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Tornadoes Devastate Louisiana and Mississippi; NWS Stresses Preparedness Planning in SKYWARN '71

Destructive tornadoes slashed across northeastern Louisiana and western Mississippi on the afternoon and evening of Sunday, Feb. 21. The exact number of tornadoes that struck these areas has not yet been determined.

Latest figures show 98 persons dead, 581 injured, and property damage estimated at more than 10 million dollars. These tornadoes caused the greatest loss of life in the South in 19 years. It was the worst tornado disaster in Louisiana and Mississippi since April 5, 1936.

As of Tuesday, Feb. 23, 25 sightings of tornadoes had been confirmed. Preliminary verification reports indicate that of these 25 tornado sightings, 22 were in the watch area issued by the National Severe Storms Forecast Center. The first tornado reported at Delhi, Louisiana, occurred in a valid watch area 70 minutes after the tornado watch was issued.

A special NOAA team headed by Arthur Peterson, NOAA Office of Plans and Programs, was dispatched by Dr. Robert M. White, NOAA Administrator, to the disaster area to evaluate the warning system. Other members of the team included Alexander Sadowski, Office of Plans and Programs; Harry Foltz, Chief, Weather Analysis and Prediction Division, NWS; Jeff Baker, NOAA Office of Public Information; and Harold McCrabb and Carl Reber of the NWS Southern Region.

Preliminary survey team findings indicate that the responsible weather service offices also did an outstanding job in issuing tornado warnings. In essentially all cases, a tornado warning was issued prior to any fatalities.

By deadly coincidence, SKYWARN '71--the National Weather Service's campaign to save lives from tornadoes--was officially launched as dozens of twisters hit Louisiana and Mississippi, emphasizing again the importance of preparedness in dealing with tornadoes.

Each year, NWS inaugurates the SKYWARN campaign before the peak of the tornado season to give communities the time needed to fill out their networks of volunteer spotters and help tell citizens how to prepare for these vicious storms. With winds exceeding 250 miles per hour, tornadoes are among the least predictable of all natural disasters.

In the past 15 years, the annual number of tornadoes reported in the United States has varied from a low of 461 with 31 deaths in 1963 to a high of 912 with 116 deaths in 1967. In 1970, according to Environmental Data Service statistics, there were 650 tornadoes, with 73 deaths.

Senate Confirms Nominees For Top NOAA Positions

The Senate confirmed on Feb. 19 the President's nominations to five top NOAA positions. Dr. Robert M. White is now NOAA Administrator; Howard W. Pollock is NOAA Deputy Administrator; Dr. John W. Townsend, Jr., NOAA Associate Administrator; Rear Admiral Don A. Jones, Director of the National Ocean Survey; and Rear Admiral Harley D. Nygren, Director of the NOAA Corps.

President Names Three NMFS Men as U.S. Commissioners

President Nixon has appointed three National Marine Fisheries Service officials as U.S. Commissioners for international fisheries commissions.

NMFS Director Philip M. Roedel has been named to the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission. Mr. Roedel, an internationally known fishery scientist and administrator, was Chief of the State of California's Marine Resources Program before he became Director of NMFS (then the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries) in January 1970. He has served as a member of several U.S. delegations to international fisheries conferences and meetings, and also as a consultant to the Agency for International Development.

The International North Pacific Fisheries Commission was formed in 1953 by the U.S., Canada, and Japan. One of the Commission's responsibilities is to coordinate scientific research, studies, and recommendations to the governments on measures to assure maximum sustainable yields of fish to member nations.

William M. Terry, Acting Deputy Director of NMFS, has been appointed to the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. Prior to his present assignment, Mr. Terry served as Assistant Director for International Affairs in the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. He is also a U.S. Commissioner for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

Fifteen nations, including the major countries fishing in the Northwest Atlantic, are now members of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. Formed by international treaty in 1951, the Commission works to conserve high seas fishery resources, and has the authority to coordinate scientific studies and propose specific conservation measures for uniform application by all member countries.

Donald R. Johnson, NMFS Regional Director for the Pacific Northwest, is U.S. Commissioner to the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission. Mr. Johnson, whose experience includes three years as a staff scientist of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, has been active in fisheries work on the west coast since 1939. He was appointed to his present position with NMFS in July 1966, having previously served as Director for the agency's Pacific Southwest Region at Terminal Island, Calif.

The International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, formed in 1937 between the United States and Canada, is charged with preservation, protection, and extension of sockeye and pink salmon runs to the Fraser River system. The Commission has both scientific and regulatory responsibilities to insure that these runs are maintained and that the allowable catch in the convention area is shared equally by fishermen of the two countries.

EDS Officials Meet in Detroit To Discuss IFYGL Data Archiving

Mr. R. W. Schloemer, Deputy Director for Climatology, and Robert Ochinero, Acting Director, National Oceanographic Data Center, both of EDS, visited the Lake Survey Center Office in Detroit on February 16 to discuss NOAA archiving of the data to be collected during the coming (1972) International Field Year of the Great Lakes (IFYGL). Mr. A. W. Hodson of the data center, and Mr. Stan Bolsanga, IFYGL Coordinator, participated. A stop was also made at the Great Lakes Institute, Ann Arbor, Mich., to survey with Dr. John Ayres, the Director, the data holdings of that organization.

Lt. North Assumes Command of Launch 1257

Lt. Caroll Dale North, Jr., has assumed command of the Norfolk-based, high-speed boat, Launch 1257. The four-man, 59-foot craft operates at speeds of more than 20 knots. The launch is equipped with a data acquisition system capable of automatically recording and plotting hydrographic data. Electronic echo sounders are used in determining water depths.

W.E. Phelps Is Awarded Commerce Bronze Medal

William E. Phelps, Jr., has been awarded the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal for demonstrating unusual administrative ability as executive officer of ERL's Earth Sciences Laboratories. As liaison officer to the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES)--a joint venture of ERL and the University of Colorado -- Mr. Phelps handled much of the administrative work of establishing CIRES. He has also worked closely with university officials as administrative officer for the Theoretical Research Study Group, which forms a major part of ERL's contribution to CIRES. Four years ago, Mr. Phelps was instrumental in creating a council composed of administrative officers from each of ERL's 11 laboratories. Under his chairmanship, the council helped to upgrade administrative services for the laboratories, and to improve inter-laboratory communication. In photo above, Dr. Wilmot N. Hess, ERL Director, congratulates Mr. Phelps on his Bronze Medal Award. Looking on are (left) Dr. Leroy R. Alldredge, Director of the Earth Sciences Laboratory, and (right) Dr. Christopher Harrison, Acting Director of the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Environmental Sciences.

Soderstrom Advises Laotian Government On Fishery Development Project

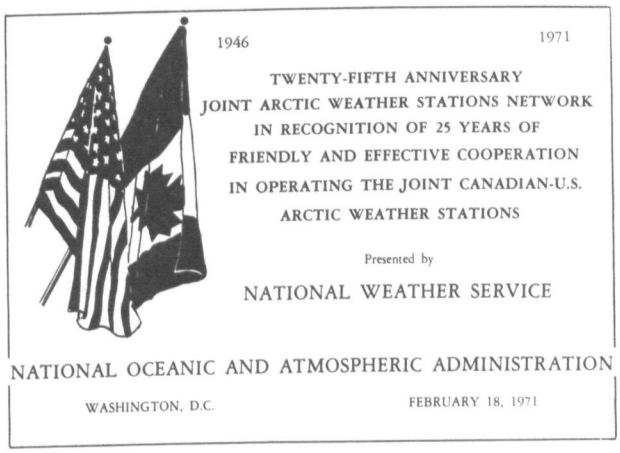
Clifford Soderstrom,of the NMFS Columbia River Fisheries Program, is in Vientiane, Laos, to advise the Laotian Government on fishery development aspects of a new reservoir. The project is part of the regional economic development plan for Southeast Asia.

Joint Arctic Weather Stations Celebrate 25th Anniversary

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Joint Arctic Weather Stations (JAWS) network organized in 1946 by the United States and Canada to provide meteorological coverage of the high Canadian Arctic. Stations in the network are located at Alert, Resolute, Mould Bay, Isachsen, and Eureka. In addition to surface and upper-air observations, the stations make observations of ice thickness and rate of growth, ice-temperature gradients, permafrost temperature, low-level air-temperature gradients, amount of sunshine and radiation, aurora, and sea-ice during the shipping season.

Vaughn Rockney, Chief of the Overseas Operations Division of the National Weather Service, represented NOAA in paying tribute to the cooperative undertaking along with U.S. Ambassador to Canada Joseph P. Schmidt, at ceremonies in Ottawa, Feb. 18. Among those participating for Canada were Donald C. Jamieson, Minister of Transport; Basil Robinson, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs for Northern Development; A. E. Ritchie, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs; G. A. Scott, Assistant Deputy Minister for Air of the Department of Transport; and J. R. H. Noble, Administrator of the Canadian Meteorological Service.

At a formal luncheon hosted by Canada, Ambassador Schmidt read a letter of greeting from Robert M. White, NOAA Administrator, and appropriate gifts were exchanged. Shown below is a replica of the plaque presented by Mr. Rockney as a U.S. memento.



Griffin, Wyoming Engineer, Wins Weather Service Award

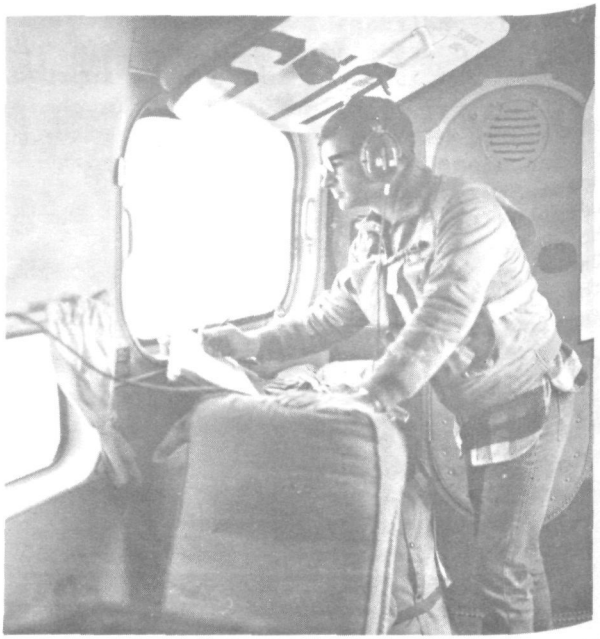
Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming recently presented a National Weather Service Public Service Award to Gordon Griffin, District Engineer for the Casper District of the Wyoming Highway Department, in a ceremony held at the NWS office in Casper. Mr. Griffin was honored for the Casper District's assistance in the collection and relay of severe storm reports to the National Weather Service and for disseminating severe weather warnings to community officials and to the public. Letters of commendation from Roy L. Fox, Director, NWS Central Region, went to Harry Salisbury, Chief of Communications, Casper, Wyo., and Mrs. Vivian Baribeau, Radio Dispatcher, Lusk, Wyo., for their outstanding personal contributions to NWS's warning program. Although not present, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Thomas of Keeline, Frank Kuhn of Lusk, and the late Everett Bird of Red Bird, Wyo., were also recognized for their services in reporting weather observations to the Casper National Weather Service Office as Severe Winter Weather Voluntary Spotters. Attending the ceremony were, from left to right, H. Jean Taylor, NWS, Casper; Mr. Griffin; Mr. Salisbury; Mrs. Baribeau; and Senator McGee. Charles W. McCain, NWS Casper, not pictured, also participated in the ceremony.

Hess Cited for Outstanding Service on T-3

Oliver Hess, observation specialist at Swan Island, has received a Special Achievement Award for outstanding service while assigned to Ice Island T-3 from July to October 1970. On extremely short notice, Mr. Hess volunteered to fly to the ice island for duty as observation specialist due to the death of Bennie Lightsy.

First Scheduled Ice Flight Made To Chart Parts of Great Lakes

The Lake Survey Center made its first scheduled ice flight on Feb. 7 to chart the Green Bay, Straits of Mackinac, St. Marys River and Whitefish Bay areas of the Great Lakes. Each of the Great Lakes, with the exception of Lake Ontario, will be charted. Flights over the other Lakes will be made at weekly intervals through the first week of April. Data collected on these flights is used for the publication and distribution of ice cover charts used as aids to navigation and to help in solving engineering problems concerned with shorelines and power generation, as well as to assist in research activities on the Great Lakes. Flight support for the missions is provided by the U.S. Coast Guard's Ninth District. An amphibian aircraft carrying a crew of five and two Lake Survey Center observers is used. The observers' task is to plot information related to ice conditions directly on work sheets. In addition, they record any other information deemed of scientific value on the work sheet. A tape recorder is also used to gain more detailed information for the later compilation of the ice charts. To provide a timely service, the ice charts are compiled and processed as soon as possible after completion of the flight. Copies are provided to such users as the Lake Carriers' Association, U.S. Coast Guard and other government agencies, universities, and private individuals interested in ice conditions.



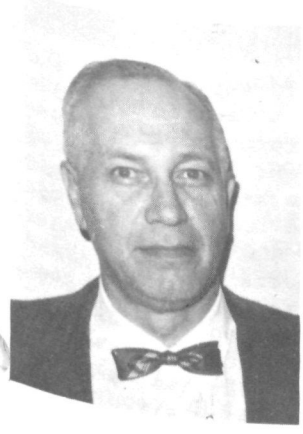
Ice observer enters data on work sheet during flight.

Winterfeld Leads Team To Prepare Data Manual

Mr. Thomas Winterfeld of the Environmental Data Service's National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC), has recently been appointed leader of an international task team responsible for the preparation of a manual that will cover all aspects of nonrealtime acquisition, storage, and exchange of data collected by the Integrated Global Ocean Station System (IGOSS).

The manual was recommended by a joint working group of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). Coordination between NODC, the lead organization within the United States, and other U.S. activities is provided through the Interagency Committee on Marine Environmental Prediction (ICMAREP) and its subcommittee on IGOSS.

Zetler Named to Oceanographic Committee



Bernard D. Zetler, senior research oceanographer at ERL's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratories in Miami, has been named to the Committee on Tides and Mean Sea Level of the International Association of the Physical Sciences of the Ocean.

New River Forecast Center Planned for Alaska Region

The National Weather Service's Alaska Region is acquiring a full-fledged River Forecast Center for the first time. The new center, to be housed at Alaska Region Region headquarters in Anchorage, will be supplemented by a smaller River District Office in Fairbanks. The River Forecast Center will be staffed by three hydrologists, and the River District Office by a hydrologic services specialist. Their job will be to analyze data on precipitation and river stages for all major river basins in the State, and to prepare flood warnings and river forecasts for people living in or near those basins. The Alaskan units will be additions to an overall U.S. network of 11 River Forecast Centers and 80 River District Offices. Besides forecasting conventional floods, the Alaskan center will have some special hydrologic duties, such as forecasting when glacier lakes are going to "self dump," the break-up of ice in the rivers, and changes in thickness of river ice. In the past, Alaskan flood warnings and river forecasts have been prepared by the regional hydrologist in Anchorage and disseminated through Weather Service Offices at Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Beers Receives Plaque for UGF Services

Clyde J. Beers, a supervisory geophysicist at the National Ocean Survey's Fredericksburg Magnetic Center at Corbin, Va., has received a plaque from the Fredericksburg Area United Givers Fund Committee in recognition of his services during the 1970 campaign. Mr. Beers coordinated a speakers bureau that addressed more than 18 employee groups, service clubs, and fraternal organizations during the campaign. Merle F. Wyant, Jr., administrative support services assistant at the Center, received a certificate for his role as UGF collector at the facility.

FERREL and PEIRCE Survey Southern Coastal Waters

A detailed survey of Atlantic coastal waters south of Charleston, S. C., will be initiated this year by the NOAA Ship FERREL, assisted by one or more planes from the National Ocean Survey's Photogrammetry Division. The survey by the FERREL is part of a three-to-five year federal program which will cover a 570-mile stretch of the Atlantic coast from Charleston, S. C., to the St. Johns River at Jacksonville, Fla. The primary purpose of the survey of oceanographic conditions is to study the circulation pattern of inlets and marshes along the coast. The information is needed to understand the physical processes in the coastal zone. One use of the data gathered would be in studies of the manner in which pollutants are transported by coastal currents between the shore and the sea. The data can also be used for ecology studies and for recreational needs.

A hydrographic survey of South Carolina coastal waters between Charleston and the Savannah River on the Georgia border, the first hydrographic survey of this area in more than 40 years, will be conducted by the NOAA Ship PEIRCE. The survey will be part of a long-range program begun in 1963 to provide detailed and accurate information on water depths and submerged hazards, channel depths, and the general shape of the ocean bottom off the South Carolina coast from the beach to 600-foot depths. The data are important to shipping, industry, and marine science studies, and will be incorporated in new nautical charts and bathymetric maps produced by the National Ocean Survey. Both the FERREL and the PEIRCE will operate out of Charleston during February, March, and April. Work which is not completed this season will be scheduled for 1972 and succeeding years.

Two Begin University Training at Clemson

Milton Brown, of the Columbia, S. C., Weather Service Forecast Office, and Ronald W. Crandall, of the Oklahoma City, Okla., Weather Service Forecast Office, have been selected for university training in agricultural meteorology at Clemson University, Clemson, S. C., for the spring semester.

NOAA Employees Nominated For Handicapped Honors

Each year, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped honors the handicapped American whose accomplishments and initiative are so outstanding as to encourage the useful employment of other disabled persons. Annually the Department of Commerce submits nominations for the President's Trophy, and, for 1970, three NOAA employees have been chosen to represent the Department in this competition.

James A. Horton, a meteorological technician at the Shreveport, La., Weather Service Office, developed rheumatoid arthritis in 1955 while in the U.S. Navy. He retired from the Navy at that time, and, although restricted to the use of a cane and a wheel chair, was able to return to employment when he accepted a position in the Weather Service.

Charles J. Neumann was serving with the U.S. Navy in 1953 when he contracted polio and lost the use of his legs. As a result, his military service ended; however, because of his military work in hurricane research, he was able to begin employment with the Weather Service in the Spaceflight Meteorology Group at Miami.

William Krohn is an engineering draftsman with the Environmental Research Laboratories. His work in drafting and illustrating in the areas of statistics, mechanics and electronics supports the projects of ERL scientists and engineers. Mr. Krohn, who is deaf and mute, trained at the Colorado Springs School for the Deaf and Blind, the Seible School of Drafting, and the Technical Trades Institute.

Record Number of Employees Participate In Blood Drive at Pacific Marine Center

One hundred and fifty employees of the National Ocean Survey's Pacific Marine Center, Seattle, participated in their annual Blood Drive, Feb. 3-5. The Drive was in response to the King County Blood Bank's continuing need for donors. The blood donors included NOAA Corps officers and crew members and base personnel of NOS. Credits were given to the Federal Employees blood pool for use by employees and their dependents and retired personnel. Last year, two employees required almost one-half of the total credits available.

Genzlinger Gets Top Honors In Army Flight Class

Lt. Lowell J. Genzlinger recently received top honors in a class of 30 pilots graduated from the Army Flight Class, Fort Rucker, Ala. Following graduation, Lt. Genzlinger was assigned to a photogrammetric flight mission as a pilot. In commending Lt. Genzlinger, Rear Admiral Harley D. Nygren, NOAA Corps Director, said his achievement demonstrated "outstanding industry, devotion to duty, a superior coordination between mental and physical processes, and a high degree of intelligence."

$1000 Reward Offered For Loch Ness Monster

Dr. Robert S. Dietz, a senior oceanographer at ERL's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratories in Miami, has offered a reward of $1000 for information verifying the existence of the Loch Ness monster. The rules for collecting the reward are: Nessie does not have to appear monstrous; Nessie need not be a monster of heroic proportions; any animal over three inches qualifies; the monster must be from Loch Ness, and must be a new species of animal, or a "living fossil" known previously only from the geologic past. Dr. Dietz, who is offering the reward " as a private citizen, in the interest of science, or perhaps psychiatry," has named as referees Dr. Clarence Idyll, Rosenstiel Institute of Marine Sciences, Miami; Dr. Robert Menzies, Florida State University of Tallahassee; or N. B. Marshall, F.R.S., British Museum of Natural History, Kensington, London.

Third Forecasters Training Course Ends at NWS Headquarters

The third Forecasters Training Course ended Feb. 12 at National Weather Service headquarters. Eighteen meteorologists in charge and principal assistants, including nine other forecasters representing the six NWS regions; the Air Weather Service; FAA Academy; and Weather Service headquarters, are attending. Seated, left to right: Arthur Hosick, Boise, Idaho; Leonard Waas, Jackson, Miss.; Wayne Johnson, Los Angeles; Hugh Snyder, FAA Academy; Mrs. Hazel Tatro, Greensboro, N.C.; Henry Mansfield, Charleston, West Va.; Russell Knierim, Spokane, Wash.; Capt. C. Tidwell, Langley AFB, Va. Front row: Maury Pautz & Fred Ostby, NWSH. Standing, left to right: William Trigg, Fairbanks, Alaska; Gordon Lippert, Lincoln, Nebr.; Robert Babb, Lansing, Mich.; Edwin Addison, Madison, Wisc.; Charles Ryland, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Arville Gibson, Atlanta, Ga.; Clyde Downes, Evansville, Ind.; Robert Hasling, New Orleans, La.; Stephen Rigney, Portland, Me.; Robert Carter, Salt Lake City; Joseph Ganser, Reno, Nev.; Clyde Hall, Anchorage, Alaska; Henry Resendez, San Antonio, Tex.; Robert Reese, NWSH; Robert Dittmar, Wallops Island, Va.; James McDoDonell, NMC; Masaru Hasada, NMC; Doyle Cook, Louisville, Ky.; Paul Reasin, NMC. Attending, but not shown is Norman Thomas, Wake Island.

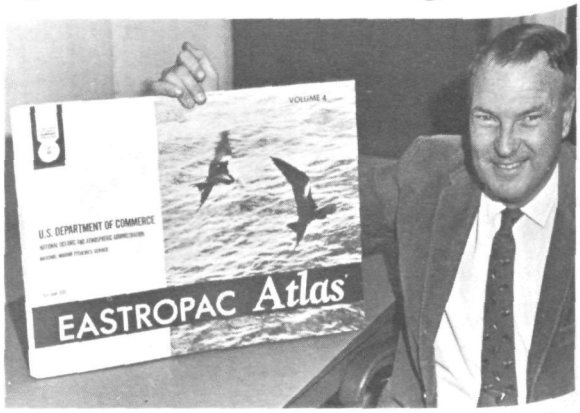
Godshall, Yao, and Rahn Attend NASA Briefing Sessions

Fredric Godshall, Augustine Y.M. Yao, and James J. Rahn attended meetings Feb. 2-5 at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland. The NASA meetings are intended as briefing sessions for prospective users of data from the Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS) and SKYLAB. All three scientists, who are members of EDS' Laboratory for Environmental Data Research, obtained information for their own projects, as well as pertinent information to be discussed with two groups EDS serves in an advisory capacity. The first such group is called "NE-69," and is composed of universities in the northeast United States which engage in NASA-supported experiments related to earth resources; the second is the Great Plains Council, an amalgamation of midwestern universities engaged in similar scientific endeavors. Both organizations work on large-scale research projects that require the cooperation of multiple scientific organizations, rather than single institutions. The three EDS men will meet again, Feb. 8-9, to consult informally with members of the Great Plains Council, which is considering potential uses of remotely sensed data for measurements of evapotranspiration.

Air Resources Lab Staffs Are Commended For Support to NASA Sonic Boom Program

Meteorological and electronic technicians from ERL's Air Resources Laboratory staffs in Silver Spring, Md., and Las Vegas, Nev., have been commended for their support to the NASA Threshold Sonic Boom Flight Program last fall. The program, in which specialists from NOAA, the U.S. Air Force, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Federal Aviation Agency cooperated closely with NASA personnel, gathered basic data on sonic boom pressure signatures associated with aircraft operating at or near the "cutoff Mach number." NOAA staff members provided meteorological support for the mission, including documentation of wind and temperature profiles from flight altitude to the ground, along with turbulence level in the earth's boundary area.

EASTROPAC Atlas Published By Government Printing Office



Cuthbert M. Love, Editor of the EASTROPAC Atlas

The first volume of the projected 11-volume EASTROPAC Atlas was published by the U.S. Government Printing Office in San Francisco during January. The Atlas is a comprehensive treatment in graphical form of the data taken on the EASTROPAC expeditions, a multiagency, international series of cruises, designed to investigate seasonal changes over a large part of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The field surveys began in early 1967 and continued through April 1968, with the National Marine Fisheries Service as the lead agency. In order to make the results of EASTROPAC available as quickly as possible, it was decided not to produce the volumes in numerical or chronoligical order, but rather in the order in which the charts could be ready. Volume 4, the first to be published, contains biological and nutrient chemistry data from the first and second monitor cruises in April-May and June-July, 1967, and has 130 pages. The atlas, 16 x 21 inches, has a loose-leafing binding held together with easily removable screws so that individual charts can be taken out for study. The black and white cover features frigate birds common near the islands in the area covered by the EASTROPAC surveys. Copies are available at $4.75 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, San Francisco, Calif.

Items to be considered for publication in NOAA WEEK should be submitted to: Office of Public Information, NOAA, Room 804, Bldg. 5, Rockville, Md. 20852. Phone (301) 496-8243.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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