



NOAA



REPORT

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

February 19, 1986

TO NOAA MANAGERS

You are seeing this document, NOAA Report, for the first time.

It is part of a continuing effort by the Office of the Administrator to improve and expand communications across the agency's organizations, and in doing so, to bring all parts of NOAA closer together.

After weeks of experimenting, the format here--a concise administrative bulletin reporting informally on our work across the entire agency--has been chosen to replace This Week In NOAA, a weekly report distributed to a limited circulation over the past several years.

NOAA Report will be easier reading, and more of us will have access to it. You will note that, in keeping with our belief that no part of NOAA is an island, reports from of all of our organizations will be intermixed.

We solicit your comments, and your contributions. Both will be sincerely appreciated.

COMING UP

Public affairs workshop for TV weathercasters on tornado safety, Mar. 7 and 8 at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, Norman, Ok.

Spring flooding outlook press conference by Weather Service's Dr. Michael Hudlow Mar. 10 at 1 p.m., HCHB Auditorium.

NOAA-G launching, Mar. 17, Vandenberg Air Force Base.

El Nino-Southern Oscillation Watch Is On:--The Weather Service's Climate Analysis Center, directed by Dr. Eugene Rasmusson, has issued an "ENSO Watch" for February through April. The move was prompted by the presence of signs in the Pacific which might--or might not--be precursors of the phenomenon, which can cause disastrous weather and

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ocean upheavals. A panel from the Tropical Ocean/Global Atmosphere (TOGA) office, established in 1985 to consider and advise on U.S. response to a potential event, will evaluate the situation with a view to possible alterations in the program's monitoring and analysis activity. Meanwhile, deployment of 40 drifting buoys has begun in the Southern Hemisphere oceans to support TOGA's second year. The National Data Buoy Center will help the TOGA office in maintaining a grid pattern to detect ocean anomalies for the next eight years.

Menhaden Surimi Plant To Test Product: The Zapata-Haynie Corp. will build and operate a demonstration plant near Reedville, Va., to determine the economic and technical feasibility of producing surimi from menhaden. Surimi is the versatile protein paste made from whitefish which can be shaped and flavored to look and taste like its higher-priced kin - lobster, crab, shrimp, and scallops. NOAA's contract with the Hammond, La.-based firm is a major step in upgrading the use of menhaden from industrial to human food markets. It is also in line with NOAA's efforts to boost the surimi industry in this country. Until recently, the surimi market has been a virtual Japanese monopoly.

Major Automation Milestone:--The Weather Service has reached a major milestone in automating its field offices, with acceptance of a pre-production model of a computerized communications terminal for use at smaller offices. The first 50 of 140 such terminals will be delivered by April 2. Their installation will link these offices to the nationwide Automation of Field Offices and Services (AFOS) system. It will free forecasters of manual data handling, allowing more time for severe weather and flood warnings, and fair weather forecasts. Delivery of the new units from the OAO Corporation in Riverdale, Md., will complete the basic process of automating Weather Service offices across the nation.

NOAA Ocean Project Planned:-- The Fisheries Service's Office of Resource Assessment's Northeast, Southeast and Northwest Fisheries Centers, and the Ocean Service's Ocean Assessment Division are planning the conduct of the third annual cycle of the \$1.3 million benthic surveillance report. This project -- a part of NOAA's Status and Trends Program -- will investigate both chemical contaminants and sediment and fish tissues, and the presence of contaminant-induced disease in fish tissue at 51 selected estuarine and coastal sites along the nation's shoreline, providing more complete information on which to base health and productivity-related decisions.

Satellite Launch Promotion Set:--NOAA and NASA will jointly conduct press activity Mar. 17, when NOAA-G (eventually to be called NOAA-10) is launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Events will include a media conference, probably in San Francisco, featuring NOAA and NASA principals, and interview opportunities with two persons who have been saved by the satellite's search-and-rescue capability. NOAA-G will circle over the poles 14 times daily at an altitude of 470 nautical miles, transmitting data and pictures covering a swath nearly 1700 miles wide with each orbit.

Tuna To Be Purchased:--At the request of the Fisheries Service, the Department of Agriculture will buy U.S.- harvested and processed

canned lightmeat tuna under the Surplus Removal Program. Although the program began more than a generation ago, only in the past few years have fish products comprised any appreciable amount of the Agriculture Department's purchases. The first purchase of 1.3 million pounds was valued at more than \$1.6 million. An equivalent quantity is scheduled for mid-March delivery. Most of the fish products bought under the program go to school lunch programs and similar federally-supported feeding plans.

Plastic Test For NOAA:--The Commerce Department plans a 15-month test to determine whether credit cards should supersede the venerable SF-44 (purchase order) for many small-scale purchases (with several exceptions, \$1,000 or less). If successful, the practice could spread to all civilian and military agencies of the government. The implications for NOAA are not yet clear, but our 103 imprest fund cashiers disperse about \$500,000 a year.

Crab Casualties To Be Monitored:--A remotely-operated submersible will be employed by the Office of Underwater Research, headed by Elliot Finkle, to probe a disturbing rise in crab mortality on the Bering Sea floor. One of the most critical issues facing Alaska's fishery is the apparent accidental destruction of king crab as fishermen trawl the ocean bottom for flounder. The low level of crab population, and the high degree of trawl activity occurring when crabs are concentrated in areas fished for flounder, combine to create a serious situation. The sub will monitor the extent to which the valuable crabs are killed or injured by contact with a trawl or its doors or rigging.

School Information Service Distributed:--The February School Information Service Bulletin (containing NOAA news of interest to secondary school systems) has been distributed to educational journals and institutions across the nation. Highlights: the radiosonde project, winter fatality statistics, the completion of a 250,000-point geodetic network, a satellite briefing for a princess, a study linking rainfall with estuarine transport, and a wrapup of the 1985 tornado season.

Matching Grant Fisheries Money Available:--\$2.671 million has been certified available to the 31 coastal states for matching grants under the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act. Since 1976, the program has been used to support research, build hatcheries and improve management for anadromous fish like salmon, herring and shad. This year's projects already have been identified by regional fishery offices in consultation with coastal states. Projects are predominantly for salmon on the west coast (approximately \$2 million) and striped bass on the east coast (approximately \$300 thousand). States are required to match the grants 50/50 in most cases.

Draft-Eligible? Here's News:--Under the Defense Authorization Act of 1986, no male born after Dec. 31, 1959, may be appointed to a job in an executive agency if he's required to register with the Selective Service System, but hasn't. Agencies are also required to screen all appointments made since last Nov. 8, to identify persons of the target age group whose draft status needs confirmation. In NOAA, this project has a high priority.

Mackerel Harvests Near Quotas:--Action may be necessary to close or sharply curtail king mackerel harvests in the Gulf of Mexico and in the South Atlantic soon. Fishery management experts say the harvests are near or in excess of established quotas. NOAA works with Regional Fishery Management Councils to determine appropriate management measures such as gear restrictions and catch, area, and season limitations.

Blood Donor Time:--Secretary Baldrige reminds all NOAA employees that there will be an opportunity to donate blood Feb. 24 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in HCHB's Conference Rooms A, B, and D. To schedule an appointment, call Vernetta Wallace of the Health Unit at 377-4088.

NOAA BACKS \$5.3 MILLION FISHERY LOAN:--The Fisheries Service recently guaranteed a \$5,380,876 loan to the Aleutian Cold Storage Company, Inc., to help the firm construct a shoreside processing plant at Sandpoint, Alaska, for salmon and herring. The loan financed 87.5 percent of a long-term loan from Bear Stearns and Co. to Aleutian Cold Storage. The guarantee is an example of one way NOAA provides support to America's fishing industry; by assisting the industry's access to private financing.

Hazmat Visibility Program Planned:--Using scientific support coordinators in NOAA's Hazardous Materials Response office as newspegs, the Office of Public Affairs plans an awareness drive in the cities where they are based: Boston, New York, Norfolk, Miami, New Orleans, San Francisco, Seattle and Anchorage. Working under John Robinson in his Seattle headquarters, these scientists are on instant call to provide scientific support in spills of oil or other hazardous materials, across the nation and in major foreign disasters. Their counsel to Coast Guard on-scene coordinators is vital to the strategy of battling spills; NOAA's participation in oilspill science goes back to the famed Argo Merchant breakup off Nantucket in 1976.

That's A No-No!--Concerning the use of official vehicles: we're reminded that "official use" is limited to work necessary to carry out NOAA programs by the most direct routes available; home-to-job use is only with prior written approval; and no dependents may ride in government cars without prior authorization.

Automated Shipboard Weather Program Inaugurated:--An international organization has been set up to coordinate an Automated Shipboard Aerological Program (ASAP). A formal statement of inauguration and terms of reference, developed in response to a resolution by the World Meteorological Organization, was signed by Canada, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States. Warren Keenan of the Office of Climatic and Atmospheric Research signed the document for the Permanent Representative of the United States to the WMO.

Welcome Back, Oceo!--The NOAA Ship Oceanographer, laid up in Seattle since December 1982, will be reactivated under the command of Capt. Freddie Jeffries, and in April is scheduled to be sailing for research in the Equatorial Pacific Ocean Climate Study.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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12200 Kiln Court
Beltsville, MD 20704-1387
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