American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists

Promoting excellence in fishery science

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A Crucial Choice

Your Candidates for President-elect

LINDA JONES

Linda Jones is currently the Deputy Science Director at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, Washington, of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). She has been with NMFS since 1979, starting as a project leader for an international research program and progressing to larger research programs and greater management responsibilities. Linda received her B.S. degree from San Diego State University (SDSU) in 1964. After finishing at SDSU, she worked for 5 years in the Neurobiology Department at University of California, San Diego (her hometown) conducting research on diverse topics, such as electric signals of South American electric fish and learning in octopus. She then returned to school, receiving a Ph.D in biological oceanography from Scripps Institution of Oceanography in 1977. After a year at the Marine Mammal Commission in Washington, D.C. as Assistant to the Scientific Director, Linda returned to the West Coast to lead a research program on the effects of bycatch in Japanese high-seas salmon driftnet fisheries. Ten years later, the highly controversial high-seas driftnet fisheries for squid and tuna by Japan, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea became the focus of her research. Linda worked with colleagues in NMFS and the Fish and Wildlife Service to build a research program to evaluate effects of these fisheries on all species caught by the driftnets. As a result of this work, Linda and her co-investigators received a Department of Commerce Silver Medal. She also received a commendation from Department of Commerce for implementing the high-seas observer program in the three driftnet fisheries with only a few months lead time. From 1979-1992, Linda was the science advisor on marine mammals and birds to the U.S. delegation of the International North Pacific Fish Commission and she was the U.S. lead for marine mammal and seabird research for the Commission. Because of her expertise in research on high-seas driftnet fisheries, Linda worked with the Department of State to negotiate the agreements for cooperative research and observer programs on high-seas driftnets. In 1989, Linda was selected to be the editor of the U.S.. Fishery Bulletin and NOAA Technical Reports for a three year term. This was a rewarding experience, due to the wide variety of fishery research published by these

(Cont. on page 2)

DOUGLAS S. VAUGHAN

Douglas Vaughan was born in Biddeford, ME, and raised in State College, PA, Wilmington, DE (twice), Cleveland, OH, and Wayne, NJ. He received his B.S. in Mathematics from the University of New Hampshire and M.A. in Mathematical Statistics from Pennsylvania State University. After working in Arlington, VA, as a Statistician for two years with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Office of Water Quality), he returned to graduate school at the University of Rhode Island where he received his Ph.D. in Biological Oceanography (his dissertation was on population dynamics of Atlantic menhaden). Doug then went to work for Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Environmental Sciences Division where he was involved with the Hudson River Power Plant case and modeling the impact of power plant entrainment and impingement on striped bass populations. Since late 1982, he has been at the Beaufort Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service. There, he has continued assessment modeling and work on both Atlantic and gulf menhaden, several sciaenids (weakfish and red drum), and snapper-grouper species (e.g., red porgy, black seabass). He has also been involved with analyzing bluefin tuna, swordfish, and Chesapeake Bay blue crabs. He continues to enjoy the challenge of sifting through often disparate data sets to tease out the status and trends of fish populations. In 2002, Doug was recognized for his scientific, technical and advisory contribution by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission with the Award of Excellence.

Doug joined the AIFRB in 1979, and was promoted to Fellow in 1987. He has served as the Carolina District's Vice-director from 1989-1994 and Director from 1994-1996. He has more recently served on the membership committee, and organized several symposia at the annual AFS meetings co-sponsored by AIFRB (most recently in Quebec City in 2003). Doug would like to encourage more active participation by the current AIFRB membership, continue efforts to make potential members more aware of the benefits of belonging to AIFRB, and especially to increase awareness of the goals and activities of AIFRB to agencies/managers who employ our members and potential members.

Remember to vote by March 31st!

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

(Cont. from page 1, Linda Jones)

journals. In 1992, Linda became the Deputy Director at the NWFSC. She says her current duties have considerably broadened her knowledge of fisheries research and issues. This year she received the NOAA Administrators Award for her leadership in resolution of a West Coast groundfish issue. For relaxation, Linda enjoys rowing or any activity in, on or near the water.

Linda has been a Fellow in AIFRB since 1993 and has served as the Chair for the Outstanding Achievement Award Committee for the past four years. With the excellent help of her committee members, she has worked to improve the guidelines and evaluation process for these important awards. For the future of the organization, Linda sees three areas she would like to focus on. The first is continuation of President Schaefer's efforts for promoting AIFRB to others. The second area is related to this, which is to find ways to bring the broad expertise of AIFRB members to focus on some of the critical fisheries issues globally and regionally. The third area is to build financial resources of AIFRB and provide a solid fiscal base for the organization of the future.

President Schaefer presents Outstanding Achievement Awards for 2003

Dr. Brian Rothschild (left) accepts plaque symbolizing the Institute's Outstanding Achievement Award (Individual) for 2003 from President Richard Schaefer during a gathering of friends and associates at the Century House Restaurant in New Bedford, Massachusetts on December 17, 2003.

On November 5, 2003, Dick Schaefer, President of the American Institute of Fisheries Research Biologists, presented the Northwest Fisheries Science Center's Ecotoxicology Program with an Outstanding Achievement Award (Group). This award, granted only 13 times in the Institute's 47 year history, recognized organizations that nurture excellence in fishery science and achieve excellence in research. The ceremony took place during the NOAA Fisheries-Sea Grant Association meeting at the Renaissance Madison Hotel in Seattle, WA. NOAA Fisheries and Northwest Fisheries Science Center representatives pictured from left to right; Dr. Mike Sissenwine, Director & Chief Science Advisor, Science Programs, NOAA Fisheries; Dr. Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries; Dr. Peggy Krahn, Program Manager, Environmental Conservation, Northwest Fisheries Science Center; Dr. John Stein, Salmon Science Coordinator, Northwest Fisheries Science Center; Dr. Tracy Collier (back row), Acting Division Director, Environmental Conservation, Northwest Fisheries Science Center; Usha Varanasi, Science & Research Director, Northwest Fisheries Science Center; and Dick Schaefer, President, American Institute of Fisheries Research Biologists).

Founding Member Kask: A brief biography

No.2 in an irregular series portraying the 26 founding members

John Laurence Kask, 1906-1998

Dr. John L. Kask was born, of Estonian immigrant parents, at Sylvan Lake, Alberta, Canada, in 1906. In his youth he worked as a commercial fisherman in British Columbia. He earned his B.A. degree at the University of British Columbia in 1928 and his Ph.D. degree at the University of Washington in 1936.

During his long professional career he held a large number of important jobs. His positions included the following: Assistant, Biological Board of Canada, 1928; Assistant Scientist, International Fisheries Commission (now the International Pacific Halibut Commission), 1929-1938; Associate Scientist and Assistant Director, International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, 1939-1943; officer, U.S. Army, 1943-1945; Curator of Aquatic Biology, California Academy of Sciences, 1945-1948; Chief Biologist, FAO, 1948-1950; Chief Investigator and Assistant Director, Pacific Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hawaii), 1951; Chief Officer of Foreign Activity and Assistant Director of Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, 1951-1953; Chairman and Science Administrator, Fisheries Research Board of Canada, 1953-1963; Director, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), 1963-1969. During 1947, while employed by the California Academy of Sciences, he served as a consultant for the U.S. Department of State where he helped rehabilitate the Japanese fisheries, which were in need of assistance after the Second World War. After his retirement, for about 10 years, he did consulting work on fisheries and biological oceanography for FAO.

Dr. Kask will perhaps be most remembered for his accomplishments as Chairman and Science Administrator for the Fisheries Research Board of Canada from 1953 to 1963. When he accepted that position there were about a dozen research stations

scattered around Canada, which operated more-or-less independently. He was instructed by the Minister of Fisheries to coordinate the work of these stations and make them more responsive to problems besetting the fishing industry. He succeeded in doing this, and also in making the Fisheries Research Board of Canada one of the finest fisheries research organizations in the world. His prophecies during that period about the dangers of overfishing and pollution proved to be correct.

Dr. Kask was Director of the IATTC from 1963 to 1969. He succeeded Dr. Milner B. Schaefer, who was Director from 1950 to 1963, and was followed by Dr. James Joseph, Director from1969 to mid-1999, and then by Dr. Robin L. Allen.

During Dr. Kask's tenure at the IATTC Mexico adhered to the Convention in 1964 and Canada in 1968, and catch quotas for yellowfin were first adopted in 1966. Some other highlights of his period as Director were the carrying out of oceanographic studies on the high seas and at the entrance of the Gulf of California (IATTC Bull., 14 (3) and 14 (4)), in the Panama Bight (IATTC Bull., 14 (2)), and in the Gulf of Guayaquil (Inst. Nac. Pesca, Bol. Cient. Téc., 4(1)).

Dr. Kask was an excellent speaker and writer, and he had the ability to handle people well. During his varied career he influenced dozens of people who eventually attained positions of great responsibility. All those who knew him respected and admired him greatly.

John Kask died in San Diego, CA on August 8, 1998.

Modified from: Annual Report of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 1998. La Jolla, CA 2000.

A Member Not At Work:

An encounter with AIFRB Member William R. Nicholson

Excerpted from: Three Days to Thanksgiving written by T. Edward Nickens
Published in Shooting Sportsman XV (VI)
November-December, 2003

Nickens "old man" character is based on a meeting with Nicholson on the moss-draped White Oak River in coastal North Carolina.

But most of all I remember the old man. He was the only human we saw on the entire trip until we cruised far into the tidal zone, where a few houses huddled over the marsh on sparse high ground and fishermen cast for speckled trout along marsh humps. He waited for us to break camp on our second day on the river, floating in the quiet water just downstream of a big logjam. He was quiet and patient as Lee and I struggled with our boat and load, each of us out of the canoe and gingerly balancing atop a slick sunken log while we pulled the boat – *one, two, three, heave!* – laterally between us.

The old man was alone and happy to chat. He'd snuck upstream for five miles that morning and never fired a shot. I asked him about his canoe, a battered fiberglass boat painted tan, with simple board seats. "Made it myself," he said proudly. "More than 25 years ago." All he carried in it was a weathered trapper's basket and a pair of shotguns at the ready. He chuckled at our mountain of gear.

He was 78 years old, lean, like musclewood, with a deeply lined face and a quick smile. His routine was to paddle upstream and then motor back to his truck with a 2-hp outboard. "I've hunted this river for 40 years," he said, then looked down into the water for a brief moment, the silence widening like ripples in a pond. "But you get to be my age and you wonder how much longer you can do these sorts of crazy things."

"I wonder the same thing myself," I said, and he grinned. He knew a gift when he heard one.

"Why, you boys are just getting started." I remember how good that made me feel.

After we'd paddled out of earshot, Lee turned from the bow seat and said "I hope that's what I'm like when I'm his age." And I nodded in agreement. Then we paddled silently for a long, lovely stretch while we thought about the miles that had crossed under the khaki-colored hull of the old man's canoe, and the missed shots he'd cursed and laughed at, and the wonders he'd seen, and the wonders that remained for us around life's twists and turns if we would keep a firm hand on the paddle and an eye open for the random gifts that drift our way.

It was three days to Thanksgiving.

T. Edward Nickens writes regularly for magazines such as Smithsonian, National Geographic Adventure *and* National Wildlife.

Ed. Note: While Nicholson is aptly portrayed, Nickens' characterization of the canoe as battered is the grossest understatement. As a result of a severe disagreement between Nicholson, the laminating cloth, and the bonding resin during the at-home construction, the canoe sports a derma resembling an eczematous rhinoceros. Further, painted a color that would have been charitably called "fecal brindle" (paraphrased) by the earthy companions of my youth, the Nicholson canoe might be the ugliest ever to bear that name.

For the unfamiliar, Shooting Sportsman is a nationally distributed magazine of bird hunting and very fancy shotguns that might be characterized as the Playboy of shooting periodicals, in that both magazines portray equipment and practices most likely to be enjoyed vicariously.

-Excerpted material reprinted with permission of Shooting Sportsman magazine and of T. Edward Nickens.

Skud Responds to Recruitment Committee

Deemphasize NMFS (*aka NOAA Fisheries*) says past president

To BRIEFS Editor

I wish to commend President Dick Schaefer for appointing committees to address AIFRB's biggest problem – recruitment of members. This action and the committee's report in the recent issue of BRIEFS has brought the problem squarely before the membership in a way that I hope will stimulate action towards a strong recruiting effort.

In line with the committee's recommendations, I'd like to mention steps taken during my three-year presidency (1982, 83, 84 – an extra year at that time because of the unfortunate death of John Radovich). The Board of Control approved several actions to address the lack of new members. I think the effort that resulted in the greatest response was the distribution of a brochure to universities that had "fish-related" courses. As I recall, the brochure told about AIFRB and announced the changes in the requirements for eligibility as an Associate member. Members of the Board and officers of districts were also encouraged to increase their recruitment efforts.

The results of these actions are evident in the annual records of new members from 1979 to 2002 (only years available to me). In the three years (1982-1984), there were 185 recruits, averaging 62 per year. In the 21 other years, there were 648 new members, averaging 31 per year – arranged by three-year averages, the range was from 19 to 45. The two highest years of recruitment (70) were in 1983 and 1984 and over 60% of these were Associates.

Another suggestion that I think may improve recruitment is to select presidential candidates from academia – they have the closest contact with potential Associates. In the last 25 years, the office of President has been dominated by NMFS personnel – there have been 11 presidents, 7 of these from NMFS, 3 from academia and one state representative. And indeed, candidates recently selected for President-elect are from NMFS. I think this is very unhealthy for AIFRB and have often discussed this matter with other members. I've been told that the recent selection was made, in part, because of financial concerns, i.e. federal agencies are willing to support the travel and activities of AIFRB officers whereas other institutions may not offer such assistance. I understand the problem, but would rather limit travel than to select most presidents from one organization. Having presidents from academia (or other non-NMFS institutions) will not ensure better recruitment but would at least help to "spread the word" about AIFRB.

Another explanation I was given about the selection process was that many (not all ?) Fellows were unwilling to take on the job. In this regard, if any non-NMFS Fellows are willing to tackle the job, I hope they make their interest known to President Schaefer for future reference.

Bernard E. Skud, Oak Harbor, Washington, skud@whidbey.net

District Activities

Ault Speaks to New England District

The New England district met on November 7th at the Massachusetts Wildlife's Field Headquarters in Westborough, MA. Jerry Ault (Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami) gave a talk entitled 'Towards Sustainable Multispecies Fisheries in the Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem'. We discussed a wide range of issues and made some plans for future activities of the district.

First, members were and are solicited to help with recruitment to the District. Prospective members can contact Kevin Friedland or go directly to the website to learn how to join. Second, there was interest in having a spring meeting of the District. Of the meeting formats considered, the one people expressed the most interest in was a meeting that would take the form of a professional workshop on generalized additive models (GAM). Brian Rothschild suggested we have the meeting at either SMAST or Woods Hole. The workshop would highlight the research of an invited speaker, but in addition we will try to find someone willing to conduct a hands on session illustrating the application and interpretation of GAMs. The morning might be focused on the mechanics of doing a GAM analysis, whereas the afternoon could be a review of interpretation, assumptions and pitfalls of GAMs. An advanced graduate student may be chosen to conduct the training. Third, two copies of the commercial software @Risk were donated to the District by Palisade Corporation of New Field, New York. We plan to use these as incentives in a student recruitment effort.

Submitted by: Kevin Friedland, District Director

Northern California Elections

Elections in the Northern California District resulted in the following slate of officers:

Director: Diana Watters
Vice-Director: Dan Howard
Secretary-Treasurer: Michelle Barlowe

Submitted by: Lourdes Rugge

Losses

Don W. Kelley
Nevada City, CA

Paul E. Thompson
Alexandria, VA

Web Newsletters Recommended

For information on the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program of the University of Hawaii, you can go to www.soest.hawaii.edu, then scroll down to Teaching and Research>Pelagic Fisheries Research Program>Publications List>PFRP Newsletters. It is my opinion, these newsletters are well done, and contain a lot of interesting information.

Submitted by: William H. Bayliff, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

Tuna Conference Scheduled

The 55th Tuna Conference is being planned for May 24-27, 2004, at the Lake Arrowhead Conference Center in California. The noted file contains the final announcement letter, registration form, abstract guidelines, information on student scholarships, and a request for updated contact data.

To Contact Paul Crone and Kevin Hill, Co-Chairs of the 55th Tuna Conference:

Southwest Fisheries Science Center
8604 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, CA 92037-1508 USA
Tel: 858-546-5637
Fax: 858-546-5653
Email: TunaConf2004@noaa.gov
Web: http://swfsc.nmfs.noaa.gov/tunaconf.html

Submitted by: Paul Crone and Kevin Hill, Co-Chairs, 55th Tuna Conference

Tagart Retires

Jack Tagart has recently retired from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. His seat on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will be taken by Farron Wallace.

Striped Bass I:

Striped bass suffer as overfishing eats away at their prey, menhaden

By Jim Price, President,
Chesapeake Bay Ecological Foundation

The Atlantic Coast striped bass fishery reopened in 1990 after a five-year moratorium with new restrictions adopted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission that established an annual quota and raised the striped bass minimum size limit in the Bay from 12 inches (roughly age-2), to 18 inches (roughly age-4). These measures altered the striped bass population's size structure and dramatically increased their forage demand in the Bay.

Since then, forage size Atlantic menhaden (ages 0-2), an essential part of the striped bass diet, have declined 74 percent and are no longer found throughout the Bay in sufficient numbers or adequate size to supply the forage demand of striped bass. Striped bass consumed larger prey and 300 percent more menhaden in the Bay before the menhaden purse seine (reduction) fishery began concentrating its efforts in Virginia's portion of the Bay in the mid-1960s.

From 1955 to 1965, the annual menhaden reduction fishery harvest from the Bay averaged 107 million pounds, or approximately 11 percent of the total coastal landings. During the 1990s, average landings by the menhaden reduction fishery increased to 379 million pounds or approximately 58 percent of the total coastal landings.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is allowing age-2 menhaden to be overfished by the reduction fishery, which annually reduces their numbers to a level inadequate to serve the important ecological role they once played along the coast and in the Bay.

During the past decade, 87 percent of the reduction fishery harvest (as well as 48 percent of a separate, and smaller, menhaden bait fishery harvest) that came from the Chesapeake Bay, by numbers, were forage size menhaden (ages 0-2). Approximately 45 percent of the estimated total populations of ages 2-4 menhaden – which represent more than 99 percent of the spawning stock biomass – are removed annually by the purse seine fisheries.

In 1995, Kyle Hartman and Stephen Brandt published the results of a bioenergetics modeling study, conducted from 1990 to 1992, which concluded: "Total prey demand by age-3 striped bass exceeded supply by 80 percent, while demand by age-4 through age-6 striped bass was 101-103 percent higher than supply."

Forage size menhaden declined to an average of 544 billion fish during 1990-1992 and according to Hartman and Brandt's bioenergetics modeling data, they made up 65 percent of the Bay's ages 3-6 striped bass diet.

Anthony Overton in 2001 suggested that prey supply, availability and size were not able to support the production of older striped bass in the Bay. Forage size menhaden declined to an average of 233 billion fish from 1998 to 2001. Overton's bioenergetics modeling study reported that menhaden made up 21 percent of the Bay's ages 3-6 striped bass diet during 1998-2001.

Older striped bass consumption shifted from menhaden to bay anchovy, blue crab and alternative prey in an attempt to survive because of the reduced number of forage-size menhaden and overfishing by the reduction fishery which also contributed to the collapse of their forage base.

Bioenergetics modeling studies completed in 2001 indicate that by the time the Bay's striped bass reach age-6, they annually consume 38 percent less forage and weigh approximately 40 percent less than they did from 1955 to 1959.

Excerpted and abridged from: Bay Journal, December 2003

Striped Bass II:
MD's striped bass juvenile index 5th highest

Maryland's 2003 striped bass juvenile index was 25.8, the fifth highest mark in survey's 50-year history, the Maryland department of Natural Resources reported. The long-term average is 11.9. The survey historically has been a good predictor of future striped bass populations along the Atlantic Coast, as the Bay is its most important spawning area.

In this year's survey, the Upper Bay index was the highest documented since 1970. Reproduction in the Potomac and Choptank rivers was more than double their historic averages. Reproduction in the Nanticoke River was slightly above average.

Most anadromous fish, which are species that migrate from the ocean to fresh water to spawn, showed very poor reproduction during the drought conditions of 2002. This year, they benefited from the spring rains and mild temperatures, according to DNR biologists. Besides striped bass, yellow perch in the Upper Bay reproduced at near-record levels while white perch spawned highly successfully in all areas surveyed. American shad reproduction in the Potomac River and Upper Bay was high for the fourth consecutive year.

DNR biologists have monitored the success of striped bass in Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake since 1954. Biologists visit the same 22 sites monthly from July through September, collecting fish samples with two sweeps of a 100-foot beach seine net. The index is calculated as the average catch of young striped bass per sample.

From: Bay Journal, November 2003

Conch farm is a step toward restoring the population

Key West, Fla. (AP) – Hope grows in the six glowing tanks that make up Key West's new Conch Baby Farm. Tucked behind a seafood restaurant, conchs (queen conch) grown here aren't bound for tables but for Florida's waters, one of the few places in the world where conch stocks, while depleted, aren't gravely threatened.

Conch, the symbol of Key West and favorite fritter ingredient in Keys restaurants, hasn't been commercially harvested in Florida since the Ford administration. The opening of the Conch Baby Farm plays a modest but important role in efforts to replenish the state's stock, which has grown to some 40,000 conchs from less than half that a few years ago.

If the stocks are sufficiently replenished, conch could one day be harvested again in Florida. At the very least, more conchs mean healthier seabeds. And growing methods, if successful, could be imitated elsewhere in the Caribbean, where a new embargo against Keys suppliers is squeezing costs skyward and threatening this country's conch supply. A global marine trade watchdog, CITES, issued a warning this summer that Honduras, Dominican Republic and Haiti were dangerously overfishing their stocks. Fishermen from those countries were also likely poaching conch from other Caribbean countries, like Jamaica, home to the Pedro bank, one of the most vital queen conch stock areas in the region, the report said.

The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration backed an embargo, and Honduras and the Dominican

Republic agreed in October to stop exporting conch to the United States. Already, the ban is hurting the U.S. importers and threatens to devastate aspects of the Honduran and Dominican economies.

Conch is the second most valuable commercial species for some Caribbean countries, and the United States buys 80 percent of the region's conch. Honduras accounted for 27 percent of the supply, the Dominican Republic 7 percent, and 40 percent came from Jamaica, which suspended trading due to internal legal battles over fishing regulations.

From: Sun Journal, New Bern, NC – Tuesday, December 2, 2003

California Bans Krill Harvest in State and Federal Waters

On August 11, California Governor Gray Davis signed AB 1296, which prohibits the commercial harvest of krill in California state waters and in federal waters (from 3 to 200 miles offshore), as long as federal law does not regulate the taking of krill.

Krill is a small, shrimp-like crustacean preyed upon by many commercially important species including salmon, rockfish, squid, sardine, mackerel and flatfish. Some whales and seabirds also depend on krill as forage. The bill prohibits the taking or landing of krill of the genus *Thysanoessa* or the genus *Euphausia* for commercial purposes. The California bill amends a sunset clause that would have allowed the law to expire. This makes California the first state to enact a fishing ban on krill. However, limits on krill harvest are also included in the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Groundfish Fishery Management Plan.

The bill was introduced by Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin, and was aimed at "protecting the marine food web by stopping any krill fishery before it could be started in the state." The bill was requested by the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and conservation groups after a krill fishery was established last year off British Columbia. To date, the Pacific Fishery Management Council has not considered prohibiting or limiting krill fishing off the U.S. West Coast. Proposals to limit krill harvesting have been discussed, but not formally proposed, by several California national marine sanctuaries.

From: Pacific Council News, September 2003

New Marine Park Established in Malaysia

Sulu-Sulawesi Protected Area Largest in Southeast Asia

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is celebrating the recent declaration of the 2.5-million acre Tun Mustapha Marine Park by the Malaysian government of Sabah. Once fully realized, Tun Mustapha will become the largest marine park in Southeast Asia.

Located off the coast of North Borneo, in the Sulu Sea, the park is an important conservation site for fish, turtles, and corals. It includes and surrounds Malaysia's largest island, Pulau Banggi, and is in a region with 50 large and small islands and a coastal population of more than 70,000, more than 4,000 of them fishermen.

Surrounded by parts of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, the Sulu-Sulawesi ecoregion houses the richest variety of coral reef plant and animal life in the world. The two seas together contain about 450 species of coral. They also support sea turtle nesting beaches and some of the world's most diverse fish communities.

Unfortunately, in recent years overfishing and destructive fishing methods have done great harm to the region. Industrial fishing companies that harvest close to shore have taken a toll on productive and fragile waters. And fishermen using cyanide and dynamite have destroyed large sections of coral and depleted important fish populations.

"Thanks to the leadership of the former Chief Minister of Sabah, and our colleagues in the Sabah Parks, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and the Sabah Fisheries, comprehensive planning and management of the Tun Mustapha Park will provide biodiversity and sustainable development benefits for present and future generations," said Robecca Jumin, WWF's Sulu-Sulawesi marine ecoregion Malaysia country coordinator.

From: Focus, November-December 2003

Did Californian Hook Million Dollar Bass?

Speculation is that whoever breaks the all-tackle record for largemouth bass could make a million dollars on endorsements. The current record has stood at 22 lb 4 oz since 1932 when George W. Perry was fishing on Montgomery Lake, Georgia and made his historic catch. Millions of bass anglers have been shooting for that record ever since.

Last August 24, Leaha Trew of Santa Rosa, California, went fishing with her son Javard on Spring Lake, California. They were fishing in Javard's 13-foot inflatable boat. Having no luck with plastic worms, Leaha switched to a stormwildeye 7" jerkbait on 8-lb line. It wasn't long before she hooked a big bass. It took her about 10 minutes of tugging before her son was able to net the fish.

Back on shore the fish was weighed, photographed, measured and released alive back into the lake. Neither Leaha nor her son realized it was a potential all-tackle record until later. The measurements were reported to be 29" overall length, 27-1/2" fork length and 25" girth. The bass pulled the Bogagrip scale down to slightly above the 22-1/2 lb reading.

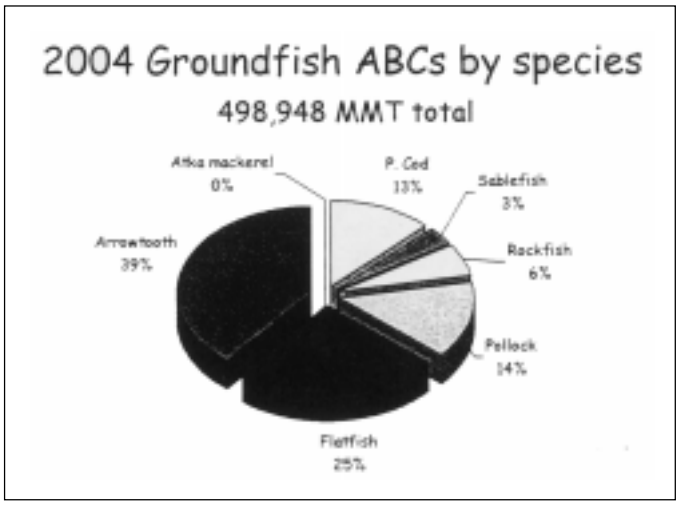
IGFA has received the record application and is investigating it as a potential record.

From: International Angler, 65(6) November-December 2003

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council approved the 2003 Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2004 groundfish fisheries.

The sum of the recommended Acceptable Biological Catches (ABC) for 2004 is 498,948 mt, an increase of 19.8% from the 2003 ABC of 416,600 mt. This is principally due to an increase in pollock (+31%), Pacific cod (+19%), flathead sole (+25%) and arrowtooth flounder (+26%). The species group-specific ABCs that declined relative to 2003 are northern rockfish (-12%), other slope rockfish (-23%) and pelagic shelf rockfish (-19%). Other stocks such as thornyhead rockfish and Pacific ocean perch remained relatively the same. The abundances of pollock, Pacific cod and sablefish are below target stock size, while abundances of Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, light dusky rockfish, thornyheads, flathead sole and arrowtooth flounder are all above target stock size. None of the Gulf of Alaska stocks are overfished or approaching an overfished condition.



For most stocks the Council established Total Allowable Catches (TAC) equal to ABCs with some exceptions. These exceptions include Pacific cod, where the quota was reduced approximately 23.5% to account for the state waters fishery, and those fisheries where the bycatch of other target species is a concern, specifically for shallow water flatfish, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder and other slope rockfish. For those fisheries, the TAC was set below the ABC.

From: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, December 2003

Chased out of Hawaii, Long-Line Fleet Meets Same Fate in California

Swordfishers are Decimating Turtles

A few years ago, an Earthjustice lawsuit resulted in the closure of a tuna and swordfishery off Hawaii because the fishermen – who use baited hooks on lines as much as 20 miles long – were accidentally catching and killing protected sea turtles. The ships – around three dozen of them – weighed anchor and set up shop in southern California. There, NOAA Fisheries issued permits without investigating whether the long-lining activities would harm turtles.

But if it's illegal to kill turtles off Hawaii without demonstrating that the activity isn't threatening the survival of the various species of turtles, it ought to be illegal to do so off California as well, and such was the ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in August, in a case brought by Earthjustice attorney Deborah Sivas on behalf of the Turtle Island Restoration Network. At press time (mid October), the government was hinting that restrictions on the fishing boats would be forthcoming shortly and Sivas was contemplating seeking an emergency injunction.

From: In Brief, Winter 2004

Massachusetts Mismanagement Threatens Dogfish

In June, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) voted to keep the limit per fishing trip for the spiny dogfish shark at a level more than ten times that recommended by scientists and dictated by rebuilding plans. This decision angered environmentalists who fear that continued targeted fishing will collapse the already damaged population.

Massachusetts has long championed the high fishing limits; at the ASMFC's February meeting, public officials used their own numbers to sway other states to raise catch limits. Massachusetts landed nearly 80 percent of the total U.S. Atlantic dogfish take in 2001.

"By ramping up the dogfish trip limit more than ten-fold, Massachusetts is leading an extermination of a vital component of the marine ecosystem," said Sonja Fordham, The Ocean Conservancy's shark conservation specialist.

Fishermen target female dogfish because they grow larger than the males; this has led to a 75 percent decline in mature females since 1989 and seven years of record low numbers of pups. Like most sharks, dogfish are susceptible to overfishing because they grow slowly, mature late, and produce few young. Female dogfish cannot reproduce until they are 12 years old and average only six pups after a two-year gestation period.

"Basing quota calculations on the economic needs of a few and passing them off as science is inexcusable, especially from a state agency entrusted to represent all its citizens," added Fordham.

From: Blueplanet, Fall 2003

Proposed Offshore Alabama Mariculture Facility of Concern to Gulf of Mexico Council

The Gulf Council, at its November meeting, reviewed the proposed relocation by Biotechnologies Inc. of a mariculture facility in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama. The current authorized location of the facility is in 47-foot-deep waters, 4.7 nautical miles off Fort Morgan, Alabama. The proposed relocation is in 85-foot-deep waters, 7.5 nautical miles off Alabama point, Alabama. Biotechnologies Inc. proposes to annually produce 5 million pounds of cobia, red drum, red snapper, hybrid striped bass, grouper, mahi-mahi, greater amberjack, and red porgy. The Council is concerned that project relocation and fencing 27.5

acres of public waters will cause user conflicts between the operation and recreational and commercial fishermen that currently use the area. Also, the proposed relocation area is immediately adjacent to a safety fairway and the Council is concerned that this would create a hazard to navigation.

The benthic area in the vicinity of the proposed relocation serves as essential fish habitat (EFH) for brown, white, and pink shrimp, and juvenile red snapper. Increased nutrients from fish waste and excess feed could lead to areas of low dissolved oxygen under and outside the area, adversely affecting these species.

The Council is also concerned that the applicant has not applied for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). An EFP is required for any mariculture facility raising and harvesting fish in pens in the EEZ since it would be considered fishing as defined in the MSFCMA and subject to applicable fishing regulations.

From: Gulf Fishery News, September-December 2003

Albatross and Eider

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council was informed that the US Fish & Wildlife Service has issued two new Biological Opinions (BiOp) concerning the effects of the Alaskan groundfish fisheries on the endangered short-tailed albatross and the threatened Steller's eider. Both a programmatic BiOp and a BiOp on the Council's TAC-setting process have been released by the USFWS to the public. The BiOps conclude that implementation of the groundfish fishery FMPs and the actions related to the TAC-setting process are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species. An Incidental Take Statement (ITS) accompanies the TAC-setting BiOp. This ITS authorizes the incidental take of four short-tailed albatross over a two year period in the Alaskan hook and line groundfish fisheries, and an incidental take of two short-tailed albatross in the Alaskan trawl groundfish fisheries over the time period the BiOp remains in effect (about five years). These incidental take limits are in addition to the take limit established in 1998 for the Pacific halibut hook-and-line fishery off Alaska, two short-tailed albatrosses in a two year period. If the level of anticipated take is exceeded in any of these fisheries, NMFS must immediately reinstate a consultation with the USFWS to review the need for possible modification to the fishery. The ITS also includes specific Reasonable and Prudent Measures NMFS must take to minimize the potential for take of these species. Staff contact is AIFRB Fellow Bill Wilson.

From: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, October 2003

You hold the key to a healthy ocean

Many of the fish we love to eat are disappearing from the world's oceans. Commercial fishing has wiped out an estimated 90% of the large predatory fish such as swordfish, marlin, tuna and sharks worldwide. Does that mean we have to stop eating fish? No, but with a little help, consumers can help preserve the oceans.

When you shop for dinner, choose fish that are well-managed or farmed responsible. That way you'll be supporting sustainable practices. To help you decide what fish to buy, Environmental Defense has created this guide listing some of the best and worst seafood choices for the environment.

Best Choices
Abalone — U.S. farmed
Anchovies
Arctic char — farmed
Catfish — U.S. farmed
Caviar — farmed sturgeon and paddlefish eggs
Clams — butter, geoducks, hard, littlenecks, Manila
Crab — Dungeness, snow (from Canada), stone
Crawfish — U.S.
Halibut — from Alaska
Herring — Atlantic sea herring
Mackerel — Spanish, Atlantic
Mahi mahi/dolphinfish — U.S. from the Atlantic
Mussels — New Zealand green, farmed blue*
Oysters — Pacific, European, farmed Eastern*
Sablefish/black cod — from Alaska
Salmon — wild from Alaska
Sardines
Scallops — bay (except Atlantic calicos)
Shrimp — Northern from Newfoundland
Spot prawns
Striped bass/Atlantic rockfish
Sturgeon and paddlefish — farmed
Tilapia — U.S.
*Try to find mollusks that are grown suspended in the water. Mollusks raised on bay bottoms are often harvested by dredging, which damages bottom habitat.

Worst Choices
Caviar — wild sturgeon and paddlefish eggs
Chilean seabass/toothfish
Cod — Atlantic
Grouper
Halibut — Atlantic
Lingcod
Lobster — spiny or rock (imported, except from Australia)
Monkfish/goosefish
Orange roughy
Rock cod/bocaccio/Pacific rockfish
Salmon — farmed or Atlantic
Shark
Shrimp/prawns — imported
Skate
Snapper
Swordfish
Sturgeon and paddlefish — wild
Tilefish
Tuna — bluefin

From: Environmental Defense

Whales Prevail Over Navy in Federal Court

In a stunning victory for marine animals around the planet, a federal court has barred the U.S. Navy from deploying a new, high-intensity sonar system across most of the world's oceans. Two months after hearing arguments in the case, U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth LaPorte agreed with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) that the Bush Administration violated multiple environmental laws when it green-lighted a hazardous system whose ear-splitting, long-range noise could threaten the very survival of endangered populations of whales, sea turtles and other marine species. The Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar system would blast hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean habitat with noise so intense it could maim, deafen and kill large whales.

"This is a banner day for the environment," said NRDC President John Adams. "Thanks to the unflagging support of our 550,000 Members, we've not only won a life-saving reprieve for millions of marine mammals, we've sent a message loud and clear to the White House that it is not above our nation's environmental laws." The dramatic setback for the Navy is the culmination of a long, uphill battle that began in 1995 when NRDC first exposed the existence and dangers of a classified LFA sonar system that emitted sound waves so intense they could destroy a whale's eardrums and cause its lungs to hemorrhage. At the time, Pentagon-watchers gave NRDC virtually no chance of blocking the system's deployment. In the intervening years, however, a series of whale strandings and mass die-offs – all coinciding with the Navy's use of mid-frequency sonar – has buttressed NRDC's case against the lethal dangers of high-intensity sonar systems.

Last October, Judge LaPorte issued a temporary ban on LFA sonar. Her new ruling orders the Navy to begin negotiating the terms of a permanent injunction with NRDC, including a plan for safely testing the sonar system in a limited area. That injunction will not prevent the Navy from using the system during war or "heightened threat conditions." "Judge LaPorte has wisely affirmed that the American people are entitled to both national security and environmental protection," said NRDC senior attorney Joel Reynolds. Unsatisfied with that balanced ruling, the Bush Administration is now attempting an end run around the courts by asking Congress to exempt the Department of Defense from the Marine Mammal Protection Act entirely. The House has already passed such an exemption but the Senate has refused. As we go to press, NRDC is fighting hard in Congress to keep any such exemption out of the final military spending bills.

From: Natures' Voice, November-December 2003

WWF Helps Bring Sturgeon Back to Tennessee River

'King of Fishes' Considered Threatened in Native Range

For the fourth year in a row, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) worked with other scientists, government agencies, and local conservation groups to release thousands of baby lake sturgeon into the French Broad River, part of the Tennessee River system. The May event drew scores of participants, including school children from nearby Knoxville.

Tennessee considers lake sturgeon endangered. They are nearing extinction in much of their traditional range. Dams, pollution, and overfishing have combined to drastically reduce lake sturgeon populations. They are exceptionally vulnerable to overfishing because female sturgeon take 15 to 20 years or more to mature and only spawn every 4 to 6 years during their 50 to 100 year lifespan. The more heavily they are fished, the less of a chance the fish have to reach reproductive maturity.

WWF worked on the sturgeon release with the Tennesse Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Tennessee Aquarium, City of Knoxville, United States Geological Survey, Conservation Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The release was made possible by TVA's Reservoir Release Improvement Program, which ensures a minimum flow of water below TVA's dams and increases the amount of available oxygen in the water, both essential for aquatic life.

"This is a long-term commitment for us," said Wendy Smith, director of WWF's Southeast Rivers and Streams program based in Nashville, Tennessee. "We're going to keep releasing and monitoring these fish – and working to improve their habitat – until they reproduce and there is a viable, self-reproducing population back in the Tennessee River and its tributaries."

Described by nineteenth-century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as the "king of fishes," lake sturgeon can grow up to 8 feet in length, weigh over 300 pounds, and live to be 100 years old. Cleanup of the French Broad River has been an environmental success story and bodes well for the success of the sturgeon reintroduction program.

Another threat to lake sturgeon was recently documented in a report by TRAFFIC, WWF's wildlife trade monitoring network. The report found an increase in both legal and illegal catch and trade of paddlefish and sturgeon in North America in recent years, coinciding with the dramatic decline of beluga sturgeon and other traditional caviar-producing fisheries around the Caspian Sea.

From: Focus, November-December 2003

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