



June 10, 1991

## Lower Columbia River Coho Not Listed Under ESA

# Snake River Salmon Called 'Threatened'

Snake River spring and summer chinook salmon and Snake River fall salmon will be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), according to a NOAA decision.

Another species, lower Columbia River coho salmon, will not be listed. A final decision for the proposed listings will be made in the next year.

Any final decision on whether to list the fall as well as spring/summer chinook salmon must be based solely on the best scientific data available on the status of these populations as required under the ESA. Under the Act, socioeconomic considerations cannot play a part in NOAA's decision whether or not to list.

Before any final decision to list these species, broad public input will be sought to ensure that the administrative and scientific record for any proposal is accurate and complete. Scientific data on the respective populations will be sought from a wide variety of groups and a broad number of scientists.

The law also calls for the preparation of a population recovery plan for each listed species. While socioeconomic considerations cannot figure in NOAA's decision to list, such factors may be considered within any recovery plan.

A year ago NMFS received four petitions from Oregon Trout, a sportfishing group, and other groups to list Snake

River fall, spring and summer chinook salmon and lower Columbia River coho salmon. The petitions also requested the designation of critical habitat under the ESA.

The decisions come after an exhaustive, year-long biological review by fisheries experts, and the completion of separate status reviews for Snake River fall chinook salmon, Snake river spring/summer chinook salmon, and lower Columbia

River coho salmon.

Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon once numbered in excess of 1.5 million annually during their yearly returns, but have declined to fewer than an estimated 10,000 fish distributed over the entire Snake River basin in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Fewer than 400 fall chinook salmon returned to the Snake River during each of the last four years.

NMFS has evaluated the status of lower Columbia River

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## Severe Geomagnetic Storm Causing Northern Lights

The most intense geomagnetic storm since 1989 struck the Earth last week, threatening electrical power distribution, satellite operations and other technical systems, NOAA solar forecasters reported.

Chris Balch, duty forecaster at NOAA's Space Environment Services Center in Boulder, Colo., said the storm, which began Tuesday morning, June 4, increased in intensity overnight and was rated "severe" by the next day. Fewer than five percent of geomagnetic storms reach that strength.

The solar event resulted in the aurora borealis—Northern lights—being visible on Wednesday night as far south as a line extending from New York City through Indianapolis, and Denver, to northern California.

Interference with high frequency radio transmission was "spotty," according to Balch, with some areas of the U.S. and Canada experiencing fading of transmissions while other areas are seeing intensification.

An extremely intense solar

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## 'Head Start' Program for Kemp's Ridley

# Endangered Sea Turtles Released Off Texas

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released 1,850 "head-started" Kemp's ridley sea turtles into the Gulf of Mexico on June 5.

The year-old endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles were freed 11 miles southwest of Galveston, Texas, from an Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO) vessel with participants from Federal and state agencies, fishing and conservation organizations which are involved in the NOAA project.

The Sea Turtle Head Start Experiment is part of the U.S.—Mexico Kemp's Ridley Recovery Program, designed to increase the population of the critically endangered Kemp's

ridley sea turtles. So far, 16,590 tagged Kemp's ridleys have been released into the Gulf of Mexico after being reared in captivity at the NMFS Galveston Laboratory.

The primary nesting site for the Kemp's ridleys is a beach along the Gulf of Mexico near Rancho Nuevo, Mexico. Each year during the nesting season approximately 2,000 eggs are collected from this beach, incubated, and hatched in Rancho Nuevo. The hatchlings are then transferred to the NMFS Laboratory in Galveston, Texas. The hatchlings are reared in seawater raceways for 9-11 months and healthy survivors are tagged and released into the Gulf of Mexico.

NMFS scientists believe that so-called head starting increases the survival rate of ridleys during their first year of life. Their larger size at release gives them a significant advantage over their natural counterparts. It is estimated that less

than 1 percent of wild hatching ridleys survive their first year.

Since 1978, NOAA has participated in an international program to save Kemp's ridley turtles from extinction. This international and interagency program includes the protection of nesting turtles and their eggs on the beach at Rancho Nuevo, prohibitions on the capture, possession, and sale of the turtles, their eggs and turtle products, the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) to allow the escape of sea turtles incidentally captured in shrimp trawls, and the experimental head starting of Kemp's ridleys.

The Kemp's ridley is listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. An estimated 40,000 females nested on the Rancho Nuevo beach in one day in June 1947. Today, fewer than 400 nest there during an entire nesting season from April to August. The primary cause of the population decline has been linked to the direct and indirect exploitation of the turtles and their eggs by man. ☺

### Salmon Species to be Listed Under ESA

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coho salmon and decided that biological evidence suggests that listing these fish under the ESA is not warranted now. Lower Columbia River coho are presently comprised of a mixture of fish of various origins, and no evidence was found that there remains a distinct wild population segment of coho salmon in the lower Columbia River.

Public hearings on the listing proposals have been scheduled for Portland, Ore. on July 30; Seattle on July 31; Richland, Wash. on August 1; and Boise, Idaho on August 7. ☺

### Severe Geomagnetic Storm Disrupts Power Grids

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flare last weekend is believed to have initiated the geomagnetic storm, and a second X-12 plus level solar flare experienced yesterday morning is contributing to the continuation of it, the NOAA forecaster said. At press time, a third similar flare Wednesday night was expected to cause additional storm

activity Friday and Saturday.

The flares causing the storm are occurring on the portion of the sun that will be visible from earth until the middle of the month, and further flaring can be expected.

The geomagnetic activity is not threatening to the crew of the space shuttle Columbia which was launched last week, because of the shuttle's orbit. ☺

*In Minnesota, 'Les' Is More*

## Forecaster's 40th Year On Job Brings Kudos

Folks in Minneapolis, Minn., know that when the forecast is for sun flurries, Harold "Les" Coleman has predicted snow flurry activity on a sunny day.

As lead forecaster for NOAA's National Weather Service office in Minneapolis, Coleman has been forecasting the weather for 40 years, since March 5, 1951. He joined NWS after a nearly five year stint in the Army, and began his present position in June 1974.

If a single word could describe Coleman's forecasts—and the weather itself in the Twin Cities—it would be colorful. When a fast-moving, low pressure system moves southeast out of the far northern reaches of Canada, Coleman will announce it as an Arctic express. If that system becomes a large, dangerous winter storm, he dubs it a "super-mega-whopper storm." He also describes spring-time low pressure systems that form in the southwest and bring large amounts of snow into the southern and central United States as tequila lows.

As the lead forecaster who prepares and issues state weather forecasts, warnings and statements, Coleman said he finds that communicating with the public and staff on a personal and friendly level is much responsibility for office operations when serving as shift supervisor.

Les adds a real feeling of camaraderie and friendship to the staff. We all appreciate his long memory of the Minnesota climate. He adds flavor to his forecast accuracy, said Jim Campbell, NWS Minneapolis

area manager.

On May 1, 1991 Coleman received the Civil Servant of the year Award from the Fed-

erations in Pittsburgh, Pa., Boston, Mass., Chicago, Ill., Kansas City, Mo., El Paso, Texas, and even the South Pole. He even got the chance to meet with Secretary of Commerce Robert A. Mosbacher, when the Secre-

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*If a single word could describe Coleman's forecasts—and the weather itself in the Twin Cities—it would be colorful.*

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eral Executive Board in Twin Cities, Minn. In 1958, he received both the Department of Commerce award and the Meritorious Award for severe weather work. His experience includes forecasting assign-

tary was in the area to work with the Minnesota Partnership Program. Members of the program encourage good working relationships between federal and state governments to save tax payer dollars. ☺

## Cable Weather Channel to Sponsor All-Day NOAA Hurricane Hotline

As East and Gulf Coast residents prepare for hurricane season, NOAA has reached an agreement with The Weather Channel to sponsor the NOAA Hurricane Hotline.

The hotline is operated for anyone who wants the latest information on developing tropical storms and hurricanes. NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) has operated a hurricane hotline since 1985. In past years the hotline operated only when there were named tropical storms or hurricanes. This year, however, it will operate

24 hours a day from June 1 until Nov. 30, whether or not a named storm is in progress.

When there is a named storm in the Atlantic Basin, the hotline will carry advisories issued by NWS's National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, Fla. The storm's position, anticipated path, and landfall predictions will be provided. Wind speed, tide effects, and areas under watch and warning will also be included.

When there are no named storms, the hotline will feature a Tropical Weather Outlook, or

## Secy.'s Quality Award Tutorial Videotape Offered

Greg Withee, the Director of the National Climatic Data Center, presented a tutorial session on preparing nominations for the Secretary of Commerce Quality Award last May, and interested NOAA organizations can receive a videotape of the session. Greg was an examiner in last year's Award selection process.

This is the second year the Secretary of Commerce Quality Award will be offered. The Secretary's Quality Award is a significant distinction for the winner, as evidenced by the Award itself, a fine piece of

Steuben crystal. The Award recognizes the organization within the Department that the Award's examiners and judges

find best exemplifies the practices of Total Quality Management. ☺

### Weather Channel to Sponsor NOAA Hurricane Hotline

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general outlook of tropical cyclone potential for the next 24 hours. This will be updated each morning and evening. This message could also contain significant tropical cyclone activity in the eastern North Pacific.

The NOAA Hurricane Hotline can be reached by calling 1-900-820-NOAA. Callers will be charged 50 cents for the first minute and 45 cents for each

additional minute. All revenue generated beyond the cost of managing the Hotline will be donated by The Weather Channel to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

The Weather Channel operates a 24-hour cable network that disseminates weather and related environmental information. The Weather Channel is also involved in community outreach activities as well as awareness and educational projects. ☺

Coming Events				June 1991		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9	10	11	12	13 Interdpt. Cmte for Meteo. Services	14	15 Chesapeake Bay Nat'l Reserve dedication
16	Coral Bleaching Symposium & Workshop, EPA-NOAA-NSF sponsored meeting to examine the causes and extent of U.S. coral bleaching, Miami. Thru June 25 →					
23 NY Times cover story on Dr. Sylvia Earle, CS	24	25 Fed. Cmte for Meteo Services, Washington	26 North Pacific Anadromous Species Conservation meetings, Washington ← Begins June 25	27	28	29

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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