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Cruise Report

FRV Goldseeker

10-26 August 1976

Objectives

1. To study the state of scallop and queen stocks in previously exploited areas of the west coast, including those around Mull and Skye.
2. To search for new grounds in the same areas.
3. To search for juvenile scallops in the same areas.

Narrative

After loading in Troon on 10 August, "Goldseeker" made her passage north via the Crinan Canal and Sound of Mull and arrived at Kyle of Lochalsh on 13 August. During the following week dredging was carried out along the northern, western and southern coasts of Skye. In the final week dredging was done off Eigg, around Ardnamurchan and in the Sound of Mull. The cruise ended in Corpach, where the vessel was left for the long weekend on 26 August. Weather conditions were very good throughout the cruise.

Results

A total of 61 dredge hauls were made. The 4ft dredges with spring loaded tooth bar fished better on rough ground than standard dredges, which were prone to damage.

Good concentrations of scallops were found in Loch Snizort, Loch Dunvegan, south of Eigg and north of Ardnamurchan. Catches were mostly poor along the southern coast of Skye. Age distributions are shown in Table I.

Table I  
Percentage age composition of scallops

Number of rings												Best catch per 15 min
	-	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Loch Snizort	-	2	9	9	8	5	5	8	11	7	35	25
Loch Dunvegan	-	2	6	10	10	9	12	8	5	8	30	39
L. Pooltiel-Sleat Pt1	4	21	10	13	8	8	10	6	4	15	22	
S of Eigg	-	1	6	10	16	15	11	12	13	8	8	45
N of Ardnamurchan	-	-	1	8	8	13	19	20	11	2	18	21

The high proportion of young scallops off Eigg, together with the good overall catch there, suggests that this area should support a commercial fishery over the next few years.

Queens were generally scarce, though one haul N of Ardnamurchan yielded several hundred rather small specimens.

Newly settled spat of both scallops and queens were found in small numbers amongst weed dredged from grounds off NE Skye and north of Ardnamurchan.

J Drinkwater  
6.9.76

Seen in draft: W B Reid