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In Confidence: Not to be quoted without reference to the Laboratory.

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "EXPLORER"

January 9th - 26th, 1967

Objectives:

(1) Experiments with detachable codends
(2) Routine West coast survey.

Narrative:

Following the experiments with the fishing gear, which were carried out by Mr. R. Jones and his team, the ship left Aberdeen on 9th January at 1030 hrs. The weather proved difficult from the outset and the prognosis for the next two weeks was not encouraging. Consequently, the programme had to be curtailed. It had been decided, therefore, to select some stations from each area included in the survey, so as to gain the general idea of the prevailing conditions. Interspersed with periods of stormy weather, during which the ship had to shelter, the survey continued until 25th January. After a stormy passage home, Explorer berthed in Aberdeen on 26th January at 1200 hrs.

Fishing:

Only 12 out of 42 scheduled stations were fished. Catches were poor and their composition usual for the areas fished. The greatest number of haddock was taken south of St. Kilda, in the stat. square VV11b (325 fish per 1 hr. haul), as well as in the northern part of the area (422 and 250 fish per haul).

Whiting was fairly numerous at nearly all stations. The largest catches were taken at the stat. square YY15c (532 fish) and WW12d (425 fish). With the exception of the Clyde and the North coast, where data were insufficient, the 1962 brood dominated the whiting populations sampled.

Cod was rather scarce. Only 28 cod were tagged. Out of 102 cod examined for the presence of the flesh nematodes, 38 were found to carry one or more worms.

Nephrops were taken in the Minches and some in the Clyde. Examination of some 400 specimens for the gill parasites and endoparasites proved negative.

Plankton:

Plankton samples were so few and scattered that it would be impossible to obtain any overall picture of distribution and abundance in the area sampled. All samples were small. Calanus was the dominant species, except in the North Minch and west of Orkneys, where Sagitta elegans formed the major species. Euphausid furcilia were present in small numbers in the Minch, increasing in abundance towards the north.

Other work:

The ship was unable to visit any of the station at which hydrographic and chemical data were to be collected. Consequently, no work in these fields was undertaken.

Z. Kabata
15th March, 1967.