

National Marine Fisheries Program Unveiled

A sweeping, long-term program to conserve and develop the Nation's marine fisheries was announced late last year by then Secretary of Commerce Elliot L. Richardson. The program, unique in the history of U.S. fishery management, is designed to bring a major national resource to a new state of health and productivity, and to benefit consumers and industry in the process.

Secretary Richardson, hailing the comprehensive plan, indicated that it had come at a vital time. Warning that overfishing off U.S. coasts has seriously depleted approximately 20 species and threatened others, Secretary Richardson said, "we cannot permit the depletion of fish stocks and the destruction of fish habitats to continue. We must learn to manage this resource . . . and we must do it in ways compatible

with the Nation's need to develop other valuable uses of the ocean."

The program has four major goals: 1) restore and rationally use important fisheries, 2) develop and maintain a healthy commercial fishing industry, 3) improve marine recreational fishing, and 4) ensure adequate consumer supplies of wholesome seafood.

The program will go into effect gradually over the next 5 years. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service will take the lead in carrying it out, with major roles to be played also by the Coast Guard, Departments of State and Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the States, and regional organizations.

The effort was announced as legislation providing a 200-mile fishing limit, officially known as the Fisheries

Conservation and Management Act of 1976, approached its effective date of March 1977. Then, the U.S. will manage approximately one-tenth of the world's fish supply; the program is designed in part to facilitate that task. The Federal government will act in partnership with coastal states and Regional Fisheries Management Councils established under the Act.

The paramount concern is the preservation and enhancement of fish stocks, some of which have declined drastically in recent years. To meet this concern the Department will integrate its management efforts, give all possible assistance to the Regional Councils, establish a permit and fee system for foreign fishermen, develop enforcement procedures, participate in negotiations with foreign governments, and step up research.

The total impact on commercial and

Three Named to Top Positions in NMFS

Appointments to three key positions created in a recent reorganization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service have been announced by Robert W. Schoning, NMFS Director.

Winfred Meibohm, formerly Staff Assistant to Schoning, has been named Associate Director, charged with supervising the day-to-day operations, executing policy decisions, and allocating NMFS resources, according to Schoning.

Brian Rothschild has been appointed Director of the Office of Policy Development and Long Range Planning. This office will coordinate policy development; develop theories, techniques, and procedures to achieve fisheries management to protect fisheries stocks; and predict the impact of complex fisheries decisions.

Kenneth Goodwin becomes Director of the Office of Program Planning, Budget, and Evaluation which will advise the Director on the selection of goals, objectives, and measures of accomplishment and coordinate the development of program plans and budgets to meet objectives. The office will perform and coordinate program analyses, reviews, and evaluations required for program emphasis and resource allocation decisions.

Meibohm retired from the Air Force in 1968, with 27 years service, taught Political Science at Elon College in North Carolina, and joined NMFS as Staff Assistant to the Director in 1972. He received an A.B. degree from Guilford College in 1941, an M.S. degree from George Washington University in 1965, and has done additional graduate work at the University of North Carolina.

Rothschild previously was the Center Director of NMFS's Southwest Fisheries Center in La Jolla, Calif. He has served in numerous positions in NMFS and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and was a Professor of Fisheries at the University of Washington. He received a B.S. degree from Rutgers University in 1957, M.S. from the University of Maine in 1959, and his Doctorate from Cornell University in 1962.

Goodwin previously served as the Chief, Plans and Policy Development Staff. He has held numerous positions in the Federal Government and in private business, transferring to NMFS in 1972 from the Federal Communications Commission. He has a B.S. degree from Yale University and has attended the University of Maryland, American University, and George Washington University.

recreational fisheries is estimated at about \$10 billion in annual economic activity. The Commerce Department expects the new program eventually to boost this figure by another \$1.5 billion.

Management of resources is only the starting point. The program will seek legislative change to bring fuller coverage of marine fisheries values in environmental decisions, initiate closer environmental review procedures, increase habitat research, cooperate with other agencies toward habitat protection, and assure that plans made under the Coastal Zone Management Act adequately consider living marine resources.

Working with industry and regional advisory groups, the Department will design programs for development of a selected number of fisheries. It will investigate ways to strengthen the ability of private industry to grow on a self-generating, self-sustaining basis. It will seek re-legislation of the Fisheries Loan Fund and use other governmental devices for encouraging private capital to finance and build ships.

The Nation's 30 million recreational fishermen, who caught approximately 1.6 billion pounds of fish in 1970, will receive substantial consideration. Their interests will be taken into account in stock assessment and research programs, in the review of management plans, in the operation of the Coastal Zone Management Act, and in surveys on which further plans can be based.

Existing aquaculture research and development efforts by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the National Sea Grant Program will be increased, with a view to providing a better basis for industry operations, for accelerating the application of research results, and attacking long-range physical problems of currently-farmed fish and shellfish.

Finally, the Department, already busily involved in safety and quality control, will refine procedures, support legislation and programs to protect stocks from chemical pollution, and carry out a national campaign to inform consumers and industry about the factors affecting safety and quality, and of the meaning of Federal identifying marks.

The program will bring a moderate

increase in Commerce Department expenditures. In Fiscal Year 1976, the Department spent approximately \$76 million on fisheries management and related activities; this year, with the extension of our fisheries jurisdiction, approximately \$100 million is contemplated.

Costs are expected to be offset to some degree by fees paid to the general treasury by owners and operators of foreign fishing vessels for permits to catch fish within the 200-mile conservation zone.

Secretary Richardson characterized the program as "only a beginning." Noting that its execution will require careful thought and hard work, he said the Commerce Department will look to the Regional Fishery Management Councils, state governments, the commercial fishing industry, recreational fishermen, scientists, conservationists, environmental organizations, and others for advice and assistance.

Copies of the report, "A Marine Fisheries Program for the Nation," may be obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington, DC 20235.

Juhl Named U.S. Fishery Attache to Latin America

The appointment of Rolf Juhl, Laboratory Director of the Southeast Fisheries Center in Pascagoula, Miss., to the post of U.S. Regional Fisheries Attache for Latin America has been announced by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

As Fisheries Attache, Juhl will be responsible for covering fishery developments in Latin America. He will have a special responsibility to act as a liaison between the United States and Mexico regarding tuna, shrimp, snapper, grouper, and spiny lobster fisheries. He will be assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.



Juhl

Since 1973, Juhl has been manager of the Groundfish Program of the Southeast Fisheries Center, an element of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For 6 years before that, he was a consultant to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Department of Agriculture and Coordinator of the Fisheries and Development Program, funded jointly by Puerto Rico and the United States. Earlier, he was with the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and also the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, La Jolla, Calif. A native of Santurce, Puerto Rico, Juhl holds a B.S. degree in commercial fisheries from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Tennessee, Arkansas Sign Cooperative Fishery Product Inspection Pacts

Cooperative agreements to inspect fish and fishery products in Tennessee and in Arkansas were signed recently by State representatives and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The voluntary, fee-for-service program encourages and assists the fish industry in improving and maintaining the quality and safety of its products through inspection and standardization procedures usually carried out by Federal inspectors.

These agreements permit existing State food inspectors to be trained and cross-licensed by NMFS, an element of the Department of Commerce (USDC), so they can perform inspections of fishery plants and products on NMFS's behalf within their respective States. The cross-licensing approach makes inspection services more readily available to the trade and more inspected products available to consumers.

"During our inspections, special attention is given to wholesomeness, proper species identification, and quality in either fresh or processed fish products," Tom Billy, Seafood Quality and Inspection Division Chief, said. "We also concern ourselves about problems of excess breeding and short weight products to assure the consumer that what he purchases contains what the label indicates," he added.

Inspection of fish products over the past 2 years has encouraged better plant sanitation as well as improved processing and quality control procedures. "More research is needed, however, to fully understand the effects of fluctuating temperatures during transit and storage, from the time it leaves the processing plant, until the time it is removed from the

consumer's refrigerator to be eaten," Billy continued. "The impact of these fluctuations on the physical and chemical properties of seafood and breeding mixtures is another area needing further investigation."

Other States are expected to sign similar cooperative agreements so that more USDC-inspected products will be available to consumers.

NOAA Moves to Set Fish Name Standards

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is moving towards bringing order out of confusion at the local fish market to make fish buying less confusing for consumer. While few, if any, consumers would mistakenly buy lobster when they really want salmon, can the same be said for most varieties of fish? Do consumers know, for example, what type of fish to expect when they buy "perch?"

From a marketing viewpoint, NOAA has learned, many seafood names are

often misleading and fail to provide consumers with the basic information they need to make a wise purchase. With hundreds of different commercial species and an enormous variety of seafood products such as fish sticks, fish cakes, pâtés, and the like available worldwide, is it any wonder confusion is widespread?

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is implementing a recommended long-range effort to develop a national retail identification system for fishery products; to find and standard-

ize acceptable market names for use by consumers, industry, and regulatory agencies. The first step will be carried out by Brand Group, Inc., of Chicago, a marketing research firm. Under a \$59,150 contract, characteristics such as taste, smell, quality, and appeal will be identified for commercial finfish.

A chart listing the species of fish and their characteristics will be developed to permit a comparison of traits. Fish with similar features will be grouped accordingly. Representative groups of similar fish will then be selected from the sorting study, and a model retail identification plan will be developed. Between 150 and 200 finfish and a sampling of shellfish will be included. Representatives of consumer groups, industry, and regulatory agencies will be shown the model plan and asked to evaluate and comment on it.

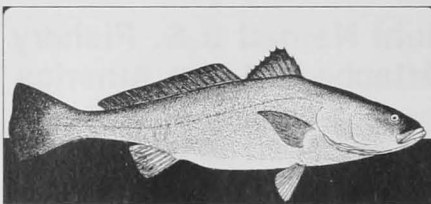
Requiring 3-5 years to complete, the effort is based on recommendations included in a 1975 feasibility study, "Retail Identification Plans for Fishery Products."

Totoaba, Hawaiian Monk Seal Called Endangered

The totoaba, or MacDonald weakfish (*Cynoscion macdonaldi*), a marine finfish found only in Mexican waters, is in danger of becoming extinct and may be placed on the endangered species list, according to a proposal by Robert W. Schoning, Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Found only in the northern Gulf of California and most often encountered in the general vicinity of San Felipe, Mexico, the totoaba spawns at the mouth of the Colorado River. The range of the totoaba includes the waters of the Gulf of California from the mouth of the Colorado River to the Rio Fuerte, Sinaloa, on the eastern coast, and from the Colorado River to the Bay of Concepcion, Baja California, on the western coast. The United States has been the principal export market for this fish, which is popular in Southern California restaurants.

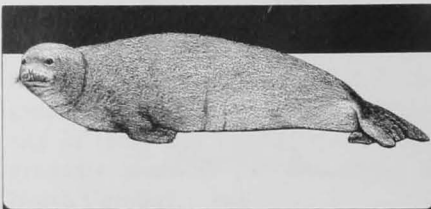
Scientists from NMFS, the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Arizona, and elsewhere contributed to the totoaba status review which led to the determination that the totoaba



should be listed as an endangered species in support of protective measures taken by Mexico.

The proposal that would list and protect the totoaba as an endangered species throughout its range, is issued under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The Hawaiian monk seal, in danger of becoming extinct, has been placed on the endangered species list, according to Robert W. Schoning, Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of the



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The listing, which designates the Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) as an endangered species throughout its range, is issued under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Found throughout the Hawaiian Archipelago, the Hawaiian monk seal breeds only on the islands of the Leeward Chain, including French Frigate Shoals, Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, Pearl and Hermes Reef, Midway Atoll, and Kure Atoll.

A status review undertaken by NMFS, a Commerce Department agency, reflects the rarity of the species, the high mortality in pups, the relatively low reproductive rate, and indications of population decline and harassment. The Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors agreed with the status review and recommended the species be listed as endangered.

The Hawaiian monk seal recently was classified as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, but it is believed that by listing the seal as endangered, a higher level of protection may be afforded.