

Mr. BAPF.

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

1974 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV TELLINA: CRUISE 1

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

STAFF

T. J. Hulme
T. W. Boon

DURATION

Left Lowestoft 1020 hours 9 January

Arrived Lowestoft 1940 hours 21 January

All times are Greenwich Mean Time.

LOCALITY

Thames Estuary

AIMS

1. To carry out an echo and fishing survey for sprat shoals along the Suffolk coast and within the Thames Estuary and its approaches.
2. To make temperature and salinity observations over the Survey area.

NARRATIVE

After being held up by gale force winds for 9 days, TELLINA sailed from Lowestoft at 1020 hrs, 9 January and made a good passage to Ipswich, carrying out an echo survey en route and making a start, south of Orfordness, on the grid of Salinity stations to be worked.

From 10 January to 13 January TELLINA was weatherbound in Ipswich, but a temporary lull in the gales on 14 January allowed a passage to be made via the Black Deep and Oaze Deep to Sheerness from where a further day's work was attempted.

It was only possible to carry out an echo survey and make salinity observations during these 2 days because the deck crew were short-handed and the head-line transducer did not work at all. Only one of the 2 trial shoots with the mid-water trawl was successful so with the weather deteriorating TELLINA sailed up to Tilbury so that repairs could be made to the head-line transducer and the Mate could rejoin the ship.

The unusually severe weather hampered operations during the next 4 days and made any work in the Outer Estuary impossible. Nevertheless, fishing was carried out in the Barrow Deep and Sea Reach Channel working out of Sheerness and Tilbury.

An improvement in the weather on 20 January allowed TELLINA to survey the Middle Deep, East Swin and Black Deep Channels en route to Ipswich and the following day a survey of the Wallet, Swine Hole and R Blackwater was carried out before TELLINA set sail for Lowestoft. An echo survey was carried out along the Suffolk coast on passage and TELLINA docked at Lowestoft at 1940 hs, 21 January.

RESULTS

1. The gales experienced immediately prior to TELLINA sailing from Lowestoft appeared to have broken up the sprat shoals that were previously being fished by the Suffolk drift-net fishermen, because no fish traces of any kind were found between Lowestoft and Felixstowe. What fish traces there were on the Black Deep, Barrow Deep, Oaze Deep, Middle Deep, East and West Swin and Sea Reach Channel were light and of no commercial value. However, there were more fish traces present in the area than at the same time last year with the few commercial boats present fishing on isolated clumps close to the Naze.

Out of the 6 trawl hauls made the best catch produced only 2 baskets of sprats for an 1/2 hour tow. Over the whole area surveyed, the fish caught had very similar length distributions between 3-13 cm with 3 modal lengths of 5, 8 and 10 cms. The very strong 1973 year class, so prominent in all the current commercial sprat fisheries on the English east coast, was present in strength.

2. A total of 32 sea surface temperatures was taken, together with 26 surface salinity samples covering the area surveyed. The sea temperature was fairly high, ranging between 5.0°C to 7.9°C.

3. 10 samples of fish, 5 sprat and 5 herring, were brought back to the Laboratory for biological sampling.

T J Hulme
30 January 1974

SEEN IN DRAFT A P

INITIALLED A J L

DISTRIBUTION

- Basic List
- T J Hulme
- T W Boon