

Coast Guard assistance. The Coast Guard cutter *Confidence* arrived on the scene 2 January 1976 to give aid.

The *Samarga*, hard aground on a rocky bottom, remained aground for over 2 weeks while repeated attempts to refloat it failed. U.S. Coast Guard observers were concerned about the possibility of oil pollution, because the vessel was in a vulnerable, unstable position and likely to break up in heavy seas. About 100,000 gallons of diesel fuel were removed from its hold to

alleviate the danger of an oil spill. All other loose ballast was also offloaded, including 100 metric tons of frozen fish, in the hope that the lightened vessel would float free. The Soviet fish carrier *Ostrov Shmidta* and trawler *Belkino* remained alongside the *Samarga* with cables attached to steady it and prevent further damage.

Although Soviet fishery officials brought salvage equipment to the scene for a refloating attempt, under U.S. law (46 USC 316D), no foreign

vessel may conduct salvage activities in U.S. territorial waters unless no U.S.-owned vessels are available to do the work. The Soviets were obliged, therefore, to negotiate with U.S. salvage firms for a contract to refloat the *Samarga*. However, before a salvage contract could be signed, the *Samarga* floated free at high tide 17 January with the assistance of the two Soviet vessels steadying it. All three vessels departed U.S. territorial waters with the *Samarga* in tow.

## Fishery Developments Around the World

The NMFS Division of International Fisheries Analysis, which follows trends in world fisheries for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), has prepared the following summary of the recent significant developments in world fisheries.

**Mexico published a constitutional amendment** establishing the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the *Diario Oficial* on 6 February 1976. The Amendment entered into force on 4 June 1976.

**Soviet-Canadian fishery talks** ended in Ottawa on 9 February 1976. The two sides agreed to one-year extensions of the Soviet-Canadian Northeast Pacific Fisheries Cooperation Agreement, and the Navigation and Fisheries Safety Agreement.

**Sovhispan, a company representing** the Soviet fishing fleet in Spain, has announced plans to build a \$1.8 million complex to service Soviet fishing vessels based in the Canary Islands. Sovhispan already manages extensive port facilities for the fleet in Las Palmas, Canary Islands.

**Fransov, the first joint Soviet-French fisheries company**, was formed on 14 October 1975, through an agreement signed by the Soviet Minister of Fisheries and representatives of the French fishing company Casacrus. Fransov vessels will operate in the Far East, off Africa, and off South America.

**The USSR and Somalia**, as part of a continuing fisheries cooperation program, have agreed on a project to develop the Somali fish-processing industry. In addition, 20 specialized fishery cooperatives will be established.

**The Republic of Korea will extend its**

territorial waters to 12 miles and its fishing rights to 200 miles, according to a report from Seoul. An official decision will be delayed until after the New York Law of the Sea meeting. Such an extension would lead to renegotiation of the Japan-Korea agreement of 1965 which was based on 3-mile territorial sea.

### Fishery Notes

## California Dungeness Crab Fishery Gets Good Start

The 1975-76 California Dungeness crab (*Cancer magister*) fishery has experienced its best beginning in 4 seasons. From 11 November 1975 through January 1976, California crabbers landed an estimated 5 million pounds. Crabs were abundant, easily caught, large, and in excellent condition, and the weather was excellent through January. Landings might have been even greater if limits had not been imposed for boats in some areas because of the large volume crossing the docks.

The Dungeness crab is found only in the Pacific Ocean ranging from Baja California north to the Aleutian Islands. It is considered rare south of Point Conception in California.

Dungeness crabs are harvested commercially in California from Avila to the Oregon border. Prior to the 1944-45 season, the fishery was centered around San Francisco. The average annual statewide production, up to then, was 2.6 million pounds. The fishery expanded into the Eureka-Crescent City area toward the end of World War II, which increased statewide landings.

**Peru and Poland agreed** to extend a 1971 scientific and technical agreement providing for increased cooperation in the fisheries sector. Poland agreed to build four factory trawlers for Peru, and the first is due in Peru in January 1977. Poland also agreed to study Peruvian requests to grant 10 fishery scholarships, provide a research vessel, and supply food fish to Peru.

Introduction of the crab pot in the early 1940's replacing the hoop net also improved the landings. Since the 1945-46 season, the average annual statewide production has been 10.7 million pounds, a fourfold increase over the pre-1945 average. Most of that increase can be credited to expansion of the fishery in the northern part of the state.

Landings declined from 15.4 million pounds in 1970 to 685,000 pounds in 1974. This was a decrease of 14.7 million pounds during the five year period and a decrease of 18.4 million pounds from the record 19.1 million pounds in 1957.

Unlike most other fishery products, Dungeness crabs are marketed in a rather small geographic area. During years of abundance, crab marketing is a problem since the regular market has difficulty absorbing the product. These years of unusual crab abundance have a tendency to cycle; there is no assurance the abundance of crab will occur again the following season.

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