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Charter Vessel MFV *Helenus* (FR 121)

Charter Cruise 3801H

REPORT

24-28 March 2002

Gadoid Survey - North Sea No 3

Vessel's Tel: 07786 000154

Agent's Tel: 01779 474231

Personnel

Iain Penny (In charge)
Keith Summerbell
Jim Mair

Objective

To collect biological data on the gadoid populations (cod, haddock and whiting) at two geographically contrasting sites:

Inshore - Buchan Deep (57°30'N 01°02'W)

Offshore - Beryl Field (59°38'N 01°45'E)

This charter is one of a series of surveys in both the North Sea and off the west coast of Scotland. These surveys are to be performed bi-monthly and the collected data will allow:

- Comparison of inshore and offshore gadoid populations, with respect to size structure, growth, age composition and condition indices;
- Description of temporal variation in these condition indices; and
- Development of unbiased bi-monthly growth curves for the target gadoid species.

This project will be conducted as a preliminary exercise to assess the feasibility of using commercial vessels to supplement the collection of biological data on key commercial stocks.

Narrative

Staff joined the *Helenus* in Fraserburgh on the evening of Sunday 24 March. The vessel departed from Fraserburgh at 2000 hours and steamed for the offshore site at the Beryl oilfield (59°38'N 01°45'E). This site was chosen first, after discussion with the skipper about poor weather reports for the latter stages of the week.

The Fishing gear was rigged with scanmar and temperature sensors while the vessel's own cod-end was fitted with a 35 mm blinder. Fishing operations commenced on Monday 25 March at 1300 hours, with two hauls successfully completed in what remained of the day. The vessel restarted work at 0630 hours on Tuesday 26 March, having a further two hauls and then started to make its way back south towards the inshore site at the Buchan Deeps (57°30'N 01°02'W) for the following morning.

The *Helenus* arrived on site at 1130 hours on Wednesday 27 March and continued fishing, completing two hauls. On Thursday 28 March, due to poor weather conditions the *Helenus* was forced to run into the coast after each haul to allow the catch to be processed. This only allowed for two hauls to be completed on that day. The vessel returned to Fraserburgh at 2000 hours. Staff left the vessel at 0900 hours and returned to Aberdeen.

I Penny
17 April 2002