NOAA REPORT

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COMING UP

Council on Environmental Quality public meeting on National Climate Program Five-Year Plan in Washington, D.C., Mar. 29.

Interdepartmental Committee for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research in Rockville, Md., Mar. 29. (Date changed from Mar. 22.)

National Weather Service Directors Conference in Silver Spring, Md., Apr. 12-14.

U.S. Hydrographic Conference '88 in Baltimore, Md., Apr. 12-15.

NOAA Climate and Global Change Panel meeting in Washington, D.C., Apr. 13-15.

Fishery Export Picture Looking Good: Nineteen eighty-seven was a banner year for U.S. fish exporters, with total overseas sales of fishery products a record $1.66 billion, up 22 percent over 1986, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NMFS said American joint-venture operations also set records last year. Exports and joint ventures in 1987 together amounted to more than $1.8 billion. Joint ventures are those in which U.S. fishermen sell their catch at sea to foreign processing boats.

According to NOAA economists, if this trend continues, fish sales to foreign buyers will top $2 billion this year, making the United States the world's biggest fish exporter.

The volume of the catch rose too, to a record 525,000 metric tons, up 13 percent from 1986. And the country's biggest foreign fish buyer, Japan, bought fish and fishery products worth a record $1.074 billion in 1987.

Also in 1987, seafood imports rose by $800 million to a record $5.6 billion. If non-edible marine products are included -- mostly high value-added jewelry made with coral or pearls-- that import figure increases to $7.9 billion.

NMFS says it expects the 1988 balance-of-trade figures to look about the same.

Part of the reason for the persistent trade deficit is that the U.S. fishing industry cannot fully supply America's growing taste for high-priced products like shrimp, tuna, scallops, lobster and farmed salmon. That demand is being met by imports.

Early, Intense Solar Cycle Seen:--Dr. Patrick McIntosh, director of solar physics research at NOAA's Space Environment Laboratory in Boulder, Colo., has expressed concern that the next solar maximum will occur earlier than the 1992 projection based on a normal 11-year cycle - possibly as early as the end of this year - and that the peak intensity may be the greatest since the advent of reliable record-keeping in the mid-19th century. Dr. McIntosh's warning came in the March 8 issue of the New York Times, which featured the NOAA laboratory's efforts to refine the art of forecasting the intensity of solar cycles. Accurate forecasts of solar activity are important to users of low-altitude satellites (for example, NOAA, NASA, DOD) due to increased drag on these satellites during periods of high solar activity.

Fur Seal Commission Disbands:--The North Pacific Fur Seal Commission officially concluded its activities in February. The Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals, signed in 1957 by Canada, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States, expired in 1984. A Protocol to extend the Convention was negotiated in 1984 and was ratified by Japan, Canada and the Soviet Union in 1985. The U.S. Congress did not ratify the Protocol because of its commercial harvest provisions. The United States hosted informal consultations on the conservation of fur seals in September 1987, proposing the consideration of a new agreement. During the consultations it was agreed that the Commission would disband.

Weathercasters' Workshop:--The Office of Public Affairs annual severe storms workshop for radio and television weathercasters, held Mar. 18-19 at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, Norman, Okla., was attended by 45 commercial weathercasters from a dozen states, many of whom filmed interviews for local airing with NOAA experts. The program included a tour of the new Oklahoma City Forecast Office; a focus on NEXRAD (newly developed Doppler weather radar); a report on severe storm research at NSSL; a look at pioneering research into how Gulf of Mexico cold fronts may play a role in tornado outbreaks in the southern United States; an overview of how the Weather Service is using a slide series in training spotters and NWS personnel about the

structure of severe storms; and a look at NSSL's new mobile lightning laboratory.

Kudos:--Cdr. Andrew N. Bodnar, Jr., of the NOS Office of Marine Operations was the NOAA nominee for the National Society of Professional Engineers' Engineer of the Year Award at the organization's ninth awards ceremony Feb. 17. Adm. Sigmund Petersen, Director of the Office of Marine Operations, served as presenter.

James R. Lucas of the NOS Office of Charting and Geodetic Services was named 1987 V. Talbert Abrams Award winner at the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing annual convention in St. Louis, Mo., on Mar. 16. The award - possession of the Grand Trophy for one year and $1,000 - recognizes significant authorship and recording of current, historical, engineering, and scientific developments in photogrammetry.

The International Journal of Mass Spectrometry and Ion Processes has dedicated a special, two-volume issue to Dr. Eldon E. Ferguson, former director of NOAA's Aeronomy Laboratory in Boulder, Colo., in recognition of his "enormous contribution to ion physics and chemistry." Ferguson, now residing in France, headed the NOAA laboratory from 1962 until 1986.

Weather Safety Public Service Announcements: A quick getaway may not be the best course of action when a tornado or flood threatens. Listeners to weather safety tips in twelve public service announcements distributed by the Office of Public Affairs to 3,000 radio stations in the top 100 radio markets in 37 states will learn that a car may be the worst place to be in a tornado or flood. Half of all tornado-related deaths occur in automobiles and mobile homes, and 70 percent of all flood-related deaths come as result of motorists being trapped while trying to cross flooded areas. Listeners also learn the difference between tornado and flash flood watches and warnings and what to do when these disasters threaten.

Big Job For A Little Bulb:--After several weeks of nurturing an aging and temperamental weather satellite, GOES-6, engineers at NOAA's Office of Satellite Operations were forced to increase the voltage to a light bulb critical for determining the satellite's proper line-by-line picture-taking sequences. GOES-6, which hovers in geostationary orbit 23,000 miles above the equator, is operating on the last of four such "encoder" bulbs, and engineers use special procedures designed to lengthen spacecraft life by keeping bulb voltage at a minimum. GOES-6 was launched in April 1983, with a design life of five years. Statistics show that this last GOES-6 bulb should operate through 1988.

Great Lakes Water Levels To Vary Widely:--Water levels in some of the Great lakes could vary widely during the next 75 to

100 years, with the possibility of extreme low levels - as much as three to seven feet - being experienced as the world's climate warms up because of anticipated concentrations of chemicals in the atmosphere.

This possibility was advanced March 18 at a scientific colloquium in Chicago, Ill., by Dr. Frank H. Quinn, head of NOAA's Lake Hydrology Group at the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratories in Ann Arbor, Mich. Dr. Quinn said that since about 1965 the annual precipitation over Lakes Michigan and Huron has been, on the average, much greater than that seen during the period from 1900 to 1986, the long-term mean.

The wet and cool climatic conditions of the past 20 years, that led to recent record-high lake levels, may be more indicative of longer term future normals than the conditions occurring earlier this century, Dr. Quinn told the Colloquium on Great Lakes Water Levels: Shoreline Dilemmas, sponsored by the National Research Council.

Dr. Quinn cautioned scientists and engineers attending the meeting to plan for water level extremes rather than concentrating only on high lake-level conditions. As the earth's climate warms up due to a predicted greenhouse effect caused by accumulation of concentrations of carbon dioxide and other chemicals in the atmosphere, he warned, water levels in Lakes Michigan and Huron could reverse sharply.

The Great Lakes presently are in a wet regime. But within about the next 100 years, general circulation models indicate a temperature rise of about 7° F. might be expected over the latitudinal range of the Great Lakes basin. In addition, changes in the amount and seasonal distribution of precipitation and major changes in wind velocities would likely occur, which would greatly modify the water supplies to the Great Lakes.

Home-Schoolers Learn About the Weather:--For five days in February, NOAA's Weather Service Forecast Office in Omaha, Nebr., participated in an unusual scientific requirement involving home-schoolers from eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. Home-schoolers are children educated by their state-certified parents in the home. Benny Gullach, who heads the Omaha station, led two-hour lecture/discussion/tour sessions, which covered severe weather, NOAA Weather Radio, weather radar, forecasting, collection of weather data, satellite meteorology, and upper air observations. The students were assembled in groups of 15 ranging from third to eighth grade levels.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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