

**CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE,
LOWESTOFT LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK NR33 0HT**

CRUISE REPORT: CHARTER PROGRAMME, PRINCE MADOG 1 / 2003

STAFF:

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DURATION: 13 – 17 January 2003

LOCATION: eastern Irish Sea (VIIa)

AIMS:

The first in a series of five plankton surveys to:

1. Collect plankton samples to determine plaice egg spawning and production
2. Collect zooplankton samples for copepod production and fish larval feeding studies.

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Menai Bridge by road on 12 January. Survey equipment was installed the following morning and RV Prince Madog sailed at 1000. Sampling commenced at 1140 in moderate to rough sea and moderate swell. Over the next 24 hours, 16 plankton tows were completed at stations off the North Wales coast. Increasing wind and sea state forced sampling to be abandoned, and Prince Madog returned to Menai Bridge, docking at 1200. The vessel was unable to sail again until 0700 on 16 January. Sampling recommenced at 1100, and a further 5 stations were completed in heavy swell. Once again, deteriorating conditions and severe weather forecasts forced the Prince Madog to seek temporary shelter. Prince Madog docked in Ramsay at 2200. On 17 January at 1000, Prince Madog left Ramsay and sampling began in Ramsay Bay. 5 further plankton tows were carried out along a southerly track. Prince Madog docked back in Menai Bridge that evening at 2100. Staff returned to Lowestoft the next day.

RESULTS:

Aims 1 and 2. 27 plankton tows out of the 49 proposed (see chart attached) were completed because of persistent strong winds and heavy seas during the period of charter. At each sampling position, 2 samples were collected and preserved in 4% formalin for later analysis on shore. The Gulf VII-type plankton sampler deployed was fitted with a main, 270µm mesh net, and an auxiliary, fine mesh (80µm) 'pup' net attached to the frame. Data recorded by self-logging flowmeters attached to a readout unit enables calculation of the volume of water filtered by each net. Temperature and salinity profiles were provided by an FSI mini-CTD. Most equipment functioned satisfactorily. One flowmeter logging unit failed during a dive, but was replaced and subsequently repaired.

N Bunn
23 January 2003

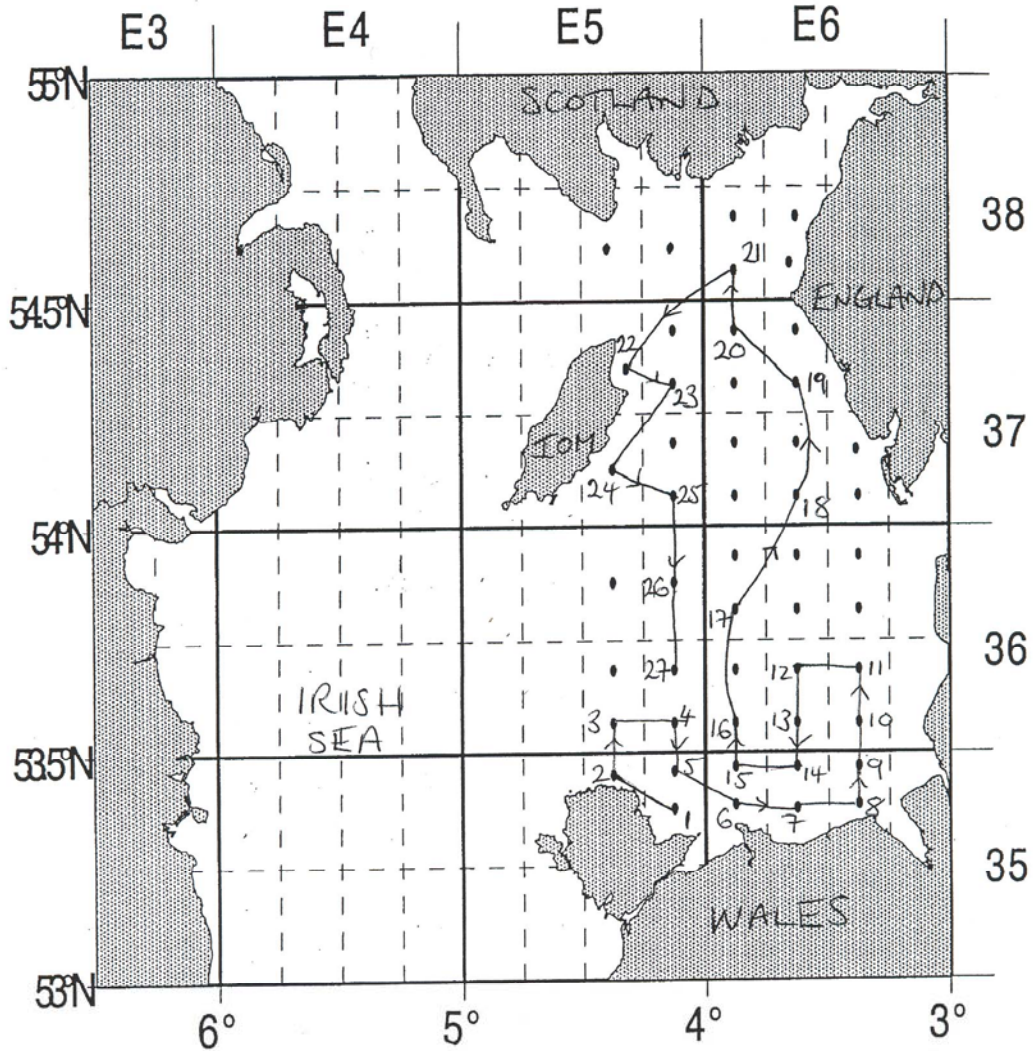
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**CEFAS EASTERN IRISH SEA PLANKTON SURVEYS.
STATION TRACK, Prince Madog 1/2003**



Bullet points indicate the approximate position of 49 stations proposed for the survey. However, due to persistent strong winds, only 27 were completed during the survey period, and these are marked by consecutive station numbers.