

R1/10

6GR71

4.

IN CONFIDENCE: Not to be quoted without reference to the Laboratory

## CRUISE REPORT

FRV "GOLDSEEKER"

8 June - 2 July 1971

## Objectives:

1. To determine the abundance and catch composition of crabs off the east coast of the Outer Hebrides, from South Uist to Harris, and around the Shiant Isles.
2. To compare the efficiencies of standard east coast creels and parlour creels in catching crabs.
3. To trawl for bait.
4. To study the distribution and abundance of scallops in the same area.
5. To take daily surface temperature readings.

## Narrative:

The cruise began at Corpach on 8 June when "Goldseeker" proceeded to the Skye-Inner Sound area. Continuous, strong, northerly winds restricted working to the Inner Sound, S.W. Skye, and the vicinity of Oban.

The creels were shot daily, each fleet consisting of equal numbers of standard and parlour creels arranged in a specified order. When possible creels were baited with fresh fish, but salted saithe was used when fresh bait was not available.

Trawling, using a standard 70 mm Nephrops trawl and small mesh whole cover, was prosecuted at suitable stations to obtain fresh bait.

Hauls with a standard 4 ft. scallop dredge were made at suitable places around Loch Dunvegan and Loch Gairloch.

## Results:

## Creeling.

In 208 trap hauls a total of 514 crabs, 3 lobsters and 2 Nephrops were taken.

Of the crabs males totalled 136, and female 378. Two females were plugged. The numbers of undersized and marketable crabs were:-

Undersized males	: 87	mean carapace width = 94.4 mm
Undersized females	: 57	" " " = 100.3 mm
Marketable males	: 49	" " " = 146.3 mm
Marketable females	: 321	" " " = 154.9 mm

The total weight of marketable crabs was 184 kg (28 stone).

The difference in the total catches of the two types of creel was not significant; 253 crabs in the standard creel and 262 in the parlour creel.

Of the three lobsters taken, one was undersized (♂ 63 mm carapace length), the other two were just over the minimum legal size (♂ 94 and ♀ 80)

#### Trawling:

Nephrops were taken in most hauls, but catches of any significance were made only in Loch Linnhe. Here a total of 1213 Nephrops were examined. The following table shows the sex and size composition.

Carapace Length Sex	20-4	25-9	30-4	35-9	40-4	45-9	50-4	55-9	Total	Mean carapace length (mm)
Total ♂	7	60	103	162	148	67	18	7	572	38.5
Total ♀	6	124	217	226	67	1	-	-	641	34.3
Berried ♀	-	1	5	5	7	-	-	-	18	37.2

Catches of white fish were generally rather small, the total catches of the main species being as follows:-

	Cod	Whiting	Haddock	Hake	Dogfish	Witch	L.R. Dab
Small mesh	2	41	14	2	13	19	41
Large mesh	5	27	30	22	34	25	16

#### Dredging:

Seven dredge hauls in Loch Dunvegan yielded 26 Pecten maximus, these had an average length of 118.3 mm. Eight were over 9 years old, three 7-8 years old, seven 6 years old, and eight 5 years old and under.

Three hauls in Loch Gairloch yielded only 1 scallop.

#### Hydrography:

Surface temperature readings ranged from 10.5°C to 12.2°C.

F. G. HOWARD  
2.8.71