

22 - 1
Indexed
R1/3

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CRUISE REPORT

"G A Reay"

8-25 January 1986

Personnel

D McKay	HSO
F Armstrong	SO
I Leaver	ASO
T Taylor	ASO

Objectives

- 1 To carry out an echointegrator and fishing survey off the east coast of Scotland and northeast of England.
- 2 To carry out trials with a new camera system for taking in situ photographs of fish.
- 3 To collect a water sample from a station off Arbroath.

Narrative

After scientific staff joined the vessel, "G A Reay" sailed from Hull at 1400 on 8 January. While testing the echointegrator system prior to sailing, the transmitter part of the echosounder developed a fault. As no one was available in Hull who was familiar with the Simrad EK400, it was decided to head for Aberdeen, where repairs could be carried out by Simrad engineers.

"G A Reay" docked in Aberdeen at 2100 on 9 January, but since the appropriate spare parts were not available, arrangements were made for these to be obtained as soon as possible and "G A Reay" sailed from Aberdeen at 2400 to carry out a preliminary echosounder survey, using the ships echosounders, and trawling trials in the Moray Firth area. During the morning of 11 January, "G A Reay" received a message that spare parts for the echosounder would be available in Aberdeen that evening. "G A Reay" arrived at Aberdeen at 1800 and repairs were carried out to the sounder. While on passage to Aberdeen, the cook reported sick and arrangements were made for a replacement to join the ship in Aberdeen. "G A Reay" sailed from Aberdeen at 1200 on 12 January to begin the echointegrator survey.

"G A Reay" began surveying southwards towards the Firth of Forth but poor weather conditions curtailed operations in the area. As the forecasts were for the bad weather to continue, it was decided to move north to the Moray Firth area which was more sheltered with the wind from the north west. The survey continued in the Moray Firth area until 14 January when an improvement in the weather permitted the survey to be extended northwards to the Shetland Isles, and west to Loch Eriboll, where a calibration was carried out on the evening of 17 January.

On leaving L Eriboll strong southwesterly westerly winds curtailed further operations to the west of the Orkneys and "GA Reay" headed for the Moray Firth area. For the remainder of the cruise "GA Reay" continued surveying southwards. The survey in the area south of Aberdeen was considerably restricted because of the prevailing bad weather in the area. "GA Reay" docked at Hull at 1700 on 24 January and after unloading scientific staff returned to Aberdeen.

Results

During the survey sprats were very scarce throughout the area. The best traces were found 10 miles east of Stonehaven, off the mouth of the Tyne and inshore off Scarborough south to Flamborough Head. Trawling in these areas indicated that the traces in the first two areas were almost entirely composed of sprats whereas those in the Scarborough area were mostly herring.

During the cruise 9 trawl hauls were carried out using an International young gadoid pelagic trawl (11 mm codend mesh) and sprat were caught in 7 of them. Examination of the length distribution of the sprats caught indicated that they largely belonged to the 1985 year class.

No opportunity was available to test the new camera system.

D W McKay
3 February 1987

Seen in draft:

L Whur

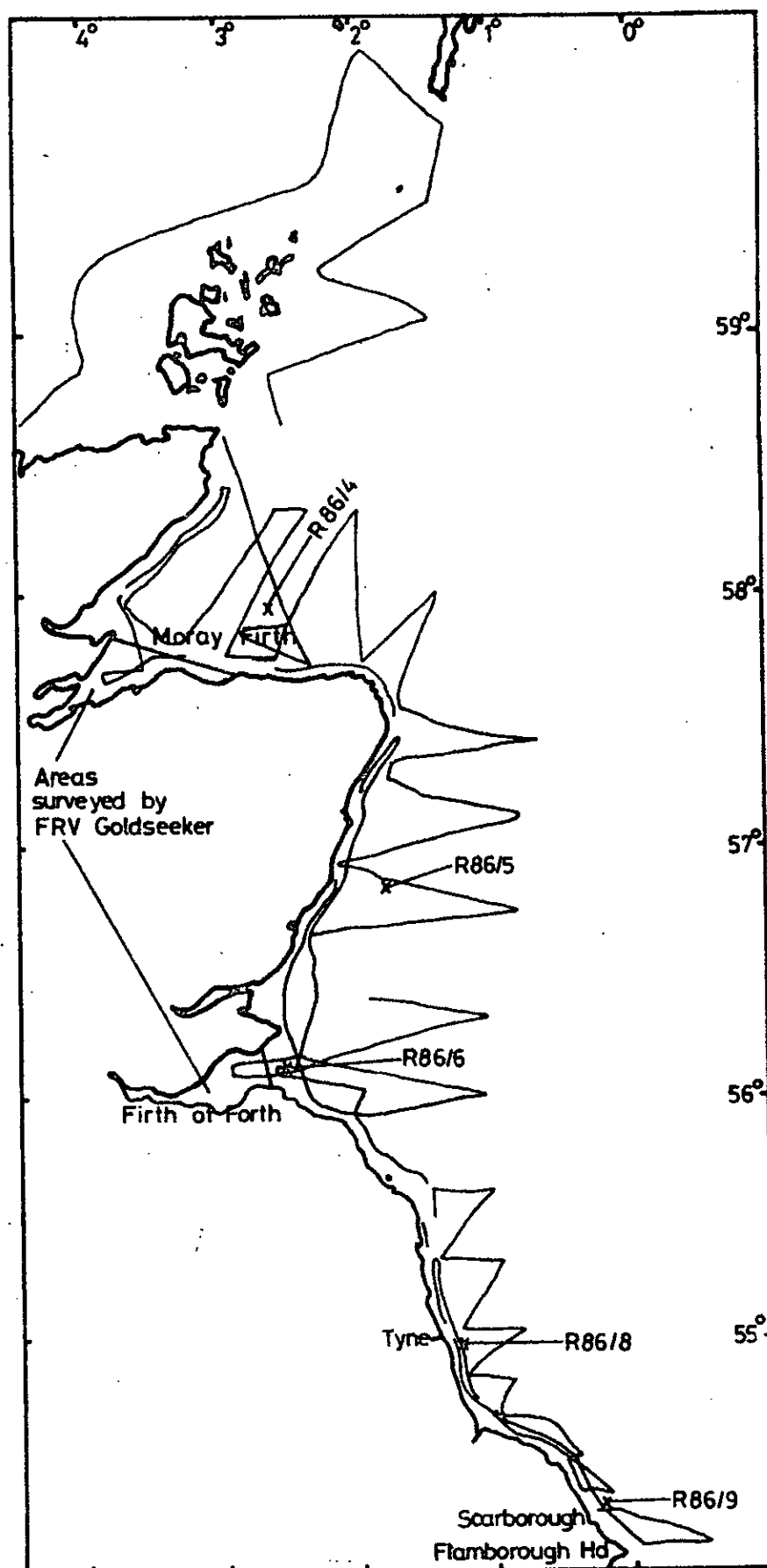


FIGURE 1 Track chart and positions of trawl hauls made on RV "G A Reay".