

Swordfish, Oysters, and Shrimp Poachers

. . . . **South Carolina's first two rod and reel swordfish** were docked in Charleston in early August. The Florida-developed night-fishing technique which took the 360- and 481-pound swordfish uses a squid rigged on a trolling line, followed 2-3 feet behind by a small cylindrical chemical light taped to the leader. As the boat drifts with the current, line is released, and the bait sinks to 250-300 feet where, apparently attracted by the light, the swordfish take it. . . .

. . . . **Last summer's Chesapeake Bay oyster set bodes well** for the 1980 harvest according to early test plate readings, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources reports. Monitors found "exceptionally good settings" on test plates in central and lower bay areas in mid-summer, though they cautioned that the extent of the real set on natural bars and planted shells would not be known until late fall or early winter. Said oyster propagation chief Harold A. Davis, "Many of our test plates contained anywhere from 200 to 300 spat, whereas last summer, plates contained from zero to half a dozen." Improved salinities up to 16 ppt in lower bay areas "might be responsible for the improved test plate sets," Davis added. . . .

. . . . **Texas game wardens confiscated some 60,000 pounds of Gulf shrimp** during the closed season, 1 June - 15 July 1977, the Parks and Wildlife Department has reported. The amount was double that seized last year. Wardens also apprehended 122 boats, 37 more than last year, in the 45-day period and \$20,000 in fines were collected from 171 cases filed. Revenue from the confiscated seafood was \$74,000. The increase in cases was

attributed partly to shrimp abundance, but mostly to more efficient patrol boats. . . .

. . . . **Bullfrog culture may become a profitable industry** in Louisiana if researchers can solve feeding problems and can get a "super frog" to spawn on command, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission reports. About one in every hundred tadpoles quickly grows to as much as 1 pound in 4 months, say scientists. Most bullfrogs weigh only 1/3-1/2 pound at 10-12



Rana catesbeiana

months past metamorphosis. However, researchers note that until the frogs can be spawned under controlled conditions, large-scale culture will be hampered. . . .

. . . . **Wastes dumped off U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coasts declined** for the third consecutive year, according to "Ocean Dumping in the United States: Fifth Annual Report," by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Dumping dropped almost 600,000 tons during 1976 alone, from 8,881,500 tons to 8,319,000 tons. The drop was due primarily to a decline in the ocean disposal of industrial wastes, which fell almost 21 percent from the 1975 level. In the Gulf of Mexico, industrial waste disposal has been slashed to 7 percent of the tonnage dumped in 1973. Meanwhile, a slight increase in ocean disposal of sewage sludge was noted. . . .

. . . . **South Carolina's fall white shrimp catch was expected** to be "well below normal"—perhaps the worst in recent years—because the species failed to recover from the exceptionally cold winter that all but wiped out the population, according to the Wildlife and Marine Resources Department. Last year's catch of fall white shrimp in the State amounted to 2.7 million pounds (heads off), worth \$4.9 million, or 44 percent of the total value of the shrimp catch for the year. Brown shrimp, unaffected by the cold winter, usually make up only about 30 percent of the state's commercial shrimp catch. . . .

. . . . **Some 4,956 striped bass were tagged** by the California Department of Fish and Game in the San Joaquin River near Antioch last spring, about 20 percent of which were tagged with \$5 or \$10 reward tags. Creel checkers noted 21,638 striped bass in San Francisco Bay Area angler's catches in 1976, compared with 27,058 in 1975. Party-boats reported taking 10,711 stripers during 12,263 angler days in 1976, averaging 0.87 fish per angler day. Comparable figures for 1975 were 11,792 fish and 0.99 fish per angler day. . . .

. . . . **Snook, sometimes speared by divers around rocky jetties** in Texas, are apparently increasing there according to the Parks and Wildlife Department. Some snook always were found when there was a cold-weather fish kill along the lower coast, but more of the prized fish are now showing up on stringers and biologists are finding more snook in cove rotenone samplings. A summer sample in Lower Laguna Madre found 15 snook ranging up to 15 pounds with an average weight of 1 1/2 pounds. . . .