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PB

FRV "Goldseeker"

Cruise 12/86

REPORT

26 August - 10 September 1986

Personnel

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Objective

To make further observations on the movement pattern of fish in the path of the trawl, looking particularly for:

- 1 Are fish stimulated to swim straight back from the towing vessel to the mouth of the gear.
- 2 Do fish swim forward or out to the side well in advance of the approaching otterboards.

Narrative

The scientific staff joined "Goldseeker" on 26 August where the trawl and scientific equipment were loaded and the RCTV prepared for operation.

Sailing was postponed until Thursday 28 August due to strong westerly winds which made it impossible to use either the RCTV or diving techniques. With the wind still at force 4-5, an attempt was made to observe the trawl using the RCTV but, due to the commercial fishing operations in the close vicinity, the water was too dirty to make useful observations. An alternative position to the south of Troon was surveyed in diving depths but due to the deteriorating weather "Goldseeker" was forced to return to port.

The strong north-westerly wind continued the next day and the vessel didn't sail until 29 August.

Tows from Girvan to Ardrossan were conducted during the next 2 days using both the RCTV and divers in both shallow and deep water but fishing was extremely poor.

With continuing onshore westerly winds a move was made to Arran where Whiting Bay and Brodick Bay was surveyed but the bottom was found to be very hard and covered with boulders. A big mark of what appeared to be herring was observed on the echo sounder but despite repeated attempts at towing the vehicle through the mark fish were not observed. It was noted that the mark appeared to remain the same on each run and did not scatter.

The half landing was on 2 September and at 2 pm, with an even worse weather forecast of gales, and in view of the poor fishing, a decision was made to move out of the Clyde and go further north. On 4 September a survey was made off the west side of Kerrera Island before arriving in Oban.

Creels set close to the shore in diving depth made it difficult to find suitable grounds but a local skipper gave us Decca reading where tows could be made using the RCTV. Fishing continued to be poor but small whiting 16-18 cms were found on the west side of Lismore Island where a number of observations were made. Good echo marks typical of small herring and sprats were found SW of Ardmucknish Bay. However, no fish were seen at the doors, wingends or net position. A few fish from the cod-end confirmed the species. It must be assumed that the majority of these fish avoided the gear. Unfortunately the general lack of fish on the grounds and the poor weather conditions prevented the full objectives of the cruise being met.

J Main
29 September 1986

Seen in draft: Mr A Mair