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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND  
1982 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV G A REAY : CRUISE 8

(PROVISIONAL: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF:

B W Jones  
B C Bedford  
B C Mumford  
S Stevens  
R D Cousens

DURATION:

Left Aberdeen 1600 h 13 July  
Docked Grangemouth 0800 h 2 August

LOCALITY:

Rockall Bank

AIMS:

To undertake a trawl survey of the Rockall Bank area to determine the distribution and abundance of haddock and other fish species of commercial importance.

NARRATIVE:

G A REAY sailed from Aberdeen at 1600 h 13 July and made passage direct to Rockall Bank. Fishing commenced on the morning of 15 July and continued until the evening of 21 July when the ship had to leave for Stornoway for water and repairs to the trawl winch. On route to Stornoway an injured crew member, requiring hospital treatment, was transferred to the G A REAY from the fishing vessel ST JASON. The ship arrived at Stornoway at 2000 h 22 July and berthed at 1430 h 23 July. The G A REAY left Stornoway at 0600 h 24 July and resumed fishing on Rockall Bank at 0700 h 25 July. The ship terminated her work at Rockall at 1900 h on 30 July and sailed for Grangemouth, anchoring in the Firth of Forth at 1330 h 1 August awaiting a pilot to Grangemouth, where she docked at 0800 h 2 August. The weather was fine throughout the cruise and no fishing time was lost due to adverse weather.

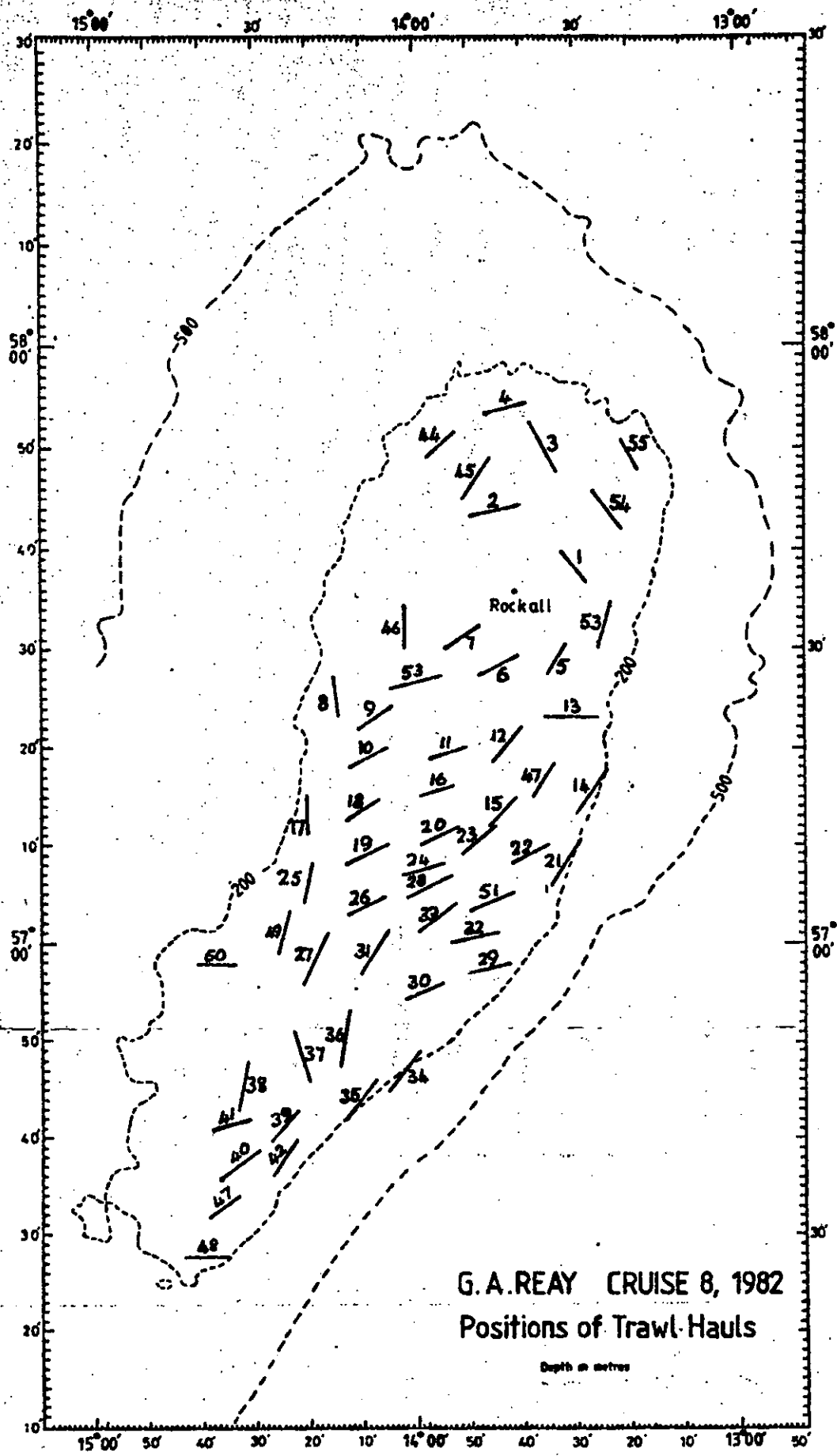
RESULTS:

1. A trawl survey of Rockall Bank was successfully completed. A total of 55 valid tows of one hour duration was made using the Portuguese high headline trawl fitted with a small mesh cod-end liner. A chart showing the positions of trawl hauls is attached.

Haddock were abundant but other species were taken in relatively smaller quantities, blue whiting, cod and saithe being the most abundant. The total catch of haddock amounted to over 54 tonnes (225,000 fish) for the 55 tows with catch rates up to 6.5 tonnes (179 baskets) per one hour haul.

I- and II-group haddock were very abundant with modal lengths of 20 and 25 cm. The length composition of the catches was rather variable but overall about 30% (by weight) of the catch consisted of fish below 27 cm long. Only two specimens of the 1982 year-class were caught but it is probable that fish of this year-class still have a pelagic distribution. A sample of 371 haddock otoliths was taken for age determination. Otoliths were also taken from cod and saithe, and samples of blue whiting were measured.





G.A. REAY CRUISE 8, 1982  
 Positions of Trawl Hauls

Depth in metres