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

1977 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV CORELLA: Cruise 18

STAFF

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DURATION

Left Lowestoft 1600 h 6 December
Arrived Lowestoft 1430 h 18 December

LOCALITY

English Channel

AIMS

1. To identify pelagic fish concentrations by trawling,
2. To study size distributions of mackerel within shoals,
3. To study colour preference by mackerel taken on "feathers",
4. To carry live mackerel back to Lowestoft in deck tanks,

NARRATIVE

CORELLA sailed from Lowestoft at 1600 h 6 December. Due to S-SE gales she could not commence work off Beachy Head as planned but continued to Ryde Bay where she was anchored from 1500 h 7 December to 0700 h 9 December. She then sailed to Tor Bay and anchored again at 1600 h until 1000 h 10 December when conditions had moderated sufficiently to permit an echo survey and trawling off Start Point. On 11 December CORELLA left the Tor Bay anchorage in the afternoon to continue work but had to return within an hour due to the heavy seas running outside the Bay. On 12 December sea conditions were much improved and trawling was carried out again off Start Point before the ship sailed to St Austell Bay to lay overnight. Trawling operations continued on 13 December off Dodman Head and the Manacles, north and south of the Fal estuary, before continuing westward to the main centre of this year's mackerel fishery north of the Wolf Rock Light. Work continued in the vicinity of the Wolf until 1700 h 14 December when CORELLA began steaming to Cherbourg where she docked at 1000 h to take on fresh water. She sailed again at 0700 16 December and spent the day surveying the Hurd Deep by echo-sounding. At 1700 h a course was laid for the vicinity of Beachy Head where an echo-survey was begun at 0745 h 17 December. Despite covering the area from Brighton to Dungeness no pelagic fish concentrations were located. At 1700 h the survey work ceased and a course was set for Lowestoft where CORELLA berthed at 1430 h 18 December.

RESULTS

1. Pelagic fish were not found in the quantity associated with south west waters in recent years. Sprats, sardines and anchovy were widely distributed between Start Point and the Lizard, but mackerel were only found between the Wolf Rock and the Lands End peninsula. Adult and 0-group horse mackerel were found off Start Point and in the Hurd Deep. The only pelagic fish marks found in the eastern English Channel were scattered small shoals off the Dungeness power station. These were not identified by trawling.
2. As no suitable shoals were found no attempt was made to study the size distribution of mackerel within shoals.
3. Loss of time for bad weather prevented the mackerel "feathering" work to be carried out.
4. No mackerel were caught for transport, live, back to Lowestoft.
5. There was some limited success with the underwater TV looking at fish shoals. This included a recorded sequence of a mackerel taken on feathers.

Seen in Draft: JMB
RCN

Initialled: AJL

Stephen J Lockwood
22 December 1977

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic List

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