

CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "SCOTIA"

February, 1952.

Aims: To carry out hydrographical sections of the Faeroe-Shetland channel, and to make a biological and hydrographical survey of the Faeroe plateau.

Narrative: "Scotia" left Aberdeen at 17.00 hours on February 2nd and successfully completed the stations at the Dog Hole, Buchan Deep and Smith Bank. By that time a bad defect had become apparent in "Scotia's" main engine whereby it could not be stopped owing to inability to close the main steam valve properly. A return to Aberdeen was necessary to effect repairs, and "Scotia" finally set sail again at 20.00 hours on February 5th.

By that time a definite break in the weather had taken place and with SW-W gales blowing, "Scotia" was forced to take shelter in Sinclair Bay for forty-eight hours. The next lap extended to Long Hope, where further shelter had to be taken, after which "Scotia" set out and commenced the Butt-Faeroe line of hydrographic stations. Two stations were completed along this line, before the effects of a depression forecast as moving SE from Iceland made themselves felt. Work was then abandoned and the passage to Faeroe completed.

The remainder of the time was utilised to some advantage and forty of the fifty-one stations on the survey were completed so far as hydrographical and plankton observations were concerned. "Scotia's" trawling record, however, was less good and after numerous set-backs owing to adverse weather conditions, and two failures of the trawl-warp depth indicators, only twelve hauls were carried out.

The line from Faeroe to Flugga was commenced under more favourable weather conditions than had previously prevailed, and this line was completed before the weather had deteriorated to too great an extent.

The last lap, including a visit to Lerwick, was confined to making a passage to Aberdeen, since the weather was unfavourable for working stations en route. "Scotia" finally returned at 22.00 hours on February 22nd.

Hydrography: Temperatures around the Faeroes varied very little either horizontally or vertically. A range of 5.34 - 7.05°C. was observed whilst the average surface and bottom temperatures were 6.22°C and 6.08°C respectively.

In the Faeroe-Shetland Channel, along the line from Sando Bank to Flugga, surface temperatures increased markedly to as high as 8.35°C. in area B2ld; at Flugga, the surface temperature was a little lower at 7.77°C.

Plankton: Plankton collections were in general very poor. Phytoplankton collections appeared negligible, and the zooplankton consisted principally of Calanus, Hyperiid Amphipods, Euphausiids and species of Sagitta. Fish eggs were quite well represented in Hensen, and occasional standard hauls, and were detected in thirty-five out of 105 samples. These were in stations to the west, east and north east of the islands, some very dense concentrations being observed in each of these regions. At this stage, it is not possible to say with certainty what these eggs were, except that they are either Cod or Haddock or both. One plaice egg was observed in a Hensen collection from the Moray Firth.

Trawling: Twelve trawl hauls were carried out around the Faeroes, yielding moderate catches of haddock, cod, saithe, and lemon soles.

Cod and saithe were nearly all in an advanced state of maturity, whilst most of the haddock were still immature. A limited number of mature specimens were observed however. No ripe and running fish were observed.

R. JONES.

29th February, 1952.

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