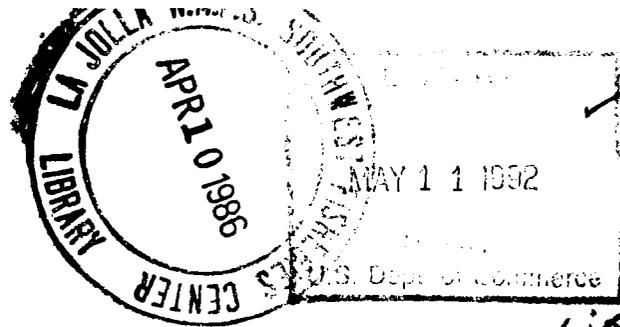




# NOAA REPORT



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

March 18, 1986

COMING UP

NEXRAD data user groups, NOAA, and the American Meteorological Society meet Mar. 25 in Washington on plans for dissemination of NEXRAD data.

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Film, "Chesapeake: The Twilight Estuary" on WTTG-TV, Channel 5, Washington, Wednesday, Mar. 26, at 9 p.m.

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Marine Data Systems MDS '86 international symposium by Gulf Coast Section, Marine Technology Society, Hyatt Regency, New Orleans, Apr. 30--May 2.

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NOAA-G Launch Wednesday, May 28, at Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

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El Nino Advisory Issued:--The Weather Service's Climate Analysis Center issued an advisory Mar. 13, noting signs of a possible El Nino/Southern Oscillation event in the tropical Pacific.

El Nino is a warming of Pacific surface waters; the Southern Oscillation a global-scale seesaw in atmospheric pressure, both part of an interacting system. Periodically, it behaves erratically and throws the climate into a global spin, the most serious recent occurrence being 1982-83, when thousands died and damage was high in the billions.

Dr. Eugene Rasmusson, chief of the center's diagnostics branch, and Dr. J. Michael Hall, U.S. coordinator for the international Tropical Ocean/Global Atmosphere Experiment, briefed science writers on the prospect. Attending: both wire services, Scripps-Howard, and USA Today. Dr. Rasmusson, terming it still too early to predict an El Nino, pointed to several significant signs of the possibility. Among them: warming sea surface temperatures in the waters west of Peru, expanding northward, then westward along the equator; and atmospheric pressure patterns over the Pacific consistent with the development of an event. Should an El Nino occur, he said, there is no expectation that it will be on the 1982-83 scale.

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During the next several months, the situation will be monitored closely, by the most comprehensive array of satellites, aircraft, ships, buoys and other instrumentation in the history of El Nino research by nations participating in the TOGA Experiment, Dr. Hall said. Every pertinent area of the Pacific is under surveillance, and the public will be notified promptly of any significant developments.

**Surf Clam, Ocean Quahog Harvests Near Record:**--The ocean quahog and surf clam fishery harvests have been so successful early closures may be necessary. The ocean quahog fishery is headed towards a record harvest with landings through November, 12 percent above the rate that would achieve its 4.4 million-bushel quota. The quota has been increased to 4.9 million bushels and fishing days have been cut from seven to five days a week, but in spite of these measures, management experts say the large landing may force an early closure to the year's fishery. The mid-Atlantic surf clam fishery (New York and south), already forced to close from June 23 to July 4, and currently on restricted hours of allowable fishing, also is headed for a possible early closure. Although cumulative landings through mid-November are 13 percent below the rate that would achieve its 2.65 million-bushels quota, the landings rate has increased due to a lowering of the minimum size limit. The Georges Bank surf clam fishery was closed in July when its 300,000-bushel annual quota was met. The Nantucket Shoals fishery's landings are 26 percent below the 200,000-bushel annual quota.

**Flood Outlook Briefings Held:**--Wire services and two TV networks--ABC and CBS--were among media covering the annual spring flood outlook briefing held Mar. 10 at the HCHB Auditorium by Michael Hudlow, Director of the Weather Service's Office of Hydrology. Dr. Hudlow also briefed concerned federal agencies, and distributed the outlook to 531 Members of Congress.

**Highlights:**

The Great Salt Lake and the Great Lakes have the most serious potential for major snowmelt flooding, with minor to moderate flooding also expected in many north central areas, from the Appalachians to the Rockies. As of Mar. 3, the Great Salt Lake stood at 4,209.95 feet, equal to the highest level since 1875. It is expected to peak around June 1 at 4,210.6 feet. Flooding will also continue around Utah Lake during this period. The potential for flooding and severe property damage and erosion is extremely high for the shorelines of Lakes Erie, Michigan, Huron and Superior. All except Lake Ontario are expected to peak this summer at about 10 inches higher than last year's records.

Moderate to major flooding can be expected in the following river basins, Hudlow said: Wind and Sweetwater Rivers, Wyoming; North Platte River in Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska; Boulder, Big Thompson and Cache La Poudre Rivers in Colorado; Moueau River

in South Dakota; Big Sioux River in South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota. Flooding conditions were created in the west by heavy snowfall in the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains, and a subsequent series of winter storms.

**Lawsuit Over Waste Burn:**--Chemical Waste Management Inc., which wants to burn hazardous waste in a research exercise for the Environmental Protection Agency from a ship off the Maryland coast, has sued NOAA in D.C. Federal Court. The company argues that NOAA, in ruling that the state of Maryland has authority to review the EPA application for a period up to six months, thereby delaying the operation, acted illegally. Chemical Waste plans to load 700,000 gallons of cancer-causing PCB's in Philadelphia and ship it to the Atlantic for burning. The Justice Department has 20 days to respond.

**Wildfires Race Over The South:**--Hundreds of wildfires have erupted across the South, peaking early this month. In Arkansas 113 blazes, highest incidence in five years, were reported. Acutely dry conditions during the winter led to high fire danger in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma. Several Weather Service offices in the affected areas have provided spot forecasts and consultations. With the danger only partially eased by thunderstorms and showers, the situation is being watched closely, according to Paul Llanso, agriculture and fire weather program leader.

**Fish Oils Fight Heart Disease:**--NOAA scientists under the direction of the Fisheries Service's Dr. Robert Kifer are preparing a "blueprint" for the production of the fatty acids found in fish which may lead to new pharmaceuticals to combat heart disease. NOAA's fishery laboratories in Seattle, Charleston, and Gloucester have analyzed the composition of marine fish oils as part of a collaborative study designed to provide medical researchers with refined and standardized fish oils to be evaluated for their therapeutic effects in human heart disease. The initial results of the analysis appear comparable among the laboratories, and following final statistical verification in December, will provide the quality assurance for the Gloucester laboratory which is developing standards for equipping other facilities to produce pure fatty acids from marine fish oils. The purified fatty acids produced in this manner, rather than being tested directly in human feeding programs, will be tested indirectly in laboratory cellular experiments.

**Reference Library Set Up:**--The Weather Service has established a reference library for prospective vendors for AWIPS, the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing system for the '90s, which will render the current AFOS (Automation of Field Operations and Services) obsolete. AWIPS-90 is an advanced, automated weather-and-water information system which will support all Weather Service field offices, the river forecast centers and the three national centers. It will also be compatible with information systems operated by other organizations. Procurement

questions may be directed to Gary Rice or Tom Genovese (427-7351), or vendors may schedule appointments for one of the 2-to-4 hour sessions held daily at 8 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The library is in Room 820 of the Gramax Building in Silver Spring, with a wealth of information available for on-site review.

**Pay System Change Coming:**--NOAA will convert to the Agriculture Department's payroll/personnel system next June. Payday will be Thursday, earning statements will be mailed to one's legal address, all direct deposits will come from the Kansas City disbursing office. The legal address will indicate the amount of state tax to be exacted, so if a post office box is used, it should be in the state where the employee lives. End-of-year benefits statements will be issued containing comprehensive information on salary, retirement, tax withholdings, and other relevant items. Retirement records maintained by the payroll office will be closed and sent to the Office of Personnel Management, with a copy to the employee. A new cumulative retirement deduction will be shown on the statement of earning

**Seafood Inspection Programs:**--Pilot studies to evaluate two new seafood inspection programs began this month. Red Lobster Inns of America initiated a new inspection program in its St. Petersburg, Fla., facility and International Seafoods of Alaska is processing groundfish in Kodiak under a NOAA-funded program with Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation. A state employee trained by the Fisheries Service is conducting the Alaska inspections.

**Science Simplified:**--The Office of Public Affairs' March School Information Service bulletin has been distributed to educational journals and major school systems and science departments. Designed to make science digestible at the secondary school level, this issue treats such subjects as debunking tornado myths, medicine from the sea, natural hazard deaths for 1985, the dining habits of fish, solar flare eruptions--even frost quakes, one of Mother Nature's quirkiest phenomena. (A frost quake is caused by rapid freezing of the ground, which can cause a small but violent earth tremor).

**New Orleans Marine Symposium:**--Twenty-eight organizations, here and abroad, will participate in Marine Data Systems MDS '86, a symposium scheduled for Apr. 30--May 2 at the Hyatt Regency, New Orleans. Dr. Jerry McCall, Director of the National Data Buoy Center, and Capt. James Koehr, Commander of the Naval Oceanography Command, are co-chairing the event.

**State Of The Bay:**--"Chesapeake, The Twilight Estuary," a film produced by Maryland Sea Grant with NOAA and Maryland state support, will be aired Wednesday, Mar. 26 at 9 p.m. on WTTG-TV, Channel 5 in Washington. The movie, which explores the effects of declining sea grasses on shellfish productivity, has won several awards. Tapes are available from Robert Amdur (377-3263) or Victor Omelchenko, (443-8888).

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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