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Charter Vessel MFV *Helenuis* (FR 121)

Charter Cruise 3901H

REPORT

17-22 March 2002

Gadoid Survey - West Coast 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 - North Minch (57°50'N 05°55'W)

Offshore - Butt of Lewis (58°50'N 06°20'W)

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 and equipment loaded MFV *Helenuis* on the evening of 17 March 2002. The vessel departed at 2100 hours for fishing grounds at the Butt of Lewis (58°50'N 06°20'W) with a two hour delay in sailing due to the vessel arriving late from Peterhead after answering a distress call.

The fishing operations commenced on Monday 18 March at 1400 hours with Scanmar and temperature sensor's being fitted to the fishing gear and a 35 mm blinder fitted inside the vessel's own cod-end to sample the total population. One haul was completed during the day as a heavy catch of pelagic fish was taken and sampling procedures were slowed. The *Helenu*s then steamed through the night to the inshore site in the North Minch (57°50'N 05°55'W) due to adverse weather reports. During the second haul on 19 March 2002, it was noted that the vessel's speed was reduced and the engine was overheating. After discussions with the skipper it was assumed that the vessel had picked up some debris in it's propeller. The obstruction was removed by manoeuvring the vessel, after which full engine power was restored. A further two hauls were completed during the day. The vessel then steamed throughout the night back to the offshore site at the Butt of Lewis where it commenced fishing at first light. A further three hauls were completed on 20 March 2002, before undertaking the final haul in the same area the following day Thursday 21 March.

The cruise ended on Friday 22 March with the *Helenu*s landing into Fraserburgh at ~0500 hours, staff were then transported back to Aberdeen leaving the vessel at 0900 hours.

I Penny
17 April 2002