

April 29, 1991

## *Civil Settlement in Jeopardy*

# U.S. Judge Rejects Exxon Fine as 'Inadequate'

A U.S. District Court judge in Alaska last week rejected the \$100 million criminal fine negotiated between the federal government and Exxon over the Exxon Valdez oil spill, throwing the entire \$1 billion settlement into doubt.

Five Federal government agencies, including NOAA, are charged under federal law with protecting the country's natural resources, and announced the settlement last month.

Judge H. Russel Holland called the fine "simply not adequate," and said that it did

not punish Exxon enough for the March 1989 11-million barrel oil spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound.

The \$100 million criminal fine was part of a total \$1 billion settlement, the largest environmental damage settlement in history. It included \$900 million to the trustees, as well as the state of Alaska, for

several purposes:

- a science program;
- restoration planning and pilot projects;
- reimbursement for most of the trustees and the Coast Guard for past expenses;
- restoration efforts aimed at returning Prince William Sound to its pre-spill condition. ☺

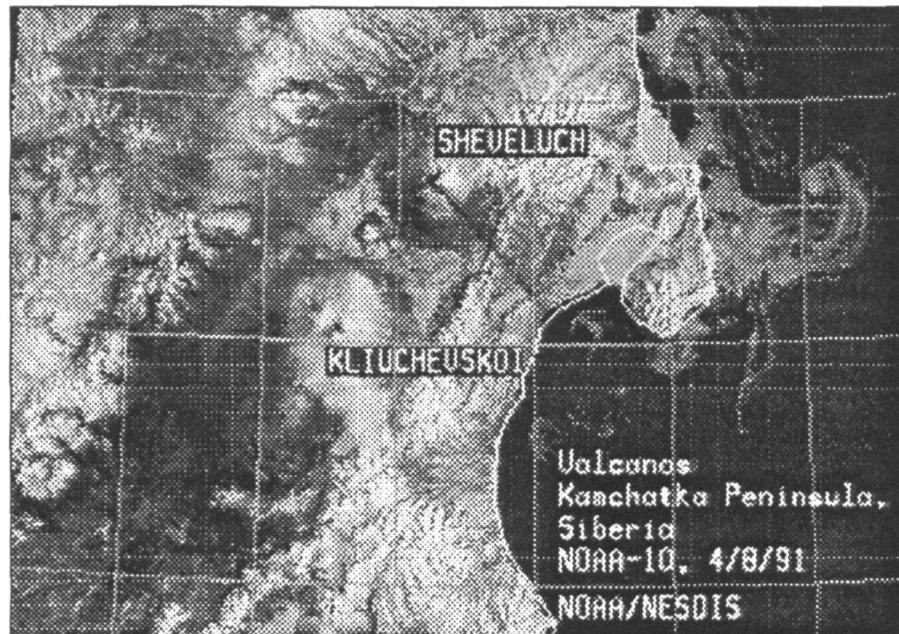
## **Texas Judge Waives Feed Ban for Local Cruise Operator**

A Texas Federal Court judge last week temporarily waived the federal ban on marine mammal feeding for a local dolphin feeding cruise owner.

The ban, however, is still in effect for all other cases.

A Corpus Christi dolphin feeding cruise operator filed suit contesting the ban in a Federal District Court April 19, after having been denied a permanent waiver permit to feed dolphins "in the name of science" by NOAA.

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## Hydrologists Look for Snow, Find Volcano

Hydrologists with NOAA's National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service didn't expect to see what they saw when they examined satellite data on April 9 of the Kamchatka Peninsula, in eastern Siberia (see photo above). In addition to snow cover, NOAA's Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer picked up ash deposits, similar to those found in Alaska in March 1990 after the eruption of Mount Redoubt. A report from the Institute of Volcanism, Siberia, confirmed that the Sheveluch volcano (top) had erupted the day before, sending ash six to eight kilometers high and to the southeast. NOAA's volcano data supports the joint NOAA/FAA Volcano Hazards Alert Plan. ☺

## Alaskan Port Tops in U.S. Fish Landings

The port of Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, Alaska, landed more fish than any other major U.S. fishing port in 1990, according to a NOAA study.

### GOES-East Goes East for Hurricane Season

NOAA's geostationary weather satellite, GOES-7, last week began a 97-day, 690-mile space trip from the skies over west Texas to east Texas, its summer hurricane-spotting station.

The satellite, 22,300 miles above the Equator, will arrive at its new station by Aug. 1.

Although its journey is short, GOES-7's new position will widen the horizon substantially for NOAA's National Hurricane Center in Miami, providing a view of developing storms far out in the Atlantic Ocean. It will see an area extending just west of Hawaii across much of the Atlantic.

The NOAA satellite's space ride will move at eight one-hundredths of a degree daily from the winter location at 108 degrees to 98 degrees west longitude. By moving the spacecraft slowly, NOAA controllers will conserve fuel, extend the operational lifetime, and still have GOES-7 in its new position before the start of the hurricane season.

GOES-7 is in excellent shape, NOAA satellite operations experts say, and its imaging instrument is more reliable than those of past satellites. ☺

#### Growth in Pollock

The growth in the ground-fish catch out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, primarily in Alaskan pollock, continued to keep it the top U.S. port in volume of landings by a wide margin with 509.9 million pounds landed in 1990.

Last year's leader in value of landings, the Port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, continued atop that same list with \$160.4 million landed in 1990.

In all, five Alaskan ports were among the top money makers last year and two were among the top ten by volume. ☺

Leading U.S. Ports (Landings)	1989	1990
New Bedford, MA	141.0	160.4
Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, AK	107.0	126.2
Kodiak, AK	100.2	101.7
Naknek-South Naknek, AK	N/A	91.1
Brownsville-Port Isabel, TX	54.1	57.2
Egegik, AK	N/A	53.9
Dulac-Chauvin, LA	50.0	52.7
Kenai, AK	56.0	47.9
Empire-Venice, LA	49.2	46.3
Hampton Roads Area, VA	31.1	43.4

Leading U.S. Ports (Volume)	1989	1990
Dutch Harbor-Unalaska, AK	504.30	509.90
Pascagoula-Moss Point, MS	282.1	303.9
Kodiak, AK	213.2	272.5
Empire-Venice, LA	272.7	244.2
Cameron, LA	352.7	232.6
Intercoastal City, LA	207.2	173.0
Dulac-Cahuvin, LA	210.9	164.4
Morgan City-Berwick, LA	68.1	146.5
Los Angeles, CA	217.2	133.8
Gloucester, MA	98.5	126.2

## NOS Branch Chief Wins Education Award

# Breaking Down Walls for the Hard-of-Hearing

When Henry Frey first took over a branch of the National Ocean Service in 1987, he found, besides the usual assortment of employees, he found three special people--three hearing-impaired women in the back of a room, facing a wall, with walls between them. They all had college degrees, but because of their special needs, they spent all their day at a word processor, typing. Their previous supervisor thought they could do little else.

But Frey thought they could do more. What can I do to make them work better? he thought. How can I improve their workplace? First thing he did was tear down the wall that separated them from each other and all the other employees. And he hasn't stopped tearing down those walls since.

When Frey, now chief of NOS's Coastal and Estuarine Oceanographic Branch, was awarded the Charles F. Kettering Award by the Cooperative Education Association last month, it only recognized what his employees had known for a long time.

Once the walls fell, Frey noticed that these three hearing-impaired secretaries were only GS-4 clerk/typists. "I asked why they weren't higher grades, like a GS-5," Frey said, "and I was told that because they couldn't use the telephone for such things as making travel reservations, they couldn't reach higher grades. I

knew they had the ability—I just had to find a way for it to work."

At first, his plan of taking all the office's secretaries, both hearing and deaf, and pooling their responsibilities, was met with some skepticism. "But eventually, with some care and patience, it worked out well," he said. "We used TDD machines, which are telephones with keyboards, for some communication, even travel arrangements, and we tended to use hotels which use TDD." He also made sure a sign-language interpreter was on hand for all important meetings.

Frey emphasized his office's commitment to both his hearing and deaf employees by holding sign language workshops during the workday, and not at lunch. "That was very important," he said. "It showed everyone that management was taking it seriously, that learning sign language was part of their job, not an added extra." Hearing-impaired secretaries taught other people sign language, and sixty of his employees eventually learned sign language. "It's not uncommon to see signing in halls here," he said. "In fact, hearing people here use it when they

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Hank Frey, chief of NOAA's Estuarine & Oceanographic Branch of the National Ocean Service.

## Aiding Deaf is 'Good Business': NOS's Frey

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want to catch someone's attention during a meeting but don't want to interrupt."

Frey hasn't made many major accommodations for his hearing-impaired workers—"just reasonable ones," he said. "The only technological changes we've made are flashing lights for the intercom, TDD machines, and fire alarms. We do use electronic mail a great deal, too."

In the end, Frey said, what he's done for his hearing-impaired employees is "good business, not just a nice thing to do."

"The hearing impaired are a rich resource, waiting to be tapped," he added. "To make the whole system work, you have to be on constant lookout

*Teaching sign language during the workday, and not on lunch time, 'showed everyone that...learning [to sign] was part of their job, not an added extra.'*

for obstacles in their path. Sometimes, people with special needs can simply accept their lot, when they don't have to. Our office has become a homebase for deaf NOAA

employees, and it's wonderful to see them walk by with a bounce now that they know they're just as important here as anyone else." ☺

## Mammal Feed Ban Waived in Texas

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The cruise operator is questioning the language of the feeding ban regulation including the interpretation of the word "taking" of marine mammals and to whether this includes feeding. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service confirmed however,

that the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which gives NOAA the authority to ban feeding, names "hunt, kill, capture, destroy and feed" as activities NOAA can regulate.

A Federal Court hearing on this matter is scheduled to take place May 23. ☺

## Coming Events

## May 1991

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Sky Awareness Week in Md. Thru May 4 →	29 Sky Show at NOAA Science Center, Camp Springs, Md.	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Launch of NOAA-D satellite, Vandenberg AFB, Ca.	15	16	17	18

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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July 23, 2010