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Commercial Fishing Vessel *Guiding Light* (LK 84)

(EU Study Contract C654 - Vessel chartered by North Atlantic Fisheries College)

REPORT

14-19 November 1999

Ports

Loading: Lerwick, 14 November

Unloading: Lerwick, 19 November

Personnel

R J Kynoch

Objectives

1. To measure the effect on fish discards of fitting a 90 mm (nominal) square mesh panel into the 100 mm extension of a commercial whitefish trawl using the alternate haul technique.
2. To collect data on the total population entering the trawl using a 40 mm mesh codend.

Procedure

Staff travelled to Shetland on the afternoon of 14 November and joined the vessel in Lerwick harbour. The vessel sailed later that evening to commercial fishing grounds to the east of Balta Sound. Alternate fishing hauls were then made, with and without the panel fitted. Length frequency data on the target species of haddock, whiting and cod were collected for each haul. Due to poor weather during the second half of the week the vessel moved from east of Balta Sound to south of Fetlar. In each fishing area a haul was made using a 40 mm mesh codend, to assess the total fish population entering the trawl.

Due to bad weather the cruise ended in Lerwick on the evening of 18 November. Staff returned to Aberdeen on 19 November.

Results

A total of five valid paired hauls were completed during the cruise, three east of Balta Sound and two south of Fetlar. In both areas the amount of marketable haddock, whiting and cod on the grounds was very low, the average catch rate was 2.8 baskets per hour. Anecdotal evidence from the vessel's skipper suggests that this has been the trend on the inshore grounds to the east of Shetland for the last month.

Large quantities of small haddock and pout (11 cm - 19 cm) were retained by the 40 mm small mesh cod-ends during the two population assessment hauls. The average catch rate for these

two hauls were 48 baskets per hour. This indicated that small fish were present on the grounds during the cruise but were not retained by the test codends.

A fuller statistical analysis will be carried out on the combined alternate haul data to be collected on further fishing charters organised by NAFC over the next 11 months.

R J Kynoch
27 January 2000