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4ER80

FRV EXPLORER

Cruise 4/80

14 March - 3 April 1980

REPORTObjectives

To participate in a joint Franco-Scottish survey on demersal fish stocks on the continental shelf to the west of Scotland and at Rockall Bank.

Narrative

EXPLORER sailed from Aberdeen at 1530 hours on Friday 14 March and proceeded to Rockall Bank where trawling occurred whenever weather conditions permitted. However, by the 18th severe gales existed at Rockall and with continuing bad forecasts it was decided to work stations off the west coast of Scotland. Work continued in this area until 23rd when EXPLORER put into Stornoway and disembarked Dr Hislop. On leaving Stornoway EXPLORER proceeded to stations off the NW coast of Ireland and worked towards the Clyde. Unfortunately on the 27th EXPLORER was forced to dock at Campbeltown to land the 2 fishing mates for medical and domestic reasons. During the enforced stay in Campbeltown EXPLORER received an urgent request from the Laboratory to obtain spawning herring from the Clyde. The ship remained in Campbeltown until 1630 hours on 29th when she proceeded to Troon to pick up 2 new officers. At the same time Messrs Seaton and MacLaughlan joined EXPLORER to participate in the extra request. The following day was spent trawling for herring and Messrs Seaton and MacLaughlan were returned to Troon at 1800 hours. EXPLORER resumed her young fish survey duties, left the Clyde and proceeded to stations NW of Barra Head. Gales forced EXPLORER to seek shelter in Broad Bay and when these moderated stations were worked in the North Minch. On completion of work in this area EXPLORER headed for Aberdeen, docking at 2000 hours on the 2 April.

Results

## a) Young Fish Survey

The trawling gear was, initially, a short wing GOV trawl but this became badly damaged after working hard ground at Rockall Bank and on the edge of the Continental Shelf. The net was replaced with a long wing GOV trawl, the wings of the latter were flown to make the 2 nets as compatible as possible.

It was hoped to make one 1 hour tow in all the statistical squares assigned to EXPLORER. However, many of these squares presented problems in that it proved difficult or sometimes impossible to find a clear tow for a bottom trawl.

## Rockall

Weather conditions only allowed 4 hauls to be made on the bank. There was little sign of the 0+ and 1+ year classes but large quantities of commercial quality haddock were taken in the vicinity of the Rock eg 2 separate 1 hour tows yielded 28 and 23 baskets of haddock. The only other species of significance in the catches at Rockall Bank was T. minitus.

## Continental Shelf

The total number of haddock, whiting and herring caught per 1 hour tow in each square fished are shown on the accompanying chart.

### b) Clyde herring

A number of spawning herring were required to provide fertilised eggs for experiments at Poolewe. Three 1 hour tows were made 4 miles south of Pladda Light and a total of 10 baskets of herring yielded 30 spawning females and 15 spawning males. The gonads were stripped and transplanted to Poolewe by car from Troon.

### c) Miscellaneous

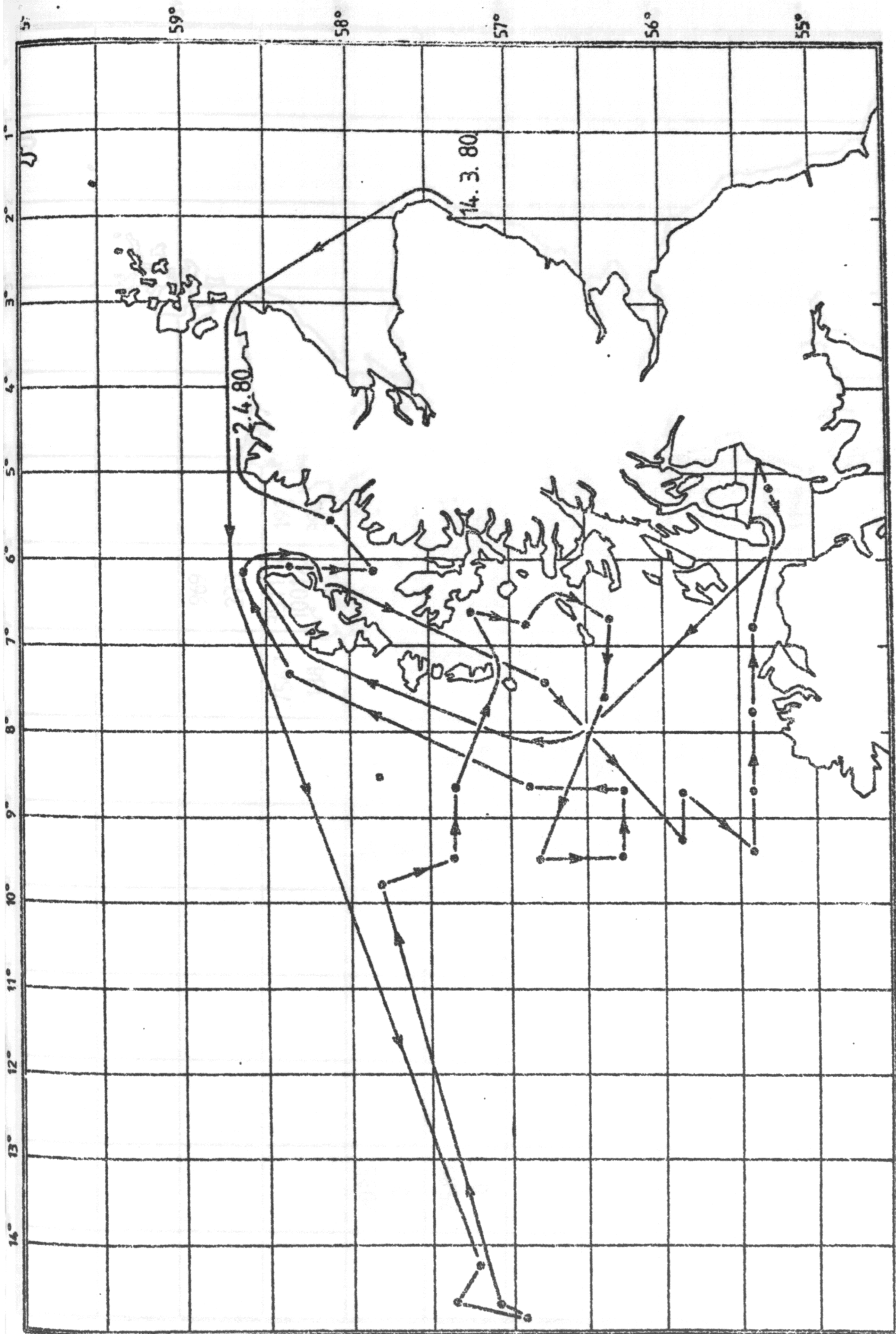
A large number of samples were returned to the Laboratory in response to various requests.

137 Dogfish were tagged, a number at deep stations on the edge of the shelf. In addition a number of stomachs were examined.

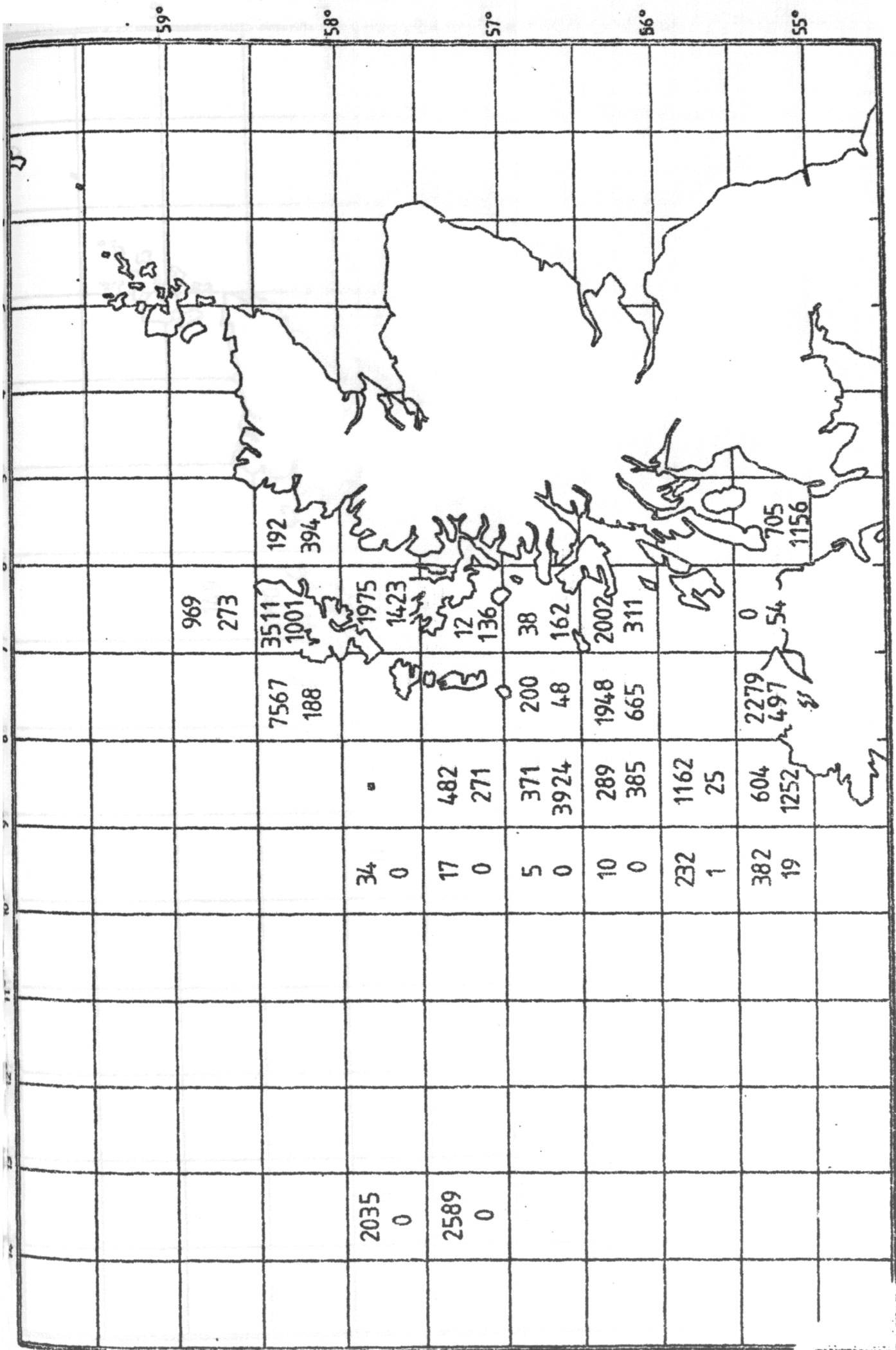
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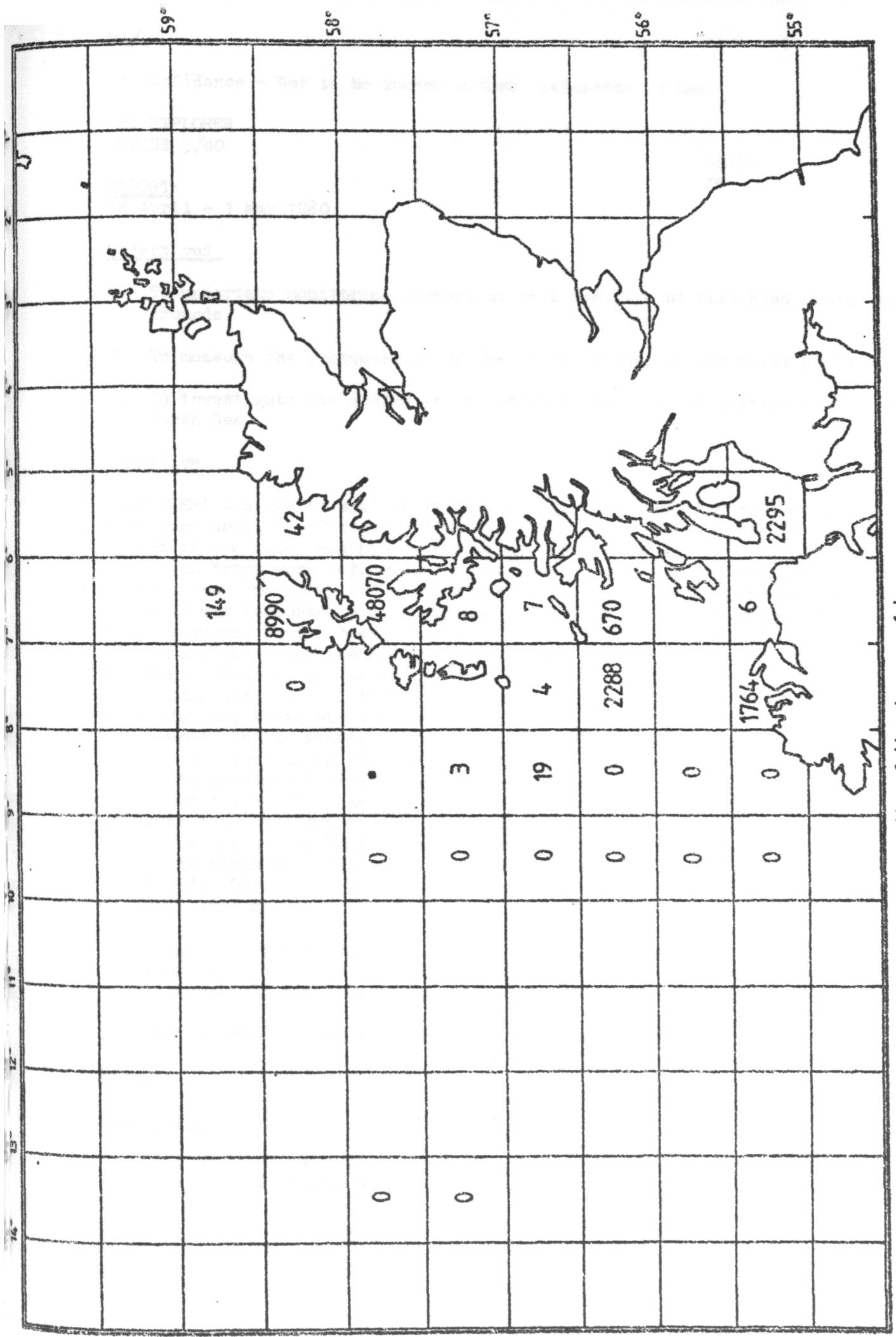
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Top Figure - No. of Haddock per 1 hour  
 Bottom Figure - No. of Whiting per 1 hour



No. of Herring per 1 hour