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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "Mara"

Part 1 8th - 24th February 1966

Part 2 28th March - 8th April 1966

Narrative

Part 1. "Mara" left Buckie on the 8th February and sailed to the Clyde, where work commenced on the 11th in Loch Fyne. Dredging was carried out on exploited scallop beds off the Ayrshire coast and in the Cock of Arran and Loch Fyne areas. This part of the cruise ended at Troon on the 24th February, when a southerly gale caused work to be abandoned.

Part 2. "Mara" sailed from Troon on the 28th March, and after dredging on grounds off the S.W. coast of Arran proceeded through the Crinan Canal. The beds of scallops around Jura, Islay and Colonsay, on which commercial dredging has commenced in recent years, were then sampled. In addition, dredging was carried out in Easdale Bay and in the Sound of Mull, on grounds which are not so far exploited commercially. After working on the morning of the 6th April "Mara" set sail for Buckie, where the scientific staff disembarked on the morning of the 8th.

Results Most of the hauls were taken by 6ft dredge. On the Clyde beds, the proportion of older scallops in catches taken was low, as in the corresponding cruises in 1964-5. This was again most marked on the west side, especially off the Cock of Arran and Claonaig Bay. On the newly-exploited beds outside the Clyde and on a hitherto unexploited bed in Easdale Bay the proportion of older scallops was higher. The percentages of scallops with seven or more growth rings in each area, with the corresponding figures for 1965 where possible, were as follows:-

		1966	1965
East Clyde	Bennane Head	74	44
	Girvan	55	40
West Clyde	S.W. Arran	44	41
	Cock of Arran	12	14
	Claonaig Bay	33	18
	Inchmarnock	47	36
	Inverneil Island	38	30
	Rudha Dhu	64	59
Islay & Jura	83	-	
Colonsay	71	-	
Easdale Bay	81	-	

Four-ring scallops were predominant in catches at the Cock of Arran, Claonaig Bay and Inchmarnock.

The numbers of scallops caught per haul were, as expected, greatest outside the Clyde. These included catches of 90 in 15 minutes and/72

72 in 20 minutes off the east coast of Colonsay. The unexploited bed in Easdale Bay yielded a catch of 81 scallops in a 6 - minute haul. The ground there is rough, but the results suggest that with local knowledge this bed might be fished commercially.

In all parts of the Clyde, 1963 appears to have been a poor year for growth. In all areas except the Cock of Arran growth in subsequent years was normal. Off the Cock of Arran, however, growth has remained poor in 1964 and 1965. Here vast quantities of queens (Chlamys opercularis) were taken, which might have been competing for food with the scallops. Up to 20 baskets of queens (approximately 10,000) were taken in a two-minute haul.

In an attempt to create an interest in queens, two baskets were landed at Troon. In addition to the exploitable concentrations off the Cock of Arran, queens were found in fair numbers off Claonaig Bay.

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