

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "MARA"

20th May - 8th June, 1963.

Sailing was delayed until 08.00 h on 21st May because of strong easterly winds. It was decided to try the fishing on the Buchan Deeps and work northwards into the Moray Firth and thence to Orkney until suitable catches were obtained. By good fortune catches in the Buchan Deeps, 18-20 miles east of Peterhead, yielded good fishing on the first day (21st May) and the entire programme of work was carried out in this area.

The weather during the trip was on the whole very good but working conditions were difficult on some days owing to an easterly swell and fog prevented work on two days.

The wing trawl was used with a nylon and an Ulstron cod-end, and selection data for these cod-ends were obtained by the covered cod-end technique. The covers employed were whole covers of Courlene. The headline height of the trawl was varied on alternate days by using daneleno sticks of lengths 2' and 9' giving headline heights of about 4' and 11' respectively.

The cod-end mesh sizes, as measured with the I.C.E.S. mesh gauge, were: nylon, 68.4 mm and Ulstron, 78.3 mm. Haddock was the only species for which selection curves could be estimated and even for this species this proved somewhat difficult for the Ulstron cod-end as the middle of the curve coincided with a natural break in the population sampled. The selection factor for nylon proved to be very low whilst that for Ulstron was somewhat higher.

The varying of the headline height did not have any effect on the numbers of haddock or flatfish (mainly dabs and lemon sole) taken in the trawl.

Some further analyses of the data are at present being made.

JAMES A. POPE  
28th June, 1963.