

# NOAA Report

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## COMING UP

National Weather Service Transition Management  
Meeting in Elkridge, Md., Jan 17-19.  
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National Aviation Icing Program Council Meeting in  
Rockville, Md., Jan. 23.  
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Oklahoma/North Texas National Weather Service Managers  
Conference, Norman, Okla., Jan. 23-25.  
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22nd Session of World Meteorological Organization  
Bureau, Melbourne/Canberra, Australia, Jan. 26-Feb. 3.  
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American Meteorological Society 70th Annual Meeting  
in Anaheim, Calif., Feb. 4-9.  
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**Atlantic Hot Springs Study Planned:--U.S., British and**  
French researchers will seek new discoveries on the Atlantic  
seafloor where hot springs, strategic materials and exotic animal  
life were found four years ago, according to NOAA's Dr. Peter  
Rona. It was Dr. Rona who, in 1985, discovered the site where  
superheated, mineral-rich water vents up through the ocean floor.

The expedition will make 20 dives this month in the Navy  
submersible Alvin, said Dr. Rona, an oceanographer at the  
Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory who shares  
expedition leadership with Dr. Geoffrey Thompson of Woods Hole  
Oceanographic Institution.

The site is a mound about the size and shape of the Houston  
Astrodome, 12,000 feet below the surface, about 1,800 miles east  
of Miami. Materials containing copper, manganese, iron, zinc and  
gold, similar to ancient deposits now being mined on land sites  
in Quebec and on the island of Cyprus, vent up through the hot  
springs caused by seafloor spreading.

The cruise of the Alvin and its support ship, Atlantis II,  
concludes Jan. 31. Additional joint cruises with the French are  
scheduled through 1992 under terms of a bilateral agreement.

The 19 participating scientists represent, in addition to  
NOAA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Woods Hole,  
Cambridge University and the Institut Francais de Recherche pour  
L'Exploitation de la Mer, of France.

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

**Fisheries Investigation Leads to Jail Time:**-- A 14-month investigation conducted by National Marine Fisheries Service special agents along with troopers from the Alaska Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection has led to sentences and fines for three fishermen.

The U.S. Attorney's office announced the results of sentences imposed against Everett J. Lindholm, James A. Duffy, and Robert E. Day. The defendants were involved in catching and transporting about 190 tons of sacroe herring taken from waters in Prince William Sound after the close of the April 1987 season.

Each pled guilty in early October 1989 to one count of conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981. Lindholm and Duffy were fined \$75,000 and Day was fined \$50,000. Each of the defendants was sentenced to 12 months in jail with nine months suspended and placed on one year's probation.

**Bonner to Head COMET Program:**--Dr. William D. Bonner will leave his position as Director of the National Meteorological Center to head the Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education and Training (COMET) on April 1. COMET is a new program sponsored by the National Weather Service to train forecasters in using new observational and modeling technologies under the NWS modernization program. While initially centered at the University of Colorado at Boulder, COMET is expected to embrace activities at a number of universities around the country.

**Ice Jam Problem Arises:**--The prolonged, bone-chilling December cold spell over a large part of the country could be setting the stage for significant ice jam formation later this winter and spring. Ice jams have already occurred in portions of the Ohio River basin, in the middle Atlantic region, along the Missouri River and along the Mississippi River upstream from St. Louis, and could occur in other river basins, according to the Office of Hydrology of NOAA's National Weather Service.

Of special concern this year are streams that are at much lower levels than normal, due to the record-breaking 1988 drought. Unless there are prolonged periods of unusually warm weather during the remainder of this winter, ice buildup will continue to be a problem. Should ice jams form, downstream water levels in some locations could fall below intakes at local pumping plants and cause serious disruptions to municipal water supplies. Another concern is the impact of ice jams on navigable rivers which may cause delays for barge traffic transporting essential commodities.

Ice jams form on rivers and streams as a result of the breakup which comes with warming temperatures and rainy weather. It is not possible to predict exactly where ice jams will form, according to NOAA's hydrologists. Usual locations are in the vicinity of bridges or sandbars, and where rivers or streams

narrow or change direction. Flow is reduced by temporary ice dams. Water backed up behind these dams can also cause flooding as large amounts of water are released.

Avalanche-Related Sounds May Improve Warnings:--NOAA scientists in Boulder, Colo., using an array of special microphones to detect low-frequency waves in the atmosphere, have been able to "hear" sounds that may be related to high country avalanches in the Rocky Mountains 50 or more miles away.

The observations, according to Dr. Alfred J. Bedard of NOAA's Wave Propagation Laboratory, could lead to improved avalanche warnings, since often more than one avalanche will occur in a given area, and if in remote areas, can go unnoticed.

If authorities could be advised that an avalanche has just occurred in a particular mountain pass, for example, they would be in a position to warn residents of the area there may be additional avalanches, according to Bedard.

Operating from a research site near Boulder, a NOAA team headed by Bedard monitored low-frequency, small amplitude sound waves during periods when avalanches were occurring in the Loveland Pass area, and near Vail and Berthoud Passes. One of the signals recorded corresponded in azimuth and time to an avalanche released by small explosives.

"The mechanisms used to trigger avalanches -- a 105 mm recoilless rifle, and a nitrogen-powered, mortar-like 'avalancher' -- each have their own acoustic signature, different from the sounds we associated with avalanches," Bedard said.

If two monitoring sites similar to that employed by the researchers were set up at different locations to observe a given mountain area, it would be possible through triangulation to determine precisely where an avalanche occurred, he explained.

Diver Allowed to Pursue Monitor Research:--NOAA has given permission to a scuba diver, Gary Gentile, to pursue his permit application to dive to the wreck of the Civil War ironclad U.S.S. Monitor as part of a research project.

The decision reverses an earlier decision that denied Gentile permission to dive to the 128-year-old wreck because of safety concerns. Gentile had appealed that decision last October.

The Monitor lies in approximately 220 feet of water 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, N.C.

The decision outlines the factors, required by federal regulations, that must be considered before a research permit can be issued. These include Gentile's professional and financial responsibility, the appropriateness of his research methods, and the value of his research.

In addition, Gentile's proposal will have to be reviewed by the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Any information Gentile obtains from his research must be made available to the public.

Finally, Gentile and any divers who accompany him will be required to hold the government harmless from any accident or injury resulting from their dives. The proposed dive is deeper than normally permitted by internal NOAA standards.

**NMFS Announces New Sea Scallop Regulations:**--Beginning February 1, scallop fishermen on the east coast will be required to unload catches during specified daylight hours to make enforcement of existing scallop-size restrictions simpler and fairer, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

All vessels equipped for the sea scallop fishery using dredge gear (gear consisting of a mouth frame attached to a holding bag constructed of steel rings) and all vessels landing more than five bushels of sea scallops in the shell will be required to offload all fish and shellfish during a specified 12-hour period. Any vessel offloading more than 40 pounds of shucked sea scallops will also be subject to regulations.

If vessels governed by these regulations are detected offloading outside of the specified time periods, they will be subject to seizure of their catch and a civil penalty. The seizure and the assessment of the penalty will take place despite adherence to other federal regulations (meat count and shell height) governing sea scallops.

**Weather Bird Does Yeoman Work:**--One of NOAA's meteorological satellites, GOES-5, which was launched on May 22, 1981, has run out of station keeping fuel. The satellite, which was relaying meteorological data, weather charts and rain gauge and snow melt information, was designed to have a seven year fuel supply.

The spacecraft, now eight years and seven months old, will drift slowly and oscillate between 65 and 145 degrees W longitude, in about an 18 month cycle.

GOES-5 served for three years as NOAA's east operational satellite and provided over 60,000 images of the Earth's weather patterns before its imaging instrument failed in 1984. Since then, it has been used as a communication satellite to relay data gathered by its other sensors along with NOAA's primary operational satellite, GOES-7.

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# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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