

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

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1971 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CORELLA: CRUISE 16

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

STAFF

R G J Shelton
M S Rolfe
R A A Blackman
P M Connor
K Roddy

DURATION

Left Lowestoft 0952 hours, 21 October

Arrived Lowestoft 1430 hours, 27 October

All times are Greenwich Mean Time

LOCALITY

North Sea

AIMS

1. To carry out a biological survey of the Falls area.
2. To carry out seabed sampling in the Outer Thames estuary.
3. To collect large plaice for acoustic tag experiments.

NARRATIVE

CORELLA cast off at 0952 hours, 21 October and steamed to the Falls area where work began at 1713 hours. A total of 40 stations were worked with the Smith-McIntyre grab and 6 hauls were made with the Agassiz trawl. On the 7th haul the net but not the beam was lost. Following an extensive echo-sounding survey west of the Falls the Granton trawl was shot on an area of smooth ground which was also being worked by a number of foreign vessels. Six 4 mile tows averaging $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours each yielded good catches of sole, plaice and codling. Before leaving the area an echo-sounder survey was carried out to the east of the Falls.

At 0835 hours, 25 October grabbing was commenced in the Barrow Deep and continued until 23 stations had been worked.

CORELLA then steamed north to the Outer Silver Pit where the Granton trawl was shot at 0530 hours, 26 October. Five hauls were made during the day in a successful attempt to obtain large plaice. CORELLA left the area at 1730 hours and arrived at Lowestoft at 1430 hours, 27 October.

RESULTS

1. The grab survey showed that the Falls area could be divided into 3 distinct bottom types. In the central part of the grid clean, medium to coarse sand predominated; on the western part, including the trawling ground, the bottom consisted of muddy sand and gravel, whereas on ground to the east of the Falls gravel and coarse sand was found.

The echo survey showed that while most of the Falls area is comparatively rough there are, nevertheless, areas of easily fishable smooth ground especially on the western third of the grid. With suitable gear a considerable part of the Falls area would be fishable.

The catches of sole, plaice and codling taken on the muddy sand on the western part of the grid were good and the area obviously has excellent commercial potential at this time of the year. No British fishing vessels were seen but from 5-8 foreign trawlers were working the area at the time of this survey. Half of these vessels were using double beam trawls fitted with heavy chains.

2. The grab survey of the Barrow Deep showed no trace of sewage sludge and anaerobic material was only found in significant amounts in the sediments on the south western quarter of the transect. A notable feature was the large number of polychaete tubes (Lanice, Pectmaria and Ampharetids) taken at many of the stations.

3. Three large (> 40 cm) plaice were taken on the Falls ground and a further 38 were taken south of the Dogger Bank on the Outer Silver Pit ground.

R G J Shelton
9.11.71

SEEN IN DRAFT: W Craig (Master)

C Snowling (Fishing Skipper)

INITIALED: AJL

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List
R G J Shelton
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