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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "GOLDSEEKER"

13th - 30th November 1967

Narrative

"Goldseeker" was storm-bound in Girvan until the 18th November, when she made a passage to Ardrishaig, where she was joined by the scientific staff, who had been working on the mussel experiments in Loch Sween.

Scallop dredging commenced in Loch Fyne on the 20th and continued on various grounds until the evening of the 25th. "Goldseeker" left Ayr on the morning of the 26th to make a passage to Aberdeen, where she arrived at 23.30 hrs. on the 30th.

Scallop dredging

The stocks of scallops were sampled off Inverneil, Claonaig Bay and Lady Isle by means of a traditional 4-ft dredge. On the west side of the Clyde (Inverneil and Claonaig) the 1961 brood (6+) scallops continued to predominate, constituting 57% of the catch. There is still no evidence of a recent successful spatfall, few (4%) of the scallops caught having fewer than 5 growth rings. However, one 0+ scallop (16 mm long) was caught off Inverneil.

Off Lady Isle, on the east side of the Clyde, recent settlements have been more successful, 3+, 4+ and 5+ scallops being well represented in the catches.

Diving

A preliminary study was made of dredge behaviour by direct observation by divers in the normal fishing depths (10-12 fm). Observations suggest that, when using a wire warp to tow the dredge on a smooth sandy gravel bottom, the dredge stays on the bottom but the teeth dig in only a short way. The mouth of the dredge tends to become blocked by a pile of bottom deposit and many scallops in the track of the dredge are not picked up.

The age composition of samples collected by hand by divers was similar to that of samples taken by the dredge, confirming that the lack of younger scallops in dredge samples is not due to their being missed by the dredge.

Direct observation on the prolific bed of queens off the cock of Arran showed a layer of queens three or four deep with a probable density of 400 per sq. yd.

Plankton

Oblique hauls with a 1m (26 mesh) net were made off Inverneil and off Ayr.

James Mason.

15.2.68.