

R1/7

In Confidence: Not to be quoted without
reference to the Laboratory.

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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

28th January-22nd February 1963

Narrative

"Mara" was based on Fraserburgh for the entire cruise, which was frequently interrupted by strong and gale-force easterly winds.

Results

Owing to the bad weather only 268 crabs were caught. These, together with others purchased from the local fishermen, were tagged and released at nine stations on the crab grounds off Fraserburgh. In all, 670 crabs of commercial size had tags attached to their claws, and 36 undersized crabs were tagged by the Gundersen toggle method.

The relative efficacies of four creel baits were tested, and though few results were obtained, they did suggest that fish meal and crab meal are poor baits. Over 148 creel hauls skate offal caught 1.37 crabs per haul, whiting 1.44 (36 hauls), white-fish meal 0.19 (36 hauls) and crab meal 0.17 (36 hauls).

A comparison between traditional Scottish creels with $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. shuttered eyes on the one hand and a design of commercial collapsible pots on the other hand showed that the Scottish creels caught 1.62 crabs per haul (56 hauls) and the collapsible pots caught 1.23 per haul (56 hauls). Both types of gear were baited with skate offal.

JAMES MASON

22nd March, 1963.