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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "M A R A"

23rd January - 18th February, 1961

"Mara" sailed from Buckie on the 24th January to undertake trouser trawl experiments in the Moray Firth. For the first two days Mr. Mowat was in charge; Mr. Dickson then took over for the rest of that week. Thereafter, Mr. Corrigall joined "Mara" and took charge for the remainder of the trip. Unfortunately Mr. Pirie became ill and had to be put ashore, his place being taken by Mr. Gibb. Mr. Pirie managed to return to duty before the end of the trip.

Bad weather accounted for $8\frac{1}{2}$ days of the time, and two more days were lost, one, because the ship was not ready after her refit, the other in landing Mr. Pirie.

Work commenced off Buckie, and catches were at first so poor that it was thought the gear was at fault. Hauls with the standard trawl confirmed that fish were very scarce indeed and two more days were spent with the $22\frac{1}{2}$ ft net doing $\frac{1}{2}$ hour hauls to try and find a suitable beat. Eventually a workable one was found about eight miles north of Buckie; catches consisting mainly of Plaice and Flounder. After trawling for one and a half days the wind shifted making work impossible in this area. A move was made; first to the Cruden Buoy, where catches were not of experimental value, and then to Benachie (off Aberdeen) which was a little better.

In all 32 hauls were carried out and two objectives completed. Namely, Standard rig V. Double sweeps and Standard rig V. Long Spreading wires. The double sweep rig with the wing end constrained showed up to no advantage over the standard rig except possibly for flats. The long spreading wire rig with the wing end split did rather better than the standard rig for all species.

A. CORRIGALL

28th February, 1962.