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## Coastal Contamination Not Rising, Study Says

Levels of some chemical contaminants in coastal areas may be decreasing or remaining stable, according to a NOAA report released last week.

The report, *Coastal Environmental Quality in the United States 1990*, also said that high—but not toxic—levels of these contaminants are found principally in coastal areas near major cities such as Boston, New York, Baltimore, San Diego, Los Angeles and Seattle. The chemical contamination levels are noticeably lower, however, along the southeast and Gulf coasts.

Although the relatively high coastal levels of chemical contamination are not considered toxic to individual marine animals, and are not widespread, the effects of such contamination on entire marine animal populations are unknown.

### 300 Sites Sampled

The report is based on samples of mussels, oysters, bottom-feeding fish and sediments taken from almost 300 representative coastal sites since 1984 by NOAA's Status and Trends program, part of the NOAA National Ocean Service. No sites were selected near major waste outfalls or other known "hot spots."

The samples were tested uniformly for trace metals including cadmium, lead, mercury, copper and zinc; the pesticides DDT and chlordane, PCBs and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

### Banned or Restricted

Although some of these substances occur naturally, all are associated with human activity and many have been banned or severely restricted by federal regulations. Even the banned compounds, however, continue to be used in other countries. Residual amounts are still present in the U.S. environment.

The report also concluded that improvements gained through pollution controls may quickly be offset by population growth and related development in coastal areas. As a result, coastal areas bear a disproportionate share of contamination from human activities, even when those activities occur far inland. ☹

### Chartists Provide Quick Fix

## New Radar Clears Andrews AFB Skies

Who do you call when your radar scopes go down? NOAA's National Ocean Service's Aeronautical Charting Division (ACD), that's who!

When the equipment which displays analog radar video maps at Andrews Air Force Base east of Washington, D.C., malfunctioned on December 7, all air traffic control responsibility for the airbase—the site of takeoffs and landings by the President and other government officials—was transferred to the already overtaxed National Airport in nearby Virginia. The local Washington air traffic control system, one of the busiest in the nation, was severely strained.

### Radar Upgrade to Digital

But luckily, ACD had recently finished upgrading the radar equipment at Andrews from analog maps to digital—a new radar display called Digital Bright Radar Indicator Tower Equipment, or DBRITE. While ACD produces both analog and digital maps for Andrews, the digital maps can provide more information.

Within a few hours, ACD staff was installing the necessary digital data to get the new displays up and running, bypassing the failing older analog displays. Air traffic control at Andrews resumed the same day, unburdening the Washington system. ☹

### Coming Events

■ **National Weather Service Transition Management Meeting**, to examine modernization progress, in Elkridge, Md., Jan. 22-24.

■ **Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Retreat**, presentations and discussions on NOAA-wide issues, Washington, D.C. and Silver Spring, Md., Jan. 22-24.

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# Scientists Seek Answers to Divers' Disease

Why do some deep-sea divers and commercial fishermen come down with bone diseases? A group of NOAA-funded Wisconsin Sea Grant scientists have joined forces with researchers from Japan and Taiwan to find an answer.

The disease, dysbaric osteonecrosis, a form of bone death caused by bubble formations in the bones due to

increased pressures during repetitive diving, plagues Asian commercial fishermen, American tunnel workers, and some American professional and recreational divers.

## Benefits to Both Sides

The joint project offers benefits to both American and Asian scientists. The Japanese and Taiwanese researchers will have access to large animals and pressure chambers re-

quired for diving research, while the American researchers will get clinical data on Asian divers, who typically suffer more immediate and severe symptoms than their American counterparts who dive less frequently, use dive computers, or follow the diving tables used by the U.S. Navy and NOAA's National Undersea Research Program. ●

# Aeronomy Chief Daniel Albritton Wins Presidential Honor

Dr. Daniel L. Albritton, director of NOAA's Aeronomy Laboratory in Boulder, Colo., has received a 1990 Presidential Rank Distinguished Service Award from President Bush.

The award, made by the President in ceremonies in the White House, recognized Albritton's outstanding research leadership and his valuable scientific contributions to national and international policy development.

Albritton has played a leading role in planning the U.S. Global Change Research Program, served as one of the two science advisors to the United Nations for the international protocol for protecting the stratospheric ozone layer, and represented the U.S. on the scientific group that assessed the current understanding of climate change for world governments.

He is NOAA's representative to numerous government science groups including the Polar Ozone Campaign Steering Group and the Greenhouse

Gas Research Committee. He also serves on several international research planning committees include the International Ozone Commission and the Commission on Atmospheric Chemistry and Global

Pollution.

A Fellow of the American Physical Society, Albritton has been with NOAA in Boulder since 1967. He was appointed director of the Aeronomy Laboratory in 1986. ●

## Weather Service Execs Honored

Two NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) executives were honored last week for their scientific achievements.

**Charles Sprinkle**, chief of NWS's Aviation Services Branch, was given the Losey Atmospheric Sciences Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics "for recognition of outstanding contributions to the Atmospheric Sciences as applied to the advancement of aeronautics" at their annual meeting in Reno, Nevada. The award is named after Captain Robert Losey, a meteorological officer who was the first U.S. officer to die in World War II.

**Dr. Richard Hallgren**, former NWS assistant administrator for Weather Services, last week received the most prestigious award in meteorology, the International Meteorology Organization (IMO) Prize, from the World Meteorology Organization (WMO), the IMO's successor, at a ceremony at the State Department in Washington. Dr. Hallgren was active in international meteorology for two decades and served as the Permanent Representative of the United States to the WMO from 1981 until his retirement from NOAA in 1988. ●

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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