

This Week In NOAA

Activities for the week ending

January 17, 1986



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

THIS WEEK IN NOAA

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Radiosonde Recovery Campaign Kicks Off:--The Office of Public Affairs has launched a media campaign to urge the public to return radiosondes to the National Weather Service for repair and reuse. Parachuted to earth after balloon-borne data-gathering flights, those recovered are reconditioned at a Weather Service center in Kansas City, Mo., at half the original \$54-per-unit cost. Over the past decade, these returns have saved the taxpayers \$10 million. Over the past several years, however, returns have dropped off by several thousand from the 18,000 units normally returned annually. Farm, outdoor, and environmental groups have been enlisted in the drive. Active sponsors include the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Boy Scouts of America. Among others, the nation's TV weathercasters will be asked to make special appeals for the return of the shoebox-sized instrument packages.

Search-Rescue Session Held:--Interagency planning sessions were held Jan. 14 and 15 in Anchorage, Alaska, for a media program to cut the number of false alarms from light planes to NOAA's search-and-rescue satellite. Working with the FAA, FCC, Air Force, Civil Air Patrol, Coast Guard and other federal and state agencies, NOAA public affairs will participate in a series of briefings in major Alaskan cities. Special events, such as programs at conferences and fairs, are planned. The campaign will begin in April.

Looking Ahead:--Two press briefings and one TV weathercasters' workshop are in the planning stage.

The schedule:

Preliminary planning for the OPA's all-media tornado safety campaign is under way. In connection with this effort, PA's annual TV weathercasters' workshop on tornado science and safety, will be held Mar. 7 and 8 at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, Norman, Okla.

The national spring flooding outlook briefing by Michael Hudlow of the National Weather Service will be held in the HCHB Auditorium Mar. 10 at 1 p.m.

NOAA's annual budget briefing will be held at such time as Departmental OPA decides, on Feb. 3 in the HCHB.

CBS Evening News will broadcast from Miami Jan. 22-31. The Office of Public Affairs has conferred with the production staff, offering Miami-based NOAA laboratories, the National Hurricane Center, and the undersea training unit as possible stories. No indication yet of outcome.

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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Meeting of the National Research Council's (NRC) Committee for the Study of the Nation's Weather Observing Systems - On January 9-10, 1986, the Assistant and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Weather Services participated in the first meeting of a 12 member committee organized by NRC under NOAA support at the request of the Office of Management and Budget. The Committee chaired by Dr. John W. Townsend, Vice President of Fairchild Industries, received briefings on the future directions of the Weather Service and an overview of current and future planned weather observing systems. The Committee's objective is to assess the capabilities and costs of various observing and forecasting systems, and to recommend priorities for the development, procurement, and implementation of space and ground-based components. (Ron Lavoie 427-7858)

National Weather Service (NWS)/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Summit Meetings - The first of planned quarterly NWS/FAA coordination meetings between the Assistant Administrator for Weather Services and the FAA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Engineering and Logistics (Neal A. Blake) was held on January 9, 1986. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure continued effective NWS/FAA coordination on items of mutual interest. The advent of new technology and its application to improved aviation weather services requires a coordinated approach throughout the development and implementation phases. (Fred Hochreiter 427-7733)

Meeting With Susquehanna River Basin Commission - A coordination and planning meeting for the Flood Forecasting System Improvement Program in the Susquehanna River Basin took place in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on January 8, 1986. In attendance were representatives from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, US Geological Survey (USGS), and the National Weather Service (NWS). The Susquehanna project will concentrate on the implementation of additional automated sensors, computer processing capability, and staffing for NWS and USGS facilities in the Susquehanna River Basin. (Mike Hudlow 427-7658)

NOAA Scientists Work With China on Storm Surge Forecasting - Hurricane storm surge forecasting was the focus of a recent visit by Drs. Jelesnianski and Chen of the National Weather Service to the People's Republic of China (PRC). The trip was sponsored by the PRC under the joint US-PRC Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Marine and Fishery Science and Technology. Both Drs. Jelesnianski and Chen visited and lectured at many institutes of the PRC's State Administration of the Sea on their specialty -- computer modeling using NWS' (SPLASH) special program to list the amplitudes of surges from hurricanes and (SLOSH) sea, lake, overland surge from hurricanes surge models. PRC scientists discussed their techniques for forecasting and observing storm surges. The PRC plans to begin computer modeling of storm surges, patterned after NWS's research. (Bob Glahn 427-7768)

Lightning 1985 - The 74 lightning deaths in 1985 were 24 percent below the 20-year normal of 97 deaths annually. Statistics for 1985 show that males in their teens and twenties are the most likely to be killed by lightning and that most deaths occur in open fields, near or under trees, or were water related. Eighty percent of the fatalities occurred between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. LST. The 74 deaths occurred in 28 states and Puerto Rico. (Dick Wood 427-8090)

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NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SATELLITE, DATA, AND INFORMATION SERVICE

GOES. GOES visible and infrared data were unavailable from 1300-1800Z on January 7 because of an equipment problem at the Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station. Reaction time was slowed because all of the Wallops senior engineers were away at the Integral Systems, Inc., factory in Lanham, Md., inspecting the new GOES ground system hardware. (G. Davis, 763-1610)

NOAA-8. Contact was made with NOAA-8 again. Enough data have been acquired to theorize that battery 1 ruptured and the "pieces" tracked by NORAD were thermal blankets from the battery. NOAA-8 was officially deactivated on January 9. The spacecraft could probably be recovered if an emergency need should ever arise. (G. Davis, 763-1610)

Launch of French SPOT-1. Launch of the French SPOT-1 satellite is scheduled for 0144Z, January 17, 1986. NOAA's Fairbanks Command and Data Acquisition station will support the launch and the early orbit checkout (14 days). (G. Davis, 763-1610)

Snow Avalanche Panel. Dr. Richard L. Armstrong, National Snow and Ice Data Center/WDC, was appointed to the newly organized nine-member Snow Avalanche Panel of the National Research Council Committee on Ground Failure Hazards, chaired by Dr. Barry Voight, Pennsylvania State University. The termination of the USDA Forest Service Mountain Snow and Avalanche Research Project (Ft. Collins, CO) in 1985 left the field of avalanche studies without a national coordinator or focus. The Snow Avalanche Panel was assembled to assess the need for a formal organization which could represent the avalanche community.

The first formal session of the panel will take place on February 1 and 2, 1986, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The eventual product of the Snow Avalanche Panel will be a National Academy of Sciences report. (R. Armstrong, FTS 320-5311)

New York Documentary. The Italian National Television Network is filming a documentary on New York City during the winter months this year. The film crew experienced several days where the temperature fell into the teens in December. This cold spell caused the producer to call NCDC and request the normal and extreme climate conditions that will be incorporated into the documentary. (J. Hughes, FTS 672-0682)

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OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

Visit to PRC Meteorological Groups - Dr. Hugh E. Willoughby (AOML/HRD) has returned from visits to the Shanghai Typhoon Institute (STI) in Shanghai, and the National Meteorological Centre (NMC), formerly the Central Meteorological Observatory in Beijing. At the STI on December 10-24, 1985, he presented an invited series of 12 lectures on tropical cyclone dynamics. He went on to give a seminar entitled "Research Aircraft Observations in Atlantic Hurricanes" at the NMC on December 28. (S. Rosenthal, FTS: 350-1400)

Sonar Method Accurately Counts Migrating Fish -- Accurately detecting riverine fish by sonar is difficult because of water volume limitations and reverberations produced by surface and bottom boundaries. For fish, like salmon, that migrate upstream against the flow of the current and debris, estimating the Doppler shift can increase the accuracy of fish counts.

Washington Sea Grant investigators have developed a prototype salmon detection system that provides a more confident measure of the number of migrating fish. The new sonic detection system can differentiate between signals bouncing off of fish, debris floating with the current, and surface and bottom boundaries. An advanced, cost-effective microcomputer system performs all signal processing tasks in real time. Detected fish are indicated on a monitor for operator verification and a fish count is maintained automatically. (E. Fritz, FTS 443-5940)

Parasite Leads To High Flounder Mortality -- Juvenile summer flounder in the Chesapeake Bay region are afflicted by the *Trypanoplasma bullocki* parasite, which has been implicated in significant mortalities of the fish. Virginia Sea Grant investigators have demonstrated that this parasite infection is brought on by a leech vector which inoculates the flounder during the late fall. Their studies showed that when water temperatures fell within the range of 0.5 and 1.5 degrees Celsius, 100% mortality was observed within 11 weeks. Symptoms of the disease in the flounder were anemia, splenomegaly, and obvious ascites (visible accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity). Results suggest that the presence of ascites can be used as an estimate of mortality in these fish. This study is one of the first to assess the impact of a disease agent on the population dynamics of its host. (E. Fritz, FTS 443-5940)

New Publication On El Nino's Effects On West Coast -- The large-scale perturbation of ocean and atmosphere known as El Nino has attracted much attention in recent years, particularly since the record-breaking incidence in 1982-3. This phenomenon had been best known for its effects in the tropics (for example, the collapse of the Peruvian anchoveta fishery in 1972), but it is now evident that El Nino influences the ocean and living resources at much higher latitudes.

The Washington Sea Grant Program has published a new book entitled "El Nino North: Nino Effects in the Eastern Subarctic Pacific Ocean." The book is a compilation of research papers on the effects of El Nino along the west coast of North America. The research papers deal with changes in physical environment that accompany El Nino and the biological response to these changes, with topics ranging from El Nino's effects on plankton, shellfish, seabirds, and fish to the consequences for management of salmon fisheries. (E. Fritz, FTS 443-5940)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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