

Library

R1/7

IN CONFIDENCE Not to be quoted without reference to the Laboratory

JA
1MR77

CRUISE REPORT
FRS MARA

January 31 - February 25 1977

Personnel:	J R G Hislop	SSO	(In charge)
	G Henderson	ASO	Jan 31 - Feb 18
	P Johnston	ASO	
	D Thompson	(MAFF Lowestoft)	Feb 21 - 24

Objectives

- 1) To tag plaice on the spawning grounds off the east coast of Scotland
- 2) To collect stomachs of demersal fish

Narrative

The cruise started on time and 'Mara' proceeded immediately to the spawning grounds off Clyth Ness (Moray Firth), where good catches of ripe plaice were being made by a number of anchor-seiners. Virtually all the plaice > 20 cm in this area were in spawning condition. At times strong southerly or south easterly winds made work at Clyth Ness impossible and on those occasions hauls were made on the Bellans ground, 7 miles north of Buckie, where almost all the plaice were immature. The prevailing winds were such that it would have been impracticable to work outside the Moray Firth. The weather was unsettled for the duration of the cruise and on four days no work was possible.

In the week beginning February 21, Mr Thompson, of the Lowestoft Laboratory, joined 'Mara' to collect live plaice eggs for use in a study of the genetics of European plaice stocks. A number of plankton hauls were made and some plaice eggs were taken, before this line of work was interrupted by bad weather. Mr Thompson left Buckie for Lowestoft on the morning of February 24.

Results

A total of 1867 plaice were tagged (1480 at Clyth Ness and 387 on the Bellans ground). In addition, 90 lemon soles and 9 brill were tagged. Stomachs were taken from common dabs. Some 300 live plaice eggs were provided for the Lowestoft Laboratory.

J R G Hislop
24 March 1977

Seen in draft : W T Mair