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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND, NR33 0HT

1988 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CLIONE: CRUISE 2(a)
(PROVISIONAL: not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF:

- A P Scott
- P Witthames
- R Turner
- S Lovewell
- A Canario (Visitor)
- P Webb (Visitor)

DURATION:

Left Lowestoft 1630 hrs 23 January 1988
Arrived Lowestoft 0900 hrs 6 February 1988

LOCALITY:

Southern Bight - North Hinder, Drillstone and East Swin grounds.

AIMS:

1. Collection of stage IV female plaice for fecundity studies (DDB2).
2. Twenty four hour collections of mature male and female flatfish (bottom trawling on the tidal slacks 8 times, and during the height of the tides 8 times). (DDB4).
3. Collection of cod (or whiting) guts (U. Thorndyke, Royal Holloway and Bedford College).
4. Collection of live plaice and dabs (DDB4).
5. Ovary incubation experiments (Canario and Webb).

NARRATIVE:

RV CLIONE left Lowestoft at 1630 on 26 January and arrived in the region of the Hinder grounds by 0800 on 29 January. A worsening force 7/8 gale precluded any trawling. Instead the ship returned to Southwold for shelter. On AM, 30 January, weather prospects at the Hinder Ground still looked poor and it was decided to head for the more sheltered Drillstones ground at the mouth of the Thames estuary in order to try and accomplish some of the minor aims of the cruise (e.g. collection of male flatfish, cod guts). Two hauls were made - at 1500 and 2200 hours. Although there were fairly large numbers of plaice, they were mostly immatures or spent females. Twenty ripe male dabs and 20 ripe male plaice were sampled. Several bags of cod guts were collected. A single stage IV female plaice was captured. This was kept alive and injected with HCG to stimulate the ovaries. Use was made of these on 1 February, while the ship lay at anchor in the Blackwater estuary (see below).

The Met Office had forecast a severe depression moving over the North Sea, and during the night of 30 January, the ship steamed to the Gabbard lightship in order to take advantage of a possible temporary drop in the wind prior to the arrival of the depression. This did not materialise, however, and the Captain advised that we head for the Blackwater estuary to seek shelter, as fishing in virtually any area of the North Sea would be impossible over the next 2 days. We could not enter the Blackwater estuary until 2100 hours, and in the meantime trawled twice on the East Swin in the Thames estuary. This yielded little of value. Some cod guts and 2 male flounders were sampled. The ship anchored in the Blackwater estuary at 2300 hours. At 0450 on 1 February, the following gale warning was received from METBRACK: 'Thames, Dover, light Southwesterly storm force 10 increasing violent storm force 11 imminent'.

RV Clione remained in the River Blackwater estuary until 0830 hours on 3 February. Trawling was resumed, again on the Drillstones Ground (because of continuing westerly gales) at 1445 hours. Two hauls were made. Several male plaice and dab were sampled. Some were kept alive. Five stage IV female plaice were also kept alive and used during the evening for ovarian incubation studies. The ship spent the night in Margate roads. Throughout most of 4 February, the ship held position north of Margate, the conditions again being unsuitable for trawling. During the evening it set off for the Hinder Ground, as prospects for the final day, 5 February, appeared to be promising.

On 5 February, despite a fair swell, five hauls were made. These yielded ample quantities of running ripe flounder, plaice and dab males, and ovulating female flounders and dabs. The numbers of mature stage IV female plaice were, however, unfortunately small and Mr Withames was unable to obtain enough fish for his annual fecundity study.

The ship returned to Lowestoft at 0900 hours, 6 February, and was off-loaded immediately.

RESULTS:

The main aims of the cruise (1 and 2 above) were not achieved. However, cod guts, live fish, ovaries and assorted flatfish blood and sperm samples were obtained for laboratory studies.

A P Scott (SIC)
9 February 1980

SEEN IN DRAFT: J French (Master)
P Mackay (Fishing Skipper)

INITIALLED: D J C

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List +
A P Scott
P Withames
R Turner
S Lovewell
A Canario (visitor)
P Webb (visitor)