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to the Laboratory.

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## CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "MARA"

24th August to 17th September 1964.

Narrative

"Mara" sailed from Buckie on 24th August. Work commenced in Loch Linnhe on the 26th. Creel fishing, scallop dredging and trawling continued until 17th September when "Mara" docked at Corpach, where gear was unloaded for return to Aberdeen.

The areas sampled were Shiant Bank and from Loch Shell to Cellar Head on the western side of the Minch and, on the eastern side, Enard Bay, Gairloch and from Loch Linnhe to the Sound of Luing. The creels were fished in six fleets of eight, four Burnmouth type and four collapsible creels comprising one fleet.

On 14th and 15th September when weather was unsuitable for working, 1817 lobsters from the tanks of the Crofters Association at Oban were sexed and measured.

Results

Crabs were most numerous on the western side of the Minch, especially to the north of Stornoway in the Broad Bay and Sanday Bay areas. Enard Bay and Gairloch were also very good, but the ground at Enard Bay is restricted. The catches of crabs/100 creel-hauls for the different areas sampled were: Shiant Bank 171, Loch Shell to Stornoway 71, Stornoway to Cellar Head 483, Enard Bay 517, Gairloch 333, Oban 4. Broad Bay gave a figure of 744 and Sanday Bay 540.

A high percentage (95) of the crab catch was female. The overall incidence of shell disease was 8%. In Sanday Bay this figure was 21%.

Taken overall, the Burnmouth creels outfished the collapsible creels 55.7% to 44.3%. The highest catch in any one creel was 15 crabs from a collapsible creel in Sanday Bay.

Scallop dredging was carried out in all areas using a 6' standard dredge. In all 34 hauls were made, the most productive being in Oban Bay and off Loch Spelve.

Trawling was carried out in conjunction with the main objectives. The Norway lobster catch was poor, all species were treated according to standing instructions. Cod caught were examined for nematodes.

A number of Nephrops, all males ranging in carapace length from 43 to 71 mm, were taken in creels where these had been shot on muddy ground; viz. one in Loch Linnhe, in 10 fms; four in Achnacudan Bay, 20 fms; four in Lynn of Lorne, 26 fms; six in Ardmucknish Bay, 12-20 fms; one in Loch Erisort, 12 fms; one in Loch Shell, 12 fms, and nine in Loch Shuna, 13-26 fms.

C. DAVIDSON  
30th October, 1964.