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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

22nd October - 13th November 1962

Narrative

"Mara" sailed from Aberdeen at 11.00 hrs on the 22nd October and worked creels on the crab grounds off Lunan Bay, Angus, and Tod Head, Kincardine. Bad weather on the 25th caused "Mara" to return to Aberdeen, where Dr. J. Mason replaced Mr. C. Davidson.

Departure from Aberdeen was delayed by persistent southerly and south-easterly winds. The scientific staff proceeded by road to Berwick-upon-Tweed and tagged crabs from commercial boats at Burnmouth until "Mara's" arrival at Berwick on the evening of the 2nd November. Strong and gale-force easterly winds curtailed working throughout the next ten days. "Mara" left for Aberdeen at 13.15 hrs on the 13th.

The scientists remained to tag crabs at Burnmouth for three further days, being joined for this work by Mr. J. A. Sinclair and Miss M. A. I. Guthrie.

Results

Insufficient comparative fishing was carried out to enable conclusions to be drawn from the bait experiment.

Off Lunan Bay and Tod Head, 80 crabs were released, 56 with suture tags and 24 with claw tags. At Burnmouth a comparison was carried out between the suture tag and the Gundersen toggle tag. 344 crabs were tagged by the suture method and 346 by Gundersen's method.

After being tagged the crabs were usually kept, at least overnight, in boxes in the harbour until they were released. Crabs which had died were not released. Of 211 recently moulted crabs with suture tags, eleven died in the boxes, and of 209 recently moulted crabs with Gundersen tags, 21 died in the boxes. Ten out of 133 hard crabs with suture tags and six out of 137 hard crabs with Gundersen tags also died.

JAMES MASON  
6th December, 1962.