

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

1991 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CORYSTES: CRUISE 7B

STAFF: -

S Flatman
D Key
D Palmer
P Walker
C Darby
R Turner

DURATION:

Left Falmouth approaches 0914 h 21 July
Arrived Lowestoft 2040 h 24 July
All times are Greenwich Mean Time

LOCALITY:

Western English Channel

AIMS:

1. To carry out a pilot study for a western Channel Groundfish Survey, using the commercial 4 m beam trawl.
2. To collect live plaice for gear-specific mortality studies.

NARRATIVE:

After changeover of two scientific staff by Searider, RV CORYSTES left Falmouth Approaches at 0914 h 21 July, and steamed to the first survey area SE of Falmouth. Fishing commenced at 1040 h, and continued in calm conditions until 1830 h. RV CORYSTES steamed overnight to the Lyme Bay survey area, and commenced fishing at 0500 h. At 0905 h, during the fifth tow of the morning, the gear came fast and the warp parted. The beam trawl and approximate 4 fm of warp were lost. The position was recorded and the Marine Superintendent notified. RV CORYSTES worked a search grid of six transects across and along the tow position, using a French scallop dredge as a grapple. At 1300 h RV CORYSTES steamed to Brixham to collect a new, heavy-duty grapple. The search was resumed at 1730 h, and during the following five-hour period RV CORYSTES worked two extensive grid patterns across and along the tow, using the new grapple. Weather conditions were calm throughout. No contacts were made, nor was anything other than

smooth ground noted on the colour sounder. A further four grid patterns were worked throughout the night before the search was abandoned at 0941 h on 23 July. RV CORYSTES steamed to Lowestoft, docking at 2040 h 24 July.

RESULTS

Aim 1 Seven valid 30 minute tows with the 4 m beam trawl were completed on the grounds off Falmouth. Four stations were completed in Lyme Bay. Non-commercial Soleidae, Agonidae and Callionymidae were predominant in the catch, with low numbers of sole (*Solea solea*), plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*) and lemon sole (*Microstomus kitt*) observed. Data were recorded using the MS-DOS pc version of the GFS input system. The benthos at each station was photographed, and the main species noted.

Aim 2 Seventeen plaice and nine sole were retained alive. Generally, plaice from the beam trawl showed some abrasion and scale damage, with little residual body slime.

Miscellaneous

1. Otoliths from 33 sole, 29 plaice, 1 cod and 12 lemon sole were taken for biological studies and to supplement the market sampling programme.
2. Samples of dabs (*Limanda limanda*) and whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) were frozen for Mr A Franklin (Burnham), and edible crabs for Dr B Thompson. Six live spider crabs (*Maia squinado*) were brought back for Cambridge University.

S Flatman (SIC)
23 September 1991

SEEN IN DRAFT: MJW,WM

INITIALLED: JWH

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list+
S Flatman
D Key
D Palmer
P Walker
C Darby
R Turner

