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1970 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: R V TELLINA: CRUISE 1

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

STAFF

R J Wood  
A M Watson

DURATION

Left Lowestoft 1010 hours 5 January  
Arrived Lowestoft 1045 hours 16 January

All times are British Standard Time

LOCALITY

Thames Estuary

AIMS

1. To make an echo and hydrographical survey of the Thames Estuary and approaches.
2. To sample the echo traces with a mid-water sprat trawl.
3. To obtain samples of the sea bed in any locality where spawning herring are caught.
4. To obtain inshore samples of sprats and herring with a beach seine or shrimp trawl.

NARRATIVE

TELLINA sailed from Lowestoft at 1010 hours 5 January and proceeded southwards to the Thames Estuary. During the next 10 days the echo and hydrographical survey was conducted throughout all the main channels and approaches of the estuary, TELLINA during the period being based either at Felixstowe or Sheerness.

The echo traces were sampled with the mid-water trawl in 9 localities and hauls with the conical dredge were made across the Eagle Bank in the Blackwater estuary. Because of unsuitable weather throughout the cruise it was not possible to fish inshore with either the beach seine or the shrimp trawl. In fact, no work at all was possible on 5 days owing to strong or gale force southeasterly winds. However, the last hydrographic station was completed at 0710 hours 16 January and TELLINA returned to Lowestoft in deteriorating weather, docking at 1045 hours the same day.

RESULTS

1. Although sprats were distributed over the whole of the survey area no really heavy concentrations were located. The best concentrations in The Warp and Ooze Deep were only yielding about 20 bushels per hour to the commercial pair trawlers. Fairly similar concentrations were also found in the East Swin, and during the return passage to Lowestoft, off Aldeburgh.

2. Small numbers of herring (mainly adults) were taken with the sprats in the samples obtained with the mid-water trawl. However at the southern end of the Wallet, in Swire Hole, and also in the Blackwater, catches consisted almost entirely of herring with only a few odd sprats included. The bulk of these herring were 1 and 2 year old immatures. Adult herring everywhere were found to be still maturing and were mostly in maturity stages IV and V. The conical dredge hauls across the Eagle Bank in the Blackwater did not produce a single herring egg, and it can be assumed that the inshore spawning in this area has not yet commenced.

R J Wood

21 January 1970

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R J Wood  
A M Watson