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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
FISHERIES LABORATORY, LOWESTOFT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND
1986 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT : FV SILVER STAR CRUISE 1
(PROVISIONAL: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF:

C N Humphreys
S Flatman

DURATION:

19 March-5 April

LOCATION:

North East Irish Sea

AIMS:

1. To carry out a groundfish survey along the North Wales coast
2. To collect samples of otoliths from commercial species
3. To obtain accurate gutted weight data of all plaice and sole selected for otoliths samples
4. To obtain mesh selection data
5. To obtain samples of ungutted fish for contaminant trend analysis work by A Franklin (Burnham)
6. To collect live cod for holding at the Fisheries Experiment Station, prior to being transported to Lowestoft for P Bromley
7. To tag 2-group pre-recruit sole
8. To collect, and deep freeze, samples of Callionymus species
9. To collect blood samples from selected species of fish for comparative protein studies by R J Turner

NARRATIVE

The staff travelled to Conwy by road on 18 March and commenced the survey on the morning of 19 March, sailing on SILVER STAR at 0400hrs. After only one days work, gale to storm force winds prevented the vessel from putting to sea for a further six days.

On 26 March work recommenced in the comparatively sheltered waters of Red Wharf Bay, but on the following day increasing winds again prevented any work from taking place, and with the prospect of little improvement in the weather the staff returned to Lowestoft to await more favourable tides.

The staff returned to Conwy on 1 April and recommenced the survey the following morning at 0445hrs. The remaining four days work was completed without further interruption by the weather, and the staff returned to Lowestoft on the afternoon of 6 April after first completing sampling work ashore.

RESULTS:

1. All 24 groundfish survey hauls were successfully carried out, catches were unusually light probably due to the severe winter conditions recently experienced.
2. Stratified otoliths samples were collected from commercial species, Totals were : plaice 475, whiting 191, sole 41, cod 9 and lemon sole 1.
3. Otoliths sampling on plaice and sole was carried out ashore, after docking, when accurate weights of gutted fish could be obtained, to provide "weight at age" data on Irish Sea stocks.
4. To provide mesh selection data, measurements of the mesh of the trawl codend were made, before the final days fishing.
5. Samples of ungutted flounders were collected and deep frozen for A Franklin, the samples comprised:
 - a) 7 fish from West Hoyle area Stations 11 & 12 on 2 April
 - b) 12 fish from West Constable area Stations 13 & 14 on 3 April
 - c) 20 fish from North Constable area Stations 15 & 16 on 3 April
 - d) 14 fish from Llanddulas area Stations 17 & 18 on 4 April
6. During the survey a total of 34 cod were captured, the majority of these fish coming from the 4 hauls made in Red Wharf Bay where they had suffered considerable scale damage in the trawl from starfish abraisions. This resulted in probably only 10 to 12 good conditioned fish being held in the tanks at the Conwy Fisheries Experiment Station for transportation to Lowestoft for work being carried out by P Bromley
7. Insufficient 2 group pre-recruit sole were caught during the survey to carry out the tagging programme.
8. A total of 41 Callionymus species were caught throughout the survey, these were all labelled and deep frozen in polybags for transportation to Lowestoft for further detailed examination.
9. Blood samples were obtained from 3 brill, 2 bull rout, 1 pollack and 1 ballan wrasse, for comparative protein studies by R J Turner.

The scientific staff wish to express their gratitude to Skipper Craven and the two crew members of SILVER STAR for the continued consideration, assistance and cooperation received throughout the cruise. - Thanks are also due to the staff at the Conwy Fisheries Experiment Station for the facilities provided for the care of live specimens.

INITIALLED: D J G

C N Humphreys
16 April 1986

DISTRIBUTION: Basic List +
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