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A short preliminary report on the Research Survey A5-2011

Pelagic fish off W- S- and SE-Iceland and the western Norwegian Sea 26 April - 18 May 2011

*Part of the joint Northeast Atlantic Pelagic Ecosystem Surveys in 2011
(see ICES PGNAPES report, August 2011)*

Vessel: R/V Arni Fridriksson, TFNA (Iceland)

Captain: Kristján Finnsson (first part) and Guðmundur Bjarnason (latter part)

Cruise leaders: Sveinn Sveinbjörnsson (first part) and Guðmundur J. Óskarsson (latter part)

In order to assess blue whiting concentrations west and south of Iceland, the survey began on 26 April at the shelf edge west of Iceland and from there continued south at and on either side of the shelf break to the Reykjanes Ridge (Figure 1). South of the Reykjanes promontory (SW-Iceland) the general course was eastwards, running along and just off and in over the outer shelf. From SE-Iceland the southern part of the Iceland-Faroese ridge was covered south towards 62°50N. Then the vessel sailed east to Torshavn in the Faroese where a 8 hrs intermission was taken from the survey while taking on fuel. From Torshavn, the survey continued by taking the first E/W transect in the survey on 63°30N. During the following days, it was continued northwards along E/W transects spaced at about 35-50 n.m. intervals. The western boundary was generally about 12°W, or the continental shelf of Iceland. The eastern limits increased gradually from 08°W to 05°W between 63° and 67°30N, and all the way to 2°E at 68°10 and 68°45 N. On 16 May at 70°20N and 6°45W, the vessel headed towards Reykjavik, where it was on 18 May.

The main results of this survey were that one year old juvenile blue whiting were recorded in considerable amount along the continental shelf west, south and southeast off Iceland. Concentrations of juveniles were also along the Iceland-Faroese ridge. The distribution of Norwegian spring-spawning herring was unlike the distribution in recent years in the way that it had not migrated as far west. No herring was observed in the cold East Iceland Current, but west, south and east of it. No herring was observed north of 69°30. The total amount of herring measured acoustically in the survey was 1.3 million tons. Around 0.55 million tons were within Icelandic waters, 0.67 in international waters, 0.12 in Jan Mayen waters, and less than 0.01 in Faroese waters. The fish-, hydrographical- and ecological data from this survey will be combined with data from other nations that participate in this International survey for more thoroughly analyses and the results will be presented within ICES.

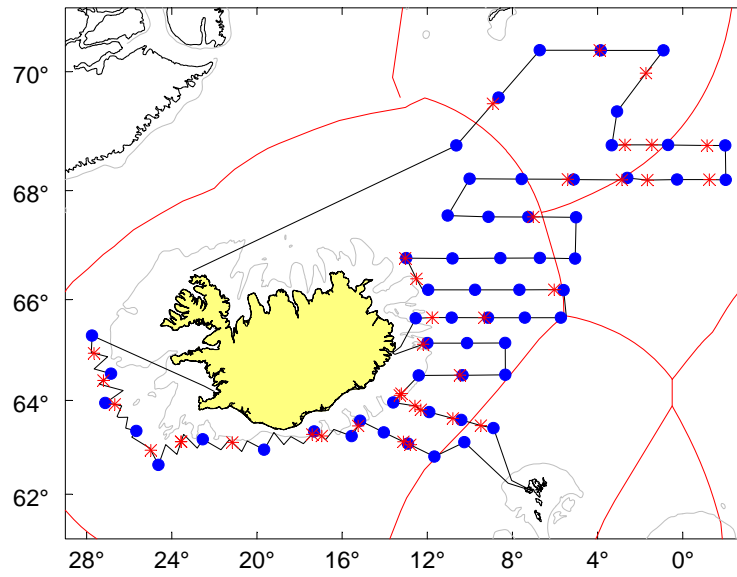


Figure 1. The survey track and locations of hydrographical and plankton stations (filled circles) and then trawl stations (stars) taken in the May survey 2011 by RV Árni Friðriksson.