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IN CONFIDENCE: NOT TO BE QUOTED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE
LABORATORY.

CRUISE REPORT

FRV GOLDSEEKER

4-29 SEPTEMBER 1972

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the catch composition and abundance of lobsters and crabs around the Orkney Islands.
2. To investigate the spawning frequency of lobsters.
3. To undertake comparative creel fishing for lobsters and crabs.
4. To undertake scallop dredging.
5. To trawl for fresh bait.
6. To take daily surface temperature readings.

NARRATIVE

Goldseeker left Buckie on 4 September but was delayed by gales until 7 September. Creeling commenced on the Orkney grounds on 8 September and continued until the 27th. Six fleets of eight creels, 4 Scottish and 4 Parlour type, arranged in specified order, were used throughout the trip. Salt and fresh baits were used for comparison.

The cephalothorax of all females were preserved and brought back to the Laboratory for further examination. Trawling using a standard 70 mm Nephrops trawl with whole small mesh cover was carried out at suitable positions for fresh bait.

A limited programme using a 4 feet scallop dredge was carried out.

The cruise ended at Buckie on 29 September.

RESULTS

Creeling

In 480 creel hauls 33 lobsters, 15 males and 18 females were caught. Five were under marketable size and 5 of the females were berried. The mean carapace length of the marketable specimens was 96.1 mm for males and 94.8 mm for females.

326 crabs were taken, of these only 87 (26.7%) were marketable with a mean carapace width of 135.4 mm for males and 132.9 mm for females. 33 of the females were plugged. There was little significant difference in the fishing performance of the 2 types of creel. The comparison of the catch using salt and fresh bait is shown below.

Bait		Parlour creel		Scottish creel	
		Salt	Fresh	Salt	Fresh
Lobster	Marketable	10	4	5	9
	Undersize	1	2	2	-
Crab	Marketable	21	20	12	34
	Undersize	52	74	50	63

TRAWLING

Eight half-hour hauls made to obtain fresh bait gave very poor results, the catch consisting mainly of small haddock, whiting and common dabs, mostly under marketable size.

DREDGING

Nine hauls of 15 minute duration yielded only one scallop. One haul produced 67 Ammodytes; these were preserved and brought back to the Laboratory for examination.

HYDROGRAPHY

Surface temperature readings ranged from 11.5°C to 12.3°C.

J. A. SINCLAIR

13 December 1972