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CRUISE REPORT

FRV "GOLDSEEKER"

21 AUGUST - 6 SEPTEMBER 1973

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the lobster stocks off the Outer Hebrides and the north coast of the Scottish mainland.
2. To compare the lobster catching efficiencies of east coast and parlour creels fitted with 5 inch or 6 inch eyes.
3. To trawl for Nephrops.
4. To dredge for scallops.

NARRATIVE:

"Goldseeker" left Corpach on 21 August for Castlebay, but fog prevented any work during the first week except soaking the creels in Vatersay Bay. The six fleets of eight creels were shot west of Vatersay and Barra during the second week, but then W to SW gales prevented work for five successive days and resulted in extensive damage to the creels. A passage was made to Stornoway and the remainder of the cruise was spent in dredging and trawling. Scientists and crew left "Goldseeker" at Stornoway on 6 September.

RESULTS:

- 1 and 2 The creels baited with salted mackerel were effectively hauled only twice. In the 96 creel hauls six lobsters were caught, one in an east coast and five in parlour creels, together with nine crabs.
3. Four half-hour hauls were made off Tiumpnan Head using "Goldseeker's" standard Nephrops trawl with 70 mm cod-end and small mesh whole cover. Fair catches of Norway lobsters were taken, 949 in all. The size- and sex - composition are given in the following table:-

Carepace length (mm)	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	Total
Total males	2	26	123	179	132	34	12	1	509
Total females	1	35	122	173	93	15	1	-	440
Berried females	-	-	35	80	35	6	1	-	157

Few fish were caught, most of those being Trisopterus esmarkii. Good catches of Pandalus montagui were taken, the best being half a basket in one haul.

4. Fourteen 4 ft dredge hauls of 15 minutes duration were made off Vatersay, Eriskay and Stornoway. Catches were poor, the best being five scallops in a haul off Eriskay.

**GENERAL:**

Mr J Kinnear spent a day on board the fishing boat "Fin - ar - Bed," one of five Channel Islands boats fishing for lobsters on grounds west of the Outer Hebrides. They were working up to 10 miles offshore in water as deep as 40 fathoms, and were using plastic-covered pots of the Cornish inkwell type with 9 inch eyes. Fished in five fleets of 60, they were hauled once or twice daily according to circumstances. On the day in question "Fin - ar - Bed" took 88 lobsters from 420 pot hauls.

JAMES MASON  
7 November 1973