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IN CONFIDENCE: NOT TO BE QUOTED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE LABORATORY

CRUISE REPORT

FRS "MARA"

2-21 October, 1972

OBJECTIVES:

1. To tag roundfish in the vicinity of the Orkney Islands.
2. To evaluate further the technique of tagging fish underwater.

NARRATIVE:

"Mara" sailed from Buckie on the afternoon of October 2nd and commenced fishing in the vicinity of the Orkneys early the next day, using the seine net and hand lines. At the end of the week the ship returned to Buckie to change crew members.

As fishing in the Orkney area was poor, on grounds shallow enough to allow underwater tagging to be undertaken, it was decided to work in coastal waters off the mainland of Scotland, so that objective 2 could be attempted. The winds prevailing at the beginning of the second week restricted operations to the southern shore of the Moray Firth. Useful concentrations of fish, mainly haddock and cod, were located in the Trink, about 1½ hours steaming from Buckie, and the remainder of the cruise was spent in this area. The scientific staff returned to Aberdeen on October 2nd.

RESULTS:

Sufficient numbers of haddock were tagged at the surface and under water to make a statistical comparison of the returns from the two methods feasible. The number of each species tagged by each method are given below:

	Cod	Haddock	Whiting	Lemon Sole	Total
Tagged at surface	26	289	52	1	368
Tagged underwater	10	210	5	0	225
Total	36	499	57	1	593

The depth at which the fish were captured was approximately 25 fathoms, and underwater tagging was accomplished in midwater, at about 11 fathoms from the surface. Initially, difficulty was experienced in detaching the codend from the net and handling the fish in midwater but by the last few working days a satisfactory working technique had been developed.

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