

R1/12

Not to be cited without prior reference to the Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen

FRV *Scotia*

Cruise 0397S

**REPORT**

25 February - 17 March 1997

**Personnel**

K A Coull	SSO
D A Smail	SSO 25 February - 8 March
P L Clark	ASO
M C Mathewson	ASO
F N Burns	ASO
J Drewery	ASO
C Needle	CW
J A King	CW 25 February - 8 March
I Garioch	CW

**Objective**

Demersal trawling survey of the grounds off the north and west coast of Scotland and Irish Sea.

**Out turn days per project:** 21 days DAC1

**Narrative**

*Scotia* sailed from Aberdeen on the morning of 25 February and proceeded to the stations off the north coast of Scotland. Trawling commenced on the following morning and work continued until the afternoon of 27 February when severe weather conditions forced *Scotia* to seek shelter in Broad Bay. A short break in the weather allowed trawling at the relatively sheltered station east of Broad Bay on the morning of 1 March but further work had to be abandoned when the strong winds returned. With severe weather predicted for several days in the northern waters, *Scotia* headed for the southern part of the survey area on the night of 2 March. Stations in the Clyde were completed on the morning of 4 March before *Scotia* moved into the Irish Sea area. With continuing poor weather forecast in the north, the opportunity was taken to extend the survey in the Irish Sea. The vessel docked in Dublin on the morning of 7 March for a mid-cruise break and sailed again the following morning. With the weather conditions improving, *Scotia* proceeded to stations off the northwest coast of Ireland. Work progressed northwards on the outer part of the survey area until the night of 13 March when the vessel headed for the North Minch. With the survey area covered by the evening of 14 March, the opportunity was taken to repeat stations sampled at the start of the trip. Further trawling operations were cancelled after encountering damage to the net on the

afternoon of 15 March. Echo survey work using the RoxAnn system was carried out until *Scotia* docked at Aberdeen on the evening of 16 March.

## Results

A total of 57 valid hauls was achieved with all programmed stations being sampled. In addition to repeating the 1996 stations in the Irish Sea, a further eight hauls were carried out at locations previously sampled by the Northern Ireland Laboratory (DANI).

Average numbers of 1-group haddock and whiting caught per hour in each statistical rectangle are shown in Figures 1 and 2 respectively. Although catches of 1-group haddock and whiting showed a decrease over 1996 catches, the numbers caught were slightly above the recent five year average.

Herring were present in nearly all of the hauls with the larger catches being caught in Belfast Lough (112 baskets), St Kilda region (73 baskets) and north west of the Butt of Lewis (24 baskets). Catches of herring (average number per hour) are shown in Figure 3.

All otoliths collected from cod, haddock, whiting, saithe and Norway pout were aged at sea. Length frequencies, haul summary and age data were punched at sea and stored on floppy disk.

The scanmar system was used throughout the cruise to monitor headline height, wing spread, door spread, distance covered and net speed during each haul.

RoxAnn was operated when weather conditions were favourable.

K A Coull  
19 May 1997

Seen in draft : J Nichols

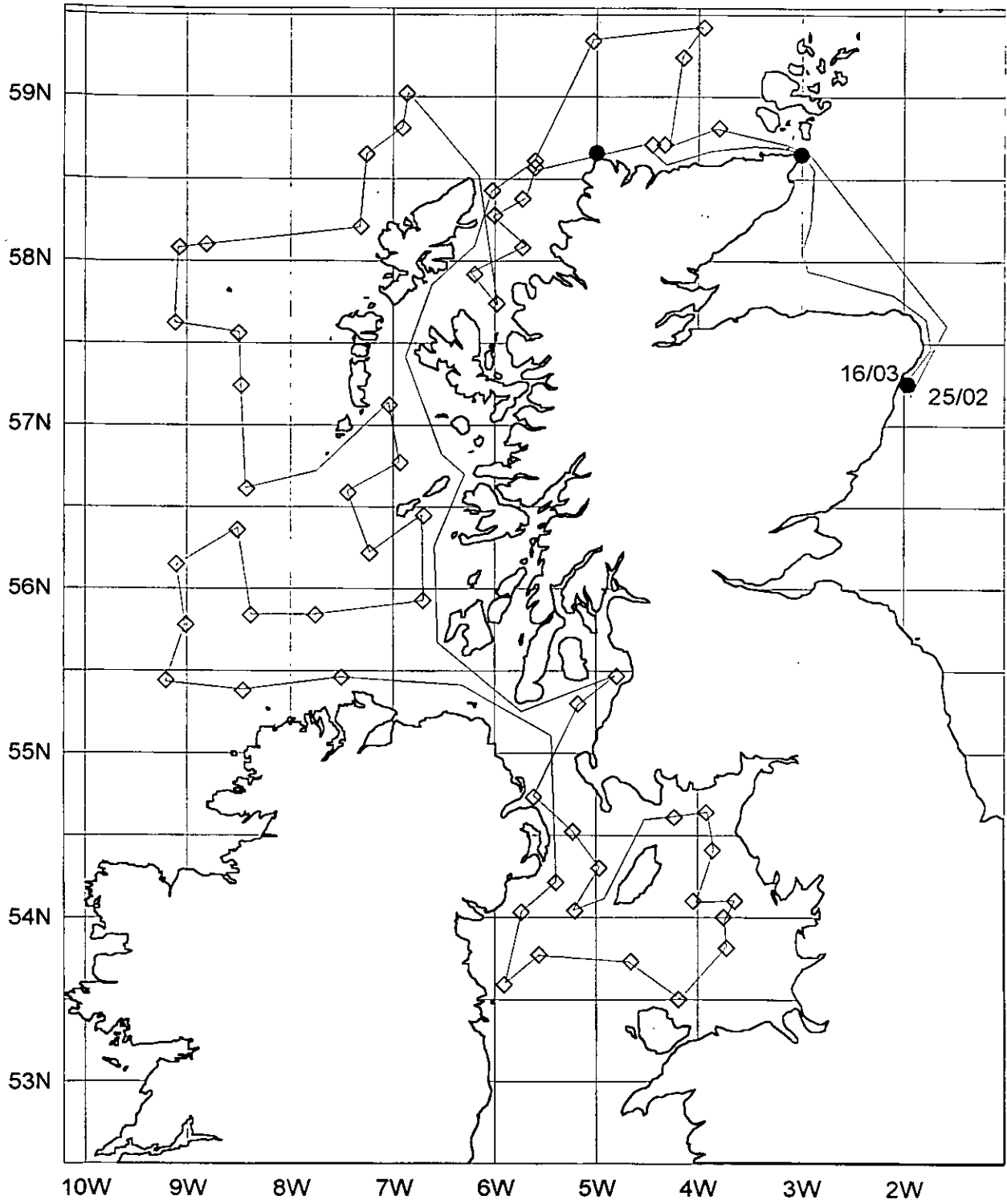






FIGURE 4

Scotia West Coast Survey 0397s



- Radio-Caesium sampling position
- ◇ Trawl station position