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Laboratory.

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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

18th March - 5th April, 1963

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Narrative

The scientific staff joined "Mara" in Buckie on 18th March and started fishing off Tarbat Ness on 19th. Damage to one of the trawls during this day's fishing forced "Mara" to return to Buckie for repairs and to pick up spare gear despatched from the Laboratory. Fishing was resumed off Kinnaird Head and continued here until the morning of 22nd when six hauls of 15 minutes duration were made for live fish 6 miles north by east of Buckie.

At the beginning of the second week of the cruise Mr. McLean joined the ship.

On 25th grounds off Berriedale were worked but strong south-easterly winds prevented further trawling in this area and for the remainder of the second week trawling was done on the south side of the Moray Firth three miles off Rosehearty.

On 2nd April trawling continued off Rosehearty, when the aft trawl door was broken during trawling. "Mara" then sailed for grounds off the east coast, but was prevented from trawling off Cruden Buoy when the spare aft door was damaged. The ship then sailed to Aberdeen for repairs to the two doors, which were completed on the afternoon of 3rd April. "Mara" left Aberdeen at midnight to work on the Benachie grounds, but only one trawl was possible in this area because of bad weather, and grounds closer inshore were worked. Three hauls were made in Aberdeen Bay for live fish and "Mara" returned to Aberdeen at mid-day on the 4th. Bad weather conditions prevented the ship leaving Aberdeen on the evening of the 4th and also on the 5th, when the cruise ended.

Trawling

Throughout this trip fishing was very poor although "Mara" usually worked in close proximity to commercial seine-net vessels, which on occasion appeared to be having reasonable catches. On two days the cameras were taken off the nets to see if they were having any adverse effect on the efficiency of the nets, but this gave no improvement in catches. During the second week the danleno poles were replaced by 48 feet spreading wires as the net appeared to be tilting forward with the danleno poles. Fishing, however, remained very poor.

W. B. HALL

25th April, 1963.