

**CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE,
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CRUISE REPORT: CHARTER PROGRAMME, PRINCE MADOG 2 / 2003

STAFF:

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DURATION: 3-6 February 2003

LOCATION: eastern Irish Sea (VIIa)

AIMS:

The second 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 2 February, and loaded survey equipment the following morning. RV Prince Madog sailed at 11:00. One plankton tow was completed at a relatively sheltered site, but on arrival at the next station the 3m swell and strengthening winds forced sampling to be abandoned. Prince Madog returned to Menai Bridge at 17:00. Due to the weather forecasts, Prince Madog was unable to sail again until 08:10 on 5 February. Sampling recommenced at 09:40, and 29 stations were completed. Strong south-westerly winds on 6 February prevented sampling in the region to the south-east of the Isle of Man as planned, and sampling on this day was therefore concentrated on the more sheltered stations further south. Prince Madog docked at Menai Bridge at 22:05 on 6 February. Staff unloaded equipment and returned to Lowestoft and Port Erin the following day.

RESULTS:

Aims 1 and 2. 30 plankton tows out of the 49 proposed (see chart attached) were completed. Strong winds during the charter period prevented sampling at the remaining 19 stations. At each sampling position, 2 samples were collected and preserved in 4% formalin for subsequent analysis on shore. The Gulf VII 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 enabled calculation of the volume of water filtered by each net. Temperature and salinity profiles were provided by an FSI mini-CTD. The equipment functioned successfully, with the exception of one pup flowmeter cable which failed during a dive, and was replaced.

P Davison
5 March 2003

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CEFAS survey Prince Madog 2/2003: station track showing positions of 30 plankton tows (numbered consecutively) undertaken in the eastern Irish Sea.

