

Library

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R.V. ERNEST HOLT

Report for Cruise 3/68

Staff:-

G. C. Bolster
R. J. Wood
B. H. Holford
M. Macdonald
A. Franklin (Burnham)
R. A. Hurst (Fleetwood)

Duration:-

12 March-8 April

Aims:

1. Larval survey with Tin Tow net (T.T.N.) in the Porcupine Bank area.
2. Trawling grid for blue whiting on the Porcupine Bank.
3. Larval survey with T.T.N. for sprat in the Bristol Channel.
4. To collect herring larvae off Dunmore.
5. To collect mackerel blood.
6. To tag mackerel in the Celtic Sea.

Narrative:

The ship sailed from Grimsby at 1715 hours, 12 March, and proceeded to Plymouth where she arrived inside the breakwater at 0900 hours, 14 March. Here, Messrs. Johns and Cave, who had come with the ship from Grimsby for the purpose of testing some experimental equipment, went ashore and Messrs. Wood and Holford joined the ship.

On leaving Plymouth at 0920 hours course was set for an area south of the Wolf Rock to investigate a report which had been brought from the laboratory by Mr. Wood. This was that during the previous week a large concentration of German trawlers had been seen working there. A visual and radar search of the area was made but none was seen. The ship proceeded thence to the Bristol Channel, where a larval survey for sprat, (aim 3) was started at 0900 hours, 15 March. Despite W.-N.W. gale warnings, which resulted in our having to dodge for some time, fifteen stations were worked up to 1400 hours, 16 March.

From this time onwards the progress of the cruise was severely hampered by a succession of gales mainly from N.W. to S.W., and later from the North.

By 1715 hours, 18 March the ship, having dodged against gales of forces 8 and 9 for two days, had reached a position off Ballycotton. Despite an adverse forecast, the weather had improved and ten T.T.N. stations were worked off Dunmore, (aim 4). The lull was short lived and the ship dodged westward against strong winds to enter Cork harbour at 1320 hours, 19 March.

With a favourable forecast for Fastnet and Shannon, the ship left Cork at 0800 hours, 21 March. Once west of Cape Clear, due to adverse winds from the S.W., the T.T.N. grid of the Porcupine Bank area (aim 1) was not started until 1700 hours, 23 March. Thirty-three T.T.N. stations and twelve Trawl stations were carried out despite a succession of gales in the next eight days. Contact was made with R.V. EXPLORER each day after 30 March and, on 2 April it was agreed that because severe gales were forecast for Rockall and Shannon, any hope of making hauls for comparison of catches would have to be abandoned.

ERNEST HOLT ran south from north of the Porcupine Bank, where we had been holding on hoping to continue the T.T.N. grid further to the north-east, before a northerly gale of from force 9 to 11 in the squalls, and entered Cork on 3 April. Oil and water were taken on again, and with a good forecast she left at 1300 hours, 4 April.

A new series of T.T.N. stations was started at 2300 hours on the same day in the Bristol Channel area and continued under good weather conditions until 1940 hours, 5 April. Course was set then for the Trevose Head area where one out of six trawl hauls (half hour duration) gave a good catch of soles. The ship left the Trevose area at 1330 hours, 6 April and proceeded towards Great Yarmouth where, after a good voyage, she entered the port at 0530 hours, 8 April.

Results:-

Aims 1 and 2

Thirty-three stations were worked with the T.T.N. on the Porcupine Bank in the area latitude $52^{\circ}30'0''N.$, to $53^{\circ}50'0''N.$ and longitude $12^{\circ}40'0''E.$, to $14^{\circ}55'0''W.$

Twelve trawling stations were worked on and off the edge of the Bank in depths of between 83-140 fathoms.

Less than 20 blue whiting were caught all of which were either immature or maturing fish. Very few larvae were observed in the T.T.N. catches.

Good catches of haddock and mackerel were taken on the S.E. portion of the Porcupine Bank. In both species all fish, both male and female, were ripe.

Aim 3

Out of the scheduled thirty-two stations, fifteen of the innermost were worked on 15 and 16 March, and nineteen more, including repeats of the former, on 4 and 5 April.

Aim 4

Ten T.T.N. stations were worked off Dunmore.

Aims 5 and 6

These were abandoned because of time lost due to bad weather.

Miscellaneous

1. Three samples of cod blood/serum were collected for Dr. Jamieson.
2. Live fish were brought to Great Yarmouth for Dr. Purdom.
3. Selected ship meteorological observations were made in the area worked west of Ireland.

G. C. Bolster
8 April, 1968

Seen in draft:- E. A. Binnington, W. J. Saxby.

Initialled:- A. J. L.

Distribution:-

Basic list, plus the following:-

Mr. B. H. Holford
Mr. M. Macdonald
Mr. A. Franklin (Burnham)
Mr. R. A. Hurst (Fleetwood)