

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "MARA"

11th June - 5th July 1963

Narrative

"Mara" sailed from Aberdeen at 08.00 hrs on 11th June for Shetland. She was based on Lerwick and Mid Yell for the entire cruise, which ended at Buckie on the morning of the 5th July. During the second half of the cruise much time was lost owing to adverse weather.

Results

Creels were fished on the coasts of Yell and Fetlar. Lobsters were scarce, and an attempt was made to catch them by setting creels among the rocks from a small boat. Particularly good catches of crabs were made on the west coast of Fetlar, near the Head of Bresdale, where the average per eight creel hauls was 15.8. A comparison showed that the traditional Scottish creel with $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. shuttered eyes caught more crabs than a commercial design of collapsible pot, 7.5 as against 4.0 per eight creel hauls.

Lobsters were purchased, and in all 171 were tagged and released at 18 stations round the Coast of Yell and in areas on adjacent islands fished by boats from Yell.

Scallops were found in a number of areas in Colgrave Sound and off Fetlar, and the quantities caught were enough to suggest that profitable commercial dredging for scallops may be possible. The best catches were 20 in seven minutes south of Lambhoga Head and 21 in 10 minutes off Otterswick. The dredge sometimes came fast, but increased experience of local conditions would overcome this difficulty.

Oblique hauls with a 1 m plankton net were made west of Unst, north and south of Fair Isle, west of the Pentland Firth and off Kinnaird Head.

General

During the cruise the scientist-in-charge gave a lecture on shellfish to an audience of more than 50 people from all parts of the Island of Yell. This attendance and the lively discussion which followed the talk showed the considerable interest in shellfish existing on the island.

JAMES MASON

18th July, 1963.