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CRUISE REPORT

FRV "MARA"

Part 1	26 April - 7 May 1971	PERSONNEL	R A Watt, J R Hutcheon
Part 2	7-19 June 1971		D W McKay, J R Hutcheon

OBJECTIVE

To survey the sandeel stocks in the East Orkney and Moray Firth areas.

NARRATIVE AND RESULTS

Part 1

Watt and Hutcheon joined 'Mara' on 26 April. Messrs Corrigall, Ranachan and Leys were also aboard for the first week to test the 'Hong Kong Diverter' trawl boards.

On the 26 April station 9 of the Smith Bank grid was carried out using the 'Mara' sandeel trawl and normal boards. A total of three and a half baskets of mixed fish, including 811 sandeels were caught.

For the next two days no work was done owing to the weather. Thursday and Friday were little better but the ship managed to carry out tests on the 'Diverter' in the vicinity of the Bellings. A feature of the 6 hauls made in this area was the presence of from 9-114 H. lanceolatus per haul.

During the second week all other stations in the Smith Bank area were sampled except No. 4. Catches were not large and A. marinus was the predominant species except at station 7 where 76 H. lanceolatus were also caught.

The 'Mara' sandeel trawl was used on the Bellings and at all stations on Smith Bank except stations 6 and 7, where the Danish sandeel trawl was used.

Part 2

'Mara' sailed from Buckie at 1200 on 7 June and headed for the Orkney area completing a station on Smith Bank on the way north. In this part of the cruise the 'Mara' sandeel trawl was used for all the hauls made. On 8 and 9 June stations 2, 4 and 6 were carried out but fresh to strong NE winds prevented 'Mara' from operating further offshore. On 10 June stations 9, 5, 3 and 10 were worked, giving a total of 7 stations completed in the Orkney area. During the second week 'Mara' returned to the Smith Bank/Clythness area and during the week all stations except No. 1 were worked.

In the Orkney area total catches ranged from 2 to 13 baskets but only at station 6 were sandeels caught and there only one basket ranging in size from 6.5-11.5 cms.

In the Smith Bank/Clythness area total catches ranged from 1 to about 40 baskets with from 0-35 baskets of sandeels. Although sandeels were

caught at all but three stations the only concentration was found in the Clythness area (station 11). Several repeat hauls, made at or around Station 11, gave catches ranging between 1 and about 40 baskets (mean approximately 14 baskets) of sandeels. The largest of these catches was not taken on board because there was no means of dividing the bag.

D W McKay
R A Watt
13 September 1971