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IN CONFIDENCE: Not to be quoted without reference to
the Laboratory.

CRUISE REPORT

FRV MARA

11-28 JUNE 1973

OBJECTIVES:

1. To carry out a plankton survey for sprat eggs and larvae off the east coast of Scotland.
2. To carry out an echosounder survey for pelagic fish concentrations.
3. To carry out limited seabird observations.

NARRATIVE:

FRV "Mara" sailed from Buckie at 1145 on 11 June and, with a single break in Wick during gales from 2200 on 12 June to 2145 on 13 June, completed most of the stations in the Moray Firth and its approaches, docking in Buckie at 0840 on 15 June.

Mara sailed from Buckie at 1045 on 18 June, but in strong south-easterly winds sheltered in Fraserburgh from 1600 that day until 0800 the following morning. Working stations down the east coast, a break was made in Methil from 1800 on 20 June to 0700 the next day.

For the remainder of the week more stations were completed off the east coast, but heavy fog and a faulty radar impeded further work and Mara docked in Aberdeen at 0300 on 22 June. During this week most of the east coast stations were completed.

The third week Mara sailed from Aberdeen at 1145 on 25 June and completed the remaining stations on the programme. A shorter repeat survey of the Moray Firth was then carried out. With a break in Buckie from 1830 on 26 June to 0900 the next day, Mara finally docked in Buckie at 2015 on 28 June, having carried out all the work planned for the cruise.

1. PLANKTON SURVEY:

In just over two weeks all but six of the 104 Gulf III stations were completed. None of the samples contained obvious concentrations of fish eggs or larvae and in most areas there was some clogging of the sampler by phytoplankton. On the repeat survey 36 stations were completed in the Moray Firth. The samples have been brought back to the Laboratory for analysis.

2. Echosounder survey:

The ship's echosounder was run continuously and the records have been returned to the Laboratory for examination.

3. Seabird observations:

Dr Bourne of Aberdeen University joined the Mara from 11-15 June to make observations on seabirds.

R S BAILEY
1 August 1973