

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

R.12/5

5
4MR58

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

3rd - 26th September, 1958

The ship returned to Aberdeen late on Thursday 4th September after having been inspected and having had some minor defects attended to at St. Monance and there was no chance of making measurements on the gear that week. On Monday 7th it was decided to go straight to the Fladen Ground while the good weather lasted. Fishing was quite good among fairly dense echo traces within a few fathoms of the bottom. The herring trawl (wing trawl) must have passed under much of what appeared on the trace. In three days working, ten clear two hour hauls were completed, 5 with the larger wing trawl and boards, 5 with the smaller wing trawl and boards. The propellor pitch was adjusted to allow the engine to develop the same power in each case, so that the smaller gear was towed somewhat faster than the larger. According to average readings of the Decca the speeds were 3.7 and 4 knots respectively but towing performances still have to be checked using the speed log and other measuring gear. The following week course was again set for the Fladen Ground but this time the weather broke in mid week and remained unfavourable until the end of it. By Monday 22nd the weather was better and course was set for the Farne Deeps. Four two-hour drags were completed on Tuesday but gales were forecast before the day was out and shelter was sought in North Shields along with what appeared to be the bulk of the Polish fleet fishing in the area. On Thursday evening "Mara" left North Shields to return to Aberdeen but turned back after two hours. The sea had moderated somewhat by the following morning and passage was made to Aberdeen that day.

From the hauls made so far it is not yet possible to say with any certainty whether the bigger and slower or smaller and faster gear catches the more herring. The same can be said for whiting and Gadus esmarkie which were the only other species caught in quantities that could be analysed.

W. DICKSON.
21st October, 1958.