

R1/7

JG

IN CONFIDENCE Not to be quoted without reference to the Laboratory

FRV "MARA"

13 MR 78

CRUISE 3/78

REPORT

14 November - 8 December 1978

Objectives

To estimate the relative strengths of pre-recruit plaice year classes on various nursery grounds on the east coast of Scotland.

Narrative

Weather conditions delayed the start of the trip until Thursday 16 November. Work commenced in the Dornoch Firth and stations in Nairn Bay, Spey Bay and Burghhead Bay were carried out in difficult conditions. On Tuesday 28 November operations were moved to the Firth of Forth and the survey was continued in the Berwick/Haddington area, Tynningham Sands, Largo Bay and Aberlady Bay. Severe weather with mainly south-easterly gales continued to hamper operations. On Tuesday December 5 passage was made to Aberdeen en route for the Moray Firth.

In the light of the continuing stormy weather conditions and adverse forecasts, after consultation with the Laboratory it was decided to abandon the remainder of the trip. Scientific gear was unloaded on Thursday 7 December in Aberdeen.

Results

Fishing was extremely poor; very few flatfish were encountered in any of the areas. The numbers of plaice and dabs caught in each area are listed in the table below.

Area	No of $\frac{1}{2}$ hour hauls	Total numbers	
		Plaice	Common Dabs
Dornoch Firth	17	187	276
Spey Bay	14	127	191
Burghhead Bay	10	60	178
Bass Rock area	8	54	247
Largo Bay	2	5	6
Aberlady Bay	5	10	283
Nairn Bay	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>107</u>
TOTAL	59	456	1288

Otolith samples were taken and brought back to the Laboratory for further study.

J A SINCLAIR
22 January 1979

Seen in draft: James A Calder O/C FRV Mara