

**CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE,  
LOWESTOFT LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK NR33 OHT**

**CRUISE REPORT: CHARTER PROGRAMME, PRINCE MADOG 3 / 2003**

**STAFF:**

N Bunn (SIC)

M Smith

P Davison

M Doggett (Ocean Sciences, Bangor)

H Rossetti (PEML)

**DURATION:** 17 - 19 March 2003

**LOCATION:** eastern Irish Sea (VIIa)

**AIMS:**

Third in a series of five plankton surveys to:

1. Collect plankton samples to determine plaice egg spawning and production
2. Collect zooplankton samples for copepod production and fish larval feeding studies.

Additional aim;

To collect fish eggs at selected sites for pollutant analysis (M. Doggett)

**NARRATIVE:**

Staff travelled to Menai Bridge by road on 16 March. Survey equipment was installed the following morning and RV Prince Madog sailed at 10:40. Sampling began at 12:10 off Anglesey. Calm seas meant that a total of 55 plankton tows were completed during the next 50 hours. 6 of these tows were undertaken en route between the standard stations, to collect samples of eggs for pollutant studies. Sampling finished at 13:10 on 19 March, and the ship docked back at Menai Bridge at 15:00 when equipment was unloaded. Staff returned to Lowestoft the following day.

**RESULTS:**

Aims 1 and 2. A standard grid of 49 plankton tows (see chart attached) was completed. The Gulf VII sampler deployed was fitted with a main 270µm mesh net, and an auxiliary fine mesh (80µm) 'pup' net attached to the frame. At each sampling position, the main net sample was collected and preserved in 4% formalin for later analysis at the Lowestoft laboratory. Unfortunately, no pup net samples were collected because the end bags were forgotten. Self-logging flowmeters attached to a readout unit provided data to calculate the volume of water filtered by each net. Temperature and salinity profiles were recorded using an FSI mini-CTD. All equipment functioned without fault.

N Bunn

4 April 2003

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Basic list +

Staff on cruise

C Fox

S Milligan

R Nash (PEML)

Sea Fisheries Committees:

North Western and North Wales

Cumbria

CEFAS charter programme, Prince Madog 3 / 2003: station track showing mid-point position of 49 plankton tows (numbered consecutively) in the eastern Irish Sea

