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M. B. Lill

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

1972 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CLIONE: CRUISE 2

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

STAFF

- R G Houghton
- M R Vince
- C N Humphreys
- S Flatman
- T Watson
- B J Knights

DURATION

Left Lowestoft 1030 h 17 January

Arrived Lowestoft 1330 h 7 February

All times are Greenwich Mean Time

LOCALITY

English Channel

AIMS

1. To mark and release 500 plaice on each of the two spawning grounds in the English Channel.
2. To determine the distribution of plaice eggs and larvae in the western English Channel at the beginning and end of the cruise using TTN.
3. To obtain 100 stage IV plaice ovaries from each spawning area.
4. To mark and release any rays that are caught for Mr Holden.
5. To carry out an echo survey in the Eddystone area for Mr Macer.

NARRATIVE

CLIONE left Lowestoft at 1030 h, 17 January and steamed south to the English Channel. The tintownet (TTN) was calibrated in the Hurd Deep between 1540 and 1740 h, 18 January before the first spell of bad weather arrived. Two trawl hauls during the afternoon of 19 January, 28 m SSE Start Point, produced 5 plaice, and at 1840 h the first TTN survey was begun and finally completed by 0210 h, 21 January. Fishing recommenced that morning with 2 one-hour hauls 42 m SSE Start Point with poor results. (Six French trawlers were fishing the same area probably for black bream and red gurnards which were fairly abundant.)

Instructions were received from Lowestoft at 1000 h to obtain fish samples from near the wreck of the GERMANIA (49°10'N, 3°53'W) and the Eddystone for analysis at Burnham. This additional aim was completed by 1415 h 22 January and the samples were landed at Plymouth, along with CLIONE's First Officer, via the pilot cutter at 1550 h.

CLIONE steamed overnight to the eastern English Channel after one haul 10 m S. Start Point during the evening. Fishing in the east commenced on 23 January 28 m S Selsey Bill. Plaice were located in quantity 20 m S Brighton - 7 hauls produced 730 plaice most of which were tagged. Males were about 10 times as abundant as females and all were either running or in stages V or VII. Bad weather prevented fishing next day but 6 hauls on 25 January 33 m S Brighton provided 220 plaice with a more even sex ratio and 3 hauls 20 m S Brighton on 26 January a further 210. CLIONE ran into Boulogne before a 40 knot westerly gale during the night and remained there waiting for the weather to moderate until 29 January.

Taking advantage of the lee provided by the English coast, CLIONE sailed west from Boulogne at 1105 h and anchored for the night in Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. The wind at last moderated and 4 hauls were completed on 30 January 23 m SE Start Point. 80 plaice were caught on this very rough ground, which had 40 foot steep pinnacles at frequent intervals which somehow caused no damage to the trawl. One haul to the east on what appeared to be smooth ground the following day (31 January) caused considerable damage to the trawl. Bad weather again prevented work until 1800 h 1 February when hauls in the same position and 1 hydrographic station were completed.

CLIONE then made for Plymouth during the night to pick up the First Officer and 3rd Engineer and remained anchored in the Sound during a force 10 storm until 0900 h 3 February. The swell was too heavy for TTN work but allowed 3 trawl hauls amongst "The Pinnacles" 23 m SE Start Point during which 70 plaice were caught and tagged. The final TTN survey began at 2135 h that evening but was interrupted by bad weather after 12 stations by 1300 h 4 February. The survey was finally abandoned, after only one more station, at 1800 h 5 January.

CLIONE anchored off Corton at 2330 h 6 January and docked at Lowestoft at 1330 h 7 January.

(Of the 18 days available for working, only 4 were entirely clear of bad weather and a total of 7 days 7 hours were lost from the remaining 14 days.)

RESULTS

1. 780 plaice were tagged - 644 on the easterly spawning ground and 136 on the western. 320 plaice were sampled for length, sex, stage and age but only 1 stage IV plaice ovary was obtained.
2. 115 rays and 40 lemon soles were also tagged.
3. 35 TTN stations were completed making up one full survey at the beginning and an incomplete survey at the end of the cruise. Surface temperature and salinity observations were made at each station.
4. Two fish samples and one water sample were obtained for analysis at Burnham, in connection with the GERMANIA wreck.
5. The echo survey was not carried out because of the shortage of time.

R G Houghton
11 February 1972

SEEN IN DRAFT: Capt M R Sutcliffe (Master)

A H Button (Fishing Skipper)

INITIALLED: AJL

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List

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