

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

1985 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: F V SILVER STAR Cruise 3
(PROVISIONAL: Not to be quoted without prior reference to the author)

STAFF:

C N Humphreys
S Flatman

DURATION:

21-27 October

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 Conwy 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 blood samples from selected species of fish for comparative protein studies by R J Turner.

NARRATIVE:

The staff travelled to Conwy by road on 20 October, and commenced the survey the following morning, sailing on Silver Star on the morning tide at 0430hrs.

During the next 4 days favourable weather conditions enabled work to continue without a break, however on 25 October, strong winds forced the vessel to return to port before reaching the fishing area.

On the morning of 26 October work recommenced and the survey was completed during the following 2 days, the vessel finally docking at 2000hrs on 27 October.

The staff returned to Lowestoft on 28 October after completing sampling duties ashore at Conwy.

RESULTS:

1. All 24 groundfish survey hauls were successfully carried out.
2. Stratified otoliths samples were collected from commercial species, Totals were: plaice 459, whiting 143, sole 74, and cod 12.
3. Otoliths sampling on plaice and sole was carried out each day, after docking, when accurate weights of gutted fish could be obtained, to provide "weight at age" data on Irish Sea stocks.
4. During the final day of the survey, measurements of the mesh of the trawl codend were made, to provide mesh selection data.
5. Samples of ungutted plaice and whiting were collected and deep frozen for A Franklin, the samples comprised:
 - a) 30 plaice from St 9 (West Constable Bank area) on 23 october
 - b) 30 whiting from St 15 (Off Llandudno Bay) on 24 October

6. Low catches of cod resulted in only 10 live relatively undamaged fish being captured, these are currently being kept live in a holding tank at the Conwy Fisheries Experiment Station.
7. A total of 125 pre-recruit soles were tagged using the Mini Petersen Disc. The majority of these fish were taken and released at positions further offshore than where the main concentrations of sole had been encountered during June.
8. Blood plasma samples were obtained from 31 plaice, 7 flounders, and 6 dabs, these were deep frozen and transported to Lowestoft for comparative protein studies by R J Turner.

The scientific staff wish to express their gratitude to the skipper and crew of SILVER STAR, for the consideration, cooperation and assistance afforded them throughout the cruise. Thanks are also due to the staff at Conwy Fisheries Experiment Station for the excellent facilities and assistance provided for the care of the live specimens.

C N Humphreys
8 November 1985

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