



American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists

Promoting excellence in fishery science

Website: www.iattc.org/aifrb/

... BRIEFS ...

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MAY, JUNE 2004

The President Speaks!

AIFRB Update News and Call for Volunteers



Greetings to all Associates, Members, Fellows and Emeriti! Thought I'd take this opportunity to bring you up to date on some important events and activities currently being pursued by your officers and the BOC.

First, the BOC recently completed its mid-year teleconference to review progress toward goals with respect to various assignments made to its committee chairs and officers, and to begin planning for the next BOC meeting to be held in late August in Madison, WI. With regard to the latter, if you have any items you wish to have included on the agenda for discussion/resolution, please let me know and they will be considered for addition. We will begin assembling a draft agenda in the very near future.

Secondly, we have recently purchased an AIFRB "table drape" inscribed with the name of the Institute, our logo, motto and website, to assist us as an advertising tool in our recruiting/marketing efforts. It will be used for the first time in Madison where we plan to have a "Recruiting/Marketing Table" located near the AFS registration counter. I would like to have this table "staffed" from Monday morning, August 23, through Thursday morning, August 26. I am seeking volunteers to serve approximate 4-hour shifts each. If you plan to attend the AFS meeting and are willing to volunteer some of your free time, please let me know. I could really use your help.

Thirdly, a few months ago Michael Hinton requested of me that he be replaced as our webmaster. In that regard, I am pleased to announce that Neal Foster, at the University of Michigan, has agreed to serve in Michael's place as our new webmaster. Thank you, Michael, for your years of dedicated service to the Institute and to you, Neal, for volunteering to take on this task. It is greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I am also pleased to announce that Doug Vaughan has agreed to chair a special "ad hoc" committee to examine the issue of what constitutes or defines "fishery research biologist". This issue has caused considerable confusion and concern among the general membership and the BOC in recent years. It emanates from an ever increasing infusion of new disciplines into the field of fishery science that raises questions about eligibility for membership in AIFRB. Some members argue that AIFRB should retain a liberal inclusionary policy, while others argue for a more conservative exclusionary policy. Since the outcome of this debate will significantly impact our current recruitment and marketing efforts, the analysis and recommendations of Doug's committee are very important to the future of AIFRB. At the present time, Doug is seeking volunteers to serve with him on this committee. If you are interested, please let me know and I will appoint you to serve with Doug and others. Thanks.

As a reminder, I can be reached at dickschae@aol.com or telephone (301) 320-5202 or (410) 873-2926.

Dick Schaefer

President, AIFRB

Board of Control

Annual Meeting – August 21-22, 2004

The officers, regional directors, and committee chairs will conduct the business of the Institute in Madison, Wisconsin August 21-22, 2004. Members are welcome to attend. Issues of concern to any member should be conveyed to an officer, director, or the editor of *Briefs* for resolution at the meeting to be held in advance of and in coordination with the annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society.

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

Golden State District eschews Soy Sauce! For Once!

The Northern California District held a dinner meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2004 at Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto in Berkeley, CA. Following a social hour and dinner the guest speaker Robert R. Abbott, Ph.D., President of Strategic Environmental Consulting, Inc., spoke on "The use of caged fish to monitor the hydroacoustic effects of pile driving".

Submitted by: Michelle Barlow

Our Founding Members: Two Biographies Henry A. Dunlop

Henry A. Dunlop, also known as Harry, was born in Dunrea, Manitoba, Canada, on July 8, 1898. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Zoology at the University of British Columbia in 1919 and a Master of Arts in Zoology in 1922 at the same university. He continued his graduate studies at the University of Toronto in 1924-1925 and at the University of Washington School of Fisheries between 1931 and 1936. He joined the International Fisheries Commission, predecessor of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, in July 1925 as Assistant Director. He held this position until May 1939. Harry Dunlop was appointed Acting Director of the Halibut Commission for the period June 1939 to September 1940, at which time he was appointed Director of Investigations, a position he held until his retirement.

Under his direction, the halibut resource was rehabilitated. Before his retirement in 1963, the fishery attained the maximum sustainable yield through conservation, a condition not attained by any other marine fishery in the world. A close relationship between the halibut industry, the fishery, and the Commission prevailed. As a consequence, fishing records that demonstrated the decline and rebuilding of the resource were readily available to the Commission's staff and early regulatory models of commercial fishing were developed.

Harry Dunlop was a member of the American Fisheries Society, the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was a charter member of the Pacific Fishery Biologists. In 1953, he received the Elizabeth II Coronation Medal for meritorious public service to Canada. He was also a founding member of the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists. Early ideas and discussions that led to the formation of AIFRB took place in the Halibut Commission's offices. The role of cooperation between the members of the fishery and the regulating agency were crucial to the recovery of the halibut resource and in any ways influenced the discussions that led to the formation of AIFRB.

F. Heward Bell

Heward Bell was born July 4, 1902, in Swansea, Wales. He came to Canada as a child and was raised there. As a young man he attended the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and graduated as an honor student in biology. He had a lifetime interest in biology, particularly in fishery biology. He was a gentleman, a scholar, and an author. As a child he contracted and survived polio. As a consequence, he saw beauty in all things and developed an inquiring mind.

Upon graduation from the University of British Columbia in 1924, Heward was appointed instructor in biology for that University. In 1925, he served as a research assistant for the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, tagging salmon off the west coast of Vancouver Island. Also in 1925, he was appointed Associate Scientific Assistant for the International Fisheries Commission, later known as the International Pacific Halibut Commission. On a leave of absence from the Halibut Commission in 1940-1941 he served as assistant director of the International Pacific (Sockeye) Salmon Fisheries Commission of Canada and the United States. During the period 1930 to 1970 he was a Special Lecturer in Fisheries at the University of Washington. He became Assistant Director of the Halibut Commission in 1943 and remained in that position until he was appointed Director in 1963. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 1970.

During his early years as a field biologist, Heward knew and worked with many individuals who were early pioneers in the commercial fisheries for halibut and salmon off the coasts of Alaska, British Columbia, and the contiguous United States. These relationships, as well as his early training in biology, were influential in forming his concepts of managing a fishery. He collected voluminous data records of fishing effort and catch. These records became the backbone of the management procedures of the Halibut Commission.

Heward's early experience as a fishery biologist was obtained on halibut vessels chartered for tagging studies. He survived a winter shipwreck off Kodiak Island. The early tagging studies showed the migration patterns of halibut and Heward's experience with the fishing operation led to the use of catch-per-unit values as measures of population size.

Heward was honored for his work as a fishery biologist and administrator in 1953 when he received the Coronation Medal of Elizabeth Regina II for services rendered to Canada with respect to the Pacific halibut fishery. He was the first person to receive the Golden Halibut Award, an award presented annually by the Halibut Fishermen's Wives Association of North America for services rendered to the industry of Canada and the United States. In 1962 he received a dedicated service award from the Maritime Press Association. In retirement he wrote and published *The Pacific Halibut – The Resource and the Fishery*, a book detailing the development of the halibut fishery and its management.

Heward was a founding fellow of the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists. His views of professionalism in fishery biology were contributed to that organization during its founding period.

Biographies submitted by: Morris Southward

Tillman Retires

Dr. Michael F. Tillman retired in January 2004, after 11 years as Director of the Southwest Fishery Science Center, NMFS, NOAA and more than three decades of federal service with the NMFS. His retirement was celebrated with a reception at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Tillman, an Alaskan Native and member of the Tlingit Indian Tribe, was born in Seattle, Washington, and received his primary and secondary education there. He received his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Washington and first joined the NMFS in 1972 to supervise a modeling study of the Bering Sea marine ecosystem, based out of Seattle. In 1974, he was assigned to the assessment of whale stocks to help support U.S. policies at the International Whaling Commission, serving on its Scientific Committee and then chairing the Committee from 1982 to 1985.

In 1979, he was appointed as the first director of the National Marine Mammal Laboratory in Seattle, which was established as a principal source of scientific expertise on marine mammals within the NMFS. From 1983 to 1986, he served as the first professional director of the Conservation Monitoring Center of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Cambridge England. In 1987, he returned to NMFS headquarters in Washington, D.C., as chief of the Conservation Science Division within the Office of Protected Resources. Tillman was appointed NMFS' Senior Scientist for Fisheries in 1988, and for two years he oversaw the NMFS' field-based research and science programs.

In 1990, he was appointed Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the NMFS, overseeing the activities of 2,000 employees and a budget of more than \$200 million annually. In 1993, he was appointed Science Director of the NMFS Southwest Region, overseeing the research programs on Pacific fisheries, marine mammals, and endangered species undertaken by the SWFSC in California and Hawaii, as well as the NMFS Antarctic research program.

Among his many international activities, Mike Tillman served as chairman of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Cetacean Specialist Group and as a member of the Commission's Steering Committee. He was a U.S. delegate to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea and to the Interim Scientific Committee for North Pacific Tunas and Tuna-like Species. Tillman is Deputy U.S. Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission and served as U.S. Commissioner to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

Tillman is a research associate of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California in San Diego and serves on the External Advisory Board of the California State University, Los Angeles' Center for Excellence in Science and Technology, supporting its efforts to train minority graduate students. He has authored or co-authored more than 40 publications, focusing mainly on whale stock assessment methods and results. Dr. Tillman is a recipient of the Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Executive, the Albert Schweitzer Medal of the Animal Welfare Institute, Presidential Appointments as U.S. Commissioner to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and as Deputy U.S. Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission, and three Department of Commerce Bronze Medals.

From: Director's Report to the 55th Tuna Conference Southwest Fisheries Science Center Administrative Report/LJ-04-04

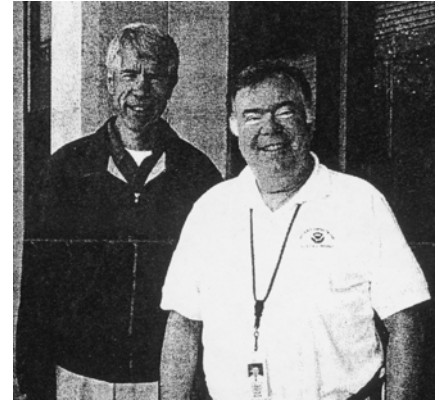
Submitted by and thanks to: Bill Bayliff



Dr. Michael F. Tillman

Fellow Fox New SWFSC Director

Fellow William W. Fox is the new Director of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center succeeding Mike Tillman. Fox's previous positions with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) included Director of the Office of Science and Technology from 1996 to 2004, Director of the Office of Protected Resources from February 1993 until October 1996, and Director of NMFS from January 1990 until January 1993. Other public service has included the State of Florida Marine Fisheries Commission (1983-1990) and the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission (1983-1990), with terms as chairman of both commissions. Before returning to public service in 1990, Fox was a Professor of Marine Biology and Fisheries and Director of the Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (1982-1990). Before that Bill spent 12 years with NMFS and its predecessor agency, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Fox has authored or co-authored more than 60 scientific publications and is a Member of the American Fisheries Society, a Fellow of the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists, and a Member of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society. Fox has a B.S. in zoology and an M.S. in marine science from the University of Miami, and a Ph.D. in fishery science from the University of Washington.



Mike Tillman (left) and Bill Fox (right).

Modified from: Director's Report to the 55th Tuna Conference, Southwest Fisheries Science Center Administrative Report/ LJ-04-04

Thanks to: Bill Bayliff

Research Assistance Awards — Apply Now!

American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists

2004 Research Assistance Award Program

The Research Assistance (RA) Award established in 1986 is offered annually to AIFRB graduate students and other Associate members to support travel expenses associated with professional development. The RA provides a maximum award of \$350 towards the opportunity to present results of an original paper or research project of merit at scientific meetings, or to conduct research at distant study sites. All AIFRB Associate Members in good standing are eligible. An individual may receive one award in a lifetime. Application packages must contain a research abstract, letter of support from the student's sponsor, and a 2-page curriculum vitae. Send AIFRB RA applications to: Dr. Jerald S. Ault, University of Miami RSMAS, 4600 Rickenbacker Causeway, Miami, FL 33149, (305)361-4884 ph; (305)361-4791 (fax); ault@shark.rsmas.miami.edu. Deadline is 1700 EDT on August 16, 2004.

Important New or Recent Works by Members Shrimp Stocks, Shrimp Fisheries and Sea Turtle Populations Could Benefit from Improved Shrimp Stock Assessments and Management

A recent paper by AIFRB Fellow Emeritus Dr. Charles Caillouet suggests that improved assessments and management of shrimp stocks in state and Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico could enhance shrimp stocks, shrimp fisheries, and sea turtle populations. Despite use of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) by shrimp trawlers, sea turtle strandings show positive correlations with shrimp fishing effort. Indications of growth overfishing in shrimp stocks are strong, and have been developing for decades, so it would be prudent for federal and state marine fisheries management agencies to reduce fishing pressure on the shrimp stocks, thereby alleviating growth overfishing, avoiding recruitment overfishing, and protecting sea turtles.

Prior shrimp stock assessments have been flawed and have encouraged overfishing. Exposure to shrimp fishing effort levels higher than are necessary to maximize or optimize shrimp yield per recruit is not a good thing for shrimp stocks, shrimp fisheries or sea turtle populations.

The full paper can be viewed and downloaded from the Marine Turtle Newsletter Web Site: <http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/archives/mtn100/mtn100p22.shtml>.

**Coming
Soon!**

Stock Identification Methods

Applications in Fishery Science

Edited by Steven X. Cadrin, Kevin D. Friedland and John R. Waldman

Stock Identification Methods provides a comprehensive review of the various disciplines used to study the population structure of fishery resources, explaining the merits and sensitivities of each approach. It represents international expertise on each method, assembled through a working group of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

Key Features: Describes eighteen distinct approaches to stock identification grouped into sections on life history traits, environmental signals, genetic analyses, and applied marks; Features experts' reviews of benchmark case studies, general protocols, and the strengths and weaknesses of each identification method; Reviews statistical techniques for exploring stock patterns, testing for differences among putative stocks, stock discrimination, and stock composition analysis; and Focuses on the challenges of interpreting data and managing mixed-stock fisheries.

September 2004, Hardback, c. 550 pp., Elsevier

\$64.95/£39.99 (tentative)

ISBN: 012154351X

The early life history of swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) in the western North Atlantic

John Jeffrey Govoni, Elisabeth H. Laban, Jonathan A. Hare

Abstract – Lengths and ages of swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) estimated from increments on otoliths of larvae collected in the Caribbean Sea, Florida Straits, and off the southeastern United States, indicated two growth phases. Larvae complete yolk and oil globule absorption 5 to 6 days after hatching (DAH). Larvae, 13 mm preserved standard length (PSL) grow slowly (~0.3 mm/d); larvae from 13 to 115 mm PSL grow rapidly (~6 mm/d). The acceleration in growth rate at 13 days follows an abrupt (within 3 days) change in diet, and in jaw and alimentary canal structure. The diet of swordfish larvae is limited. Larvae, 8 mm PSL from the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and off the southeastern United States eat exclusively copepods, primarily of one genus, *Corycaeus*. Larvae 9 to 11 mm eat copepods and chaetognaths; larvae 11 mm eat exclusively neustonic fish larvae. This diet indicates that young larvae <11 mm occupy the near-surface pelagia, whereas, older and longer larvae are neustonic. Spawning dates for larvae collected in various regions of the western North Atlantic, along with the abundance and spatial distribution of the youngest larvae, indicate that spawning peaks in three seasons and in five regions. Swordfish spawn in the Caribbean Sea, or possibly to the east, in winter, and in the western Gulf of Mexico in spring. Elsewhere swordfish spawn year-round, but spawning peaks in the spring in the north-central Gulf of Mexico, in the summer off southern Florida, and in the spring and early summer off the southeastern United States. The western Gulf Stream frontal zone is the focus of spawning off the southeastern coast of the United States, whereas spawning in the Gulf of Mexico seems to be focused in the vicinity of the Gulf Loop Current. Larvae may use the Gulf of Mexico and the outer continental shelf off the east coast of the United States as nursery areas. Some larvae may be transported northward, but trans-Atlantic transport of larvae is unlikely.



John Jeffrey Govoni

Fish. Bull. 101:778-789 (2003).

New!

Large Marine Ecosystems of the World

Trends in Exploitation, Protection and Research

Volume 12 in Large Marine Ecosystem

Edited by G. Hempel and K. Sherman

Globally, 95 percent of the world's annual marine fish catch comes from 64 large marine ecosystems (LME). Effects of overfishing, pollution, habitat destruction and climate change are described in this volume for several LMEs in polar and boreal seas, and tropical and upwelling regions. Together with other volumes in the series, this volume provides a post "World Summit" perspective on the efforts supported by the Global Environment Facility to lessen the North-South economic divide and promote sustainable recovery of depleted fish stocks and degraded habitats. Case studies describe how competing interests of different agents can be united across political boundaries to achieve the sustainable development of shared resources.

2003, Hardback, 440 pp., \$105.00/£105.00 Elsevier

ISBN: 0444510273

***Still
Available!***

Large Marine Ecosystems of the North Atlantic

Changing States and Sustainability

Edited by K. Sherman and H.R. Skjoldal

2002, Hardback, 464 pp., \$99.00/£99.00

ISBN: 0444510117

A Fish Biologist's Impact on National Security

Howard A. Schuck

This is a story of the threat assessment indicating United States vulnerability to surprise atomic attack—that was believed and acted upon. (As contrasted to assessments which were ignored with serious consequences, like the Rudman Commission and Gilmore Panel in late 1990's, and in the Pacific just prior to Dec. 7, 1941).

This story is the “inside” perspective of the unlikely chain of events which led to the inquiry being authorized, and then conducted. It postulates why its unsettling findings were accepted as credible and valid. It describes how the findings were utilized as the basis for the massive efforts to eliminate this vulnerability, i.e. that the United States' system for deterring Nuclear World War III – (SAC) – could be attacked by complete surprise, and destroyed on the ground by the Soviet long-range bomber force.

Finally the book speculates as to how the inquiry helped end the cold war without nuclear detonations by either side.

About the Author

Classed as “Least Likely to Succeed”, the author at age 12 studied and practiced fly-fishing for 4 years in local waters devoid of trout. At age 16 he was decreed a trout fisherman, at 17 an expert and at 18 a trout conservationist.

At Cornell his thesis developed the method which was used at N.Y. State's experimental trout stream to produce the first ever count of the number of trout in a stream. As a result he was asked by USFWS to try to count the haddock at Georges Bank in the North Atlantic. This effort was also successful. Howard's ability to count elusive items influenced Dept. of Defense to suggest that he might be able to count other items which are also hard to see, are moving, and do not wish to be counted, i.e. the number of Soviet bombers which might be destroyed by U.S. Air Defenses under various conditions of altitude, speed, night or day, degree of alert, and timing and size of attack.

Howard was dubious that he was capable of handling this problem, but decided to try it. Parts II and III document what happened to him when he left his beloved fish and entered into an unfamiliar and challenging profession.

From Author House

Electronic Book: ISBN 141847424X \$4.95

Paperback: ISBN 1418430463 \$13.50

Freshwater Fishes of the Northeastern United States

A Field Guide

By Robert G. Werner

*A unique reference to the freshwater fishes of the Northeast for anglers,
students, naturalists, and environmentalists.*

Informative, accurate and readily comprehended by both the layperson and scientist, this book will aid anyone interested in identifying fishes of the northeastern United States while learning more about their life history and distribution. The book focuses on characteristics of fishes in the field using beautiful illustrations for most species that accurately depict their morphology and color. The book is a source of detailed information with state-by-state species lists and an extensive bibliography.

Robert G. Werner has published two books, *Fishery Science: The Unique Contribution of Early Life Stages and Freshwater Fishes of New York State: A Field Guide*, the latter published by Syracuse University Press. He is professor emeritus of SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry College and the former director of the St. Lawrence River Biological Station. He is also former co director of the Great Lakes Research Consortium.

Syracuse University Press

1-800-365-8929

6 x 9, 280 pages, 112 black-and-white and 134 color illustrations, bibliography, glossary, index

\$38.00

Ed. Note: I am certain that there are many more works of members that deserve listing in Briefs, with your help I could be more complete in my coverage.

Two More Documents of Interest

Canadian Subsidies

The Canadian Subsidy Directory 2004 edition is available. This publication contains more than 2600 listings of grants and loans offered by government departments, foundations and associations.

To obtain a copy please visit: www.canadabooks.biz
ISBN: 2-922870-05-7

Undaunted Tales Non-scientific adventures of seagoing scientists

*By Merton C. Ingham
A Review by Albert C. Jones*

Seagoing experiences of fishery biologists, oceanographers and vessel crew aboard the fishery oceanography research vessel *Undaunted* in the late 1960s are chronicled in this book by Dr. Merton C. Ingham. Mert Ingham served as chief scientist and physical oceanographer aboard the *R/V Undaunted* while the vessel was assigned to the Tropical Atlantic Biological Laboratory (U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries – now NOAA Fisheries), Miami, Florida. The *R/V Undaunted*, a U.S. Navy surplus auxiliary tugboat converted to a civilian oceanographic research vessel, lacked many amenities and comforts of today's modern oceanographic research vessels. However, the scientists and crew were dedicated to their tasks. They also had unique personalities that led to unpredictable events at sea and ashore during cruises in the tropical Atlantic off Africa and South America. These events are described by the author in an entertaining way. Today's young marine scientists will wonder if such situations and outcomes, sometimes ludicrous and sometimes reflective, could be true, as the author claims. Older scientists will recall with amusement and nostalgia similar experiences from their own seagoing days. And the scientists who joined Ingham on the *Undaunted* cruises will recognize specific events and attest to the veracity of *Undaunted Tales*. I recommend the book for casual, enjoyable reading. Available from the author (Merton C. Ingham, 11 Hawthorne St., South Dennis, MA 02660-3217, barmer@gis.net) for \$8.00 per copy plus \$3.00 shipping for 1-3 copies.

The old Unwanted carried me on my first extended cruise in 1967. I have almost recovered. Ed.

A Pertinent Meeting Held “Bycatch in Northeast Fisheries: Moving Forward”

June 29-July 1, 2004

The workshop provided an opportunity for northeast constituents with an interest in issues related to bycatch of fish and other marine life to examine specific aspects of bycatch and express their views on issues. Participants discussed and recommended priorities and solutions regarding science/research, data/monitoring, management, and gear engineering that will be identified and incorporated in an updated version of the Northeast Region Bycatch Implementation Plan to be released later in 2004.

The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) has organized a workshop, “Bycatch in Northeast Fisheries: Moving Forward.” The Workshop is co-sponsored by NMFS and Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant, in cooperation with the Northeast Fisheries Science center, New England Fishery Management Council, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Additional support was provided by the Northeast Consortium.

This workshop was an opportunity for constituents with an interest in fishing issues to share ideas about developing improved measures to reduce or eliminate bycatch of both fishes and protected species. The information collected will be used by NERO to update the Regional Bycatch Implementation Plan later this year.

Salmon 2100 Project Initiated

Two dozen of the top salmon scientists and policy experts have joined forces in an innovative research project to answer the question of what it would take to restore wild salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest. The Salmon 2100 Project has been organized in collaboration with Oregon State University's Center for Water and Environmental Sustainability.

The purpose of the project is to synthesize and apply the best available scientific and social information and understanding to the challenge of protecting and restoring wild salmon runs in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and southern British Columbia. A key objective of the project is to identify those policy options that, if adopted, would successfully sustain wild salmon through this century.

To identify those policy options, the project has enlisted 24 leading Pacific Northwest scientists and policy experts, each of whom possesses stellar scientific and analytical credentials, a track record for innovative thinking about salmon and ecosystem recovery, and a demonstrated ability to think beyond the status quo. The project participants are writing chapters in a book to be published by the American Fisheries Society.

Restoring wild salmon to the Pacific Northwest is a daunting challenge. Since discovery of gold in California in 1848, salmon runs have dramatically declined across the region due to water pollution, loss of spawning, rearing, and riparian habitat, a history of over-fishing, dam construction and operation, water withdrawal for irrigation and industrial cooling, competition with hatchery-produced salmon, competition with various non-indigenous fish species, predation by marine mammals and birds, and climatic and oceanic shifts.

Many experts conclude that current salmon recovery efforts, as earnest, expensive, and socially disruptive as they currently are, do not appear likely to sustain significant wild salmon runs through 2100. It appears that other recovery strategies must be adopted if wild salmon are to survive in significant numbers through the century. Key project results also will be disseminated to policy makers and others through a regional symposium (Corvallis, February, 2005) and an international symposium (Anchorage, September, 2005).

Contacts: Robert T. Lackey, lackey.robert@epa.gov or (541) 754-4607; Denise H. Lach, Dlach@oce.orst.edu or (541) 737-5471

Submitted by: Robert T. Lackey

America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2004

1. Colorado River: While conflict over Colorado River water allocations has grabbed headlines for years, water pollution problems from human waste, toxic chemicals, and radioactive material have been largely overlooked and threaten to get worse. Unless the federal government bolsters cleanup efforts, drinking water for 25 million Americans will remain at risk.
2. Big Sunflower River: Two flood control boondoggles promoted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers threaten Mississippi's Big Sunflower River. Unless the EPA vetoes the Yazoo Pumps, the project will damage seven times more wetlands than all the nation's private developers harm in one year. Without opposition from EPA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Corps will also dredge more than 100 miles of the riverbed.
3. Snake River: Dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers have caused dramatic declines in the Snake's once abundant wild salmon population, with all the river's runs either extinct or sliding toward extinction. Unless the administration delivers a credible plan to rebuild wild salmon populations, our generation could be the last to enjoy these legendary species.
4. Tennessee River: All along the Tennessee, overloaded wastewater systems discharge inadequately treated sewage into the river with distressing regularity. Unless the administration holds these sewer systems accountable – and Congress provides financial assistance – the Tennessee River will continue to be deluged with sewage.
5. Allegheny and Monongahela rivers: Abandoned mines leak acid and other toxic substances into streams throughout Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Unless Congress takes action, efforts to treat this problem will cease and the amount of pollution reaching the rivers will increase, threatening drinking water, fish and wildlife.
6. Spokane River: More pollution concentrated in less water will be the future of the Spokane unless new groundwater withdrawal applications are rejected, sewage plants meet stringent water quality standards, and mine waste is cleaned up.
7. Housatonic River: Irresponsible industrial activity has left the Housatonic with some of the highest levels of PCBs in the nation. Unless the EPA orders a cleanup of the remaining PCBs, the toxic legacy in the Housatonic will remain a health hazard for generations to come.
8. Peace River: Mining in the Peace River watershed has caused serious problems for many years, and large new mines are planned. Two Florida agencies must safeguard the watershed from mining impacts, including protecting drinking water, as

well as tourism and commercial fishing industries.

9. Big Darby Creek: Big Darby Creek in Ohio has managed to escape many impacts of urban sprawl. Unless state and local governments adopt and enforce river-conscious land use planning in the Big Darby watershed, one of the highest quality streams left in the Midwest may become just another polluted, urban ditch.
10. Mississippi River: After decades of manipulation by the Corps of Engineers, the Mississippi is beset with problems. Unless Congress gives the agency marching orders that reflect the needs, desires and opportunities of today's communities, the river faces ecological collapse with vast economic impacts to tourism and recreation industries.

From: American Rivers, Spring 2004

See related article next. Ed

House Considers Upper Mississippi Project

The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing Thursday, June 24, 2004 on the Army Corps of Engineers Upper Mississippi River navigation improvement and environmental restoration plan. The proposed project would construct seven new 1200-foot locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, and double the size of five existing locks on the Upper Mississippi, from 600 feet to 1200 feet. Navigation advocates claim the river transport system is outdated, causing long delays and ultimately affecting the cost of grain transported on the river. However, environmentalists are concerned that further construction on the river would further hurt a damaged ecosystem. The Corps has included a proposal for \$5.3 billion to be spent over 15 years on environmental restoration. Environmental organizations support a substantially larger investment in river restoration, and note that the National Academy of Sciences has found that no lock expansion project can be evaluated until the Corps takes more limited steps to improve operations of the existing navigation system.

The House hearing follows a Senate draft bill from Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) to construct seven new 1200-foot locks at nearly \$3 billion over 10 years. Bond will be seeking to authorize these funds through the Water Resources Development Act restoration bill. The House does not yet have a companion bill, though sources indicate Representatives are waiting to see what comes out of the Senate first.

Witnesses at the hearing will include officials from the Corps, EPA, Agriculture Department, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, National Corn Growers Association and Environmental Defense are also expected to testify.

From: American Rivers RPU

Freedom to Fish Act Building Momentum Among Congressmen

With the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) stepping up its lobbying efforts in Washington, seven members of Congress have recently signed onto the Freedom to Fish Act introduced by Congressman Jim Saxton (NJ).

The Freedom to Fish Act (H.R. 2890) would establish reasonable, scientifically based standards that must be met before any more no fishing marine protected areas (MPAs), i.e. marine reserves, are established off our coasts. Such closures would have a devastating impact on coastal economies and quality of life for millions of recreational fishermen with little conservation benefit. Consistent with sound marine conservation, the Freedom to Fish Act recognizes the social and economic importance of recreational fishing and establishes standards that must be met before no fishing MPAs are implemented in federal waters.

In a demonstration of strong, bipartisan support, Representatives Rob Andrews (NJ), Allen Boyd (FL), Barbara Cubin (WY), Jim Marshall (GA), George Nethercutt (WA), Mike Simpson (ID), and Dave Vitter (LA) have each signed on as co-sponsors for the Freedom to Fish Act.

"History has shown us that marine fisheries problems need to be addressed on a gear by gear basis-not by creating blanket no fishing MPAs as some radical environmental groups would like to do," said Jim Donofrio, RFA Executive Director. "The Freedom to Fish Act recognizes this and would allow fishery managers to get to the real sources of overfishing."

From: International Angler 66(3), May-June 2004

California Budget Crisis Postpones No-Fishing Marine Reserves

Citing a severe lack of funds and technical expertise, California has indefinitely postponed plans to create a string of no-fishing marine reserves along the state's coast. This isn't the first time the state's ambitious reserve process has stalled. The Marine Life Protection Act of 1999 originally directed wildlife biologists to complete a master plan for establishing a network of marine reserves by April 2003. Fishermen successfully fought to extend the deadline two years.

The California department of Fish and Game estimates it would cost \$1.5 million over the next 18 months to two years to continue drafting a reserve plan. Environmental groups have offered to help keep the "working group" process moving forward. But even with private funds, the department says, its own budget woes and staff reductions render it unable to support that effort.

From: International Anger 66(3), May-June 2004

Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund Given \$10 Million Raise in 2005 Budget

Administration officials announced a \$10 million increase for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund for a \$100 million total in 2005. Established in 2000, the fund has provided over \$118 million to the Washington Recovery Funding Board and \$59 million to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

From: International Anger 66(3), May-June 2004

Council Begins Work on Amendment 1 for Spiny Dogfish

The Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council at its March meeting voted to begin work on Amendment 1 to the joint Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Council will address the biomass rebuilding target and the establishment of a stock rebuilding schedule that is consistent with the National Standard one guidelines. The Amendment will also include the subtraction of overages from the next fishing year's annual quota, and the ability to develop multi-year quota specifications.

The Joint Middle Atlantic/Northeast Spiny Dogfish Committee in February decided there was no reason to address limited access because as the resource rebuilds there is not likely to be a directed fishery for several decades. The Joint Committee also rejected the idea of prohibiting spiny dogfish possession in the EEZ.

A spiny dogfish stock assessment was conducted by Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) in June 2003. According to that assessment the "spiny dogfish stock is overfished and overfishing is not occurring." The estimated fishing mortality in 2002 exceeded the rebuilding target ($F = 0.03$) by a factor of 3. "The female spawning portion of the biomass has declined by about 75% since 1988 and is at 29% of the biomass target." The "recruitment estimates from 1997 to 2003 represent the seven lowest values in the entire series."

The management advice that the SARC provided is: "given low current spawning biomass, poor recruitment and reduced pup survivorship, the SARC recommends total removals (landings, discards, Canadian catch) below those derived from the estimated rebuilding F (0.03). Targeting females should be avoided."

The future forecast from the SARC is that: "rebuilding of spiny dogfish populations will take at least 15 years under the most optimistic scenario. The low biomass of spawning females, high abundance of males, and the near absence of dogfish less than 50 cm will induce large oscillations in the stock regardless of management strategies. Forecasts of rebuilding which take into account the apparent lower survival of pups from smaller females indicate that rebuilding will not occur."

Many fishermen have difficulty with the stock assessment because the scientific findings do not support what they see when they retrieve their nets. Unquestionably, the total stock of dogfish is large and was estimated to have been in excess of 800 million pounds in 2002. However, the near complete lack of large adult females (which had been targeted by the fishery since the U.S. began seriously harvesting the resource in the late 1980s), the life history characteristics (long-lived, few pups, long gestation), and the record low recruitment since 1997, all lead to serious concern for the sustainability of this resource.

From: Mid-Atlantic Perspectives 8(5), Spring 2004

Hard to Keep a Good Fish Down!

4 snakeheads caught near Potomac; MD, VA issue alerts

When Virginia biologists identified a fearsome-looking fish snagged in a tributary of the Potomac River as a snakehead, they wrote it off as a castoff from someone's aquarium. But when the fish kept turning up, on both the Maryland and Virginia side of the river, they began to fear the worse: The so-called "Frankenfish" – a voracious predator which biologists fear could alter local ecosystems – has found a new home.

Four fish were caught in or near the Potomac from late April to mid-May – two in Virginia and two in Maryland. All four were the same species – northern snakehead – which raised concerns among biologists as some were mature enough to procreate. The first fish was a mature female, while the most recent one caught was a developing male.

After the fourth fish was caught on May 15, Virginia fisheries officials created a snakehead fish panel to assess the possibility that the snakeheads are spawning, said Julia Dixon, spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Gary Martel has contacted both Maryland and District of Columbia Fisheries agencies requesting a meeting to coordinate efforts, Dixon said. "The incident team is working to see what resources are needed to even assess what is needed," she said. We're going to be working closely with Maryland to see if we're dealing with a population." State officials will work with the Smithsonian Institution to see if genetic testing can tell if the Virginia fish is related to one recently found in Maryland.



*This snakehead was caught along Little Hunting Creek near Mount Vernon, VA.
AP Photo*

The snakehead is considered dangerous to the ecosystem because it devours other fish and frogs and has no known predators. Native to Asia and Africa, it's an anomaly because it can move short distances on land using its fins and live out of water for up to three days. "We learn more and more from these exotics," Dixon said. "The results are not the desired results." While fisheries officials expressed concerns that the snakeheads are spawning, efforts to get rid of them may be futile. "If they're in there, there's nothing anyone's going to be able to do about it," Virginia fisheries biologist John Odenkirk said last week. He said people may have to accept that the alien fish may likely join a long list of exotic animals that have adapted to the ecosystem. "Maybe 100 years from now it'll become part of the ecosystem as common as the largemouth bass," he said.

Officials have gone to great lengths to keep the fish out. In 2000, snakeheads infested a pond in Crofton, MD, spawning hundreds of juveniles. State biologists poisoned and drained the lake. Largely as a result of the Crofton discovery, at least 20 other states have imposed a ban on the sale, ownership or release of snakeheads.

This first snakehead this year turned up in a pond in Wheaton, MD. That lake was also drained, and biologists were relieved to find no other snakeheads. But the relief was short-lived: Only days later, a snakehead turned up in the Potomac.

From: Bay Journal, June 2004

South Atlantic Reef Fish Status

Stock status for the non-deepwater species units in the South Atlantic snapper/grouper complex as specified by the preferred biological reference points and status determination criteria and the percent reduction in harvest needed to reach the MSY control rule. *The species has undergone a Southeastern Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment.

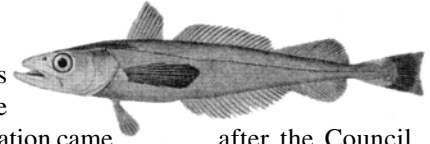
Management Unit	Indicator Species	Overfishing?	Overfished?	Percent Reduction	
Unit 1	Shallow-water Grouper	gag grouper*	No	No	0%
Unit 1A	Goliath Grouper*		No	Yes**	0%
Unit 1B	Nassau Grouper		No	Yes**	0%
Unit 2	Shallow-water Snapper	yellowtail snapper*	No	No	0%
Unit 3	Triggerfish/Spadefish	gray triggerfish	Yes	No	7%
Unit 4	Mid-Shelf Snapper	vermillion snapper*	Yes	No	31%
Unit 5	Jacks	greater amberjack	No	No	0%
Unit 6	Sea Bass	black sea bass*	Yes	Yes	30%
Unit 8	Grunt/Porgy*	white grunt	Yes	No	6%
Unit 8A	Red Porgy		No	Yes	(increase allowed)

**Total closure for Goliath grouper in place since 1990 and Nassau grouper since 1992.

Unit 7, The Deepwater Grouper/Tilefish Unit will be addressed separately in Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. Snowy grouper is the indicator species.

From: The South Atlantic Update, Spring 2004

Council Recommends Removal of Whiting from “Overfished” List



Based on a new stock assessment, the Pacific Fishery Management Council is recommending that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) remove whiting from the “overfished” list. Whiting was originally declared overfished in 2002. The recommendation came after the Council adopted a new Pacific whiting assessment at its March meeting in Tacoma. The new assessment was recommended by a Stock Assessment Review Panel and the Scientific and Statistical Committee as the best available science for managing Pacific whiting in U.S. and Canadian waters. It is likely NMFS will comply with this request in the near future.

The Council also set 2004 Pacific whiting harvest specifications using the new assessment. The acceptable biological catch (ABC) was determined to be 514,441 mt for the entire stock. Under the terms of the recently negotiated Pacific whiting treaty with Canada, which is still pending Senate ratification and federal rulemaking, the U.S. share of the ABC would be 73.88%, or 380,068 mt. However, the Council recommends U.S. fisheries be managed to an optimum yield (OY) of 250,000 mt. The Council did not want to consider higher Pacific whiting harvests that might risk exceeding the 2004 OY for widow rockfish (an overfished species), and was concerned about the effect of higher catches in 2004 on abundance in future years. The Council also considered complications of adopting a level higher than 250,000 mt, which was the upper bound of the range analyzed in the final environmental impact statement of proposed ABCs and OY specifications for the 2004 Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Adopting a higher Pacific whiting harvest in 2004 would have likely delayed the normal April 1 start of the Pacific whiting fishery while further analysis was done under the terms of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Choosing between two models

Both the Stock Assessment Review Panel and the Scientific and Statistical Committee recommended two models from the assessment as equally probable. The distinction between the two models is the value of the catch ability coefficient (q) from the National Marine Fisheries Service 2003 hydroacoustic survey for Pacific whiting. The two assessment models ($q=0.6$ and $q=1.0$) indicate the presence of a strong 1999 year class and an estimated spawning stock biomass in 2003 of either 47% or 49% of the stock’s initial, unfished biomass (termed $B_{47\%}$ and $B_{49\%}$, respectively), depending on whether the true value of q is 1.0 or 0.6. Both of these estimates of spawning stock biomass are above the threshold associated with the level necessary for maximum sustainable yield ($B_{40\%}$).

In setting the ABC, the Council considered the scientific advice of equally probable abundance estimates and made the policy decision to select the $q=1.0$ assessment model as the basis for determining the ABC level of 514,441 mt for the entire stock. The basis of this choice included the historical use of the $q=1.0$ assumption in prior years’ management of this fishery, the negative implication to future year stock abundance if harvest quotas were set using the $q=0.6$ model in 2004, and the lack of compelling information to choose the less conservative option.

From: Pacific Council News 28(1), Spring 2004

Senate Panel to Review Grazing Practices

The Senate Public Lands Subcommittee of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in late June reviewed a proposal from the Bush Administration on federal grazing regulations. The hearing will examine the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service’s grazing programs, including the deep backlog of permits that the Forest Service has to review. Environmental groups have filed suit over a number of grazing permits asserting that the permits put threatened and endangered species at risk, cause stream bank erosion, soil compaction, and lower plant diversity. The Bureau of Land Management revealed a proposal last December that would extend the amount of time required to take action on grazing practices that harm rangeland health from one year to two. It would also limit public participation in major planning decisions, remove the time limit for ranchers to hold a permit without using it, and would allow ranchers the rights to permanent rangeland improvements such as fences, wells or pipelines. Many Democrats and environmentalists have criticized the plan, asserting that it would only exacerbate the environmental problems already stemming from grazing.

Fate of Northwest Salmon Back in Biologists' Hands

Court determines that it doesn't have jurisdiction

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals declined to rule on a case to determine how hatchery and wild Oregon coast coho salmon should be handled under the Endangered Species Act. Government scientists decided years ago that only wild coho should be counted when determining whether the species qualifies for federal protection, not only because hatchery numbers are a poor indicator that the species is recovering in its natural habitat, but also because hatchery fish can actually harm wild populations. In September 2001, responding to a suit by developers, a district court found the government's method illegal and stripped wild coho of their Endangered Species Act protections.

The Bush Administration refused to appeal the ruling, so conservation and commercial fishing groups, represented by Earthjustice, stepped into the gap to defend the coho. This quick action put the protections back in place for the coho pending an appellate court decision. In February, the Ninth Circuit decided it didn't have jurisdiction to decide the case. Now all eyes are on the continuing agency process that will determine the interactions of and protections for hatchery and wild fish. At the end of March, six leading independent scientists publicly urged the government to treat wild and hatchery fish differently and to protect the wild.

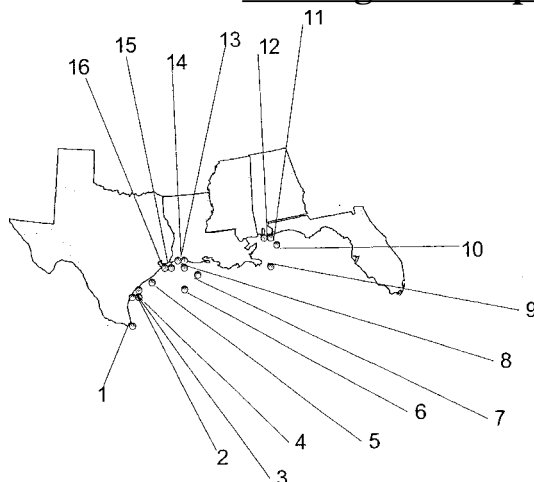
In the meantime, Earthjustice's attorneys are seeking reconsideration of the Ninth Circuit's ruling – a petition process that keeps the ESA protections for Oregon coast coho in place until final action by the appellate court.

From: In Brief, Summer 2004

Gulf Council Opposes the Use of Open Loop LNG Systems in the Gulf of Mexico

The Gulf of Mexico Council, at its May meeting, received a presentation on proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities in the Gulf of Mexico. To meet an increasing demand, 15 new LNG terminals are proposed for the Gulf of Mexico. One LNG currently exists in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Nine of the proposed facilities are closed loop systems that will not impact fishery resources, but six proposed facilities would each circulate approximately 100-200 million gallons of water per day to heat the liquefied natural gas back to its gaseous phase. Each facility would impact billions of fish eggs, larvae, and plankton each year. All fish eggs and larvae are assumed to be killed after passing through these systems. NOAA Fisheries is concerned about the potential impact of these facilities on fish populations in the Gulf of Mexico. One facility at Sabine Pass, Texas would filter 30% of the water in Sabine Lake each year. EPA has required the power generating industry to use closed loop systems to mitigate impacts on aquatic biota. As a result of the information presented to the Council, the Council adopted a position that it believes LNG open loop systems will adversely affect the biota of the Gulf of Mexico and the recreational and commercial fishing industries that depend on this biota. Therefore, the Council opposes the use of open loop LNG systems in the Gulf of Mexico, and recommends the use of closed loop systems in inshore, near shore, and offshore locations.

Existing and Proposed LNG Facilities



1. Cheniere Brownsville
2. Cheniere Corpus Christi
3. Vista del Sol
4. Oxy-Chem
5. Freeport
6. El Paso (approved)
7. Port Pelican (approved)
8. Gulf Landing
9. Main Pass
10. Compass Port
11. Cheniere Mobile
12. ExxonMobile Mobile
13. Lake Charles (existing)
14. Hackberry (approved)
15. Cheniere Sabine Pass
16. Golden Pass

Sea Otters Get a Hand

Threatened southern sea otters off the coast of California would benefit from a new bill introduced in Congress by Representative Sam Farr (D-CA). The legislation would organize and authorize funding for sea otter research and recovery programs for a five-year period, as well as set up a team of experts (including fishermen, scientists and conservationists) to advise the recovery process. “We have been fighting to bring the southern sea otter back from near-extinction for [more than] sixty years. Yet today scientists estimate that there are still only 2,400 sea otters,” says Farr. “This legislation will provide the platform for full recovery of sea otters in California and for scientific study that will help improve our understanding of the health of California’s coastal ecosystems.”

From: Defenders, Spring 2004

Hudson sturgeon release may glean information for Bay effort

New York officials in May plan to release several dozen large Atlantic sturgeon into the Hudson River, a move that some biologists hope is a prelude to an eventual release in the Bay within the next few years. The release was proposed by New York and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who hope the tagged, hatchery-reared sturgeon will provide new information about the halibut use, movement and post-release behavior of the fish. The release was approved in March by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, a panel of fishery officials from East Coast states and federal agencies that is responsible for managing migratory fish stocks.

The Hudson release is the first along the Atlantic Coast since 1996, when the Maryland Department of Natural Resources turned more than 3,200 fish loose into the Nanticoke River. “Not a heck of a lot has gone on in the interim,” said Steve Minkinen, who was with the DNR and helped to plan the 1996 release and now heads the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Maryland Fisheries Resource Office.

The stocked fish are descendants of Hudson River fish that were captured and taken to the USF&WS’s Northeast Fishery Center in Lamar, PA, during the 1990s. Biologists at the center used the fish to perfect hatchery spawning techniques for sturgeon, and eventually produced thousands of young fish. Some of those were released in the Hudson in 1994, and in the Nanticoke two years later. But the hatchery was left with about 600 fish, some of which are now 4-foot long, putting the hatchery in the unique position of being overpopulated with some of the rarest fish along the East Coast.

The Hudson plan, which will relieve space pressure at the hatchery, calls for releasing 25 radio-tagged fish in May, and another 325 tagged fish later in the year. The hatchery will keep about 135 fish for further spawning studies. Because the fish are so large, predation is not expected to be a problem as is often the case with other hatchery-reared fish.

One thing that remains unclear is whether hatchery sturgeon – especially large ones – will return to their native river to spawn, as do wild sturgeon. Because some of the Lamar fish are 10 years old and will mature within the next few years, the release could shed light on that issue. “We don’t know when these fish imprint to their home water,” said Andy Kahnle, a biologist with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. “Salmon imprint at the larval stage. We have no clue when it occurs in sturgeon. “These fish were spawned from Hudson parents and were hatched in a hatchery in the Susquehanna drainage. I don’t have any idea where they will return to spawn. That question is on the table.”

The Hudson is home to the largest remaining Atlantic sturgeon stock on the U.S. East Coast. Kahnle said it’s estimated that the Hudson stock includes 200-300 females and 500-600 males in its spawning population, and they produce between 5,000-8,000 fish a year. About 17,000-20,000 immature Hudson fish are estimated to be living along the Atlantic Coast. “We may be seeing a rebounding of the Hudson stock, but it will take awhile,” Kahnle said.

Kahnle said the rebound appears to stem from Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission action in 1998 which mandated an unprecedented almost 40-year moratorium on catching sturgeon to give the population a chance to recover. But that did not address all of the problems. Between 1988 and 2000, an average of 1,400 sturgeon a year were killed in bycatch off the Atlantic Coast. “That’s a lot of bodies given the low coastwide abundance of this species,” Kahnle said. Bycatch losses have declined in recent years as restrictions were placed on some of the most harmful fisheries.

From: Bay Journal, May 2004

DuPont Faces Suit Over Mercury Pollution

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club are preparing to take DuPont to federal court to force a cleanup of mercury from Virginia's South River and the South Fork of the Shenandoah. The mercury poses a serious health threat to people who eat fish from those waters. "There are well-known ways to remedy mercury pollution in rivers, but DuPont is avoiding those," says Nancy Marks, senior attorney with NRDC. Dupont's Waynesboro textile operations discharged tens of thousands of pounds of mercury into the South River from 1929 to 1950. When the contamination was disclosed in 1977, the state was forced to declare a fish consumption health advisory for over 100 miles down river of the plant. That advisory continues today. Mercury pollution is known to cause severe physiological, behavioral and reproductive disorders and is particularly harmful to developing fetuses. The main route of human exposure is through eating contaminated fish.

Over 20 years ago, DuPont and its consultant convinced government regulators that the mercury contamination would disappear on its own. That has not occurred, according to the most recent data collected by the state. Today, some fish in the two rivers have mercury levels more than eight times the level at which the state issues health advisories. But rather than make DuPont clean up the mercury pollution, state and federal regulators have joined DuPont in a collaborative effort to study the mercury contamination. The team has no cleanup plans. "The time for study is over," says Marks. "Local residents have waited long enough for the cleanup to being."

From: Nature's Voice, Jan-Feb. 2004

Commerce Department delays decision on shrimp case

By Brad Rich

U.S. Commerce Department officials announced Wednesday they had delayed until July a decision on whether to impose tariffs on imported shrimp in order to help the beleaguered domestic shrimp industry. A statement from the office indicated the delay was necessary because of the "complexity" of the case. The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) had ruled earlier this year that there is a "reasonable indication: that as many as six foreign countries have "materially injured" the U.S. shrimp industry with unfair trade practices. The unanimous finding by the ITC — an independent, nonpartisan, quasi-judicial federal agency that provides trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government — set the stage for a final decision on the issue by the U.S. Department of Commerce on or near June 8. If the commerce department investigation and ruling eventually echoes the findings of the ITC, the U.S. could impose tariffs on some shrimp products exported to the U.S. by Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand and Vietnam. The ITC action was in response to petitions filed on Dec. 31, 2003, by the Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA), a compact of shrimpers and shrimp industry participants from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. The products covered in the SSA trade action are certain warm-water shrimp and prawns, whether frozen or canned, wild-caught (ocean harvested) or farm-raised (produced by aquaculture), head-on or head-off, de-veined or not de-veined, cooked or raw, or otherwise processed in frozen or canned form. According to statistics from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the value of the U.S. shrimp harvest dropped by more than 50 percent (\$690 million) between 2000 and 2002. While the wholesale value of shrimp had dropped to the lowest levels in 40 years due to unfair trade, shrimp industry spokesmen point to a recent Wall Street Journal report that states the average price for a shrimp entrée at major restaurant chains actually increased during the same period. In other words, according to the national publication, consumers have not benefited from the low prices that have injured shrimpers and processors. Financially strapped shrimpers in Carteret County are involved in the case through the N.C. Fisheries Association, a New Bern-based commercial fishermen's trade and lobbying group that has been a member of and participant in the SSA effort since the very beginning. In North Carolina, shrimpers landed 5.2 million pounds worth \$11.9 million in 2001 and 9.9 million pounds worth \$18.2 million in 2002, the last year for which complete statistics are available from the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. That might sound like a healthy industry, but in 2000, the figures were 10.3 million pounds and \$25.4 million. That total put the year in the top five since 1972, but the average price per pound worked out to only \$1.84. That price looks even worse if you factor in inflation: It's lower, in 1972 dollars, than the 64 cents per pound fishermen averaged for their shrimp that year. By contrast, shrimpers received an average of \$2.46 per pound in 2000 and \$2.16 per pound in 2001. Shrimpers and their representatives have said that after 2001, the European Union and Japan clamped down on shrimp imports because of health concerns about antibiotics in farm-raised shrimp. That, they contend, forced many exporters into the American market, and contributed to the downward slide of prices. Success in the SSA effort could have resulted in tariffs being imposed on the exporting countries by late 2004, but settlements are possible with one or more of the targeted nations.

From: The Carteret County (NC) News-Times; Friday, May 21, 2004

Ed: Latest reports are that the USDOC will impose tariffs on shrimp from China and Vietnam, at the least.

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