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CONFIDENTIAL: Not to be quoted without reference  
to the Laboratory.

## CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

13th-21st March, 1961.

- Objectives. 1) Trials with the herring purse seine  
2) Herring larval survey off the South Coast of Arran.

The scientific staff joined "Mara" on the evening of 12th March and the programme of work was begun on the following morning. One day was lost due to stormy weather. At the end of the cruise "Mara" left the Clyde and returned to the east coast.

Purse seine trials

After a number of trials a satisfactory method of shooting and hauling the gear on "Mara" was worked out. On future occasions, however, it would be a great advantage if the after gallows on the starboard side was temporarily removed. This would provide an area on the deck completely free from encumbrances from which the gear could be worked efficiently.

During the trials echo-searches were made over a wide area to locate suitable traces to fish on with the purse seine. Only a few traces were located, some of which proved to be composed of small sprats which escaped through the meshes of the net. From a small catch of herring in Irvine Bay, 24 were tagged.

Larval Survey

The herring larval survey was carried out at the beginning of the cruise and repeated again at the end of the cruise.

On the first occasion herring larvae were observed only at one station near Pladda. These were mainly young yolk sac larvae, suggesting that hatching had recently taken place.

When the survey was repeated at the end of the cruise larvae were taken at the majority of stations of the survey but the best hauls were taken at the stations close to the Iron Rock ledges and also those near Pladda.

IAN G. BAXTER

26th April 1961.