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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "M A R A"

9th-21st March, 1959.

Objectives

Herring spawning survey and larval sampling on Ballantrae Bank.

"Mara" sailed from Aberdeen on the afternoon of 9th March and proceeded to the Clyde via the Caledonian and Crinan Canals. Work commenced on the Ballantrae Bank on 13th March. At the end of the cruise the scientific staff disembarked at Ayr.

Spawning Survey

Intensive sampling of the bottom deposits on Ballantrae Bank was carried out by grab. The small patch of eggs located by "Clupea" on the previous cruise was resampled on two occasions. The majority of the eggs on this small patch were now in an advanced stage of development showing embryos with large pigmented eyes.

There was no evidence that any subsequent spawning had taken place on the Bank until the 20th March, when some recently deposited eggs were obtained about 100-200 yards to the east of the small patch located in the previous cruise. The trammel nets restricted further sampling to the east of this position and it was not possible to find out the extent of these recently deposited eggs.

Larval Sampling

Frequent hauls were made on the Bank with a 1 metre silk net to detect any hatching which might have taken place during the second week of the cruise. Small numbers of newly hatched larvae were observed in the hauls; these larvae were most abundant in the south-west region of the Bank, but there was no suggestion that any large scale hatching was taking place at that time.

IAN G. BAXTER  
14th April, 1959.