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

1977 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: R V CLIONE: CRUISE 8

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

PART A

STAFF: B C Bedford
R N Tucker
T W Boon
M W Easey
S Warnes

DURATION: Left Lowestoft 1545 h 10 June
Arrived Grimsby 0015 h 25 June

LOCALITY: Orkneys, Shetland, Northern North Sea

AIMS:

- 1 To tag cod in the general area of Papa Bank and Western Shetlands.
- 2 To tag coalfish and to obtain blood samples from tagged fish.
- 3 To obtain fish in good condition for the Fisheries Officers Fish Identification course.

NARRATIVE

CLIONE left Lowestoft at 1545 h BST on 10 June and arrived at Papa Bank at 2030 h 12 June when fishing began. Fishing continued on a daily basis between 0630 h and approx. 2200 hours without interruption until 1930 h 20 June when CLIONE entered Lerwick. Various grounds around Papa Bank, at Foula and Sumburgh Head were fished during this period. CLIONE left Lerwick at 0830 h 21 June having taken on water and stores and for the next 2 days fished grounds 40 miles east of Sumburgh Head and at Fair Isle. Throughout the duration of fishing activity winds ranged from light to moderate and were from a generally northerly direction. CLIONE concluded fishing at 0830 h 23 June and steamed for Grimsby arriving at 0015 h 25 June. The scientific staff for Part A left the ship and returned overland to Lowestoft.

RESULTS

1 Cod catches were poor on all grounds fished and only 253 fish were tagged from 66 hauls. VHF contact was made with several Grimsby skippers working in the area and they attributed poor catches to the persistent northerly winds. A single tow on the north side of the bank on 18 June yielded 40 baskets of large cod, but with this excluded the average number of cod caught per 1 hour tow was less than 7 fish. Most grounds fished were very rough and major damage to the trawl was sustained on 19 hauls. One Grimsby skipper commented that our gear (the heaviest we have available) was too light for working this area. An attempt to repeat next day the successful haul of 18 June resulted in the trawl being paralysed.

181 cod were tagged at Papa Bank, 60 at Fair Isle, 4 at Foula and 8 at 40 miles east of Sumburgh Head.

2 Coalfish were equally scarce and only 74 were tagged. All of these were in the area of Papa Bank. No coalfish blood samples were obtained as all fish tagged were caught prior to the earliest date for the storage life of unprocessed blood.

3 Samples of mixed small gadoids and mixed small flatfish were deep frozen for Mr Blacker's Fish Identification Course.

MISCELLANEOUS

1 Two halibut were caught during the cruise and brought back alive for Dr Purdom.

2 In the area 20-40 miles east of Sumburgh Head, scene of the Shetland summer herring fishery, the sea was observed to be an unusual pale blue colour. The echo sounder indicated some bottom shoals of fish on the tops of peaks but few traces were seen on clear level ground. No herring were taken from any hauls.

B C Bedford
6 July 1977

Seen in draft: J R F (Captain)
R C N (Skipper)
A J L (Director)