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Note on the Salmon landed by M.F.V. 'Faro Bank', May 1968

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On 20th May 1968 the Danish M.F.V. Faro Bank landed a total of 1413 salmon, consisting of 790 fish caught by herself and the remainder by a sister ship, at Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, Scotland. All the salmon were taken on baited lines within a rectangular area, 67° 30' N, 70° 00' N, 8° 00' E and 10° 00' E off the Norwegian coast.

At each fishing the Faro Bank shot a total of 20 lines each having 20 hooks. Each hook was baited with sprat and was attached to the line at intervals of 8 fathoms by a 2 fathom monofilament nylon snood divided into two parts joined by a small barrel lead incorporating a swivel. A two-inch diameter synthetic float was fixed to the line at its junction with each snood.

All the fish had been gutted though the head had been left on and, as each vessel had spent approximately eight days on the fishing grounds the first caught fish had been on ice some twelve days prior to landing. The catch was divisible into three quality groups, poor, fair and good. Most of the catch was of poor quality mainly because of the length of time it had been on ice but even some of the freshest fish were of poor quality because their Condition Factor was considerably less than 1.00. The good quality fish compared very favourably with first class Scotch salmon and as many of them weighed more than 15 pounds they would be suitable for smokers and would command an above average price.

The price obtained for the catch ranged between  $\frac{1}{6}$  and  $\frac{6}{4}$  per pound. None of the recognised salmon netting firms bought any fish at Stonehaven. The skipper of the Faro Bank was most disappointed at the prices obtained and remarked that he would have grossed about three times as much if he had sold his catch in Denmark.

A sample of 235 fish, selected at random from the total catch of both vessels was scaled, measured and sexed. The average length of the salmon was 74.5 cm, ranging between a maximum length of 102.0 cm and a minimum length of 49.0 cm. However, the length of approximately 72% of the fish sampled lay between 65.0 cm and 85.0 cm. The average gutted weight of all the salmon landed was 7.2 lb.

The appearance of a large proportion of the catch suggested that the fish were either mending kelta or were maiden fish at the stage when the length of the fish was increasing rather than the girth. As the fish were gutted no gonads could be examined and maggots were observed on the gills of only four fish. The appearance of the teeth suggested that the majority of the fish were actively feeding when caught.

From the total of 235 sets of scales collected, it was possible to read 233. The percentage of two-, three-, four- and five-year old smolts occurring in the sample of scales examined was 22.3, 47.6, 27.5 and 2.6 respectively, and the average calculated lengths of the smolts attained by the end of the winter before migration was 12.8 cm. These results suggest that the majority of these fish originated in rivers situated nearer the northern rather than the southern limit of the Atlantic salmon's range. Nearly 84% had spent two winters in the sea and the percentage of one-, three- and four-sea winter fish was 4.7, 8.6 and 0.4 respectively. Six (2.6%) of the scale samples were from previous spawners, four having spawned during the winter of 1966/67 and the remaining two the following winter.

During 1968 three salmon were taken in the River Tay and one in the River North Esk carrying hooks and lengths of nylon similar to that used by the Faro Bank.