

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

1983 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CLIONE : CRUISE 1

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

STAFF:

P O Johnson

B J Robinson

I L Davies

A M Watson

T W Boon

R Numm (Student)

DURATION:

Left Lowestoft 1500 h 6 January

Arrived Lowestoft 1045 h 17 January

LOCALITY:

North Sea

AIMS:

1. To carry out an acoustic survey for sprat, as part of an ICES co-ordinated programme, in the Thames Estuary, Southern Bight, Wash and west central North Sea, north to 54°30'N and offshore to 4°30'E.
2. To sample any major concentrations with a mid-water trawl.
3. To undertake an intership calibration run with RV EXPLORER.
4. To collect species of fish for fish identification courses.

NARRATIVE:

CLIONE sailed from Lowestoft at 1500 h on 6 January and made passage south towards the Thames. The towed body was then prepared and launched at 1930 h off Aldeburgh and after equipment checks and calibrations were carried out the survey commenced at 2030 h in the Shipwash area. The immediate offshore area of the Thames estuary was then surveyed overnight and the following day (7 January) the survey covered the main channelways of the Thames Estuary and on the following night the south-east approaches, including the North-South Falls and South Goodwin area. On 8 January work continued over the eastern approaches to the estuary and then extended further offshore to the Gabbard-Galloper region and north towards Smith's Knoll. A SW'ly gale developed during the night and the survey then moved to more sheltered waters off the Suffolk coast on 9 January. After the weather improved the survey continued to cover the Norfolk Banks area on 10 January and the Skate Hole - Outer Silver Pit - Botney Gut region on 11-12 January.

Deteriorating weather then forced a return towards the Inner Silver Pit region, which was surveyed in difficult conditions on 13 January. A heavy NW'ly swell and increasing winds then necessitated breaking off the survey to dodge off the Lincolnshire coast. Weather conditions were then generally poor over the next two days (14-15 January) and only a limited amount of work was possible close inshore between the Inner Dowsing and Flamborough Head.

RV EXPLORER was contacted by radio and the vessels made a rendezvous near Flamborough Head on the morning of 15 January, but it was decided to cancel the intership calibration run due to an absence of suitable fish traces in the area and the poor weather conditions. CLIONE then returned to the Wash area which was surveyed on 16 January and a return then made to Lowestoft where the vessel docked at 1045 h on 17 January.

RESULTS:

1. A total of 1329 nautical miles were acoustically integrated over an area covering the coastal belt between South Foreland and Flamborough Head, including the Thames and Wash estuaries, and extending offshore to about 2°E in the Southern Bight and 3°E further north, in the Botney Gut region.

2. Trace levels were generally low over most of the survey area except for the Wash, where major concentration of sprats were present. In the Skate Hole - Outer Silver Pit region traces were particularly scarce and only three moderate sized shoals were recorded, pelagic trace levels were almost zero over most of this area.

The Thames area also showed generally low trace levels and radio contact was made with some of the Thames fishing vessels seen working (principally fishing for cod) towards the south side of the estuary. They reported a general scarcity of sprat shoals in that region so far this season.

3. Five hauls were made with the International Young Gadoid Trawl and four samples of sprat and three of herring were deep frozen for further biological analysis at the laboratory. In addition several samples of various fish species were obtained for the Fish Identification Courses.

4. The intership calibration run with RV EXPLORER was cancelled due to a lack of suitable traces in the Flamborough Head area or within suitable range to the north or south. Weather conditions were also poor, with a heavy N'ly swell running.

P O Johnson (SIC)
25 January 1983

SEEN IN DRAFT:

G S

R C N

INITIALLED:

D J G

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List:

P O Johnson

B J Robinson

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