

NOAA Report



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April 2, 1990

COMING UP

Selling Seafood to Europe: Economic Community '92
and Beyond, Seattle, Wash., Apr. 16-17

National Hurricane Conference, Houston, Tx., Apr. 20

Joint Meeting of the Gulf and Atlantic Fishery
Management Councils, Tampa, Fla., Apr. 23-27

European Geophysical General Conference, Copenhagen,
Denmark, Apr. 23-27

National Weather Service Spring Directors Conference,
Camp Springs, Md., Apr. 24-26

Harvest Rights Allocated to Surf Clams, Ocean Quahogs--The first Federal allocation of individual harvest rights to U.S. fisheries has been approved by NOAA for Atlantic surf clams and ocean quahogs.

NOAA described the management plan as precedent-setting since owners of vessels taking part in the fisheries from 1979 through 1988 initially will be entitled to yearly percentage allocations that also may be transferred or sold.

Applying to the 200-mile Federal fisheries limit, the final regulations for the plan developed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council are expected in April.

Dr. William W. Fox Jr., NOAA's Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, said the plan is designed to promote economic stability and efficiency, allow orderly growth, prevent overfishing, and reduce governmental regulation where too many vessels are competing for limited resources.

Under the new process, Dr. Fox said, safety should improve since vessel operators often worked in bad weather to avoid losing their quotas of quarterly fishing trips. In some instances, he said this led to boats and lives lost or jeopardized.

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Separate surf clam management areas for Nantucket Shoals, Georges Bank and the Mid-Atlantic have been ended. One management area will permit allocation holders to fish where, when and with the number of vessels they want under a single set of rules.

The new approach was praised by a majority of clammers and several conservation groups, but also drew some objections. The major objections were the inclusion of ocean quahogs and combining management areas. Philosophical concerns over the allocation of harvest rights also were raised. Surf clams and ocean quahogs are used in products such as breaded clam strips, chowders, chopped or minced clams, and clam juices.

The fisheries had been managed under "most restrictive measures" since 1977, said Dr. Fox. The measures limited each vessel's fishing time to 36 hours per calendar quarter, required written notification 10 days before fishing, and specified closed areas, minimum sizes and reporting requirements.

Most of the fisheries' vessels dredge for both surf clams and ocean quahogs while a small number harvest just the quahogs.

Autos No Refuge During Twisters:--A car often becomes an airborne missile in a tornado. NOAA urged motorists to abandon their vehicles and seek safer shelter if a tornado approaches.

NOAA's National Weather Service advises that underground shelter is the best place to wait out a tornado. If an underground area is not available, a bathroom is the second best place in a home because of the pipes which reinforce the walls.

Those who are in a vehicle should seek shelter immediately. If none is available, find a ditch or ravine. Lie face down with hands shielding the head.

The weather service reports that during a November 1989 tornado in Huntsville, Ala., 12 of the 21 fatalities resulted from people driving in their cars. Many were locked in traffic, unable to move. The weather service concluded that if those people had abandoned their vehicles for better shelter, the death toll would have been lower.

NOAA Places Limit on Bluefish Catches:--A 10-day daily possession limit for anglers, a 20 percent commercial share of bluefish catches, and a permit requirement for the sale of bluefish highlight a Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Bluefish (FMP) adopted by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. The new requirements will become effective in May.

The plan was prepared jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to promote conservation of bluefish that scientists say

are showing signs of decline. Bluefish is important to the recreational fishing industry and is the predominant species harvested by Atlantic marine anglers.

The Commission's plan, approved last October by 14 of the 15 states involved, will provide complementary management in state waters from Maine to Florida. New Hampshire and Maine already are placing regulations in effect to implement the bag limit. A commission spokesman said a majority of the other Atlantic states are expected to implement compatible regulations.

The adoption of the Federal plan imposes the following management measures: The initial 10-fish daily possession limit may be adjusted from between 0-15 fish to reflect stock condition; controls on the commercial fishery when the commercial fishery approaches 20 percent of the total catch or exhibits a significant increase from the previous year; and a permit issued by the state or the National Marine Fisheries Service (for those states without permits) for individuals fishing commercially or anglers wishing to exceed the possession limit.

OAR Moves to Silver Spring:--The NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research relocated from Washington Science Center Building 5 in Rockville, Md., to the fourth and fifth floors of the Silver Spring Metro Building 1 on Saturday, March 31. OAR offices now located in SSMB 1 include the Office of the acting Assistant Administrator, Dr. Alan R. Thomas, the Office of Oceanic Research Programs, and the Office of Climatic and Atmospheric Research Programs. ✓

Salmon May Be Endangered:--Oregon Trout, a sportfishing association located in Portland, Oregon is planning to petition the National Marine Fisheries Service to determine if spring, summer, and fall chinook salmon in the Snake River and wild coho salmon in the lower Columbia River are becoming threatened or endangered species.

Oregon state officials have already expressed concern over the proposed action. Chinook salmon are harvested by sport and commercial fishermen in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, British Columbia and by treaty Indians with fishing rights, and placing the fish on the threatened or endangered species list would affect how they are managed and could mean severe fishing restrictions for fishermen.

In a separate development, the Fisheries Service has already begun reviewing the status of sockeye salmon in the Snake River under the Endangered Species Act because of recent declines in their population.

NOAA Expands Global Data Set:--Valuable observations dating back over a two hundred year period to the 1700s from the Klementium Observatory in Prague, Czechoslovakia, will be added to the NOAA Global Surface Baseline Data Set. The project involves obtaining as many surface weather observations as possible from

stations that have a long history of continuous weather observations. NOAA's stewardship of this important global surface data set will be used to record past temperature and precipitation patterns for global and climate change studies.

Biologists Study Sea Lions:--As of March 26, five of six male sea lions transported by boat and truck to San Miguel Island off California were still on the island as part of a study by NOAA biologists to determine if the predatory animals will return to the Seattle area during the migratory season or remain on the breeding grounds of the Channel Islands. The animals were tagged, branded and fitted with radio transmitters.

For several years, the sea critters have had a serious impact on the wild steelhead trout population in the Ballard Locks area of Seattle, Wash., by preying on adult steelhead migrating upstream to spawn.

NOAA Builds Child Care Center:--Construction has begun on the Little Anchor Child Care Center at NOAA's Western Regional Center in Seattle, Wash. with a grand opening scheduled for mid-summer or early fall. The center will provide first call care to the children of NOAA's Seattle employees.

The 4,200 square foot building will include separate areas for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers, a kitchen, reception area and office for the Center Director. There will be a fenced outdoor play area of 3,600 square feet. The Center will provide care for 56 children.

The center will be operated by a licensed child care provider under contract to the NOAA employee-parent non-profit organization. NOAA will construct the center and provide maintenance for the facility. Operating costs will be covered by enrollment fees paid by parents using the center.

NOAA Man Receives Air Force Award:--Jim Prange, a radar specialist with NOAA's National Weather Service in Seattle, Wash., has received the Outstanding Airman Mobilization Augmentee of the Year Award for 1989 from his Air Force Reserve Unit. ✓

Prange, who holds the rank of Senior Master Sergeant in the Air Force Reserve, received his award for his performance with the Air Weather Service at nearby McChord Air Force Base, where he trains, and Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., where he is assigned for active duty in case of a national emergency.

Prange was also praised for outstanding community service. This year, he coached a girls' softball team and participated in the Children's Hope Auction, a fund raiser sponsored by adoptive parents to help finance the adoption of homeless children. He also developed a program for the Pacific Science Center in Seattle which prepares local elementary school instructors to teach a meteorology course.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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