



HENRY WOOD
(1894 - 1969)

Dr. Henry WOOD, a scientist well known to Scottish herring fishermen and in international fisheries research circles, died on 15. February, 1969. The son of a Portsoy fisherman, Dr. WOOD attended the local school and later Fordyce Academy, before proceeding to Aberdeen University where his studies under Professor (later Sir) J. Arthur THOMSON were interrupted by the first Great War. After serving on minesweepers, he returned to the University to graduate M.A. in 1920. His appointment to the post of naturalist at the Aber-

deen Laboratory of the Fishery Board for Scotland followed in the same year.

Apart from a spell of war-time duty with the Admiralty, Dr. WOOD's scientific career was devoted almost entirely to investigations of the herring, especially the stocks of this important species exploited by the Scottish fleets in the northern North Sea and off the Scottish west coast. He was a member of an eminent group of European biologists, all working under the auspices of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, amongst whom were LEA and DEVOLD (Norway), FRIÐRIKSSON (Iceland), ANDERSSON (Sweden), TÅNING and JENSEN (Denmark), SCHNACKENBECK and BÜCKMANN (Germany), GILSON and GILIS (Belgium), TESCH and HAVINGA (Netherlands), LE GALL (France) and HODGSON (England). Their pioneer work during the inter-war and early post-war periods laid the foundations of our understanding of the herring's biology and population dynamics.

Dr. WOOD's scientific career began at the height of the controversy then raging over the validity of the ring pattern on the scales of herring as an index of age. His contribution to this problem was a significant one which marked him at that early stage as an observant scientist of integrity and sound judgment. These qualities characterised him and held him in good stead throughout his career. Amongst his many contributions to the advance in knowledge of herring biology, perhaps the most notable and important were his investigations of the "racial" composition of the exploited herring population in the northern North Sea. His conclusions, from analyses of the meristic characters of individuals, that this population consists of a mixture of members of distinct "spawning groups" of spring and autumn spawners has since been confirmed by more direct methods, including tagging, the successful application of which he himself also pioneered.

WOOD had a great love for the sea and a deep respect for the fishermen, whose livelihoods are gleaned from its resources. As a native of the Moray Firth he also had a keen appreciation and knowledge of their problems. This was exemplified by his early recognition, during his wartime secondment to the Admiralty Research Establishment at Fairlie (during which he made several trips on Naval vessels with the Arctic convoys to Murmansk), of the potential value of ASDIC as a fish detection tool. On his return to fishery science in 1946 he joined one or two others as a strong advocate of the application of this equipment to fishing. The rapid post-war growth in the use of echosounders and sonar for this purpose bears witness to his foresight and sound judgment.

During the inter- and post-war periods, WOOD contributed numerous papers at meetings of the Council's Herring Committee and published several in the laboratory's Fisheries Investigations and Marine Research series and in international journals. In 1932 he

delivered the Buckland Lectures on the "Natural History of the Herring in Scottish Waters" to Scottish audiences. WOOD gained his doctor's degree from Aberdeen University in 1933 and was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1946. In 1950 he was appointed Deputy Director of the Marine Laboratory, giving loyal and sterling service at a time of rapid expansion. In 1952 the first number of the popular Scottish Fisheries Bulletin was produced under his enthusiastic editorship. He retired in 1959.

His love of the sea and the fisheries was not an armchair one. He was very much at home aboard ship and spent much of his time working on the herring fishing grounds, aboard the Department's research vessels, and speaking at the fishing ports to fishermen about aspects of the science of herring fishing. He spared no efforts to encourage a closer, mutual trust and understanding between fisherman and scientist.

Because of his origins, his thorough practical knowledge of herring fishing and his natural ability to talk to fishermen in their own language, he was held in as high regard by all who knew him in the industry as he was by his colleagues in Aberdeen and many scientific friends elsewhere.

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