

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

1992 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT : RV CORYSTES 13/92

STAFF: D J Symonds
S Flatman
M J Boon
B F M Harley
I Holmes
R P Flatt (10-22 Nov)
P A Large (22 Nov-2 Dec)
J W Read (10 Nov)

DURATION: Left Lowestoft 0800h 10 November
Arrived Lowestoft 2330h 2 December
(All times are Greenwich Mean Time)

LOCALITY: Western English Channel

AIMS:

1. To investigate the seasonal changes in the distribution and abundance of flatfish in the western English Channel by repeating, and extending, the groundfish survey carried out by a chartered beam trawler each October.
2. To determine the distribution and abundance of flatfish in the outer Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea using a 4m beam trawl.
3. To make observations on the substrate and benthos using the ROXANN system, grabs and underwater camera at all trawl stations.
4. To tag cod in the Bristol Channel and pre-recruit soles in Cardigan Bay.

NARRATIVE:

The dominant feature of this cruise was the persistent south to west winds which were often strong to gale force in strength. Consequently the scientific programme was severely interrupted and only five of a possible 18 days were worked without stoppages caused by the weather.

On leaving Lowestoft on 10 November CORYSTES recovered the two current meter rigs off the East Anglian coast which had been left at the end of the previous cruise due to adverse weather. Mr J Read was landed at Felixstowe during the afternoon and the vessel proceeded to the western English Channel. However, a southwest gale slowed down progress throughout the 11th and morning of the 12th. The first beam trawl station in Lyme Bay was started at 1235h on the 12th and 17 stations were completed in reasonable conditions by the

evening of the 13th November. Frequent interruptions by weather resulted in only two complete days (15th and 19th) in the western Channel and SW Approaches before CORYSTES proceeded to Falmouth, arriving at 1630h on 22 November, to replenish stores and water and change scientific staff.

Sailing from Falmouth was delayed by a southerly gale until 0910h on 25 November and shelter was immediately sought in Mevagissey Bay. Two trawl stations were completed on the 27th before increasing south-west winds and heavy swell again stopped work. Two days' uninterrupted work was carried out on the 28th and 29th although weather conditions on the latter were marginal for trawling. With a full gale and heavy swell on 30 November, and no prospect of any improvement in the foreseeable future, the decision was made to terminate the cruise and return to Lowestoft.

RESULTS

1. Forty three of the planned 44 beam trawl stations of the charter vessel survey were completed (see Track Chart). Catches of fish species were generally small with the dominant species by number being poor cod, thickback sole and scaldfish. Catches of sole and plaice were low compared to those made by the charter vessel in October but this difference was significant only in plaice.

In addition 17 valid 30 minute beam trawl hauls were carried out in and to the west of the English Channel. Catches were again light except for station 81 when 3 baskets (91.5kg) of small mackerel were taken. Few sole and plaice were caught.

All fish data were input to the Fishing Survey System. However, processing of catch data from this cruise and from a previous cruise database taken to sea for this specific purpose, was not possible due to a bug in the seagoing INGRES database. This bug had been corrected on the laboratory system under the latest version of INGRES, but the shipboard system was not updated before CORYSTES sailed.

Otoliths (or scales) from 391 fish of 8 species were collected for pre-recruit and biological studies and to augment the market sampling programme.

Species	ICES Division		Total
	VIIe	VIIh	
Plaice	111	0	111
Sole	175	4	179
Lemon sole	18	2	20
Megrim	27	25	52
Cod	2	0	2
L. piscatorius	17	5	22
L. budegassa	0	3	3
Bass (scales)	2	0	2

All edible crabs and selected fish species were deep-frozen for Dr B Thompson and the laboratory's Fish Identification course respectively. Selected benthos was brought back live to the laboratory.

2. No beam trawling in the outer Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea took place.
3. Records were kept and photographs taken of benthos caught at trawl stations. Also it was planned to keep a photographic record using the underwater camera attached to the beam trawl but damage to the system meant that it was not deployed during the second part of the cruise. The ROXANN system was run during all trawling, and also before 16 of the hauls which had not been previously worked by beam trawl. Validation of the ROXANN results posed problems which have yet to be resolved. A menu map and notes for new users were produced during the cruise by Messrs Flatt and Flatman. Sampling of the substrate by grab proved difficult due to the adverse weather conditions and was eventually abandoned.
4. Cod and sole tagging did not take place.

SEEN IN DRAFT:

Master: M J Willcock

Senior Fishing Skipper: R F Graham

INITIALLED: JGS

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list+

D Symonds

S Flatman

M Boon

B Harley

I Holmes

R Flatt

P Large

J Read

Sea Fishing Committees: North Western and North Wales
 South Wales
 Devon
 Cornwall
 Isles of Scilly

Guernsey Sea Fisheries Committee

Jersey Sea Fisheries Committee

Corystes 13/92

10 Nov - 1 Dec 1992

- 4m Beam trawl
- 4m Beam trawl & RoxAnn

