

This Week In NOAA

Activities for the week ending

November 30, 1984



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

THIS WEEK IN NOAA

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*An asterisk indicates no items this week.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Countermeasures

Attended meeting with representatives of the Japanese Government, who summarized their investigation into an alleged scheme by Japanese vessels to counter the effects of observer coverage and to evade Coast Guard enforcement efforts. Their report shows no violation by the North Pacific Longline-Gillnet Ass'n, but five violations (of unspecified nature) by the Hokuten Trawlers. Various sanctions have been undertaken, including resignation of four officers of the Hokuten Ass'n and suspension of operations by the Hokuten fleet for the rest of 1984.

Turkish Government Considers Coastal Zone Law

Through ITA, answered inquiry from the American Embassy in Turkey concerning U.S. law or policy on private ownership of beaches or tidelands for the Turkish government which is considering amending its laws to promote tourism but retain public interest in such areas. Responded, and sent documents, to the U.S. Embassy, explaining that while there is no single applicable U.S. law or policy inasmuch as this issue is subject to state control, generally the states own the tidelands and submerged lands and private interests own the uplands or dry beach area, with many states providing for public access to the wet beach across private uplands.

Consistency Appeal - Florida East Coast Railway Company (FEC)

On November 8, FEC appealed to the Secretary under section 307(c)(3)(A) of the CZMA the objection by the Florida Dept. of Environmental Regulation to FEC's proposed project requiring a Corps of Engineers section 404 permit to dredge and fill 332 acres of wetlands for construction of an access road associated with a proposed industrial park, Town of Medley, Dade County, Florida.

Union Consistency Appeal - Decision by Secretary of Commerce

On November 9, 1984, the Secretary issued a decision sustaining Union's appeal of the consistency objection by the California Coastal Commission to Union's proposed exploratory drilling within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. As a result of the decision, Union's exploratory drilling project may be approved by Federal agencies subject to the conditions and limitations agreed to by Union. Chief among these conditions is Union's agreement to confine its drilling to the period November through January, when pelicans are least vulnerable to injury from an oil spill, and not to seek production facilities within the boundaries of the Sanctuary.

Exxon's Santa Rosa Union Appeal - Decision by the Secretary of Commerce

On November 14, 1984, the Secretary issued a decision denying Exxon's appeal of the consistency objection by the California Coastal Commission to Exxon's proposed exploratory drilling on Lease OCS P-0467. The Secretary found that the alternative of exploratory drilling outside the thresher shark fishing season (Thanksgiving to May 1) is reasonable and available to Exxon.

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Winter Weather Outlook Aired - Dr. Donald Gilman, chief of the Extended Forecast Branch, National Weather Service, met with 47 media representatives Wednesday, Nov. 28 at the Commerce Department as he issued the winter weather forecast. Among those attending: Cable News Network, Independent News Network, ABC, NBC, CBS, TV and radio; the Post-Newsweek stations; Associated Press, United Press International, Scripps-Howard, U.S. News, USA Today, Cox Newspapers, Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, Toledo Blade, and the Philadelphia Inquirer. The forecast: a relatively mild winter for the eastern U.S., contrasted with cold weather for most areas between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. December through February also is expected to be rather wet across the country. The greatest likelihood of cold, 60 percent, exists for Utah and portions of nearby states, including Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada. The western area with at least 55 percent chance for colder than normal extends eastward from the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains across the Great Basin and canyon country into the Rocky Mountains and the High Plains of Colorado, New Mexico and West Texas. The East Coast from New Jersey to Florida has the highest probability for warmer-than-normal weather -- 65 percent. Areas east of the Mississippi River have a 55 percent chance of above-normal temperatures while the probability for these conditions is 60 percent along the Appalachian Mountains. The greatest chance for rain or snow exceeding the long term median, 60 percent, exists for Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, and portions of adjacent states. There is at least a 55 percent chance of more-than-usual precipitation centered on Utah in the Great Basin and from the southern Rocky Mountains eastward through the Plains and Midwest to the mid-Atlantic states. The only area with a 55 percent probability of less than usual precipitation is southern Florida.

Satellite Media Briefing Scheduled - Dr. John McElroy, Assistant Administrator for NESDIS, will meet the press Monday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. at the Commerce Department to outline new developments in the space field, including formation of the International Polar Orbiting Meteorological Satellite (IPOMS) Group.

African Drought Queries Increase - Specialists from NWS and NESDIS have briefed journalists from the print media and the TV networks on the causes of the tragic drought in Ethiopia.

Ocean Service Centers Described - A comprehensive article in the Journal of Commerce brought to the attention of the business and industrial community the existence of this growing NOAA service.

Long Distance Liaison - NOAA PA's Western Regional Center office coordinated media activity for a NOAA user conference scheduled for Nov. 30 in Anchorage, Alaska. Margaret Courain, NESDIS Deputy Assistant Administrator, was booked for a half-hour TV interview.

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National Ocean Service

Interagency Hazards Mitigation Team - In accordance with Annex D of the joint FEMA/NOAA MOU, OCRM staff participated as members of the Federal Interagency Hazards Mitigation Team which evaluated damage and proposed non-structural solutions to mitigate against future flood losses in the flood disaster area of Southern Louisiana. These recommendations will eventually evolve into a plan which will be adopted and implemented by the State. The 100-year storm event for that area damaged 1300 homes, many of which were in Zone C (outside of the floodway), an indication of the problems of Federal Insurance Administration maps in relatively flat country. This was the first joint Federal/State Hazards Mitigation Team reviewing a disaster area. (R. Mieremet, 254-7494)

Disclosure of Deep Seabed Mining License Coordinates - In response to a request from Ocean Mining Associates (OMA), NOAA published OMA's deep seabed mining license site coordinates in the November 13, 1984, Federal Register. This disclosure was made after the OMA consortium withdrew a previous requirement for confidential treatment of its coordinates, and after consultation with the State Department. Similar requests are expected from the other three mining consortia licensed by the U.S. to protect their interest in their mines sites, in anticipation of Soviet and other mine sites being presented in mid-December under the Law of the Sea treaty procedures. (J. Lawless, 635-7695)

Office of Oceanography and Marine Assessment and Coastal Engineering Research Center Establish Cooperative Tasks - Dr. John G. Hayes, Director, OMA, and staff visited the Waterways Experiment Station (WES), Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg, Mississippi, on November 19 and 20, 1984. Overviews of WES activities were presented by the chiefs of three major WES laboratories. A special session was conducted to coordinate both measurements and modeling of the Port of Miami. Future cooperation between OMA and CERC includes: (1) the reciprocal transfer of numerical modeling technology; (2) cooperative efforts in the joint Port of Miami Circulation Project; (3) transmittal of four OMA circulation data sets to CERC; (4) a continuing partnership between Dr. Hayes and Dr. Whalin; and (5) establishment of a joint task group to carry out partnership guidance. (H. Frey, 443-8510)

Next Generation Water Levels Measurement System Applications - Drs. W. Scherer and D. Beaumariage, OMA, visited Tsunami Warning Centers at Honolulu, Hawaii, and Palmer, Alaska, to provide technical information to the centers regarding the applicability of the Next Generation Water Level Measuring System for the Tsunami Warning Network. A number of technical discussions were also held with personnel at the University of Hawaii regarding the Pacific-Wyrtki Sea Level Monitoring Network and with personnel from the USDI's Minerals Management Service, the State of Alaska, and the new Ocean Service Center in Anchorage, Alaska. These discussions involved the broad applicability of the Next Generation System to programs of those organizations. (W. Scherer, 443-8254)

NOAA Ships SURVEYOR and DAVIDSON Return to Seattle - The NOAA Ships SURVEYOR and DAVIDSON returned to home port at the NOS Seattle Ship base on November 18 and 19, 1984, respectively. The SURVEYOR was conducting SEABEAM bathymetric mapping from Cape Mendocino to Pt. Conception, California. The DAVIDSON was conducting BS³ seafloor mapping of the San Andreas Fault and Exclusive Economic Zone along the northern coast of California. The data collected by these ships is used for application to bathymetric maps and nautical charts. (W. Forster, FTS 399-4548)

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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

New Water Year for Much of West Starts Off Wet - The water year runs October 1, 1984, to September 30, 1985, and the first month saw winter abruptly start with early snowpack development in the higher elevations of the mountainous West as it has for the past several years. Northern Utah saw precipitation two to three times normal. The Great Salt Lake is forecast by the National Weather Service to peak next spring about 1 foot higher than 1984 approaching the all-time record set in 1873. If the winter is wetter than normal, as it has been the past 3 years, the 1873 record level may be exceeded. (Allen Flanders 427-7660)

Railroads and NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) - The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad has placed NWR warning alarm receivers at all of its offices along its main lines. This allows the dispatchers to know immediately of any weather-related problems. In addition, NWR can be routinely monitored on any of the multi-channel radios used by railroad personnel. Recently, the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and AMTRAK took similar action. (Herb Benner 8-588-4000)

Unexpected Test of Mt. St. Helens's Alert System - The two-take level gage located on South Castle Lake near Mt. St. Helens failed recently. This precipitated the issuance of an "unusual event alert" by the Seattle Weather Service Forecast Office to the Office of Emergency Services (OES), State of Washington. OES quickly determined there was no unusual activity in the vicinity of South Castle Lake and deduced it was a mere equipment failure. This occurrence was a good test of the National Weather Service's ability to alert and communicate potential problems to the action agencies in the Mt. St. Helens area. (Tom Bowers 8-588-5137)

Association of American Weather Observers (AAWO) Conference - The annual meeting of the AAWO was held on October 19-20, 1984, at the Saddle Brook Marriott Hotel in Saddle Brook, New Jersey. The National Weather Service Cooperative Observer Program Manager was invited to be the guest speaker at the meeting. His subject was entitled "The Cooperative Observer - Now and in the Future." (Bill Pogerman 427-7724)

Alabama Power Company Network - The National Weather Service (NWS) is working with officials of the Alabama Power Company to work out details necessary to effect hydrologic data exchange between the two agencies. An existing network of the Power Company provides real-time stage and precipitation data from 36 gaging sites located in Georgia and Alabama, collecting data over the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Warrior River basins. Expansions of the network over the next 4 years will result in 132 data sources over these drainages, with a final 30 data sources in Georgia. Several details of the exchange are yet to be worked out, but successful completion of the project will represent a milestone in NWS-private industry data exchange. (Dave Smith 8-334-2674)

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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Proposes 1985 Initial Specifications for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Harvests - On November 6, 1984, NMFS filed its notice of proposed 1985 initial specifications for total allowable catch (TAC) amounts for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area target species and the "other species" category, and apportionments of those TACs between domestic annual harvests and total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF). The total TAC equals 2.0 million metric tons (mt) which is the upper end of the biomass optimum yield for the groundfish complex (1.4 - 2.0 million mt). Proposed initial specifications of 1985 TAC are 78,411 mt for domestic annual processing, 443,757 mt for joint venture processing, and 1,177,832 mt for TALFF. Of the total TAC, 300,000 mt would be held in reserve. Public comments are invited until December 7, 1984. On the basis of comments received, and after consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Secretary will make 1985 initial apportionments providing for proper and full utilization of the groundfish resources. (RGorrell, 634-7449).

Fourth Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) - The ICCAT held its fourth special meeting in Las Palmas, Canary Islands, Spain, November 7-13, 1984. Carmen Blondin, U.S. Commissioner and Chairman of the Commission opened the conference which was preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), November 1-6. The current restrictions in effect for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic were reviewed in light of SCRS findings which concluded that the present catch levels are likely to stop the decline of the stock as well as allow gradual increases over the long-term (30 years) proportional to stock recovery. Catches lower than present levels would most likely result in an increased speed of recovery while slightly higher catches would slow down the rebuilding of the stock. In light of the SCRS report, the Commission extended for 1 year the existing management regime for bluefin tuna including those provisions in effect in the eastern Atlantic. While the United States proposed a 3-year extension, it supported the consensus favoring a shorter term. The Commission also extended indefinitely the 3.2 kilogram minimum size limit for bigeye tuna after considering the SCRS report on the results of the Working Group on Juvenile Tropical Tunas convened in July 1984. The same size limit for yellowfin tuna remains in effect. No other management measures concerning other stocks of tuna or tuna-like fish were considered by the Commission which did, however, take note of the need to monitor closely the fisheries for blue and white marlin and to improve statistical reporting. (B Rothschild, 634-7257).

Southeast Regional Office Adopts-A-School - The Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, recently became a foster parent organization to Northeast High School, St. Petersburg, Florida. NMFS is the first Federal agency in the Tampa Bay area to join the Adopt-A-School Program. The program is designed to enhance the students' educational experiences by providing the school with class speakers, educational aids, field trips, general information on the Federal government, and temporary jobs or training. The program is coordinated by the Northeast High Continuing Business Education office and the NMFS Regional Director's office. The primary focus of the program for this year will be in the secretarial field. The Regional Office recently acquired a computerized word processing system composed of a stand-alone word processor and 13 personal computers. The NMFS intends to introduce the Northeast High business students to the computerized office and how the students can best prepare themselves for jobs using the computer. (CDempsey, 826-3141).

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NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SATELLITE, DATA, AND INFORMATION SERVICE

NOAA-F Launch Status. The NOAA-F launch has been delayed again. It was postponed on four successive days by weather conditions, that would have overstressed the vehicle and again by a ground equipment failure. The launch has been rescheduled for not earlier than December 1, 1984, at 5:42 EST. (A. Schwalb, 344-5207)

First IPOMS MEETING. The first meeting of the International Polar-Orbiting Meteorological Satellite (IPOMS) group was held November 19-20, 1984, in Washington, D.C. Dr. John H. McElroy, Assistant Administrator for the Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service chaired the meeting. IPOMS was established through the Summit of Industrialized Nations to explore mechanisms for greater international support (in-kind or financial) for the U.S. polar meteorological satellite system. Representatives from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, the European Communities, and the European Space Agency attended the meeting. A technical working group was established to study future systems and contributions. The working group will meet in May 1985, and IPOMS will meet in plenary session in October 1985. (K. Hodgkins, 763-4586)

First Meeting of IOC Group of Experts on Marine Information Management. Robert Freeman, Deputy Director of AISC, and James Churgin, Director, World Data Center-A, Oceanography, attended the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Group of Experts on Marine Information Management on November 19-23. Since this was the first meeting of the Group, most of the discussions and recommendations centered around plans for improving IOC efforts in information dissemination. Agenda items included information activities related to developing countries, the completion of a Handbook on Marine Scientific and Technological Resources, evaluation of current information systems, development of workshops and training in information management, and preparation of a program development plan. Among the items to be investigated to meet the needs of developing countries is the application of NODC's Coastal Information System. (J. Churgin, 634-7500).

Bulletin of the AMS Features NOAA Radiation Map. The September issue of the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society features a color map showing the global distribution of the heat energy lost by the Earth to space. The map is based on 10 years of NOAA satellite radiation observations. The computer-generated color map was developed by Marilyn Varnadore, a computer specialist in the Climate and Earth Sciences Laboratory (CESL). An article by A. Gruber, CESL, and A. Krueger, formerly of the Climate Analysis Center, NWS, describing the 10-year NOAA radiation budget data set appears in the same issue. (A. Gruber, 763-4294)

NRC Space Applications Board. A joint presentation on their respective agencies' plans was given by Mr. Burt Edelson (NASA); Capt. David Honhart (U.S. Navy); Dr. Stanley Wilson and Mr. William Townsend (NASA); and Mr. John W. Sherman, III, (NESDIS/NOAA) to the National Research Council (NRC) Space Applications Board. The NOAA presentation was extremely well received by the Board and stimulated both discussion and support for the NOAA oceanic satellite plans contained in the FY 1986 Oceanic Services Initiative. (J. Sherman, 763-4244)

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OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

WATOX Planning Meeting - John M. Miller, Rudolph F. Pueschel, and Dennis L. Wellman, all of the Air Resources Laboratory, participated in a planning meeting at NASA/Langley for the March 1985 field program of the Western Atlantic Ocean Experiment (WATOX). The purpose of the experiment is to measure the flux of sulfur and nitrogen off the coast of North America. The NOAA Kingair was flown to Langley so all participants could begin instrument installation. Besides NOAA, participation is expected from the Canadian Atmospheric Environment Service; the Universities of Washington, Delaware, (York in Canada), and Virginia; the Bermuda Biological Station; and NASA. (J. Miller, FTS: 427-7684)

39th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference - Four AOML/HRD scientists will give presentations at the Research Committee Meeting of the 39th Annual Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference on January 8, 1985. Topics are: Omega dropwindsonde data collection in Hurricanes Josephine and Debby; the HRD land-based radar recording program; and an evaluation of drifting buoys deployed in the path of Hurricane Josephine. (S. Rosenthal, FTS: 350-1400)

NOAA/NWS Hurricane Conference - At the NOAA/NWS 21st Annual Hurricane Conference on November 28-30, Dr. Peter G. Black (AOML/HRD) discussed drifting data buoys as a new tool to monitor hurricane surface winds and pressures during critical forecast periods. (S. Rosenthal, FTS: 350-1400)

Visitor - Dr. John Lewis of the NOAA/NESS Development Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin is visiting AOML/HRD and the National Hurricane Center to discuss use of the barotropic hurricane forecast model, SANBAR, for VAS (VISSR atmospheric sounder) data. In addition, he is comparing his results of the objective analysis of Hurricane Debby (1982) Omega dropwindsonde data with HRD findings. (S. Rosenthal, FTS: 350-1400)

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NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM

New Computer Program Helps Prawn Farmers -- A new computer program to assist prawn farmers in managing semi-intensive pond systems has been developed by Hawaii Sea Grant investigators. The easy-to-use program was designed primarily for inventory management of prawn production ponds, but slight modifications allow the program to be used for other species as well. Called Aquaculture MIS (management information system), the program was designed for the IBM PC microcomputer; however, it can be modified for other systems that can use DBase II language. The computer-based inventory system is considered cost-effective for aquaculture farms with 30 or more ponds.

(J. McVey, 443-5940)

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth.... -- The ever-present energies of nature contribute to shoreline erosion, but coastal property owners can now turn to a new pamphlet on Maintaining Coastal Erosion Control Structures that provides helpful advice on fortifying structures such as bulkheads, seawalls, revetments, gabions, and sand fences. For example, major cracks in a seawall may signal a drainage problem caused by blocked or even non-existent weep (or drainage) holes. If a wall is more than 20 years old, it's a good bet that sediment has built up and the holes should be cleaned out; if no weep holes exist, the pamphlet recommends hiring a contractor to ensure that proper drilling is done so that a wall's strength is not accidentally diminished. The six-page pamphlet was produced by marine extension specialists at New York Sea Grant.

(R. Kolf, 443-8977)

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