



September 4, 1990

COMING UP

World Meteorological Organization Working Group
Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, Sept. 11-14.

National Marine Fisheries Service Board of Directors
Meeting in La Jolla, Calif., Sept. 11-13.

US-USSR Joint Committee on Cooperation in Ocean
Studies in Moscow, Leningrad and Crimea, USSR, Sept. 14-
22.

Sea Grant Site Visit Review in Seattle, Washington,
Sept. 16-21.

Ban on Marine Mammal Feeding in U.S. Waters Proposed--The
feeding of wild marine mammals by the public would be banned to
avoid potential adverse effects on the marine population if a new
NOAA recommendation goes into effect.

NOAA's move was in response to the rapid expansion of public
dolphin feeding cruises in the Gulf of Mexico and the South
Atlantic.

Citing problems of dependency, malnutrition, and altered
feeding habits that were found in grizzly bear feeding by the
general public at Yellowstone National Park as early as the 1950s,
the NOAA ban would take effect before the relatively new dolphin
feeding industry expands.

Problems associated with the feeding of dolphins in the wild
described in the rulemaking include the loss of the animal's
ability to cope and live in the wild, encouragement to approach
boats, including fishing vessels, in search of food, and a lack of
control over the quality of food or other harmful items that may
be given to animals in the wild. Animals become ill or died from
readily ingesting foreign objects that were given to them by
humans.

The proposed rule allows for a 45-day public comment period
to end Oct. 15, 1990.

Satellites Show Northern Hemisphere No Snow Job:--Snow cover over the Northern Hemisphere in June and July was the lowest since 1967, when NOAA satellites began recording it.

NOAA imagery showed North America at approximately 60 per cent of normal June-July cover, and less than 40 per cent across Europe and Asia--something scientists would expect to occur by chance only one or twice every few hundred years.

Analysis of NESDIS data from polar-orbiting satellites showed 3.5 million-square kilometers (km²) of snow cover across America in June, compared to a normal average of 6.4 million. In July, North America showed approximately 57 per cent of normal cover--2.3 million km² compared to a mean of 4 million.

Northern Alaska, western and northern Canada had large snow-cover deficits. In June, only 1.7 million km² of Eurasia were snow-covered; in July, only 300,000 km² were. In both months, most of the extreme northern parts of the USSR were remarkably snowless.

Snow cover has major regional effects on water resources, agriculture, and local weather. Because it reflects so much solar radiation and prevents the earth's surface from absorbing heat, it also plays a role in global climate change. Although snow cover is a critical ingredient in global warming, no conclusions should be drawn from the June-July readings; they might be no more than a climatic blip.

The readings show the difficulty of studying climate change in a world where individual events may be spectacularly large compared to the long, slow climatic trends NOAA is trying to detect.

Undersea Research Center Established at U. of Alaska:--NOAA has established a National Undersea Research Center at the University of Alaska to support marine research in U.S. west coast and Alaskan waters.

The center, the fifth in a network of university-based regional National Undersea Research Centers around the country, will provide manned submersibles, remotely operated underwater vehicles, and facilities to support research.

The competitively selected center, operated by university personnel, will receive approximately \$800,000 in research funding from NOAA for its first year, plus approximately \$132,000 in administrative funding from the university. It will conduct approximately eight marine research projects this year, and work closely with the existing government, academic, and university research community to support a variety of marine research in areas of national importance, including investigations of global ocean processes, the pathways and fates of materials in the ocean,

biological productivity and habitat characteristics, coastal ocean physical processes, and ocean minerals and ocean bottom resources.

West Coast Fire Update:--A return to cooler and more moist weather from northern California to the intermountain area has helped fire fighters bring many of the blazes that ravaged the area under control. Lightning is still striking the area, but much of it is accompanied by rainfall. In other weather news, 100 residents of a hospital and retirement center in Fulton County, Indiana, were evacuated on August 17-20 when heavy rain caused a dam on nearby Lake Manitou to leak. By the 20th, an emergency spillway had been cut and water levels fell.

More Shrimpers Using TEDs:--Turtle excluder devices (TEDs) were found on 85 percent of all fishing boats in the Gulf of Mexico for the week of August 15-22, up from 80 percent previously. The mandated traps allow sea turtles to escape from shrimpers' nets unharmed.

Baldrige Changes Command:--Capt. Charles Y. Molyneaux of the NOAA Corps is scheduled to assume command of the NOAA ship *Malcolm Baldrige* in a public change of command ceremony tomorrow. Capt. Molyneaux relieves Capt. Otto F. Steffin, NOAA Corps.

The *Baldrige* conducts oceanographic research in the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea from its home port of Miami, Fla. The ship carries 10 officers and 42 crew, with a capacity for 25 visiting scientists. At 278.3 feet and 2,802 gross tons, it is the largest of 18 active ships in the NOAA fleet of research and survey ships. Commissioned in October 1968 as the NOAA Ship *Researcher*, the ship was renamed *Malcolm Baldrige* in March 1988 in honor of the late Secretary of Commerce.

California Reporters Fly With NOAA:--Four reporters for major California media flew on NOAA's research aircraft during an Environmental Research Laboratories clean-air study in the San Joaquin Valley last week.

The reporters represent the *San Francisco Chronicle*; the *Merced Sun Star*; KJGO-TV, San Francisco; and KSEE-TV, Fresno.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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