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CRUISE REPORT

FRS "EXPLORER"

3-20 December 1973

OBJECTIVES:

West coast, north coast and Moray Firth pre-recruit demersal fish and environmental survey.

NARRATIVE:

"Explorer" left Aberdeen at 16.30 on Monday 3 December. Four north coast positions were completed before bad weather interrupted work on the 5th. Trawling was resumed on the 6th and all 12 positions in the Minches and the Firth of Clyde were worked before berthing at Greenock at 12.30 on Thursday 13 December.

After leaving Greenock at 14.30 on Saturday 15 December, "Explorer" took part in a search for men missing from a small boat off Campbeltown. Because of this delay and worsening weather conditions, "Explorer" berthed at Campbeltown at 21.30 on 15 and left at 12.30 on 16 December. The continuing succession of gale force winds prevented any work being done west of the Outer Hebrides. "Explorer" therefore proceeded to the Moray Firth, where three stations were worked on 18 and 19 December before gale force winds again forced work to be abandoned. "Explorer" berthed at Aberdeen at 23.30 on Thursday 20 December.

RESULTS:

1. Trawl stations completed: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43. Catches were treated according to Standing Instructions. Hauls from the Clyde, Minches and Moray Firth were dominated by the 1972 year-class of whiting. Squalus were taken in large numbers in the Minches and off the north coast, and haddock off the north coast and in the Moray Firth.

2. Dutch Gulf III samples were taken at all trawl stations, Standard net samples at five stations and a WP3 sample at station 39. Other environmental samples were taken as detailed in the cruise programme.

3. Biological tag studies. Five samples of the 1971 (395 fish) and 12 of the 1972 (1631 fish) year classes of whiting were examined for Gilquinia squali infection. Immunodiffusion tests were conducted, using serum from infected and uninfected whiting of various age groups. Positive results were obtained only from the two oldest (5+ and 6+) infected whiting tested.

Four samples of haddock, totalling 450 fish, were examined by Mr Lubieniecki for infection with the cestode parasite Grillotia.

4. Insufficient numbers of plaice and lemon sole ≥ 20 cm were taken in any area to justify tagging.

K MacKENZIE
9 January 1974