorily.

Others: (a) Small numbers of scad, mackerel and herring were caught in the Bløden area and suitable samples deep frozen for Messrs Bolster, Burd and Macer.

(b) Gadoids were abundant in the trawl and cover throughout the cruise. The 1966 and particularly the 1967 year classes of haddock were very prominent, and whiting were no less plentiful. Combined catches for the two species ranged from 4-17 baskets per hour. Whiting were also very numerous in the cover as 'O' and 'I' group fish, together with reasonable numbers of 'O' and 'I' group cod, while *G. minutus* and *G. luscus* were well represented in cover catches taken at Smiths Knoll.

R C A Bannister
3 November 1969

Seen in draft: W Craig

Initialed: AJL

Distribution:

Basic list, plus the following:-

R C A Bannister

M J Holden

M Macdonald

C L Whiting

D J Peek

Mr Christopher Lee