

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

1973 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: R V TELLINA: CRUISE 9

(Provisional: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF

R J Wood
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DURATION

16-31 August

All Times are Greenwich Mean Time

LOCALITY

English East Coast (Coquet Island to Dover)

AIM

To investigate the distribution and abundance of young herring and sprats along the English east coast using beach seine and midwater trawls.

NARRATIVE

A number of faults following the ship's refit delayed the commencement of the cruise until 1020 h 16 August. A good passage was then made northwards and Blyth was reached at 1035 h 17 August. During the following 8 days beach seine hauls were made at several localities inshore and hauls with the midwater trawl offshore between Coquet Island and Great Yarmouth under very mixed weather conditions. In view of the lack of echo traces north of Beacon Point (roughly midway between Blyth and the Coquet) and the reduced duration of the cruise, the survey was not extended northwards beyond the Coquet. TELLINA returned to Lowestoft at 1425 h 25 August and sailed again to complete the southern part of the survey at 0805 h 27 August. Most of the work as far south as Dover was successfully carried out by 1830 h 29 August, but strong SW winds made it impossible to complete the survey along the final section of coastline between Dover and Dungeness. The last of the work in the outer reaches of the Thames Estuary was completed during 31 August in marginal weather conditions and TELLINA returned to Lowestoft at 1730 h the same day.

RESULTS

Catches of 0-group herring along the northeast coast between Newbiggin Bay and Spurn Point were very substantial, and were in fact the best which have been made since the 1969/70 year-class was sampled in the 0-group stage inshore during July 1970. Catches along the Lincolnshire coast and in the Wash were however rather poor in comparison. Further south, ie. along the East Anglian coast and in the Thames Estuary, catches of 0-group herring were the smallest to have ever been obtained since these surveys were commenced 9 years ago. It would therefore appear that while the 1972/73 year-class of herring shows every indication of being a strong one in the north, in the south (the Downs Stock) on the other hand, the indications are that it is the worst year-class on record.

Sprats were found to be plentiful along the north-east coast, where they were mainly 9 and 10 cm in length, and in the Wash where they were mainly 7 and 8 cm. Further south catches were very small and consisted predominantly of the smaller 0 and 1-group fish from 2-7 cm in length. While the prospects for next winter

look most encouraging in the north the opposite is the case in the south as a whole, although there were indications that sprats were more concentrated in the SW part of the Thames Estuary (West Swin and The Warp) than elsewhere.

R J Wood
17 September 1973

INITIALLED A J L

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