

1 BACKGROUND

The 9th joint survey (BESS) was carried out during the period 8th of August to 30th of September 2012. The survey plans and tasks were agreed upon at the annual IMR-PINRO Meeting in March 2012 and the almost joint collaborative tasks were executed according to this plan.

“Johan Hjort” (15/8-21/8) started the ecosystem survey with special investigations of the ecosystem of Isfjord and Billefjord (Spitsbergen/Svalbard) area. All ecosystem components (plankton, fish, invertebrates) were collected by trawl and grabs. In addition, genetic and biochemical biological samples were also collected. A new fish sampling technology was also tested during this part of survey. Reports from these investigations will be presented later on the website (http://www.imr.no/tokt/okosystemtokt_i_barentshavet/nn-no). “Vilnyus” (08/08-30/9) started the ecosystem survey from the southeastern part of the Barents Sea and then continued to cover the REEZ from south to north. “G.O. Sars” (18/08-12/09) covered the central parts of the NEEZ and “Johan Hjort” (17/8- 30/9) covered the western part. “Helmer Hansen” started out with a special investigation on the Yermak plateau north of the Svalbard archipelago, where the hydrography in that area and the plankton community were studied in the period 6/8-20/8. That vessel continued to survey the coastal areas of Svalbard until it finished the survey at 3rd September. Only “J.Hjort” and “Vilnyus” were involved in the survey from September 12 to the end of the survey period, where the two vessels covered the northern areas east of the Spitsbergen/Svalbard archipelago.

There were variable weather conditions during the survey, and heavy winds delayed activity in areas covered by the Norwegian vessels. Large areas in the REEZ were also closed and inaccessible for sailing due to military activity. This led to a significant loss of time for “Vilnyus” and lack of survey coverage in the north-eastern parts of the Barents Sea, including the adjacent waters of the Kara Sea. For inexplicable reasons, “Vilnyus” was also denied access to areas close to the Novaja Zemlja coast and to the south of Franz Josef Land.

Except for coverage in the north-eastern parts, the investigations were kept at the same level as in previous years. Thus though there was a reduction in the oceanographic sampling of the standard sections, some new investigations were introduced such as, a special subsurvey in Svalbord/Spitsbergen fjords.

The contents of this report cover many but not all aspects of the survey. The content will be updated and made available in electronic form on the Internet (www.imr.no). An internet site dedicated to collating all information from the ecosystem survey is currently under preparation. The site ([www. http://www.imr.no/tokt/okosystemtokt_i_barentshavet/nn-no](http://www.imr.no/tokt/okosystemtokt_i_barentshavet/nn-no)) will be store information covering all aspects of the survey, including all previous reports, maps, etc. Post-survey information which is not included in the written report may also be found at this site.

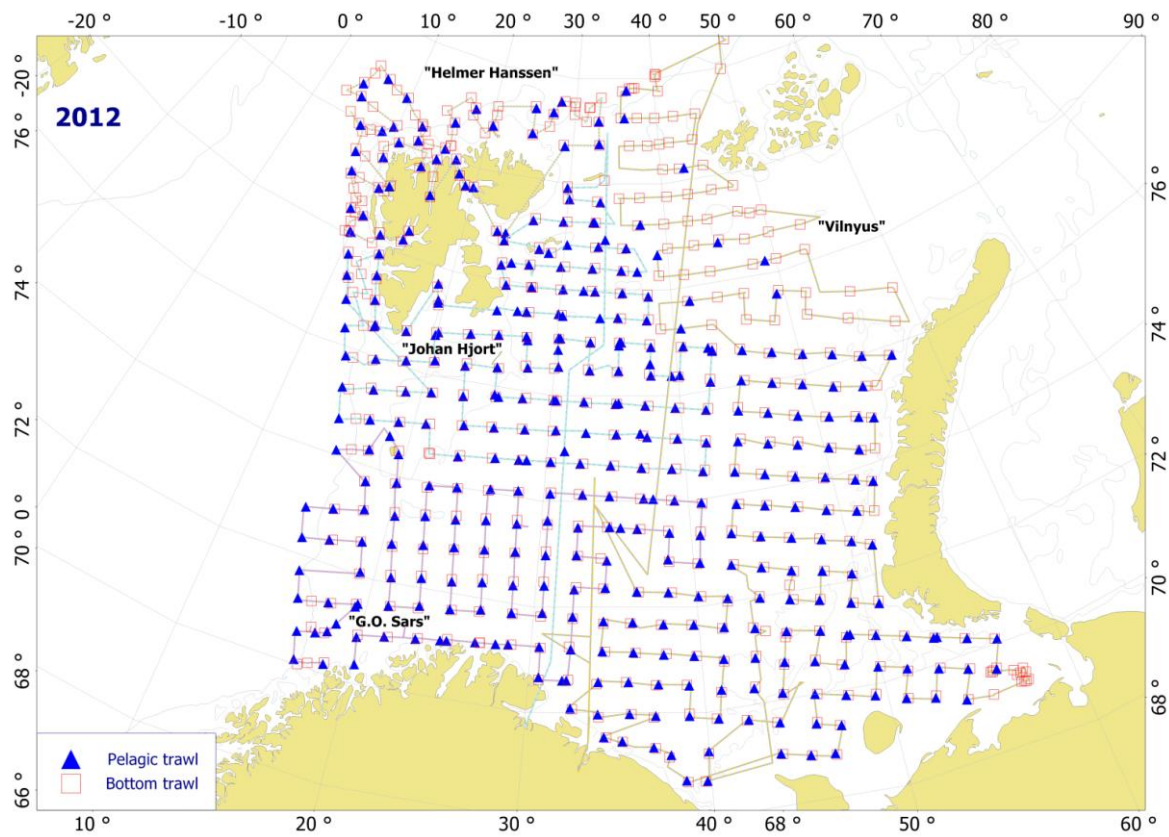


Figure 1.1 Ecosystem survey, August-September 2012. Trawl stations.

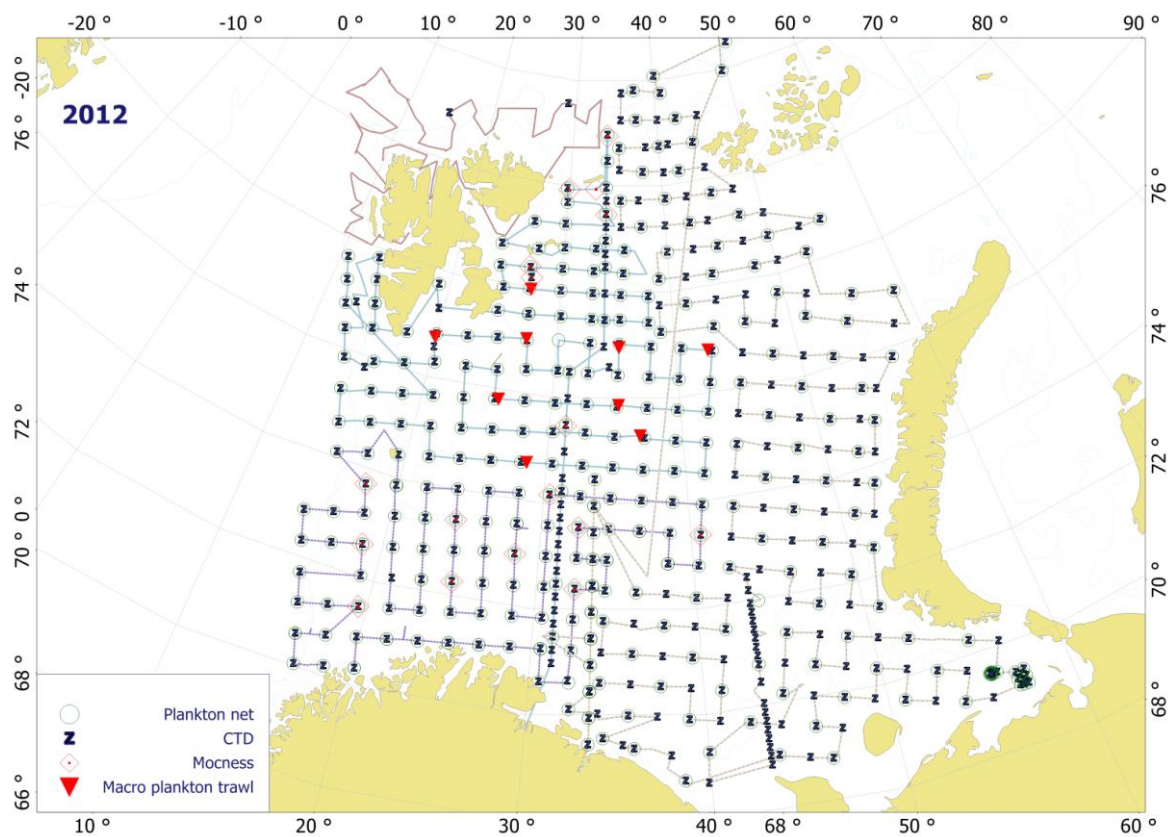


Figure 1.1 Ecosystem survey, August-September 2012. Hydrography and plankton stations.