

NOAA Report

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OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
HCHB Room 5222
14TH & CONSTITUTION AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20230



April 23, 1990

COMING UP

National Fisheries Institute Annual Convention,
Asheville, N.C., Apr. 30

Atlantic Climate Change Science Plan and Meeting,
Princeton, N.J., May 1-3

International Conference on Global Warming and Climate
Change: Perspective from Africa, May 2-4

COSPAS/SARSAT Pacific Region Users Conference,
Honolulu, Hawaii, May 16-18

Secretary Kicks Off Earth Week:--Secretary Robert Mosbacher and Under Secretary John Knauss inaugurated NOAA's celebration of Earth Week by opening an environmental exhibit in the Department of Commerce lobby, April 16, highlighting NOAA as the Earth Systems Agency. Exhibits and various handouts featured the National Ocean Service's National Status and Trends Program, the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, the National Marine Fisheries Service and its Office of Enforcement, the National Weather Service, "Serving the Nation's Weather Needs", the National Oceanographic Data Center's Management of Ocean Data, and the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service and its COSPAS/SARSAT Satellite Aided Tracking Search and Rescue Program.

"Blue Revolution" Celebration Planned:--NOAA is coordinating activities for the April 24th celebration of the film series, "The Blue Revolution", in the HCHB lobby. A reception will be held with Secretary and Mrs. Mosbacher, the Ambassador of Egypt and other dignitaries attending. The program is a series of eight one-hour episodes airing on the Discovery Channel. It will detail the cultural, economical, political and environmental importance of the world's oceans and show how the world is working together to preserve and protect ocean resources. NOAA cooperated in the production and aided in sponsorship of the series, which will be shown globally.

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NOAA Supports Tuna Companies Protecting Dolphins:--NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service issued a statement last week supporting recent voluntary actions made by the H.J. Heinz Co. (StarKist) along with those of Bumble Bee and Chicken of the Sea to protect dolphins inhabiting the Eastern Tropical Pacific. The companies announced they will no longer buy or sell tuna caught in nets that also trap dolphins.

Dolphins die in tuna fisheries because some yellowfin tuna swim beneath dolphin herds. Fishermen seek the dolphin, round them up with speedboats, and encircle the animals and tuna with huge purse seine nets. Some of the dolphins escape or are released over the nets but others become entangled and drown.

The new policy will affect U.S. and foreign purse seine vessels that fish for yellowfin tuna in the Eastern Tropical Pacific where this method of fishing for tuna occurs. Many of the 29 U.S. purse seine vessels fishing in the area are expected to shift operations to the western Pacific and have applied to fish under the terms of the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. The treaty requires U.S. vessels to register with the Forum Fisheries Agency, which administers the treaty, and obtain a license. Only 50 licenses are available for the season.

Under the guidelines of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Fisheries Service has observers on board 100 percent of the U.S. tuna fleet. Foreign fleets carry Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission observers but their coverage ranges only from 33 to 50 percent. The data received from these observers will be the primary source for verifying that tuna caught by purse seine methods in the Eastern Tropical Pacific has not harmed dolphins. The agency is currently working out the details on how this information will be provided to the various company representatives.

Coastal Zone Site Visit Planned for Mississippi:--Federal officials will conduct a site visit to Mississippi April 23 through 27 to hear local views regarding the implementation of the Mississippi Coastal Program. NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management will meet with interested parties as part of its evaluation of the program.

Areas of interest include:

Success and problems in implementing the state's Special Management Area Program; how low-cost construction projects have helped to achieve the objectives of the state's program and the national objectives of the Coastal Zone Management Act; evaluation of the state's efforts in public participation, promotion of greater awareness of coastal issues, and educating and informing the public; determination of how well the Mississippi coastal zone regional permit has been used to streamline permit processing; and evaluation of the state coastal program's leadership role in addressing emerging or expanding coastal issues.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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