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CRUISE REPORT

FRV "GOLDSEEKER"

31 January - 2 March 1972

7 March - 31 March 1972

OBJECTIVES:

1. To undertake experimental electrical fishing for Nephrops.
2. To study the states of the scallop and queen stocks off the south-west of Scotland.
3. To compare the efficiencies of various gears used to catch scallops and queens.
4. To study the stocks of Munida in the same area.
5. To take surface temperatures daily.

NARRATIVE:

Bad weather during the first week of the cruise prevented the experimental electrical fishing for Nephrops. "Goldseeker" left Lossiemouth on 8 February and made a passage to the west coast. The scientific staff joined at Oban on 11 February and work commenced on the 14th in the Sound of Jura, where dredging and creeling continued until 24 February. "Goldseeker" then worked on scallops and queens in the Clyde until 2 March, when part I of the cruise ended at Troon. Work in the Clyde was severely restricted owing to adverse weather.

The scientific staff for part II of the cruise joined ship on 7 March. Thereafter dredging for scallops and queens was possible somewhere each day, though some of the more exposed positions could not be worked. The scientific staff left "Goldseeker" at Ardrossan on 25 March, and the boat returned to Buckie, arriving on the 30th.

RESULTS

1. Experimental electrical fishing

This part of the programme had to be abandoned because of bad weather in the Moray Firth.

2. Scallop and queen survey

Sixty seven hauls were made in the first part of the cruise and 124 in the second.

Outside the Clyde, hauls with the 4ft commercial scallop dredge yielded some good catches of scallops, the best being 53 and 34 in 15 minute hauls in the Iussa-Tarbert area (Sound of Jura) and 42 and 31 south of Easdale. While scallops with more than 9 rings continue to make up a considerable part of the catch, those with 4 and 5 rings have become more prominent.

On the west side of the Firth of Clyde catches using the commercial dredge were generally poor, scallops with 8 or more rings predominating.

Scallop catches on the east side of the Clyde were generally better than in recent years, several catches of 20 to 30 scallops per 15 minute commercial dredge haul being taken off Lendal Foot and moderate hauls off the Heads of Ayr, Lady Isle and Girvan. Scallops with 4 and 5 rings predominated in the

catches off Lendal Foot. A series of 5 minute hauls using dredges fitted with fine mesh linings showed that after a succession of poor settlements many younger scallops are now present off the Ayrshire coast, scallops with 2 rings being particularly abundant, and even some 0- and 1-ring scallops being taken.

Age-frequencies of scallops caught (%)

No. of rings		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Area	Gear											
Outside Clyde (Sound of Jura and Easdale)	Commercial scallop dredge	-	1	1	2	4	5	6	8	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	38
West side of Clyde	Commercial scallop dredge	-	-	1	3	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	12	12	9	8	19
East side of Clyde (Lendal Foot - Bernane Head)	Commercial scallop dredge	1	4	9	5	<u>23</u>	<u>26</u>	8	8	4	3	10
	Scallop dredge with fine lining	7	13	<u>20</u>	8	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	6	4	1	1	4

Catches of queens by commercial scallop dredge and beam trawl were generally poor, though the presence of large numbers of small queens (20-30 and 40-55 mm) in hauls with the fine mesh scallop dredge off north Arran and in Clunaig Bay indicate recent good settlements which should enter commercial catches in 1 to 2 years time.

3. Comparative fishing

Five hauls totalling 90 minutes with an 8 ft beam trawl off the Heads of Ayr yielded 992 queens and 14 scallops. Four hauls totalling 60 minutes with an 8 ft Manx queen dredge yielded 298 queens and 1 scallop.

4. Munida Survey

Fleets each of 10 Nephrops creels were shot in suitable areas adjacent to the Sound of Jura. Localities were chosen where Munida had previously been recorded in abundance ie on the harder ground just off Nephrops areas. Munida were everywhere scarce. Grounds which had previously yielded up to 20 per creel yielded a maximum of only 5 individuals per fleet. A few Nephrops were caught, and considerable numbers of Fortunus, Carcinus and Hyas.

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8 May 1972