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Charter Fishing Vessel *Celtic Dawn II* (K76)

Cruise 1708H (SISP Crab Tagging (Offshore))

## **REPORT**

26-30 August 2008

### **Personnel**

G Jones (In charge)  
P Gibson

### **Objectives**

1. To increase the knowledge of the offshore crab stocks to the north of Scotland.
2. To tag Brown Crab (*Cancer pagurus*), of a range of sizes, from the north of Scotland for investigations of their movements. Tagging will involve using both high visibility double t-bar tags that are retained on moulting and 'cable-tie' type tags which will be attached to the claws of some of the animals.
3. To biologically sample all tagged Brown Crab for carapace width, shell condition, sex and reproductive state (of females) along with date, time and latitude, longitude, and depth of the return location.

### **Narrative**

Staff and equipment joined the vessel at Stromness on the 26 August 2008. The vessel sailed during the evening of 26 August to fishing grounds approximately 10 miles west of Orkney to set a string of 50 creels which would be hauled on the return leg of the charter. Once the string was shot, the vessel continued its steam to fishing grounds at the south east corner of the windsock closed area.

The vessel arrived on station early on the morning of 27 August 2008 and commenced fishing, hauling strings of 100 creels, working east along the windsock.

On the 28 August the vessel steamed to ground towards the middle of the windsock and carried out a number of hauls. These were completed by 2030 when the vessel began a steam to inshore waters (approx 10miles west of Orkney) to haul a series of other strings, including the one set on the way to the windsock.

Hauling creels west of Orkney started on the morning of the 29 August. Several hauls were completed before problems with the tagging equipment (needles snapped) resulted in tagging being suspended. In addition, electrical problems affecting the vessel's navigation system and telex required attention and the vessel returned to Stromness on the evening of 29 August. FRS staff returned to Aberdeen on 30 August.

## **Results**

Despite the early curtailment of the charter (one day), the objectives were largely achieved. A total of 2500 creels, 2,100 offshore and 400 inshore and were hauled and 1959 crabs (1767 female, 192 male) were tagged with high visibility T-Bar tags. Of these 242 were tagged with cable ties on their claws as moult indicators.

The skipper of the Celtic Dawn recaptured 20 tagged crabs, when fishing at the strings hauled on the first day of the charter, the week following the charter. These crabs were returned to the sea. Recapture information is being sought from the industry

*Gareth Jones*  
11 September 2008