

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Division

CRUISE REPORT LF2697

JUVENILE GADOID STUDY 22-26 JUNE 1997

PERSONNEL

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M. McAliskey	SO
J. Peel	ASO
C Burns	ASO
D Hornby	RA [Liverpool]

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the abundance and geographic distribution of juvenile gadoids in the western Irish Sea.
2. To collect samples for the validation of whiting otolith primary increment deposition.
3. To investigate the factors determining the vertical distribution of zooplankton and ichthyoplankton in the western Irish Sea.

METHODS

This cruise is the last in a series of three cruises this summer. Two grids of stations were worked, one with the high speed plankton sampler and one with the MIK net. Samples were sorted onboard and preserved in buffered 4% formaldehyde. Fish larvae and juveniles were picked from the samples and fixed in 99% ethanol.

Yet again the Pronet system failed to work, so mechanical flowmeters were used on the high speed plankton sampler. The screen of one of the on-board computers failed mid-way through the cruise.

CRUISE NARRATIVE

Sunday 22 June 1997

Scientific staff boarded the vessel and attended a pre-cruise briefing which included a safety demonstration and discussion. The RV *Lough Foyle* sailed at 21h.45 and proceeded south to station 25 (Figure 1).

Monday 23 June 1997

Two MIK net stations were worked before daylight. The ship proceeded to station 4 to begin the plankton sampler grid. 13 plankton stations were sampled (Figure 1). At 21:00 sampling of the MIK net stations continued.

Tuesday 24 June 1997

Overnight, seven MIK net stations were sampled (Figure 1). Then the remaining eleven plankton stations were sampled. At 15:00 the ship headed to Belfast to allow one of the crew to leave the cruise for personal reasons. The vessel reached Belfast at 22:15 and headed back to sea at 22:35.

Wednesday 25 June 1997

The vessel reached MIK net station 27 at 04:00 but the sea was too rough to sample. The ship headed for the fixed station in the centre of the western Irish Sea. It became apparent that the sea state was worsening and sampling was impossible. The winds were forecast to become even stronger and swing round to northerlies over the next few days. At 10:00, the SIC and captain agreed to end the cruise and return to Belfast.

RESULTS

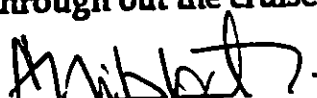
33 deployments were made during the cruise. The distribution of the plankton conformed to the findings of previous cruises. Only half of the MIK net grid and the plankton grid were completed. No fixed station studies could be made.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Master, officers and crew of MRV *Lough Foyle* are thanked for their enthusiastic co-operation throughout the cruise. As a result of very poor, unseasonal June weather, the cruise objectives were not completed. However, the scientists must be congratulated for working well in unpleasant conditions through out the cruise.


M Dickey-Collas

(Scientist in Charge)


A Niblock

(Master)

25 June 1997

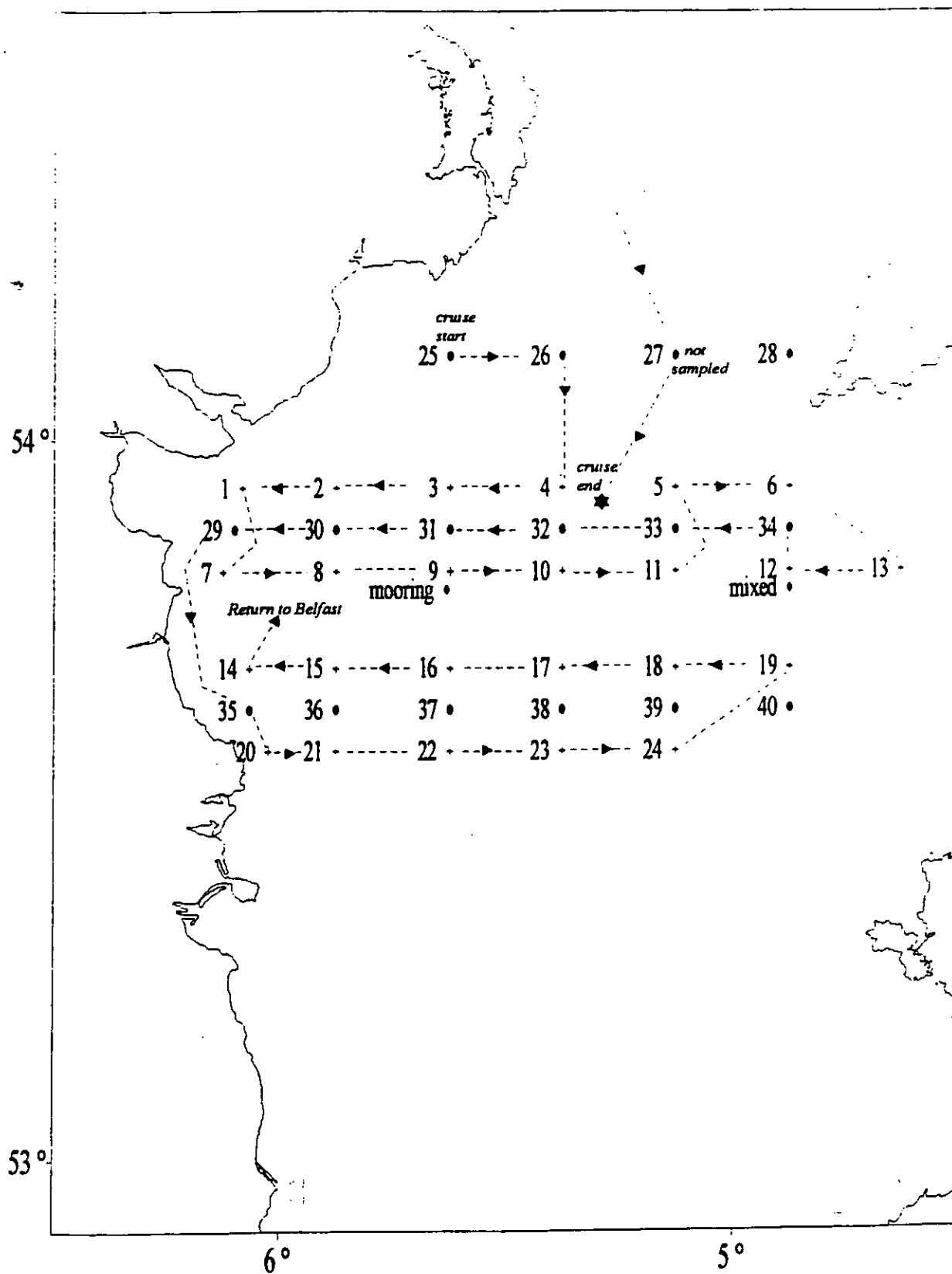


Figure 1. Schematic of cruise route on LF2697, 22-26 June 1997