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CRUISE REPORT

F. R. S. "SCOTIA"

8th November - 30th November, 1961

"Scotia" left Aberdeen on the afternoon of 8th November for fishing grounds to the east of Shetland. Trawling was begun on Friday 10th, in the area off Balta and Fetlar, and continued in this area until 13th when four stations on the 61°01'N hydrographic line were completed. Two trawls were made in conjunction with the line but damage to the gear prevented any further trawling in this area.

Fishing was resumed off Balta and continued until 16th November. On 17th two trawls were made 12 miles off Bard Head before "Scotia" entered Lerwick for water. "Scotia" left Lerwick on the morning of 19th and started trawling off Bard Head but as both trawls were fouled, it was decided not to continue fishing in this locality. Trawling was resumed off Fetlar and continued in this area for three days. Bad weather on 22nd forced "Scotia" into Lerwick where she remained until the morning of the 25th. During this period a leak had developed in the boiler, and it was decided to finish the cruise in more sheltered waters in the Firth of Forth.

The ship left Lerwick on 25th, but was forced by heavy seas to turn back, after three hours, to shelter off Mousa. The passage to the Firth of Forth was made on 26th and the gear experiment was resumed in conjunction with the Nephrops survey on 27th. Fishing continued in this area until the evening of 29th when "Scotia" docked in Dundee for the annual refit. The laboratory gear was off-loaded on 30th November.

General

During the cruise 52 trawls were completed in two main areas. The major species caught on the grounds to the east of Balta was plaice. Haddock and whiting were generally scarce in the area off Fetlar and Balta, but haddock was the main species caught north of Flugga and off Bard Head. The sizes caught in these two areas were mainly greater than 30 cm (modal length 34 cm).

In the Firth of Forth small whiting (modal length = 17 cm) were caught in considerable quantities, but only small numbers of haddock (modal length = 18 cm) were caught in this area. Four trawls in the Firth of Forth yielded catches of more than 100 Nephrops per one hour haul. Most hauls in this area gave samples of cod and 100 of all sizes were examined for nematode worms.

The gear used during this cruise in the main handled well, and after the experience of a few days there was little or no difference between the times taken to shoot and haul the 'bang-up' gear and the standard gear used on board the vessel.

A detailed analysis of the results is being done.

W. B. HALL
13th December, 1961.

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