



# TIDEWATER CHAPTER

Southern Division - American Fisheries Society

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

JANUARY - MARCH 1988

\*\*\* N O T E : MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME - RENEWAL FORM ON LAST PAGE \*\*\*

## ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

### PROGRAM REVIEW

Attendees at the 1987 annual meeting, held in Atlantic Beach, N.C. on November 15-17 were treated to excellent weather and an even better program. The theme of the program was Coastal Development and Fisheries. Many of the presentations addressed the subject of how various land based activities affect fish resources. For many of the fishery professionals at the meeting it was a nice change from the usual series of presentations of length frequencies and CPUE estimates. Two very important underlying themes were present throughout. Decision makers seem to have realized that 1) the abundance of living resources will provide the measure of success in preservation/restoration activities and 2) what we do on the land directly affects what happens in the water. These may seem like trivial points, but when they are accepted by those who make environmental policy they can have profound impacts on that policy.

### NEW OFFICERS

New Chapter officers were elected at the business meeting. They are:

President - John Cooper from the East Carolina University Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources. As President-Elect during 1987 John was Program Chairman for the 1987 annual meeting.

Phone: (919) 757-6752.

President-Elect - Eileen Setzler-Hamilton from the University of Maryland Chesapeake Biological Laboratory. Eileen will be responsible for this year's program.

Phone: (301) 326-4281

Secretary-Treasurer - Chris Bonzek from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division. The Secretary-Treasurer is the newsletter editor and keeps the minutes and the books.

Phone: (301) 974-3784

North Carolina At-Large Member - Sean McKenna from the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. Sean continues the At-Large post he held last year. The At-Large members act as contact points for members in their states and are contributors to the newsletter.

Phone: (919) 946-6752

Virginia At-Large Member - Gary Swihart from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in White Marsh, VA. Phone (804): 642-7180

Maryland At-Large Member - Ron Klauda from the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. Along with Eileen, Chris and Gary, Ron is new to the list of Chapter officers this year. Phone: (301) 867-7000

In addition, the President has appointed the following committee chairs:

Membership Committee - Jane DiCosimo from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in Charleston. Jane continues in the Chapter post she held in her past incarnation at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Phone: (803) 571-4366

Nominating Committee - Walt Pollard from the Brunswick Biological Laboratory in Southport, NC. Phone: (919) 457-3399

Audit Committee - Linda Clements from the National Marine Fisheries Service Beaufort Lab. Phone: (919) 728-3595

### BUSINESS MEETING

BYLAWS CHANGES - The proposed changes to the Chapter bylaws outlined in the September 1987 newsletter were adopted. These involved the expansion of the Chapter Executive Committee (EXCOM) to include the At-Large members and the establishment of standing committees. The general philosophy behind these changes was to expand the circle of people with direct impact on Chapter activities.

RESOLUTIONS - The Chapter was asked to comment on several items from the parent society and to take a position on a couple of outside issues. These are summarized following the President's Message.

### P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

The irruption of the red tide off the coast of North Carolina was a sobering event at the annual meeting. As we were discussing the effects of man's activities on aquatic resources, a natural event was adversely affecting the recreational and commercial fisheries industries and nothing could be done to change it. The red tide is still present off the coast, preventing the harvest and

sale of a major portion of the season's shellfish. The economic effects of the red tide will be felt for many months after it has dissipated.

Environmental events like this show that we cannot control the forces of nature, but we must not be discouraged from protecting our aquatic resource. Although the red tide is composed of natural organisms, its sudden increase may be linked to man-made pollution and as such it may serve as an early warning about the effects our activities are having on the resources we depend upon. By limiting pollution, we may be able to decrease the chances of a recurring red tide as well as benefiting the aquatic resources in general.

Many of the topics presented at the annual meeting were concerned with the effects of man's activities and, in some cases, showed how these effects could be used to create beneficial habitats. The Tidewater Chapter has encouraged this approach in commenting on several environmental proposals. It is in this area that the Chapter can have its greatest impact. We have the scientific expertise and experience in our members to recommend effective solutions to present and future environmental problems. The Chapter can also provide technical assistance to public-interest groups and trade associations to further the goals of wise utilization of our natural resources and protection of habitats. Public education about the objectives of the Chapter (and of AFS) and why these objectives are important to everyone can do a great deal to ensure that the Chapter will have an audience that will listen to our position statements and advice.

To accomplish our goals, we need a strong Chapter and the strength of the Chapter lies in its membership. Our success as a Chapter shows that our members are willing to support the Chapter activities through annual dues and attendance at meetings: it requires participation by all the members. Many of our activities, such as position statements and resolutions, are discussed and voted on at the business meeting. Members who are concerned about the direction that the Chapter takes and the policies that are endorsed can influence the decisions by offering their views on these issues at the business meeting or by contacting the officers or at-large members. We would like to hear from all of you.

The attendees at the annual meeting were treated to excellent presentations. Several positive comments were heard about the quality and scope of the program. On behalf of the Chapter, I would like to thank the speakers for their presentations and invite them to attend the next annual meeting. I would also like to thank Past-President Roger Rulifson for his help with the program, Membership Chair Jane DiCosimo for registration and the social, and Allyn Powell, projectionist extraordinaire.

## RESOLUTIONS and POSITION STATEMENTS

The following issues were addressed and positions agreed upon at the business meeting.

**CRANEY ISLAND STABILIZATION PROJECT:** The Norfolk District of the Army Corps of Engineers has proposed to add dredge spoil to the existing Craney Island spoil area, adversely affecting about 43 acres of bottom in Hampton Roads. The Corps has initiated a public interest review of this proposal as required prior to issuing a permit for this action. The National Marine Fisheries Service in Oxford, Maryland has asked AFS and the Tidewater Chapter to support NMFS in its endeavor to protect the existing aquatic habitat in the Hampton Roads area. NMFS has suggested four options designed to mitigate the effects of adding dredge spoil. These included artificial reefs of fiberglass (Japan); concrete igloos utilized by the Virginia Marine Resource Commission; plastic cones used in protecting oil platforms (American Reef Corp.); and emergent rock rubble breakwaters. Of these options, only the breakwater could be placed within Hampton Roads, the others would be located at another site, and, in effect trade the bay bottom of Hampton Roads for another area. NMFS has endorsed all the options except the plastic cones (too expensive and untested). The Corps has responded with a list of benefits that it believes the public will receive and so no mitigation is required. These benefits include reducing public expenditures for new spoil disposal areas, improved habitat for nesting birds, increasing inter-tidal area and its associated benthos on the spoil banks. The two sides are opposed on the issue of mitigation: NMFS believes that "no net loss of habitat" should be the guiding principle, and the Corps states that no mitigation is necessary since there are other public benefits that outweigh the loss of the 43 acres. The Tidewater Chapter has issued a statement supporting the NMFS and its belief in the "no net loss of habitat" concept and has urged the Corps to adopt one of the options endorsed by the NMFS.

**AFS REBATE TO CHAPTERS:** A proposal presented at the AFS Annual Meeting suggested that "AFS should adopt the practice of sending an annual rebate to each Chapter based on the number of dues-paying AFS members in the Chapter. The AFS (national) dues should be raised by \$2.00 to cover this rebate." A membership concerns survey indicated 26% "strong" support and 34% "slight" support for the proposal. The issue was discussed at the Annual Meeting and several objections were raised. Among these were the geographical overlap of some Chapters (e.g. Tidewater and Potomac); National AFS dues are high now and any increase would make recruiting difficult; and the program would be more trouble than it was worth. This proposal was discussed at the business meeting of the Tidewater Chapter and it was decided that the EXCOM should write a position statement concerning the proposal. It was determined that we could not support the rebate proposal because 1) members of AFS would not be able to support the Chapter of

their choice, 2) the geographic overlap of Chapters would cause unnecessary conflict between Chapters, 3) the rebate is not needed and may cost more in administrative time than the amount rebated, 4) the proposed establishment of an escrow account to cover those AFS members not in a Chapter's geographic range was not satisfactory, and 5) chapters should be supported by their members, and if not, the need for the chapter is in doubt.

**SUMMARY REPORT ON FEDERAL FISHERIES RESPONSIBILITIES:** In the July-August 1986 issue of Fisheries, the AFS Committee on Federal fisheries responsibilities (Chaired by John Harville) presented its recommendations for consolidating and improving Federal fishery administration of national programs. Everyone should read this report as it will ultimately affect all AFS members. The National office solicited the participation of Chapters, Sections, and Divisions of AFS in alerting area legislators of the need and importance of the initiative to implement the changes in the report. The Tidewater Chapter sent letters to all the national legislators of the three states covered by the Chapter outlining the problems brought up by the Harville report and urged the legislators to support the initiative. In addition, several public interest groups were contacted and asked to support AFS by writing to their legislators.

**TRAVEL COSTS TO SOUTHERN DIVISION MEETINGS:** At a recent Southern Division meeting, it was expressed that better attendance by Chapter officers would be desirable. At our Chapter business meeting, it was noted that since individual Chapters may not have the financial reserves to pay directly for travel costs, the Southern Division should provide matching funds to the chapters. A letter to this effect was sent to David Whitehurst, President of the Southern Division.

**NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL INITIATIVE PLAN:** (Editor's note: The following is excerpted from written comments made by John Cooper on behalf of the Chapter)

On 24 November 1987, Governor Jim Martin of North Carolina proposed a coastal initiative that would simultaneously increase economic development of North Carolina's coastline (including the sounds and bays) and further protect ecologically significant areas and resources. An interagency task force, headed by former Lieutenant Governor Jimmy Green, has been charged with the task of producing a statewide plan for accomplishing these goals.

The Tidewater Chapter of the American Fisheries Society would like to support Governor Martin's Coastal Initiative plan, but we have serious reservations concerning the program's impact upon the environment. There is a strong case to be made for an orderly and well-considered approach to coastal development, one in which the state and communities can benefit economically. But successful development of the sound and waterways depends upon maintaining good water

quality and the integrity of biological resources. The tourist industry that is being courted by the Coastal Initiative plan will be attracted to these developing areas because of the abundant aquatic resources. Intensive development of these resources without adequate environmental controls will seriously threaten the quality of the development as well as the environment.

Of the objectives summarized in the Coastal Initiative plan, it is the development of a marine waterways system that is the most alarming. ... the effects of increased boat traffic with its attendant shoreline erosion, sewage, oil, and gasoline discharges has the potential for degrading already stressed aquatic resources...

The Coastal Initiative plan proposed to make the coastal areas "more attractive to economic development while establishing stronger environmental safeguards in our most sensitive and productive areas." No mention is made of improving less productive areas, a goal that would enhance the aquatic resources and protect adjacent areas as well. By limiting safeguards to only sensitive and productive areas, the Initiative will fail to protect any area. Sediment, sewage, and other water-borne materials do not respect manmade boundaries. Tide and wind will move these materials into all areas rendering those "sensitive and productive" areas more similar to those not so protected.

## NEWS FROM THE STATES

### INTERSTATE

**CBSAC STOCK ASSESSMENT PLAN** - The new Chesapeake Bay Agreement has mandated the development of a stock assessment plan for valuable species. The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee is in the process of developing that plan. (Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a briefing document prepared by Dr. Louis J. Rugolo, MDDNR)

**Initiative:** To develop, adopt, and begin to implement a Bay-wide plan for the assessment of commercially, recreationally and ecologically valuable species by July, 1988.

The objectives of the research plan are:

1. Document abundance of economically important species.
  - o Population parameter estimation and evaluation of changes in stock status.
  - o Studies of juvenile abundance, including review and development of methodologies for estimating abundance, and management of the data bases.
2. Describe spawning patterns of fishery resources in Chesapeake Bay and its

tributaries.

- o Patterns of distributions and abundance of spawners.
  - o Production and variability of eggs.
  - o Patterns of abundance, distribution, and development of eggs, larvae, and juveniles.
3. Identify coastal and estuarine stocks that are dependent on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
  4. Study climate and fisheries resources interactions.
  5. Develop and initiate a Bay-wide program to improve the collection of fishery catch and effort statistics.
  6. Integrate biological effects studies with stock assessments.

The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Plan as proposed by the CBSAC contains four principal components or modules. The modules comprise major areas of investigations or activities and data requirements as they relate to fishery resource stock assessment. The modules can be adopted and implemented independently, although the ability to perform a stock assessment on any fishery resource is dependent on information generated from all four modules.

The four principal components (modules) of the proposed stock assessment plan are:

- Module 1. Fishery independent monitoring plan (post recruitment).
- Module 2. Fishery dependent monitoring plan.
- Module 3. Recruitment dynamics processes.
- Module 4. Biological affects.

The chairpersons of the plan sections are:

- o Plan Introduction - Erik Barth, VMRC
- o Module 1 - Jack Buckley, D.C.
- o Module 2 - Chris Bonzek, MDNR
- o Module 3 - Louis Rugolo, MDNR
- o Module 4 - John Boreman, NEFC

#### MARYLAND

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR WETLANDS- (Editor's note: The following is excerpted from an article in the Salisbury, MD Daily Times)

Maryland's once scorned wetlands are today being programmed into computers at Salisbury State College.

A system for converting aerial and satellite photographs of Maryland's changing shorelines into computerized images is being developed by Dr. K. Peter Lade under contract to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

The new system converts satellite and aerial images into a computer file. The stored images can be brought up on the screen as color photographs. Segments can be blocked off for enlargement, overlays added to identify soils or vegetation, or to establish new wetlands boundaries, and the results printed on any scale.

The computerized images "will give the state a system to look at the locations of wetlands, add information and data and supply reproductions to landowners or counties who want to know where they stand in complying with the Wetland Act" Lade said. "With computerized procedures, the state permit process can be shortened and better planned development encouraged."

The computerization of tidal wetlands on which Lade and his staff are now concentrating is an important update on the Wetlands Act of 1970. At the time the act was passed the wetlands along Maryland's coast and around Chesapeake Bay were rapidly being destroyed by dredging and filling for artificial, bulkheaded boating canals and waterfront developments.

It had not been generally accepted at that time that wetlands are not wastelands, but are vital to the food chain which then filled our waters with fish, shellfish and waterfowl. They are also buffers which catch sediments and pollutants and flood waters which would otherwise rush directly from the land into the bays and rivers.

#### VIRGINIA

PERSONNEL TURNOVER AT VMRC - Several personnel changes have recently occurred at VMRC. Wally Parolari, formerly head of the Plans and Statistics section, has accepted a position within another unit of VMRC. Lyle Varnell was promoted to fill Wally's vacancy. George LaPointe formerly a planner at VMRC and past Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter accepted a position at ASMFC. Jane DiCosimo, also formerly a VMRC planner and still membership chair for the Chapter accepted a position at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Three planners have been hired to fill the slots. They are: Ellen Smoller, Rob O'Reilly and Lewis Gillingham. Congratulations to all.

#### NORTH CAROLINA

RED TIDE - The red tide outbreak which greeted attendees at the Chapter's annual meeting in Atlantic Beach is still making its effects felt in the seafood industry. Oyster and clam stocks along the outer banks are still affected and the bay scallops in Bogue Sound have been decimated. An estimated 9,000 shellfishermen are out of work and the Tide has cost an estimated \$2 million so far. Some watermen are working to transplant oysters from contaminated beds to areas of clean water, but this will do little to change this year's harvest. Low interest loans have been approved but their arrival may be several weeks in coming. In the meantime, restaurants have reported sizable decreases in business as consumers are not buying seafood regardless of its origin. A recent proposal by Gov. Jim Martin to allow mechanical harvesting of shellfish in Brunswick County by shellfishermen from areas affected by the tide was met with strong protest by Brunswick County shellfishermen. The fishermen

claimed that this change in the regulations would allow destruction of the bottom and place stress on an area that is currently producing quality shellfish. The Martin administration has backed away from the proposal as a result of the protest.

ROANOKE RIVER STRIPED BASS STUDIES - The striped bass program being conducted by the Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources of East Carolina University has entered its fourth year. Flowrate continues to be of primary importance in relation to striped bass density. In 1987, only 100 striped bass were collected during the eleven weeks of sampling. Flowrate this year was six times that observed in 1985 and 1986 (around 35000 cfs). Three to five thousand striped bass were collected in prior years with flowrates at 6000 cfs or less. Zooplankton concentrations appear to be similar in 1987 as in previous years but these data have not been analyzed as yet. Of the larvae collected in 1987, only nine were capable of feeding and only three of these had food in their guts. Abundance of other fish species varied: those normally found in greater numbers upriver (centrarchids, carp) were more abundant in the delta in 1987. White perch and herring, normally abundant in the delta, were found in reduced abundance in 1987.

DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES PROJECTS - A number of fish species are being tagged by the NCDMF. In 1987 over 2,000 spanish and 1,000 King mackerel, 450 red drum and 1,566 summer flounder have been tagged. To date, 27 spanish, 14 king, 20 red drum and 108 flounder have been recaptured. A subsample of all species has been injected with tetracycline for age verification.

Other NCDMF projects include field testing of turtle exclusion devices and separator trawls, surveying and mapping shellfish habitat in order to delineate areas capable of supporting shellfish resources, and examining the feasibility of a mandatory cull ring for crab pots.

**I N M E M O R I U M**

The Chapter lost one of its charter members recently with the passing of Mr. James Martin to complications from a kidney transplant. Jim did his graduate work at Old Dominion University and worked briefly in VMRC's artificial reef program before becoming Maryland DNR's artificial reef coordinator. Jim will be deeply missed by those of us who had the opportunity to work with him.

**M E M B E R S H I P**

It's time to renew your membership for 1988. Those who attended the annual meeting have already renewed. For everyone else, please fill out the application on the other side of this page. Membership in the Chapter gives you a voice in national fishery issues.

If there are others in your organization who may wish to be members, please post the announcement on the last page of the newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE: UNLESS YOU ATTENDED THE ANNUAL MEETING AND RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 1988, THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU WILL RECEIVE. TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE FILL OUT THE APPLICATION BELOW.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

TIDEWATER CHAPTER, AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

I would like to renew my membership in the AFS Tidewater Chapter. Enclosed are my 1988 dues of \$3.00.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

AFILIATION:

Are you a member of the American Fisheries Society? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and \$3.00 to: Chris Bonzek, Secretary/Treasurer  
Tidewater Chapter, AFS  
580 Taylor Ave./C-2  
Annapolis, MD 21401



# TIDEWATER CHAPTER

Southern Division - American Fisheries Society

Members of the American Fisheries Society representing coastal areas of Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina have formed a chapter of the AFS which is serving the research and management communities of the coastal region.

The purpose of the Chapter is to provide a forum for discussing and presenting progress on regional estuarine and coastal fishery information by AFS members and non-members residing in, working in, or having a professional interest in the estuarine and coastal fisheries of Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. We are committed to providing such a forum for scientists, managers, students and interested citizens. In keeping with our purpose, we have had chapter meetings in which members are given an opportunity to present information related to their work, regardless of whether the work is in progress or completed.

Membership in the Chapter is composed both of AFS members and non-AFS members. Chapter members who are not AFS members will receive all Chapter communication, but may not vote at business meetings, may not chair a Chapter committee, or may not hold Chapter office.

To become a 1988 member, please fill out the application below and send it, along with \$3.00, to the address indicated.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

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## TIDEWATER CHAPTER, AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

I would like to become a member of the AFS Tidewater Chapter. Enclosed are my 1988 dues of \$3.00

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

Mail this form and \$3.00 to: Chris Bonzek, Secretary/Treasurer  
Tidewater Chapter, AFS  
580 Taylor Ave.  
Annapolis, MD 21401