

FRV EXPLORER

Cruise 6/79

REPORT

June 6 - 28 1979

Objectives Part 1 (June 6 - 12) Preliminary observations on the distribution of jellyfish.

Part 2 (June 13 - 28) Participation in the International North Sea O-group gadoid survey.

Narrative

EXPLORER sailed from Aberdeen on the afternoon of June 6, but had to return to the harbour later on the same day because of crew problems, and it was not until June 12 that the cruise eventually got under way. Trawling began east of the Firth of Forth on June 13. During the period June 13 - 16, fifteen stations were worked off the north east coast of Scotland and in the Moray Firth. During the last haul on June 16 (in the western part of the Pentland Firth) the netzonde equipment was not functioning properly, with the result that the net went on to the bottom, splitting the belly. EXPLORER anchored in Thurso Bay whilst the damage was repaired. During June 17/18, five hauls were worked west of the Orkneys, after which EXPLORER returned to Thurso Bay to pick up spare netzonde equipment that had been driven to Scrabster by Mr Lawrie. Mr Mowatt left the ship at Scrabster and returned to Aberdeen with Mr Lawrie. Trawling recommenced, east of the Orkneys, on June 19. After completing three stations in this area, EXPLORER steamed northeast to begin the northern part of the survey. A number of hauls were made with a small Isaacs Kidd net en route. Between June 20 and June 26 a further 21 trawl hauls were made. During this period the ship run into several dense and persistent patches of fog, with the result that some working time was lost. A further delay was experienced on June 26 when gale force winds held up work for 24 hours. Two hauls were made on June 27 after which EXPLORER set off for Aberdeen, where she docked at 2330 hours on June 28.

Results

Part 1: Due to the delay in sailing, the objectives that had been scheduled for this part of the cruise had to be abandoned.

Part 2: All but three of the trawling stations were successfully completed.

a) O-group fish

Cod, haddock and whiting occurred mainly in two areas, these being between the Shetland Isles and the edge of the Norwegian Deeps and to the west of the Orkneys. Norway pout were abundant only to the east of the Fair Isle/Sumburgh region. Saithe were more widely distributed than usual and were taken in the largest numbers along the edge of the shelf near the Norwegian Deeps. Blue whiting were taken in two rectangles only (49FO and 48FI). Samples of O-group cod and haddock were frozen for Mr Childs of the Lowestoft Laboratory. Of the main non-gadoid species caught during the survey, sqrats, sandeels and Squalus acanthias seemed less abundant than in recent years.

b) Macroplankton

Scyphomedusae were present in all hauls except one during the survey. Aurelia aurita and Cyanea lamarcki were less abundant in the Moray Firth and off the Scottish North coast than in 1978 but more abundant east of Shetland. Cyanea capillata were more abundant off the Scottish east coast and east of Shetland than in 1978 but less abundant west of the Norwegian Deeps. Other macroplankton occasionally abundant were the hydromedusan Staurophora mertensi and Laodicea undulata, the ctenophore Pleurobrachia pileus and the euphausiid Meganyctiphanes norvegica.

c) Hydrography

There was insufficient time to survey the JONSSIS line.

Seen in draft J W GILLON

J HISLOP

9 August 1979

