

Blue Crab Travels, Safety Progress, and Fishing Luck

. . . .A 144-foot minesweeper has been converted into a research vessel for oceanographic work in the Virginian Sea over the continental shelf for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Institute reports. On long-term loan from the U.S. Navy, the 20-year-old wooden-hulled USS *Thrush* has been renamed the R/V *Virginian Sea*. The navy will get data and other services in return for her use. . . .

. . . .A Florida blue crab, tagged near the mouth of the Steinhatchee River 25 November 1974, was caught off Pensacola, Fla. 174 days later, according to the *Florida Conservation News*. That 260-mile move covered about a mile and a half per day. Another crab, tagged at Punta Gorda and caught 71 days and 297 miles later off Panacea, averaged better than 4 miles per day. The blue crab tagging project is part of a migration study conducted by the University of Florida's Resources Management Systems Program. . . .

. . . .The United States recorded a 17.5 percent decline in boating accident fatalities in 1974 as 1,446 persons lost their lives according to U.S. Coast Guard statistics. The fatality rate, 16.9 persons per 100,000 boats, was the lowest since records have been kept. About 6.8 million boats are registered nationwide. . . .

. . . .Successful experiments using a spray-on polyurethane foam to insulate old fishing boats have been reported in *The Marine Newsletter*. One trial showed that ice aboard boat lasted twice as long following use of the in-

ulation, thus saving fuel for ice trips and increasing overall fishing time. Another boat owner estimated that he saved enough in ice and fuel costs in one year to pay for his \$1,200 insulation investment. More than 50 boats have been insulated from Manteo, N.C. to Georgetown, S.C.

. . . .Florida commercial fishermen caught 162 million pounds of fish last year, a 2 percent drop from the year before and the third consecutive annual decline. However, rising seafood demands brought a 14 percent catch value increase to \$64 million, according to Department of Natural Resources data. The record catch, 241,443,000 pounds, in 1938, was worth only \$6 million. Florida shrimpers saw a 3 million pound catch increase but a \$1.6 million drop in value in 1974. . . .

. . . .A 52-inch, 43-pound yellowtail taken off California's Santa Catalina Island by outdoor writer Harry Bonner, San Diego, has been entered in the Fish and Game Commission's annual gamefish awards program, the Commission reports. The winning yellowtail in the 1974 contest was a 60 pounder, also taken off Santa Catalina Island. The trophy award program recognizes sportsmen who take outstanding specimens of certain fish and game species in California and adjacent ocean waters. Most fish are judged on weight alone. . . .

. . . .Only 10 percent of Oregon's commercial fishermen—mostly drag fishermen after bottomfish, shrimp, and

some crab—make their living from fishing, according to Joe B. Stevens, associate professor at Oregon State University, Corvallis. The draggers fish about 7 months, have an average boat investment of \$66,761, and an average annual income of about \$31,031. Stevens' interviews with 214 of the state's 1,985-3,280 commercial fishermen on their experience, nonfishery employment, and income earned in 1972 showed that salmon trollers lost about \$100 yearly and made all their money from full-time employment outside the fishery. "They stay in because they like it," said Stevens. . . .

. . . .The Coastal Plains Regional Commission has awarded a \$40,920 grant to the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department to expand 6 offshore artificial fishing reefs, *The Marine Newsletter* reports. State matching funds will total \$13,640. Funds will also go for potential reef site surveys, to locate and buoy wrecks along the South Carolina coast, and to maintain existing reef buoys. The reef program was started in 1967. . . .

. . . .A new Seafood Processors' Assistance Program to help processors keep abreast of and comply with pertinent Federal and state regulations has been started by the Coastal Plains Center for Marine Development Services and the Coastal Plains Regional Commission, according to *The Marine Newsletter*. Seafood processors in the coastal region of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida will be advised on regulations governing waste discharges, occupational safety of employees, product labelling, sanitation, and more. . . .

. . . .Citing an imminent human cancer hazard, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train ordered an end to the manufacture of the pesticides heptachlor and chlordane for most household and agricultural uses last summer. Among 8 findings leading to Train's decision was a 1974 Food and Drug Administration market basket survey showing measurable amounts of both chemicals in composite samples of 77 percent of all meat, fish, and poultry and 73 percent of all dairy products. . . .