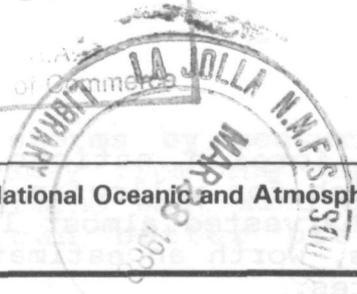




NOAA REPORT

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March 21, 1988

COMING UP

NMFS/Regional Council Ecosystem Workshop in Orlando, Fla., Mar. 22-23.

Geophysical Monitoring for Climatic Change annual meeting in Hilo, Hawaii, Mar. 28 - Apr. 1.

Interdepartmental Committee for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research in Rockville, Md., Mar. 29. (Date changed from Mar. 22.)

National Weather Service Directors Conference in Silver Spring, Md., Apr. 12-14.

NOAA Climate and Global Change Panel meeting in Washington, D.C., April 13-15.

Yellowfin Tuna Ban:--A new ruling by NOAA requires foreign nations exporting yellowfin tuna to the United States caught in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean to take steps to reduce the number of dolphins killed during purse seine fishing.

Countries that do not reduce dolphin deaths will not be allowed to import yellowfin into the United States.

The ruling by the National Marine Fisheries Service requires foreign fleets that catch yellowfin tuna from purse seine vessels to establish regulations comparable to those required for the U.S. fleet. The ruling, which goes into effect in mid-April, requires observers to monitor fishing activities and the use of gear and techniques that minimize harm to dolphins during yellowfin fishing.

The ruling also requires that by 1991, the average annual rate of dolphins killed by a foreign fleet in the area is comparable to the yearly rate for the U.S. fleet.

Eight foreign nations, including Mexico, Venezuela and Ecuador, fish for yellowfin in the eastern tropical Pacific. In 1986 they harvested almost 195,000 tons of the fish. More than 46,000 tons, worth an estimated \$35 million, was exported to the United States.

In the eastern tropical Pacific where schools of yellowfin tuna swim beneath dolphin herds, fishermen search for schools of dolphins as an indication of tuna. The fishermen encircle both dolphins and tuna with huge purse seine nets. Although the vast majority of the dolphins escape or are released by fishermen, a few become entangled and drown.

EEZ Mapping and Research Agreement Announced:--Commerce Secretary C. William Verity and Interior Secretary Donald Hodel have signed a charter under which NOAA and the U.S. Geological Survey will coordinate mapping and research programs in the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the nation's coasts. President Reagan proclaimed the establishment of the EEZ on March 10, 1983. Activities will include seafloor surveying programs, preparation of atlases and maps, and investigation of the nature of seabed geology. Collectively, NOAA and USGS have already mapped more than a million square nautical miles of the ocean floor - about one-third of the area in the EEZ.

A joint NOAA-USGS office to implement and coordinate the national EEZ program has been set up at the USGS National Center in Reston, Va. Day-to-day operation of the office has been assigned to Gary Hill, chief of the USGS Office of Energy and Marine Geology, and Millington Lockwood, an oceanographer and technical advisor in the NOS Office of Charting and Geodetic Services.

Scientists Sort Snowflakes:--NOAA scientists using radar and volunteers with hand-held microscopes are seeking to predict winter storm accumulations by sorting out snowflakes.

Scientists at the Program for Regional Observing and Forecasting Services (PROFS) in Boulder, Colo., where foot-high accumulations are normal, have launched a double-barreled effort, based on the fact that snowflakes have "signatures."

John McGinley, chief of the PROFS Forecast Research Group, said snowflakes occur in several major categories, ranging from large, star-shaped flakes called dendrites to various types of crystals heavily rimed or covered with frozen cloud-water droplets, called graupel. Dendrites usually bring deeper snow; graupel, lighter.

NOAA hopes that new Doppler radars, scheduled for nationwide use by the National Weather Service over the next few years, can isolate the snowflakes' different signatures. (Doppler radar

allows scientists to "see" inside storms by measuring wind carried moisture moving toward and away from the instrument.) "If, by using the radar, we can determine what kind of snow is falling and at what rate, we can better predict the accumulation," McGinley said.

He has enlisted several dozen volunteer observers in Greater Denver who, when it begins snowing heavily, make periodic observations, recording the type of flake as well as the accumulation. Each uses a small, hand-held microscope to determine shape and riming characteristics of individual snowflakes. Meanwhile, meteorologists record the Doppler returns. In the coming months they will compare radar results with those of the volunteers.

Highway departments, airport managers, school districts, utility companies and others have a vital interest in snow accumulation on highways, runways, and power lines. The ability to predict accumulation once it starts snowing has major safety and economic potential.

NWS Signs Agreement with Radio Relay League:--The National Weather Service gained a strong ally in its severe weather spotter network recently with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). ARRL is the major association representing some 400,000 amateur radio operators in the country. The agreement documents how volunteers of the League and the NWS will coordinate their services, facilities, and equipment in support of weather emergencies. The ARRL will work to provide specialized communications and observations and encourage its members to organize and participate in Skywarn networks. Skywarn is the Weather Service's volunteer storm spotter program. The NWS will work with ARRL on the organization and training of spotters.

Airspace Restructuring Plan Completed:--NOS' Office of Charting and Geodetic Services has completed the final phase of the FAA's Expanded East Coast Plan (EECP), designed to ease air traffic congestion along the East Coast corridor by restructuring the air space in this region. The plan included the modification of air routes, airspace fixes, holding patterns, navigation aids, and sector boundaries. These changes had significant effects on the maintenance of every NOAA aeronautical product covering the area from Maine to Florida and as far west as Illinois. The project took a year and a half to complete at a cost of approximately \$400,000 to the FAA.

Denver's Brown Cloud Studied:--Unique remote sensing instruments, developed by NOAA to provide weather forecasters with detailed meteorological information, are helping determine what causes Denver's infamous "brown cloud," and to provide a scientific data base on which decisions can be made as to what controls would be the most effective in reducing its intensity.

Led by Dr. William Neff, a 10-member team from NOAA's Wave Propagation Laboratory, participated in the four-month, multi-agency investigation which ended in February. The NOAA team studied how weather conditions and nearby mountains affected the brown cloud, its movement and mixing in the lower atmosphere, its transport in and out of the city of Denver, and other meteorological questions. The team took advantage of research instrumentation already in place in northeastern Colorado - several research wind profiling systems, and a mesonet of automated weather stations among them - as well as one-of-a-kind remote sensors (such as Doppler lidar) developed at the Environmental Research Laboratories in nearby Boulder.

Hydrographic Conference Set for April:--NOAA's National Ocean Service and The Hydrographic Society of America will sponsor "U.S. Hydrographic Conference '88" April 12-15 in Baltimore, Md. The conference theme is "The World of Hydrography." Conference participants from around the world will discuss the revolutionary advances being made in gathering, analyzing, and displaying hydrographic data.

Nearly 30 presentations will be made in technical sessions on international hydrographic activities, positioning systems, laser bathymetry, hydrographic sounding systems, oceanography, hydrography, and charting. The conference will close with a half-day workshop on electronic charts April 15.

Registration is available at the door or write: U.S. Hydrographic Conference '88, P.O. Box 732, Rockville, MD 20851. For additional information, call Jean Duroske on (301) 443-8881.

NOAA Man Is Soaring Chairperson:--Walter Rogers, head of the Weather Service Unit at the Los Angeles, Calif., Air Traffic Control Center, has been named Meteorology Chairperson of the Soaring Society of America. Rogers, a soaring pilot who has provided meteorological support to various soaring events in the past, will help to educate members about weather and its relationship to sailplane operations.

Last Two Years Warmest in Quarter Century:--Statistics from NOAA's National Climatic Data Center show that 1986 and 1987 were the warmest years since 1953 for the contiguous United States. The annual average temperature for both years was 54° F., exceeded only three times in the Twentieth Century: 1934 - 54.7° F.; 1921 - 54.4° F.; and 1931 - 54.1° F. The warmth was especially pronounced over the north-central states where the winter of 1986-87 was the warmest in the 93-year climatological record.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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