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Charter Fishing Vessel *Ocean Starlight* PD 493

Cruise 2502H

**REPORT**

21-26 February 2003

**Ports**

**Beginning:** 21 February, Peterhead

**Ending:** 26 February, Peterhead

**Gear**

Buoyed winch

**Objectives**

To standby and monitor operation of buoyed winch.

**Narrative**

Owing to last minute engineering problems the buoyed winch was not available and the *Ocean Starlight's* winch was used instead. The cod-end towed by the *Clupea* was detached at depth on three occasions and a line from this cod-end came to the surface and was picked up by the *Ocean Starlight*. On a further occasion the acoustic release did not operate and the cod-end was detached at the surface and allowed to sink to the holding depth. The tows took place at the Belger Heads, north east of Fraserburgh, and on grounds due north of Macduff.

The release of the detachable cod-end was timed so as to ensure that the *Ocean Starlight* could secure it before nightfall. The *Ocean Starlight* then drifted through the night and hauled the cod-end at a rate of one metre every 15 minutes from the holding depth of about 50 m. Owing to strong wind and tides, often acting in opposition, the cod-end was generally at a shallower depth than was hoped for. A depth meter attached to the cod-end provided a full profile of the cod-end's depth during towing, release and hauling. In the morning when the cod-end reached the surface the *Clupea* rendezvoused with the *Ocean Starlight* and retrieved the cod-end and its catch.

The two vessels co-operated very well and the depth meter readings demonstrated that the Skipper and crew of the *Ocean Starlight* were very diligent in performing their side of the operation.

Barry O'Neill  
17 October 2003