

R1/10

SW
9GR77

Cruise Report

FRV 'Goldseeker'

30 August - 23 September 1977

Objective

To tag mackerel in the Minch.

Narrative

'Goldseeker' sailed from Crinan at 0900 on 31 August towards fishing grounds in the North Minch and reached Mallaig by 1945. Strong winds prevented sailing the following day until late afternoon when the 'Goldseeker' continued as far as Kyle. Persistent strong winds prevented further progress until the following week.

'Goldseeker' left Kyle on 6 September for fishing grounds off Melvaig where tagging was begun that day. For the remainder of the week fishing and tagging were carried out in the vicinity of Greenstone point. The weekend was spent in Ullapool.

During the following week fishing and tagging were again carried out mainly off Greenstone point. One day's fishing was lost as a result of bad weather but sampling of the commercial landings of mackerel at Ullapool was done on that day. The weekend was spent in Ullapool.

During the final week tagging was again carried out off Greenstone point on the 19th, before the 'Goldseeker' sailed for Kyle. The scientists disembarked there at 0530 on 20 September and 'Goldseeker' departed for Buckie via the Caledonian Canal.

Tagging and Fishing

A total of 1,273 mackerel were tagged during the course of the cruise. Of these 428 were tagged using internal tags and the remainder were tagged using externals, of which 426 were spaghetti tags and 419 were flag tags.

No great difficulty was encountered in locating fish on most days and some progress was made in the positive identification of mackerel marks on the echosounder. The problem of fish loss to gannets was again encountered but was successfully overcome by dropping fish down a long weighted pipe with an exit well below the surface.

Fish Sampling

All mackerel caught whether tagged or not, were measured and otoliths were taken from 216 fish, which were too badly damaged to tag, to provide data for an age-length key. In addition 11 catches from the commercial fishery were sampled, 6 from pair trawlers and 5 from purse seiners.

M Walsh
7 October 1977

Seen in draft: W B Reid OIC