

R1/7

CRUISE REPORT

FRV MARA

25 Oct - 19 Nov 1976

OBJECTIVES

To carry out a survey of pre-recruit plaice in various nursery areas on the east coast of Scotland.

NARRATIVE

The cruise started at 1200 hours on 25 Oct. During the first week (25-29 Oct.), work was carried out in Spey Bay, Nairn Bay and Burghead Bay. Attempts were also made to work in the Dornoch Firth and in Cullen Bay but, because of heavy swell it was not possible for the vessel to operate in these areas.

On 1 November 'Mara' steamed from Buckie to Fraserburgh via Aberdour Bay where 3 hauls were made. Between 2 and 5 November 'Mara' worked in Aberdeen Bay whenever possible. Heavy swell prevented work on 4 November. 'Mara' remained in Aberdeen over the weekend (6-7 November).

Between 8 and 11 November 'Mara' worked in the Bass Rock area, in St Andrew's Bay and in the area between Montrose and Milton Ness. On 12 November 'Mara' steamed from Aberdeen to Buckie.

For the last week Mr Armstrong was replaced by Mr Howell, during this week it was hoped to concentrate work on the northern shore of the Moray Firth and accordingly on Monday 15th 'Mara' steamed to the Dornoch Firth. Work proceeded in the Dornoch Firth until mid-day on Tuesday 16th when 'Mara' steamed to Wick. Surveying in Sinclair Bay commenced on Wednesday but after two hauls all the gear was lost due to a splice on the towing bridle breaking when the beam trawl came fast. However, after creeping for two hours the gear was recovered intact. A forecast of deteriorating weather conditions necessitated 'Mara' leaving the north and the vessel moved south to complete the survey of the Dornoch Firth. On Thursday a short survey was made in Nairn Bay, Burghead Bay and Spey Bay and 'Mara' returned to Buckie the same day. The gear was discharged on Friday 19 November.

RESULTS

The number of hauls per area and numbers of plaice and common dabs caught are shown in the following table.

Area	No. of Valid Hauls	PLAICE		C. DAB	
		Total No.	Av. No Per Haul	Total No.	Av. No Per Haul
Spey Bay	11	824	74.9	655	59.5
Nairn Bay	6	68	11.3	341	56.8
Burghead Bay	9	250	27.8	183	20.3
Aberdour Bay	3	79	26.3	148	49.3
Dornoch Firth	12	628	52.3	225	18.8
Sinclair Bay	2	61	30.5	4	.2
Aberdeen Bay	14	145	10.4	273	19.5
Montrose-Milton Ness	6	181	30.2	69	11.5
St. Andrews Bay	12	301	25.1	525	43.8
Bass Rock	5	58	11.6	661	132.2
Total	80	2595		3084	

Inspection of the length frequency distribution of plaice caught in all areas indicate that catch ratios of the 1 and 2 groups are probably very low.

SEEN IN DRAFT W MAIR

D W Armstrong
A W Newton
23 November 1976