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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "GOLDSEEKER"

29th January-22nd February, 1968

Narrative

"Goldseeker" left Fraserburgh on 29th January and, after taking plankton hauls in the Moray Firth, proceeded through the Caledonian Canal, arriving at Corpach on 1st February. In connection with Pulp Mill effluent investigations, plankton samples were taken in Loch Eil and Loch Linnhe, and baskets of live mussels put out. "Goldseeker" then steamed south and through the Crinan Canal, and dredging operations were started at Inverneil on 6th February. Exploited scallop beds on both sides of the Clyde Estuary were sampled, and the cruise ended at Troon on 22nd February.

Results

A total of 133 hauls were made, all with a 4 ft. dredge and mostly of 15 minutes' duration. As in previous years, the proportion of older scallops was generally lower on the west side of the Clyde than on the east.

The percentages of scallops with seven or more growth rings from each area, with corresponding figures for 1967, were as follows:-

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>
Inverneil I.	47	33
Claonaig Bay	16	16
North Arran	23	5
Inchmarnock	30	75
Lady I.	47	25
Heads of Ayr	76	72
Bennane Head	72	71

As was expected from last year's results, the predominant age group at Claonaig Bay and North Arran was the six ring group. Queens (*Chlamys opercularis*) were again abundant at Claonaig and Loch Ranza, but a change was noted at the Cock of Arran. Both queens and scallops were found to be scarce in this area, but most hauls contained large numbers of empty shells of both species.

North of Lady Isle scallops, mostly young, were fairly plentiful. Further south, on grounds from Ayr to the mouth of Loch Ryan, they were very scarce and mostly older specimens.

Experiments were carried out at Claonaig to see how duration of towing affected the hauls. If the bag becomes full, further towing will not increase the catch, but even if such hauls are excluded, it seems that a 15 minute haul is on average only twice as effective as a 5 minute haul.

J. Drinkwater  
2nd August, 1968