

In Confidence: Not to be quoted without reference
to the Laboratory.

R1/7

8
8MR67

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.V. "MARA"

11th-30th September 1967

Objective:- Sandeel survey

"Mara's" departure from Buckie was delayed until midnight on 12th September as the purse-seining gear had to be unshipped and the trawling gear replaced. Work started on the north coast of Scotland on the morning of 13th and continued there until the evening of 15th. During this time a total of 8 trawls were done in this area. Although all these trawls were shot on grounds which were on the charts marked as sand the incidence of gear damage was extremely high. Sandeel catches were also small. Some were taken in most hauls but the largest catch of sandeels amounted to only $\frac{1}{2}$ a basket for 1 hour's fishing. In view of the gear damage sustained, after consultation with the laboratory, it was decided to change the area of operation to the Scottish east coast.

Work was started in this area on 18th September and continued until 28th, apart from 2 days lost due to bad weather. Nine trawl hauls were done between Cruden Bay and Aberdeen Bay, 2 off Montrose and 6 in St. Andrew's Bay. No sandeels were taken in any of these hauls.

In the Cruden Bay-Aberdeen Bay area catches of other fish were fairly heavy, amounting to 3-13 baskets per hours fishing. These were predominantly composed of small whiting and haddock. Off Montrose small haddock were less abundant, the catches of about 6 baskets per hour being chiefly small whiting, and sprats with a modal size of 8-9 cms.

In the St. Andrew's Bay area catches were more variable, ranging from less than 1 basket to 7 baskets per hour. Here again sprats and small whiting were the major constituents of the catch along with considerable numbers of common dabs and plaice.

Alan Saville
9th October 1967