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reference to the laboratory.

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "M A R A"

19th September-8th October, 1960.

After a long period of seine netting "Mara" was being re-rigged for trawling and although re-rigging had been started at the end of the previous week it was midday on the 20th before the last jobs were completed and the ship sailed.

The first week was spent in Aberdeen Bay and at the Benachie Ground working with the trouser trawl. By mid-week, after a few minor adjustments, it appeared to be fishing properly and for the remainder of the week a comparison was made between the two halves of the net; one with $3\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh in the square belly and batings, one with $5\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh in the square and the forward parts of the belly and batings.

There were fair catches of prime fish on the Benachie Ground and whiting too in the deeper water at one corner of it, so apart from a day or two spent at Tod Head, the remainder of the trip was spent making a survey of that ground. A large scale Decca chart of the ground, about 8 miles square, was made up and the tows plotted back onto it from the track plotter. There are two wrecks right in the middle of the ground but they were not located.

Means were devised of handling a large wing trawl with a 30 ft string of bobbins along the belly and bunts. A lightweight nylon net of the size used by the Aberdeen trawlers was handled similarly, but "Mara's" smaller nets were more serviceable. The ground is not so very hard, but each attempt to use a big net, even though protected by a bobbin groundrope, ended in split bellies. To start with 18 inch rubber bobbins were used in the bosom of the groundrope, but these were found to be rather heavy to handle. Bosom bobbins of 14 inches and bunt bobbins of 12 inches were about as large as was convenient.

Various rigs were tried out to assess the ease with which they could be handled, the emphasis being on rigs which would give good headline height and be workable on rough ground. A storm which lasted from 30th September to 3rd October made the water so dirty that no underwater camera work could be done thereafter and the camera was not available before these dates.

W. DICKSON
17th October, 1960.