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A short preliminary report on the Research Survey A5-2012

Pelagic fish off W- S- and SE-Iceland and the western Norwegian Sea 2 May - 24 May 2012

*Part of the joint Northeast Atlantic Pelagic Ecosystem Surveys in 2012
(see ICES WGIPS report, December 2012)*

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

Captain: Guðmundur Bjarnason

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 2 May 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, generally along E/W transects spaced at about 40-50 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 22 May at 70°00N and 6°49W, the vessel headed towards Reykjavik, where it was on 24 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 northern part of the Iceland-Faroese ridge. The distribution of Norwegian spring-spawning herring was similar to last years survey with respect to the area south of 67°N. No herring was observed in the cold East Iceland Current, but west, south and east of it. In the area covered north of 67°N, the amount of herring was only 25% of what was observed there in last year's survey. The total amount of herring measured acoustically in the survey was 650 thousands tons. Around 420 thousands tons were within Icelandic waters, 160 thous. tons in international waters, 20 thous. tons in Jan Mayen waters, and 43 thous. tons 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.

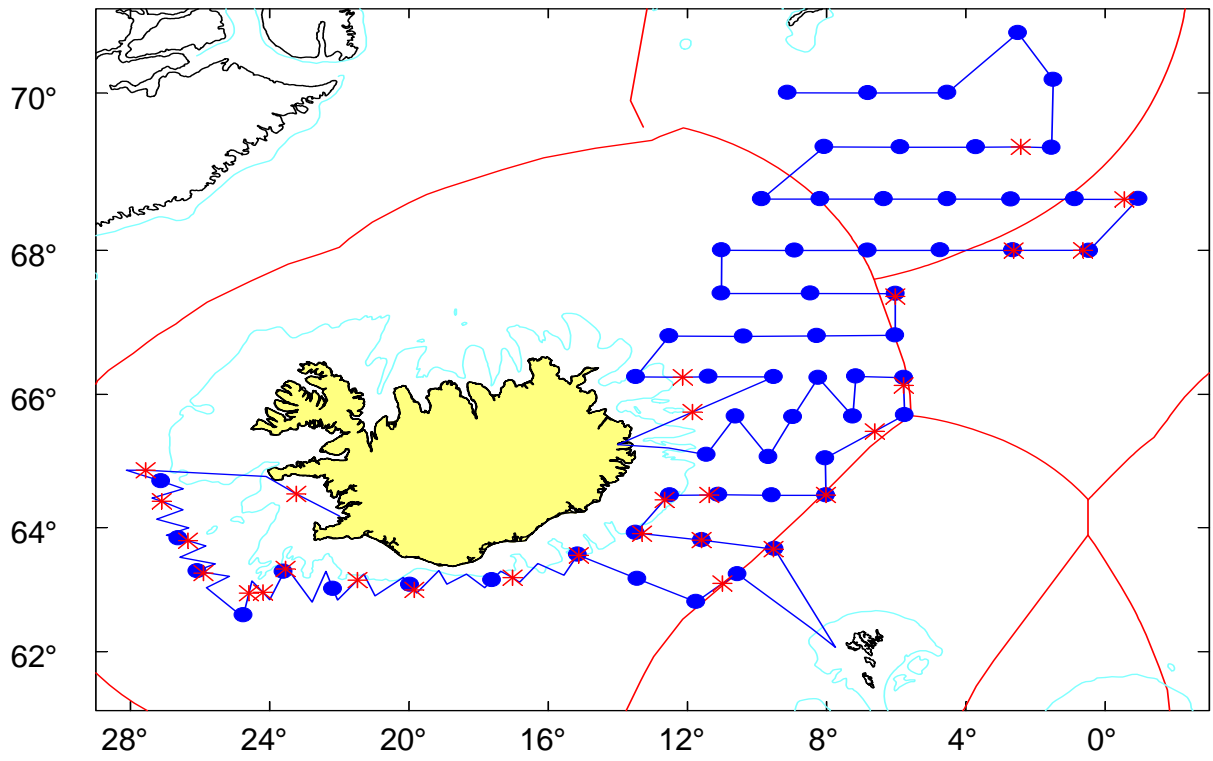


Figure 1. The survey track and locations of hydrographical and plankton stations (filled circles) and then trawl stations (stars) taken in the May survey 2012 by RV Árne Friðriksson.