American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists

. . . BRIEFS . . .

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New President Begins Shaping His Program

President Dick Schaefer writes:

First, I've appointed Marty Golden to chair an "ad hoc" special committee to examine the issues of member recruitment and retention, and to report back to me and the BOC at its next meeting in August with his findings and recommendations. Marty's e-mail address is marty.golden@noaa.gov. I'm certain he would welcome any thoughts/ideas/recommendations from the membership.

Second, I've appointed Gil Radonski to chair an "ad hoc" special committee to examine the issues of AIFRB "marketing" and promotion, and to report back to me and the BOC at its next meeting in August with his finding and recommendations. Gil's e-mail address is gcrgmr@clis.com. I'm certain he would welcome any thoughts/ideas/recommendations from the membership.

Third, I'm trying to locate a member/fellow/emeritus who would be willing to help Dora Passino-Reader, who is our overall "arrangements" person for our next BOC meeting in Quebec City next August, with organizing and arranging our reception. Any takers?

Fellow Barbara E. Warkentine honored by the State University of New York for research on fish populations in New York City area.

Keystone Fellows Lauded by SUNY

Two AIFRB Fellows from the Keystone District were recently recognized for their research by the Chancellor of the State University of New York at an official Ceremony at the Central Administration Facility of The State University of New York in Albany, New York on October 24th, 2002. They were Dr. James M. Haynes of the SUNY College at Brockport, New York and Dr. Barbara E. Warkentine of SUNY-Maritime College Bronx, New York.

Dr. James M. Haynes is a Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Biology at the College at Brockport. Since coming to Brockport in 1978, Dr. Haynes has been involved in over $2.5 million of externally funded research and service projects. Early in his career, with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant program, NYS Electric & Gas, and several U.S. and Canadian fishing organizations, Dr. Haynes's research focused on the movements and habitat preferences of salmon and trout in Lake Ontario. This work, which involved numerous graduate and undergraduate research students, resulted in several peer-reviewed publications co-authored with students and helped anglers throughout the Great Lakes basin improve their harvests of stocked fish. Dr. Haynes had directed nine National Science Foundation projects, funded by the Division of Undergraduate Education, that show science faculty across the nation how to use environmental problem solving as a way to enhance the enthusiasm, knowledge and skills of undergraduates in science courses.

Dr. Barbara E. Warkentine is Professor of Biology at Maritime College. Since 1999, Dr. Warkentine has been working with colleagues at the City University of New York to study and evaluate the state of the aquatic fauna of the Bronx River. These projects have received funding from The Partnership for Parks, City Parks Foundation, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and Wildlife Conservation Society. Dr. Warkentine's goal is to assess the population dynamics and resource utilization of the fish fauna of the Bronx River, and to understand its current and historical utilization by anadromous species (those that migrate up rivers from the sea to breed in fresh water) and the catadromous eel (which live in freshwater and go to the sea to spawn) in the region of the river south of the falls in River Park at 180th Street and Boston Road. These research efforts also focus on the extent to which fish from the north river above the fall line contribute to and influence populations below this demarcation break.

Submitted by: Joe Rachlin

The AIFRB is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (EIN 61-6050711).

Northern California District Stays Busy

On December 18, 2002 at a meeting in the conference room at the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) office at Crissy Field in the Presidio, San Francisco, the Northern California District AIFRB Past-Director Dan Howard, of the Cordell Bank NMS, showed videos of his surveys on Cordell Bank using the two person submersible Delta. He discussed habitat characterization studies, fish surveys and invertebrate assessments of the Cordell Bank. Playing second fiddle to Howard's presentation was a meal of gourmet pizza.

The District's Winter Season Banquet was scheduled for Saturday, January 18th, 2003, at The Mandarin Restaurant in Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco.

Submitted by: Tom Keegan

Founding Fellow Carlander Succumbs

Kenneth Dixon Carlander
1916-November 21, 2002

Ken Carlander and Iowa State University were synonymous. After completing military service (ever-productive, Ken even produced, while he was in service, a scientific paper on birds observed during maneuvers) and graduate research at the University of Minnesota on the fisheries of the Lake of the Woods, Ken became Assistant Professor of Zoology at Iowa State University and Leader of the Iowa Cooperative Fishery Unit. (Iowa State is home to the cooperative unit concept, a brainchild of Iowa's conservation pioneer Ding Darling). Ken remained at Iowa State throughout his active and emeritus career. By 1985, the date of his nominal retirement, he had directed programs of 34 Ph.D. graduates and 59 M.S. students (of whom 22 also completed Ph.D. programs – 12 at Iowa State).

Ken had a vital interest in encouraging fisheries research in developing countries. To that end Ken mentored numerous foreign students from, among many countries, Sudan, Liberia, Iraq, and India as well as serving as visiting professor in Egypt and Indonesia.

Ken Carlander's accomplishments in fisheries research and education, as well as his contributions to Iowa, have been recognized in many ways: selection to four scholastic honor societies; selection as a Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists, the Iowa Academy of Science, and the International Academy of Fishery Scientists; appointment in 1974 by Iowa State University as Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor; appointment by Iowa governors to various councils and boards; and invitations to lecture at more than 30 universities and scientific laboratories. Ken was a member of more than 30 professional societies, serving on committees and boards of 11 and being elected President of the American Fisheries Society (1960-61), of Sigma Xi, Iowa Chapter (1963-64), and of the Iowa academy of Science (1968-69). He was presented the Award of Excellence by the American Fisheries Society in 1979 and the Distinguished Fellow Award by the Iowa Academy of Science in 1980.

None of the above, however prestigious, can convey the deep affection in which Ken was held by his students. Always calm, always understanding, always tolerant, Ken made each of us feel accepted and capable of the work expected of us. His generosity was unequalled. At least one graduate student found long after completion of his degree that a supposed assistantship from the university that had supported him and his family during tight times had actually come straight from the pocket of Ken Carlander.

And I probably ought to nominate Ken for sainthood. Finishing a hot, hot, summer Friday of electro fishing, David Behmer and I were driving the 30 miles from the Des Moines River back to Ames when a five-gallon container of strong formaldehyde solution overturned in the back of the Chevrolet station wagon assigned to the fisheries unit. The vile fluid filled the recessed wheel well in the aft floor of the vehicle. Completely saturated with fish, fish biology, heat, and the week's work, Dave and I were absolutely convinced that that formaldehyde would be overjoyed to spend the weekend in the wheel well so that it's removal could provide us with a fitting beginning to the Monday next. We did not know that Ken and Jess Muncy were planning a very early departure in that same despoiled vehicle on Monday morning for the 150 mile round trip to Fort Dodge. Nor did Ken and Jess know in the cool of their pre-dawn departure that the morning's heat would vaporize the caustic, but unsuspected and then hidden, fish preservative and force them to ride the entire distance with their heads out the windows. Ken never mentioned the incident to Dave or me.

Gene Huntsman

Partially taken from Muncy, Robert J., Kenneth D. Carlander, An Appreciation, pp. viii-xi in Summerfelt, Robert C. and Gordon E. Hall eds. Age and Growth of Fish, Iowa State University Press, 1987.

Two Fellows on Prestigious Federal Committee

Commerce and Interior Departments Select Candidates for National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee

On January 3, 2003, the Department of Commerce, with assistance from the Department of the Interior, named final candidates for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee. Required as part of Presidential Executive Order 13158 dealing with Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the 30-person committee represents a broad stakeholder community, including scientists, academia, commercial and recreational fishermen, resource users and managers, and environmentalists.

The advisory committee's duties include providing advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on implementation of aspects of the MPA Executive Order. The members may establish working groups, subcommittees, or task forces as needed to fulfill the committee's goals. They also will create a scientific working group of experts in marine and ocean science fields, which will assess the conditions of natural and submerged cultural resources within the nation's MPAs. The members will serve for two or three-year terms, and will elect a chairperson from the group.

"Marine protected areas are important resource management tool's," said Commerce Secretary Don Evans. "We look forward to strong leadership from these individuals in helping us determine how best to continue our efforts, balancing conservation needs with commercial and recreational interests as we move forward to protect the marine environment for present and future generations."

The Committee will be supported by the National Marine Protected Areas Center, established by NOAA in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, as required by Executive Order. The MPA Center is charged with providing federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local governments with the information, technologies, training, and strategies to coordinate federal activities related to MPAs.

Final candidates for the MPA Federal Advisory Committee are: **Dr. Tundi Agardy,** *Sound Seas, Bethesda, Md;* **Mr. Robert Bendick, Jr.,** *The Nature Conservancy, Altamonte Springs, Fla.;* **Mr. David Benton,** *North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Anchorage, Alaska;* **Dr. Daniel Bromley,** *University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.;* **Dr. Anthony Chatwin,** *Conservation Law Foundation, Boston, Mass.;* **Dr. Michael Cruickshank,** *Marine Minerals, Technology Center Associates, Honolulu, Hawaii;* **Mr. Ernesto Diaz,** *Puerto Rico Coastal Zone Mgmt Program, San Juan, Puerto Rico;* **Ms. Carol Dinkins,** *Vinson & Elkins Attorneys At Law, Houston, Texas;* **Dr. Rodney Fujita,** *Environmental Defense, Oakland, Calif.;* **Dr. Dolores Garza,** *University of Alaska, Ketchikan, Alaska;* **Mr. Eric Gilman,** *National Audubon Society, Honolulu, Hawaii;* **Dr. Mark Hixon,** *Oregon State University, Corvallis, Ore.;* **Mr. George Lapointe,** *Maine Department of Marine Resources, Augusta, Maine;* **Dr. Bonnie McCay,** *Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ;* **Mr. Melvin E. Moon, Jr.,** *Quileute Natural Resources Department, LaPush, Wash.;* **Mr. Robert Moran,** *American Petroleum Institute, Washington, DC;* **Dr. Steven Murray,** *California State University, Fullerton, Calif.;* **Mr. Michael Nussman,** *American Sportfishing Association, Alexandria, Va.;* **Dr. John Ogden,** *Florida Institute of Oceanography, St. Petersburg, Fla.;* **Mr. Terry O'Halloran,** *hulaRez, Inc., Kalaheo, Hawaii;* **Mr. Lelei Peau,** *Department of Commerce of American Samoa Pago Pago, American Samoa;* **Dr. Walter Pereyra,** *Artic Storm Management Group, Inc., Seattle, Wash. (AIFRB Fellow);* **Mr. Max Peterson,** *International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Washington, DC;* **Mr. Gilbert Radonski,** *Sport Fishing Institute, Cape Carteret, NC (AIFRB Fellow);* **Mr. James Ray,** *Environmental Ecology and Response Shell Global Solutions (US), Inc., Houston, Texas;* **Ms. Barbara Stevenson,** *Portland Fish Exchange, Portland, Maine;* **Dr. Daniel Suman,** *University of Miami, Miami, Fla.;* **Capt. Thomas E. Thompson,** *USCG (Ret.), International Council of Cruise Lines; Arlington, Va.;* **Ms. H. Kay Williams,** *Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Vancleave, Miss.;* **Mr. Robert Zales, II,** *Bob Zales Charters; Panama City, Fla.*

Committee members were nominated by organizations and individuals. Potential members are offered membership into the committee and then must undergo a background check. These candidates were selected by a panel of experts from both agencies seeking to ensure that the committee's membership represented the broad spectrum of interested parties throughout the nation.

Marine protected areas are one of several management tools NOAA Fisheries uses to prevent decline and promote recovery of marine fish, mammal and sea turtle species that fall under the agency's stewardship responsibilities. In partnership with the eight regional fishery management councils, NOAA Ocean Service, states, fishermen, and coastal communities, NOAA Fisheries combines protected areas with other marine resource management tools to ensure a healthy and bountiful ocean for all Americans.

Feds Fish for a Definition: Radonski Speaks

By Patricia Smith Heupel
Freedom ENC

One of the most important issues federal fisheries authorities must decide is how to define a marine protected area and what criteria to use, a fisheries scientist who lives in Cape Carteret, NC said. "I have a great fear that a lot of people see using marine protected areas as a surrogate for fisheries management just cut off all fishing and the fish will come back," said Gilbert Radonski, who retired in 1994 from the Sport Fishing Institute in Washington.

While there is a strong movement in the U.S. south Atlantic region to create large refuges where no fishing – commercial or recreational – is allowed, such actions would not solve the problems, Radonski said. "It's sort of the easy way out," he said. The U.S. Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior last week named Radonski to the National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations to the agencies' secretaries regarding a national system of marine protected areas. And Radonski believes the idea of these large, no-fishing zones is one that will likely come up, but he hopes it is not a direction the committee will take.

To protect an area there must be a clearly stated objective with rules to meet those goals, Radonski said. Closing waters to all fishing might work to bring back fish populations, if done on a large enough scale, but it would also have economic and social impacts, he said. In May 2000, President Bill Clinton signed an executive order, which the Bush Administration has retained, directing the Department of Commerce and the Department of Interior to inventory existing federal and state marine protected areas and set up a scientific center to develop the framework for a national marine protected area system. The MPA Center was also charged with coordinating the development of strategies to both enhance and expand protection of existing MPAs and to recommend new ones. "One of the major tasks is going to be to try to determine what we should, as a country, be trying to protect and how we should work to meet those goals," said Joseph Uravitch, director of the MPA Center. Federal authorities expect to find thousands of MPAs already in existence, defining them in the most general terms as areas set aside with some level of management, Uravitch said.

There are already about 10 such federally protected areas in North Carolina waters, including the USS Monitor shipwreck site and several waters in national reserve programs, Radonski said. Uravitch said it will take until the end of 2004 just to complete the MPA inventory. The advisory committee will hold its first meeting this spring to organize and decide what specific issues they want to address, he said. "It's such a new thing for the country that it's going to take a while before things get settled," he said.

From: New Bern (NC) Sun-Journal, January 7, 2003

Harold Kincaid Retires

Dr. Harold Kincaid retired from government service at the Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory, Wellsboro, PA, effective January 3, 2003.

Harold started with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the 1970's as a research geneticist in Beulah Montana, eventually working his way to Wellsboro in 1984. His vision of a fish strain database culminated in the National Fish Strain Registry, an interactive tool for managers to make stocking decisions based on performance rather than hunch.

In retirement, Harold and Ruth plan to stay in Wellsboro for the time being and spend time with their children and grandchildren. He also plans to do some consulting and perhaps travel.

Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory sponsored a retirement party on Thursday, January 16th to honor Harold.

Submitted by: Dora Passino-Reader

Editorial Comment: A clarification and expansion

In the last issue (Nov.-Dec. 2002) after an announcement of the recipients of the Research Assistance Travel Awards, I offered the following editorial comment about one of the awards:

"With ample respect and admiration for the work of Jerald Ault and his (award) committee and for the intellectual prowess and accomplishments of Ms. Tungkawachara, it is the position of the Editor of *Briefs* that food scientists are not, but the wildest stretch of imagination, fishery biologists. Food scientists do not meet the criteria for being a fishery biologist as described in the bylaws and thus are not eligible for membership in the AIFRB or to receive a research assistance award. The Board of Control was remiss in not clarifying that position to the Research Assistance Award Committee."

Although I thought I had written the above in such a way as to direct clearly any criticism to the Board of Control, and to be almost flattering to Ault *et alii*, and Tungkawachara, at least two readers believed I had impugned one or both. So for clarity, Ault and his committee, following established precedent, did a fine job and Ms. Tungkawachara appears to be an accomplished and deserving scientist.

THE PROBLEM IS that the established precedent cannot be justified by the official policies and bylaws of the AIFRB. In the Articles of Incorporation (Institute Charter, Bylaws, and Policy Statements, Amended August 20, 2001) p. 3 Article III, Membership, "…membership shall be available to scientists of competence and proven achievement in the field of fishery biology…". In the Bylaws, pp. 7, 8, and 9, members and fellows must have "experience in the field of fishery biology" and associates must be "engaged in research concerned with the fishery sciences or engaged in a graduate degree program in fishery science", and finally in the Policy Statements, II, Criteria to Membership, p. 18, "Membership…shall be available to scientists of competence and of proven achievement in the field of fishery biology…" and IV, Declaration of Affiliation (p. 21) "limitation of our membership to professional fishery biologists".

And most importantly, the Official Policy Statements, (Section III, Educational Standards, pp. 19 and 20) clearly define fishery biology. "Although fishery biology is not independent of the other aspects, it is concerned with the biological aspects of a fishery and with maintaining and improving the production of useable fishery resources. It may be distinguished from fish biology and ichthyology by its emphasis upon the resource and its fishery rather than the organism. Fishery biology must involve knowledge of the taxonomy, biology, and environment of the fish. However, a fishery biologist puts more emphasis upon the factors affecting production rates and population dynamics, which relate to fisheries exploitation." "Fishery biology (p. 21) ….has developed theories of the effect of fishing on populations and catches….".

Given the overwhelming evidence from the official documentation of the organization can there be any doubt as to whether food scientists ought to be considered for membership in the AIFRB? If even ichthyologists and fish biologists are distinguished from fishery biologists by our official policies, can there be any justification for granting Associate memberships and Research Assistance Awards to protein chemists?

How the divergence between official policy and practice occurred is unimportant. Organizations, like continents, have tendencies to drift slowly away from fixed positions. And even more unimportant is the fact that we have been funding food scientists for a long time. A wrong precedent is still wrong despite venerable age.

There are two ways to deal with the discrepancy between official policy and practice: 1. Change the errant practices to match the policy; or 2. Change the policies to match the practices. I encourage the Board of Control to change our practices. I, for one, an extremely proud to be a member of an organization of professional fishery biologists, *sensu strictu.*

Note: As Editor I take advantage of the pages of Briefs *to air my views. As I have said many times before, as long as I am Editor, every member of AIFRB has the same access to these pages as I do. Have an opinion? Write it down. Gene Huntsman*

Effects of Fishing Symposium

The Symposium on the Effects of Fishing Activities on Benthic Habitats began November 12, 2002 in Tampa, Fla., with nearly 400 participants from around the US and the world, including Alaska, Florida, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Mexico. Convened by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Geological Survey (USGS), in collaboration with the American Fisheries Society and the Ecological Society of America, the meeting brought together leading experts to address the pressing issues of fishing and habitat alteration that challenge managers, practitioners, and ocean scientists.

The Tuesday session featured introductions by Dr. William T. Hogarth, Assistant Administrator of Fisheries at NOAA and Dr. Charles G. Groat, Director of USGS. Jake Rice of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada discussed management and policy for fishing, emphasizing the importance of socioeconomic impacts in decision-making. John Steele of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution discussed some of the findings of a National Marine Fisheries Project that examined the ecosystem effects of fishing in Galveston, Texas, Boston, Massachusetts, and Anchorage, Alaska.

"Scientific advice to manage benthic fisheries in Mexico: present status and perspectives," a presentation by Francisco Arreguin-Sanchez of the Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marina del IPN, described the condition of shrimp and snapper fisheries. He described recent work to understand the conditions these fisheries are in and possible ways to avoid future collapse. The shrimping system in the Gulf of California has already suffered one collapse, and many other areas are on the verge of collapsing if fishing practices do not change soon, according to Arreguin.

In the afternoon, the meeting shifted focus to characterizing and understanding natural changes in benthic areas. Presenters described and discussed high-resolution imaging, sonars, and other technologies used to determine features and conditions of the ocean bottom.

Submitted by: Andy Jahn

New Study Supports Breaching Snake Dams

The highly respected Rand Corporation, an independent, nonprofit research and analysis firm, has added its considerable weight to the effort to remove or bypass four small hydro-electric dams on the lower Snake River in eastern Washington and replace the power with conservation, improved energy efficiency, natural gas plants, and renewables. This would benefit not only the salmon but also the region's economy as a whole. To view the entire report, you may visit www.wildsalmon.org.

From: Earthjustice, Autumn 2002

Volunteers Scour Texas' Coast for Abandoned Crab Traps

Cleaning up the tens of thousands of crab traps abandoned each year is expensive and time consuming. Coastal resource managers in Texas were overwhelmed by the problem, until they created a volunteer program to clean up derelict traps. The resulting effort was so effective, it is inspiring other Gulf states to tackle the issue. "It was a huge success," says Art Morris of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Coastal Fisheries Division's first crab trap clean up program. "What stemmed from this is that all the other Gulf states are creating some type of crap trap removal program," and Texas is making it an annual event.

The Texas Crab Trap Removal Program prohibited crabbing with traps in state waters for the first time beginning February 16 and going through March 3, 2002. During this time a total of 8,070 abandoned crab traps were hauled out by 554 volunteers in 228 vessels. "We estimate that our cleanup saved 11,000 organisms," exclaims Morris, fishery outreach specialist. "That's a

lot of the reasoning behind creating this program. In addition to killing blue crabs and more than 20 other species, abandoned or lost crab traps are unsightly, create conflicts between recreational and commercial fishermen, and may damage sensitive habitat, such a sea grass. Until 2001, the law in Texas stipulated that only a trap's owner or state game wardens could remove the wire mesh cages used to catch crabs. Texas Parks and Wildlife estimates that 30,000 traps are lost or discarded in state coastal waters each year. In the past, wardens have only been able to collect about 2,500 traps annually. "We've were hand tied to address the magnitude of the problem on a coast wide basis," Morris explains.

Sport fisherman, whose motors are often snagged by the traps, took the issue to the state legislature in 2001, which voted to allow Parks and Wildlife to close crab fishing for up to 30 days in February or March, and authorized the use of volunteers to remove traps after the first 7 days of the closure. Parks and Wildlife worked with the Crab Advisory Committee, a group that includes commercial crab and sport fishermen, to work out the details of the cleanup. The committee proposed a 16-day closure that allowed two weekends for cleanup during the slowest harvest time. After public hearings on the proposal, final approval came November 7, 2001, giving Parks and Wildlife staff only three months to pull the event together. "We really got after it immediately," Morris says. "We had to seek volunteer support, donor support, advertise the event, alert fishermen, find disposal facilities, arrange for 24 collection sites, and find the traps and point them out to the volunteers." Nearly 60 organizations supported the project through donations and volunteers, and the Coastal Conservation Association provided a $14,000 grant for the program, Morris says. "Ultimately, it worked out very well for us."

So well that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission is developing guidelines for other states to create similar crab trap removal programs. "There's been a lot of interest in this program," notes Morris. "It exceeded everyone's expectations."

For more information on the Texas Crap Trap Removal Program, contact Art Morris at (361) 825-3356, or Art.Morris@tpwd.state.tx.us. To read the guidelines that will be published by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, point your browser to www.gsmfc.org.

From: Coastal Services 6(1), January-February 2003

DNR confirms snakeheads gone from Crofton pond

Remember the snakeheads? Maryland environmental officials have confirmed that the alien carnivorous fish that became a sensation this summer when it was found reproducing in a Crofton pond is indeed a memory.

Department of Natural Resources biologists visited the 4-acre pond November 20th to check for any sign that the Asian predators survived after a fish poison was applied in September in an intensive effort eradicate them. After waiting until the weather chilled and the thick plant life in the pond died, the scientists used an electric shock method to try to stun any fish in the pond and make them float to the surface. "There was not a fish of any species," said DNR Spokesman John Surrick. That wasn't the case two months earlier, when thousands of fish were killed as the DNR sprayed rotenone throughout the pond. Among them were more than 1,000 dead juvenile and six adult northern snakeheads, an aggressive fish that reaches up to 3 feet in length and sits at the top of the food chain in its native China.

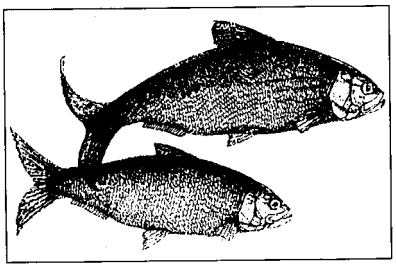
A Maryland man had plopped two of them in the pond two years ago after buying them live in a New York market. Biologists were concerned that the snakeheads could wreak havoc with Maryland's native aquatic creatures if they successfully reproduced and spread to other bodies of water. In fact, some of the snakeheads dissected after the poisoning revealed they had swallowed native fish whole. The fear of snakeheads breaking loose was compounded because snakeheads have the unusual ability to breathe air and wiggle across expanses of land. Surrick said it will be up to the landowners to decide whether they wish to restock the pond with native species with the DNR's assistance. But evidence seemed to suggest the snakehead saga was truly concluded. "This is pretty much it as far as we're concerned," Surrick said.

-Associated Press
From: Bay Journal 12(9), December 2002

East Coast to Begin Phaseout of Ocean American Shad Fishery

Efforts to restore American shad in the Chesapeake Bay may get a boost at the end of December as states along the East Coast begin restricting the catch of the fish in the ocean. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in 1999 called for a five-year phaseout of coastal shad catches. The phaseout begins at the end of this year when states must implement plans to reduce catches by 40 percent. The ocean fishery must be completely closed at the end of 2004.

Shad spend most of their lives migrating along the coast, but they return to their native rivers to spawn. The ASMFC, a panel representing all East Coast states that develops management plans for migratory species, hopes that ending harvests in the ocean will bolster ongoing efforts to rebuild shad populations in many East Coast rivers. "It's kind of an obvious deduction," said Richard St. Pierre, Susquehanna River Coordinator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where shad restoration efforts have been under way since the 1970s. "If you don't kill them at sea, at least they are going to get into the rivers."



The ocean fishery has long been controversial because it "intercepts" shad as they migrate along the coast, and fishermen cannot distinguish whether they are catching fish from rivers with healthy or depleted stocks. "Stocks that are most in need of restoration are the ones that could be most impacted by just a relatively small take in the ocean," said Bill Goldsborough, a scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a member of the ASMFC. "It is entirely possible that with one set of a net, you get the bulk of the remaining fish from one little tributary."

Restoring shad has been a major goal of the Bay Program, with efforts taking place in all the Bay states to boost populations with hatchery-reared fish and to reopen historic spawning rivers by building fish passages and removing barriers to migration. Proponents of closing the ocean fishery have argued that it makes little sense to invest millions of dollars in such activities only to have the fish harvested in the ocean. The ASMFC will still allow shad harvests within individual rivers. That allows harvests in the rivers with healthy stocks while protecting systems with depleted populations. All of the Bay and its tributaries are closed to shad fishing. Maryland closed its portion of the Bay to shad fishing in 1980, the Potomac River was closed in 1982, and Virginia closed the rest of the Bay in 1993.

Coastal fisherman, though, have argued that shad are often caught as a bycatch as they are targeting other species. If the ocean fishery is closed, they say, the fish will continue to be caught – only the fishermen will not be able to legally sell them. Because of that concern, the ASMFC has also asked the states to enact limits on the bycatch of shad. "Bycatch is anticipated to be a growing problem as the directed ocean fishery is phased out," according to the ASMFC. Scientists say the initial 40 percent reduction may be too little to be seen in annual surveys that take place in the Bay and its tributaries. "With this first reduction, if there is any signal, it is going to be very subtle," said John Olney, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, who oversees annual shad surveys in the York River. "But over the long run, I certainly believe that the expectation is that the reduction in offshore effort will result in increased catch rates in our monitoring program in Virginia over the next two to four years. During the early 1900s, shad were the Bay's most valuable fishery, but over the years, shad stocks dramatically declined because of overfishing, pollution, and the construction of dams that blocked access to their spawning grounds.

Recent surveys have suggested the efforts to rebuild the population are having some success, showing a gradual increase in the adult shad population, although they remain far below historic levels.

From: Bay Journal 12(9), December 2002

Congress Rejects Proposals to Transfer Sea Grant, Smithsonian Research

Plans by the Bush Administration to transfer some research programs to the National Science Foundation – a change that would have affected some Chesapeake Bay – related research – have been rejected by Congress and a scientific study panel. In its proposed 2003 budget, the administration called for removing the 35-year old Sea Grant program from the National Oceanic

and Atmospheric Administration and transferring it to the NSF, which is called "one of the true centers of excellence" in the government. The budget also said the administration was considering a shift of funds from the Smithsonian Institution's research facilities, including one heavily involved in Bay research, to the NSF beginning in 2004.

But Congress this year blocked the Sea Grant proposal by passing a bill reauthorizing the program within NOAA. To address the administration's concerns, the bill did call for annual reporting to ensure that research supported by Sea Grant is not duplicative of work supported by the NSF. The plan to transfer Sea Grant had been criticized by some because the NSF tends to support basic research aimed at national priorities, much of which is not immediately applicable. In contrast, each of the 30 university-based Sea Grant programs around the nation tend to emphasize research that is important to its region and is immediately relevant, either to decision makers, or to businesses and the public.

In the Chesapeake Bay, for example, Sea Grant programs in Virginia and Maryland have supported work on aquaculture and studies related to numerous fisheries, including striped bass and blue crabs, as well as some of the original research about the impact of nutrients on Bay water quality and underwater grasses.

The bill would authorize $60 million for Sea Grant for the 2003 fiscal year, and increase that to $85 million by 2008. In addition to these amounts, the bill would authorize an additional $5 million for zebra mussels, $5 million for oyster disease, $5 million for algal blooms and $3 million for fishery extension each year. Meanwhile, a pair of outside studies concluded that scientific research at the Smithsonian Institution is unique and of such high quality that it deserves continued federal funding.

Last year, the White House Office of Management and Budget proposed to switch some Smithsonian funds to the NSF, forcing the Smithsonian to compete with other scientists for grants. When that drew fierce opposition, the OMB asked for a review of Smithsonian science, suggesting that it was not original enough to deserve noncompetitive funding. The National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences, concluded this fall that work at three Smithsonian centers, including the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, MD, do "world-class" science, and said that changing the source of funds would hamper their work.

SERC is well-known for decades-long research on how watersheds impact water quality. It has also maintained the longest consistent survey of blue crabs in the Bay and serves as a nationwide clearinghouse for information about ballast water, which is moved from place to place by ships, often causing invasions by foreign aquatic species. The National Academy of Public Administration, an independent organization that was also asked to look at the Smithsonian science programs, also issued a separate report calling the continuation of direct appropriations for Smithsonian science.

"Both reports speak to the secret of Smithsonian science, and I think both of them will go a long way to uncovering that secret," said David L. Evans, Smithsonian undersecretary for science. "The secret is, there is a long tradition of very high-quality science practiced by renowned scientists who have very little exposure outside of their own field.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

From: Bay Journal 12(9), December 2002

Oyster harvest expected to be lowest in more than a century

Chesapeake Bay oysters are so ravaged by drought and disease that Maryland and Virginia biologists expect this year's harvest to be the smallest since the late 1800s, when catch records started being kept.

The Bay is expected to produce a harvest of less than 100,000 bushels in the coming oyster season. Biologists blame dry conditions, which have persisted for the past three years, for creating favorable conditions for the deadly oyster diseases MSX and Dermo.

"We're seeing diseases literally robbing the Bay of the oysters," said Christopher Judy, director of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' shellfish division.

Maryland biologists say preliminary reports indicate that the harvest — which began Oct. 1 and ends March 31 — should drop lower than the 79,618 bushels caught in 1993-1994, the lowest on record. Virginia officials predict the Virginia catch should remain where it has been for the past several years — around 20,000 bushels.

As recently as the 1950s and 1960s, before the diseases were widespread in the Bay, annual harvests ran between 3 million to 6 million bushels a year.

The diseases have also been a setback for the Chesapeake 2000 agreement goal of achieving a tenfold oyster increase by 2010.

From: Bay Journal 12(9) December 2002

Pass on Chilean Sea Bass

By Vivian Newman

The Sierra Club, in partnership with The Antarctica Project and the National Environmental Trust, is urging restaurant chefs and home cooks to stop buying Patagonian toothfish, known commercially as Chilean sea bass, in an effort to save the species from extinction. "We're taking Chilean sea bass off our plates in order to keep it on the planet," says one chef. Unless demand for the fish declines, estimates suggest that it may be commercially extinct within five years.

There has been a limit on legal fishing of the toothfish since 1991. However, illegal fishing of the species has skyrocketed in recent years. The estimated illegal catch is two to three times the legal limit. Approximately 80 percent of Chilean sea bass sold on the world market is illegally obtained.

The slow reproduction rate of the Patagonian toothfish – they can live up to 80 years and don't reproduce until they are 8 to 10 years old – makes it nearly impossible for it to recover from overfishing. When researchers began studying the Patagonian toothfish 20 years ago, the average fish was five feet long and weighed more than 150 pounds. The fish was virtually unknown until a specimen was caught in the deep waters off Chile in 1982. Appearing on menus as Chilean sea bass, the fish quickly became a sensation in high-end restaurants. The restaurant industry accounts for 70 percent of all Chilean sea bass sales in the United States.

The "Take a Pass on Chilean Sea Bass" campaign will continue until the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, the international body that regulates the Patagonian toothfish, can put an end to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing of the species.

From: Planet, September-October, 2002

Pew Commission Report

United States, Monday, October 28, 2002

Many fishing activities are harming the ecosystems on which future fishing depends, and damage is worsening, contends new report prepared for the Pew Oceans Commission.

"Ecological Effects of Fishing in Marine Ecosystems of the United States (available online at www.pewoceans.org) was written by Paul Dayton of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Simon Thrush of the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere Research (New Zealand), and Felicia Coleman of Florida State University. Leon Panetta, chair of the Pew Oceans Commission, released the report Friday in Santa Barbara, California, in conjunction with the California and the World Ocean Conference.

"Our oceans are more vulnerable and more valuable than we ever imagined," and Panetta. "If we want to sustain America's proud fishing industry, then we need to take a hard look at how pollution, development, and fishing activities are harming the oceans.

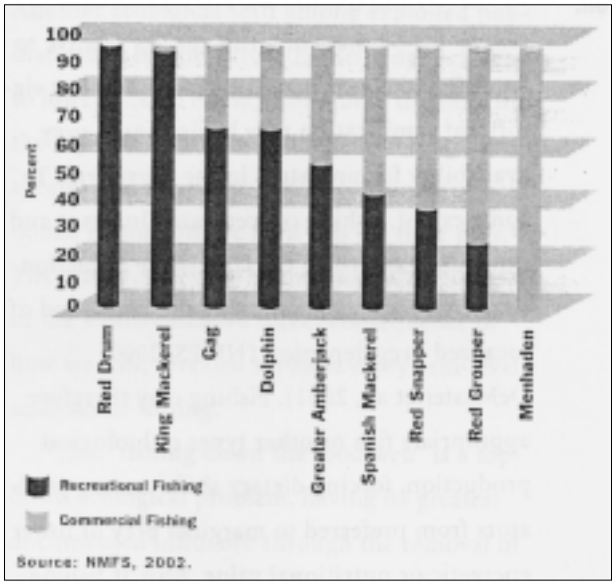
The Pew Oceans Commission is conducting a review of policies and laws needed to sustain and restore living marine resources in over 30 years. The commission will present its final recommendations for a new national ocean policy to Congress and the nation in early 2003. Information about the Commission, including copies of its science reports, is available online at www.pewoceans.org.

From: FIS North America

Recreational Fishing Gulf of Mexico

Allocation of total catch (by weight) of the principal finfish species contained in the management plan for the Gulf of Mexico, as defined in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report to Congress on the 2001 Status of Fisheries. Note: We used the landings data for the year 2000 to created this graph because the 2001 landings data on recreational fisheries were not available on the NMFS website at the time of this writing. The NMFS website notes that the catch weights for the recreational fishing component are likely underestimated.

From: Ecological effects of Fishing in marine ecosystems of th eUnited States by Dayton, Paulk., Simon Thrush and Felicia Coleman Pew Oceans Commission, Arlington Virginia



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