

NOAA Report



NE1000 (A-List/353)
MARINE SERVICES DIVISION
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July 2, 1990

COMING UP

National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologists Conference in Boulder, Colo., July 9.

World Meteorological Organization International Symposium on Assimilation of Observations in Meteorology and Oceanography in Clermont-Ferrand, France July 9-13.

Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite Quarterly Review in Greenbelt, Md., July 10.

Next Generation Weather Radar Program Council meeting in Rockville, Md., July 13.

International TOGA Scientific Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, July 16-20.

NOAA Employees Awarded Commerce Medals:--Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Awards have been presented to the following NOAA employees:

Brenda J. Page, Larry M. Burgett, David L. Jacobs, Jerral J. Miller, and William Scott Sharp (jointly), National Weather Service, Huntsville, Ala., "for providing critical weather information which helped reduce the number of fatalities and injuries in the Huntsville tornado of November 15, 1989."

Bernard L. Palmer, National Weather Service, Columbia, S.C., "for major contributions to provision of agricultural weather services, dissemination of automated warnings through South Carolina law enforcement agencies, and EEO commitment."

Joseph T. Schaefer, National Weather Service, Kansas City, Mo., "for outstanding scientific contributions to the National Weather Service Severe Weather Warning Program."

Carl P. Staton, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, Camp Springs, Md., "for development of new satellite products and services that have significantly improved NOAA's environmental monitoring, forecast, and warning services."

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Ronald E. Moffatt, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, Washington, D.C., "for 20 years of leadership in making the World Data Center A for Oceanography a valuable resource for our Nation's environmental programs."

Daniel J. Cotter, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, Suitland, Md., "for incisive analysis of complex inter-agency, commercial, and international environmental satellite policy issues in meeting program commitments."

Fred E. Nichy, Henry W. Jensen, David J. Radosh, and Donna M. Place (jointly), National Marine Fisheries Service, Woods Hole, Mass., "in recognition of sustained innovation and excellence in educational outreach, research, and management."

Jeffrey J. Polovina, Robert A. Skillman, Alan R. Everson, Thomas K. Kazama, and Raymond P. Clarke (jointly), National Marine Fisheries Service, Honolulu, Hawaii, "for designing and testing a circular escape vent for lobster traps used by commercial lobster fishermen in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands."

Pollution Suits Settled For \$12 Million--NOAA and the Los Angeles County sanitation districts (LACSD), Interior Department and state of California have reached an out-of-court settlement worth as much as \$12 million, as part of a series of Superfund cases involving long-term pollution of the Los Angeles harbor area.

The agreement, filed June 28 in federal court between NOAA, the sanitation districts and the other trustees, which are responsible for protecting marine natural resources, stems from the Government's action last January when it notified LACSD and 16 California companies that they could be liable for environmental damage from past discharges of the pesticide DDT and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The sanitation districts were named in the action at that time because they ultimately were responsible for releasing through their sewer systems many of the harmful chemicals from upstream industrial sources into the Los Angeles-Long Beach waters, NOAA said.

On June 18, NOAA sued eight of the 16 companies in federal court in California, charging Montrose Chemical Corp., Westinghouse Electric Corp., Stauffer Chemical Co. and Potlatch Corp., among others, with discharging hazardous chemicals into Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors, onto the Palos Verdes Shelf off Whites Point and at two dump sites in the San Pedro Channel near Santa Catalina Island.

"LACSD wasn't named in that suit because at no time did we feel that it generated this pollution," said Thomas Campbell, NOAA's General Counsel. "In fact, officials at LACSD have been

extremely cooperative throughout this investigation, opening their files, sharing with us their records, and helping us in our search to identify those responsible for this industrial pollution."

Campbell said he was hopeful that other defendants would follow LACSD's example and reach similar agreements to help underwrite the cost of damage assessment and restoration of natural resources.

"There's no reason why the taxpayers should have to foot the bill for up-front assessment costs," he said. "I think everyone would be better off - including the eight defendants named this month (June) - if we can reach early settlements."

Key elements of the settlement include:

- o \$1 million for legal support from LACSD to develop and present cases against the eight named firms.
- o \$2 million for services and contract support from LACSD to determine the cause and extent of environmental damage.
- o \$2 million in LACSD services and contract support to investigate and analyze what kind of natural resources restoration or replacement should take place.
- o \$2 million for a restoration pilot project.
- o \$5 million for implementation of restoration projects.

Any money recovered from the eight firms, Campbell said, will be used to restore damaged natural resources or their habitat, and could include removal or treatment of underwater sediments, restocking of fish or installation of artificial reefs.

International Dolphin Mortality Increases:--Estimates of incidental dolphin mortality for 1989 increased by 22.9 percent over 1988. Data released by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission from 287 observed trips on tuna purse seine vessels of all flags, including the U.S. fleet, indicate that 96,979 dolphin were killed during the year (kill-per-set ratio). Of the total, 84,336 dolphin (87 percent) were killed by non-U.S. fleets and 12,673 dolphin (13 percent) were killed by the U.S. fleet. The increase in kill is attributed to a 32.8 percent increase in the tonnage of tuna caught on dolphin and a 19.6 percent increase in the number of dolphin sets made by the international fleet. Eastern spinner dolphin mortality was 20 percent lower than in 1988.

Coastal Oceans Video Produced:--The Office of Public Affairs is planning distribution of a video production, "Coastal Oceans In Crisis," produced for NOAA by Commerce Department audio-visual chief Robert Amdur. The 14-minute production outlines problems facing the coastal oceans, and NOAA's role in meeting them.

GOES-5 Finally Goes:--The GOES-5 satellite, which is completely out of fuel and drifting, will be decommissioned the week of July 9. The geostationary satellite, launched on May 22, 1981, took pictures of the earth for over three years until failure of the imaging instrument on July 30, 1984. The communications portion of the satellite has been used for data collection and dissemination of weather facsimile products for over nine years. These functions will be transferred to the GOES-7 and GOES-2 satellites on July 9.

Two NOAA Men Win WMO Award:--Chester F. Ropelewski and Michael S. Halpert of NOAA's Climate Analysis Center will receive the World Meteorological Organization's 1990 Norbert Gerbier - MUMM Award for a study on global and regional scale precipitation patterns associated with the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The study concerns the relationships between ENSO and seasonal precipitation in various regions of the world. The results will have a practical use in forecasting El Niño-related precipitation and will greatly assist in the planning and operation of agricultural activities, according to the WMO. The award is named for Norbert Gerbier, a well-known figure in the meteorology community. The award consists of a medal bearing a likeness of Gerbier offered by Mrs. G. Gerbiew and a cash prize of 50,000 French francs from MUMM, a champagne producer.

NOAA To Brief Latin America On Fishing Regulations:--NOAA officials are planning to visit 13 Central and South American countries to brief local fisheries officials on provisions of U.S. conservation regulations. Countries exporting shrimp to the United States are required to enact conservation regulations comparable to those of the U.S. Law also requires that the average rate of the incidental taking of sea turtles be comparable to that of this country. The United States will embargo shrimp from these countries beginning May 1, 1991, if they are not certified to be in compliance with the law.

Special Achievement Medal Awarded:--NOAA Corps Cdr. Terry M. Laydon recently was awarded the NOAA Special Achievement Award Medal for sustained superior performance as Aircraft Operations Center Safety Office, P-3 Pilot, and Aircraft Commander.

US, USSR Maritime Boundary Agreement:--On June 15, a Maritime Boundary Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union was provisionally implemented. The new agreement will not have an effect on the "donut hole" fishing/research area in the Central Bering Sea. At issue was the demarcation of the boundary established by the 1867 Convention, which transferred what is now the State of Alaska. It was not until recent years that it became clear that each government was using a different method of cartographic depiction to define the boundary. The agreed boundary is a compromise between the great circle line claimed by the United States and the rhumb line claimed by the Soviet Union.

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July 23, 2010