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

1976 RESEARCH VESSEL PROGRAMME

REPORT: RV TELLINA: CRUISE 10

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

STAFF

R J Wood  
T W Boon (22-30 July)  
J Dann (2-11 August)

DURATION

Left Lowestoft 0830 h 22 July  
Arrived Lowestoft 1530 h 11 August  
All times are Greenwich Mean Time

LOCALITY

English East Coast

AIM

To investigate the distribution and abundance of young herring and sprats along the English east coast from the Farne Islands to Dungeness.

NARRATIVE

TELLINA sailed from Lowestoft at 0830 h 22 July and made passage northwards. Good weather conditions enabled fishing operations to begin at Blyth at 1230 h 23 July. During the next 6 days the survey was completed between the Farne Islands and the Humber, TELLINA docking at Grimsby at 1700 h 29 July. A strong northerly wind prevented TELLINA from sailing the next day and with an unfavourable forecast for the following 2 days the staff and crew returned to Lowestoft for the mid-trip break.

TELLINA left Grimsby at 0655 h 3 August and during the following 8 days most of the work was completed between the Humber and Dungeness. Fresh northeasterly winds during the last 4 days of the cruise however, prevented some of the beach seine and trawl stations being worked in the southern parts of the survey area. The cruise was terminated when TELLINA docked at Lowestoft at 1530 h 11 August.

RESULTS

Catches of 0-group herring along almost the whole of the English east coast were very low during this survey, as had been expected in view of the poor larval production last autumn and winter. The only stretch of coastline where appreciable numbers of 0-group herring were caught was from just north of the Humber to the Wash. Juvenile herring

in this area are almost certainly derived from the Whitby spawning grounds, and the mean abundance here was fairly similar to that of the previous year. Elsewhere the mean abundance was at least 50% lower than in 1975. It must be concluded that the 1975/76 herring year-class is a very weak one in the North Sea herring population as a whole.

With such a low abundance of 0-group herring along the northeast coast it is unlikely that the herring by-catch will be of any significance in the sprat fishery off the Tyne next winter.

Sprat catches, of predominantly 1 year-old fish, were generally low this year throughout the inshore survey area. There appeared however, from the large number of echo traces, to be considerable quantities of sprats distributed off the northeast coast in the deeper water offshore.

R J Wood  
24 August 1976

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