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In confidence: Not to be quoted without reference  
to the Laboratory

## CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "SCOTIA"

11th-26th February 1969

Objective

To take part in an international survey of the distribution and abundance of adolescent herring in the North Sea.

Because "Scotia's" refit took longer than estimated the beginning of the cruise was put back by a week and three days extra were allowed at the end.

"Scotia" sailed from Aberdeen in the morning of 11th February and completed thirteen stations before returning to Aberdeen at mid-day on 18th February. One day's work was lost through bad weather. The weather broke while "Scotia" was in harbour and, although she left Aberdeen during a temporary lull in the afternoon of 21st February, she had to shelter in the Firth of Forth till the afternoon of 25th February. Two stations were completed in difficult conditions before "Scotia" docked in Leith during the afternoon of 26th February.

Hydrography

Surface temperatures ranged between  $5.1^{\circ}$  and  $6.6^{\circ}\text{C}$  and there was little difference between surface and bottom temperatures.

Trawling

Four of the trawl hauls were invalid because of damage to the net: of the remainder, six were made on grounds less than 40 miles from the coast between Peterhead and St. Abb's Head, and the others on grounds 100 to 150 miles east of Aberdeen.

a) Herring

On the offshore grounds herring were scarce. Catches ranged from 0 to 8 herring with an average catch of 4 herring per hour.

On the inshore grounds herring were slightly more plentiful. The average catch was 61 herring per hour and the range was from 0 to 142 herring. Most of the herring were between 14 and 20 cm long.

b) Other species

The total catches per hour ranged from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 65 baskets and the average catch per hour was 31 baskets on the offshore grounds and  $20\frac{1}{2}$  baskets on the inshore grounds.

Haddock, mostly belonging to a size group with a modal length of 22-23 cm, supplied about three-quarters of the fish on the inshore grounds and a slightly higher proportion on the offshore grounds. Whiting, of a similar size range, were also common being more abundant on the inshore grounds than on the offshore grounds.

Trisopterus esmarkii and other industrial species were caught in small numbers only.

George McPherson  
25th March, 1969