

Lobrey

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CRUISE REPORT

FRS Explorer

8-14 March 1977 (Part I)

Personnel: S T R de Silva HSO (in charge)
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Objectives

- (1) To use and evaluate the new Blue Whiting trawl on shoals of fish.
- (2) To determine the basic engineering characteristics of the trawl.
- (3) To improve the handling of large pelagic gears on "Explorer" using a power block.

Narrative

Explorer sailed from Aberdeen at 1800 hours on 8 March heading for deepwater grounds NW of Shetlands. Due to severe gale force winds on 9 March Explorer had to shelter off Fetlar. The rigging of the gear was completed on this day.

On the following day Explorer proceeded to the edge of the continental shelf 40 miles NW of Flagga where after streaming the warps the gear was shot. The power block was used to heave up the bulk of the netting. Since worsening weather conditions precluded further hauls an echo sounder survey for Blue Whiting was conducted along the edge of the shelf in a south easterly direction. The search was abandoned at 0920 hours on 11 March due to the severe wind force and Explorer dodged to the shelter of the Orkneys. At 0900 hours on 12 March the echosounder search was resumed off North Rona and the gear was shot at 1600 hours. After hauling the gear Explorer proceeded to Broad Bay in order to change the gear for a smaller trawl. This gear was shot on 13 March to ensure that it was fishing correctly in readiness for Part II of the cruise. Explorer docked in Stornoway during the morning of 14 March.

Results

Severe gale force winds and the swell prevailing during the week limited the use which could be made of the new Blue Whiting trawl. The results of the echo sounder survey were retained for reference during Part II of the cruise. It was shown that a power block is very desirable to ease the handling of large nets and bulk fish. A large but portable hydraulic power pack is to be purchased for use on Explorer and other vessels.

S T R de Silva
19 May 1977

seen in draft - J W Gillon