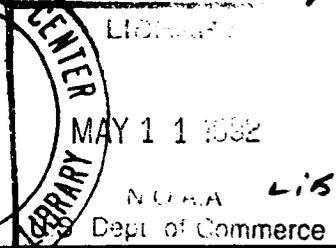
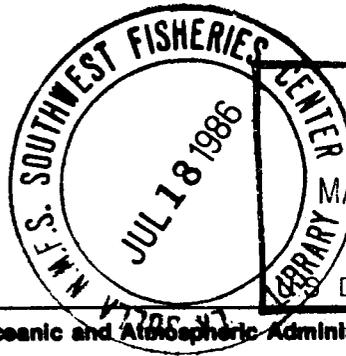




NOAA REPORT



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June 25, 1986

COMING UP

NOAA-NASA-NSF media briefing on the far-reaching earth sciences program recommended in a report by NASA's Earth System Sciences Committee in Washington June 26.

Public hearing on management and operation of South Slough Estuarine Reserve at the reserve near Coos Bay, Oreg., 7:00 p.m., June 26.

NOAA Science Seminar Series: "Pelagic-Benthic Energy Fluxes in Lake Michigan;" Wayne S. Gardner, GLERL, WSC-5, Room 926, 10:30 a.m., June 27.

NOAA Regional Users Conference in New Orleans Sept. 10-11.

Oceans '86 in Washington, D.C., September 23-25.

Bluefish Found Safe:--Bluefish, the main Atlantic coast recreational fish are safe to eat, according to a just-released NOAA study, "Report on 1984-86 Federal Survey of PCBs in Atlantic Coast Bluefish," requested by the Congress in 1984.

Their pesticide levels show no health threat and PCB (polychlorinated byphenyl) levels for all but some of the largest bluefish are within the two parts per million set by the Food and Drug Administration, the National Marine Fisheries Service announced.

The announcement revealed preliminary results of a 12-month study, largest of its kind ever conducted, by NOAA in cooperation with the FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency. A final report will be issued in December.

The study, involving more than 3,400 bluefish caught from Maine to Florida, shows that levels of PCBs in commercially available bluefish pose no health threat for the public, primarily because bluefish constitute only a small portion of the diet of most fish eaters. The study stated, however, that there "might be health concerns" for those who consume contaminated bluefish daily for several years. Nevertheless, the FDA said even those groups that eat bluefish from areas of the highest PCB levels will not be endangering their health during the next few months, while the data are being analyzed for the final report.

The annual bluefish catch has been more than 130 million pounds in recent years. In 1985, commercial landings totalled almost 14 million pounds, worth about \$2.4 million.

Honolulu Inaugurates Marine Phone Service:--A new recorded phone message service just started by the Weather Service forecast office in Honolulu is providing Hawaii's large marine community with information on wind and sea conditions along coasts of the islands and over the neighboring ocean, according to Pacific Regional Director Richard Hagemeyer. Updated six times daily, the recordings include the latest observations from coastal stations, as well as winds and wave heights from deep ocean buoys, an offshore "waverider" buoy, and the Marine Reporting Program. The new service offers three dedicated phone lines to the public, recreational and commercial fishermen, and other boaters.

Atlantic Black Smokers Confirmed:--The first direct observations of high-temperature black, smoker-type, seafloor hot springs in the Atlantic Ocean were made by a team of NOAA, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology scientists with the submersible Alvin in a dive series between May 21-23. According to Dr. Peter Rona of AOML who dove on the 12,000-foot-deep geysers, the black smokers (so called because of the dark shade of the mineral-rich fluids they emit) are the first to be found outside the Pacific Ocean. They were discovered, by remote cameras, by scientists in the NOAA VENTS Program in 1985 in the Rift Valley of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge near 26 degree north latitude, 45 degrees west longitude at a site known as the Tag Hydrothermal Field.

ERL Hosts Artificial Intelligence Meeting:--Can machines be taught useful skills in such atmospheric sciences as weather forecasting? A number of scientists say "Yes." On May 28-29 NOAA's Environmental Research Laboratories in Boulder, Colo., hosted a meeting on artificial intelligence research in environmental science. The 80 participants, from the United States, Canada, and Australia, included government and university researchers in atmospheric science and representatives from military and civilian weather services and private industry. Six panels discussed aspects and problems of applying artificial intelligence techniques to the needs of atmospheric science including automated detection of low-level wind shear hazard to aircraft, computer-worded forecasts of coastal ice danger, forecasts of winds dangerous to space shuttle launches, and forecasts of typhoons in the western Pacific Ocean. The general feeling expressed by panel members and other conference participants was that expert systems can provide aid not only in weather forecasting itself, but also in general support of weather forecasters (data acquisition and quality verification, for instance) and in support of those who must use weather forecasts to make operational decisions. This was the first meeting in which such a wide variety of participants gathered to discuss the potential effect of artificial intelligence technology on weather research and operations.

GOES Moving To Hurricane Position:--The GOES-6 satellite was maneuvered on June 19 to drift at 1/2 degree per day toward 98 degrees west longitude where it will remain for the duration of the hurricane season. The geostationary weather satellite will arrive "on station" July 9 where it will provide forecasters with greater coverage of the Atlantic spawning grounds of hurricanes and tropical storms.

Elephant Seal Study Completed:--A 2-year study of the foraging ecology of northern elephant seals on San Miguel Island, Calif., has been completed, according to NMFS principal investigators Dr. Robert L. Delong and George Antonelis. Preliminary analysis by the Seattle-based scientists indicates that the seals are capable of foraging on a variety of prey which are found in different marine habitats. This information and analysis of data on depth of feeding dives will provide a better understanding of this species' feeding behavior in waters around the island, and allow scientists to predict those areas within the National Marine Sanctuary which might be of critical importance to the foraging success of these animals. The study was accomplished through the combined efforts of NOAA and the National Park Service.

NOAA Issues Booklet for Liberty Centennial:--The National Ocean Service, in cooperation with the Office of Business Affairs, has prepared a marine safety aid booklet for the tall ships participating in the Statue of Liberty Centennial. "Selected Tidal Predictions, 1986, Block and Long Island Sounds and New York Harbor" covers the period July 3-7, and contains tide tables, tidal current tables, and tidal current charts. It will be distributed by the Operation Sail '86 commission to all sailing ships, foreign vessels, and warships that the commission invited as official participants in the centennial celebration.

PCBs Declining in Lake Superior:--Because PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are decreasing in the atmosphere and Lake Superior's PCB source is almost exclusively atmospheric, its toxin level may be declining faster than in the other Great Lakes where the influx of contaminants is heavier from lakeshore industries and tributaries. Expectations are that PCB levels in lake fish are declining as well. According to a University of Minnesota Sea Grant study led by Steven Eisenreich, the Great Lakes respond rapidly to changes in PCB input. As fewer PCBs enter the lakes, their ability to cleanse themselves increases, Prof. Eisenreich says. Lakes actually lose PCBs back to the atmosphere through volatilization--the contaminants dissolve in the water at the surface and turn into gas just out of the water.

Moving On:--The Washington offices of NMFS and other NOAA sections, including the NESDIS Assessment and Information Services Center, are expected to complete their move from the Page 1 and Page 2 buildings to new quarters in early July. The new NOAA address is the Universal South Building just north of DuPont Circle at 1825 Connecticut Avenue in Washington. Phone numbers will change, but new numbers have not been assigned yet.

NOAA Documentary Wins Film Award:--The documentary, "Give Me the Tides, Give Me the Currents," was the winner of the Cup of the Minister for Relations with Parliament at the recent 25th International Competition on Maritime Films and TV Documentaries in Milan, Italy. The 18-minute film, produced by the National Ocean Services Office of Oceanography and Marine Assessments, illustrates the importance and application of the National Ocean Service's real-time tides and currents information to ship navigation, commerce, rescue operations, and environmental protection.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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July 23, 2010