

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

1979 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: FV SILVER STAR: CRUISE 1

(Provisional: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF: I L Davies
C L Whiting

DURATION: 19 March - 5 April

LOCATION: North east Irish Sea

AIMS:

1. To carry out a groundfish survey along the N Wales coast and off the east coast of the Isle of Man.
2. To collect samples of otoliths and stomach contents of commercial species.
3. To tag and release plaice on the Gt Orme grounds.
4. To make observations of discard rates at sea.

NARRATIVE:

Staff travelled to Conwy by official van on 18 March and work commenced at 0400 h 19 March on the groundfish survey and continued in the Welsh coast and Liverpool Bay sectors over the next four days. SILVER STAR sailed to Douglas (I.O.M.) on 24 March but strong to gale force N.W. winds prevented work on 25 and 26 March. Four trawl hauls were carried out on 27 March but work ceased after the second haul on 28 March due to increasing winds, the wind reaching force 9 by the time we reached harbour. The remaining trawl hauls in the Manx sector were completed on 30 and 31 March, the vessel steaming overnight to Conwy afterwards.

The Boris Goshawk trawl used on the survey was changed for the SILVER STAR's 420 trawl on 1 April and deck tanks installed in readiness for the plaice tagging which was to start the next day. Ideal weather conditions with only light variable winds prevailed over the next four days and enabled 1124 plaice to be tagged and released in 5 I.C.E.S. sub-rectangles around the Gt. Orme grounds. Staff returned to Lowestoft on 6 April.

I would like to record my thanks to the skipper and crew of SILVER STAR whose help and active co-operation is greatly appreciated.

RESULTS:

- (1) 34 one hour trawl hauls were carried out covering the depth/belt strata between $3^{\circ}30'W$ and $4^{\circ}W$ off the N. Wales coast, in Liverpool Bay and those between the Manx 6-mile limit and the Cambria 12-mile limit.

(2) All commercial species were measured and otoliths taken from:

456 plaice	37 sole
401 whiting	1 brill
89 cod	3 lemon sole

The stomach contents of all otolithed fish were examined.

(3) Colour slides were taken of the benthos at all survey stations and of plaice tagging.

(4) In the first of the series of plaice tagging experiments 1124 plaice were released in four days in ideal conditions.

(5) Note was made of the discard rates whilst using the 420 trawl for catching plaice for tagging, but these were only trawl hauls of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 h duration.

I L Davies
10 April 1979

INITIALLED: AJL

DISTRIBUTION:

Basic list +

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