

## Stingray Records, Clam Salvage, and a Menhaden Die-Off

. . . . The California Fish and Game Commission's **Fish and Wildlife Award Program has received its first abalone entry**—an 8¼-inch-diameter specimen taken while free-diving in 20 feet of water off Leo Carrillo State Beach by Linda Gray, Los Alamitos. While recognizing outstanding specimens of fish and game, the program provides biological data for maintenance of long-term records . . . .

. . . . **Patt Hawn, Port Aransas, Tex., held three Texas** saltwater fishing records simultaneously with her recently certified records for bluefin tuna and blue marlin, according to the Parks and Wildlife Department. Her third state record was a 325-pound mako shark, although that may be surpassed by a recently entered 388-pounder. Hawn's bluefin tuna weighed 540 pounds and measured 101½ inches long and 66½ inches in girth. It was taken on 23 April with an 80-pound class rod and 80-pound test line. Hawn used identical tackle to take the marlin (560 pounds, 148¾ inches long, 58½-inch girth) on 20 April some 75 miles off Port Aransas . . . .

. . . . Meanwhile, **Texas has moved to add four ray categories to the State Fish Records Program.** The species considered for records are the southern stingray, Atlantic stingray or stingaree, cownose ray, and spotted eagle ray. Minimum weights listed are: southern ray, 50 pounds; Atlantic ray, 10 pounds; cownose, 40 pounds; and eagle ray, 200 pounds. Rays must be taken on rod and reel only, though the unrestricted division includes the heaviest of the species taken by any legal means (archery, spear, gig, handline, trotline, etc.) other than rod and reel exceeding the weight of existing rod and reel records . . . .

. . . . **Purse seining, used extensively in ocean fishing,** was untried on the Great Lakes until recently. Now, researchers with Michigan's Depart-

ment of Natural Resources and the Michigan Sea Grant Program are into a 2-year test program to see if the purse seine will become a practical alternative to gill nets for commercial fishing on the Great Lakes. They hope that purse seining will not conflict with sport fishing or other commercial fishing. Advantages cited include the net's selectivity, short time in the water compared with gill nets, adaptability to some existing Great Lakes fishing tugs, and potential use for a wide variety of fish. Primary target fish during the study are lake whitefish, round whitefish (known locally as menominee), yellow perch, and underutilized species like freshwater mullet (sucker) . . . .

. . . . **The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, which has been** stocking striped bass in selected bays during the last 2 years, finally recorded its first catch—a 13-incher (stocked when 1½ inches long)—out of Espiritu Santo Bay near Port O'Connor in April. More than 250,000 fingerling-sized stripers have been released in the San Antonio Bay system since 1975 and an additional 200,000 were released by mid-May this year. Stripers are native to Texas and were once found in salt as well as fresh water, the Department notes . . . .

. . . . **To keep an estimated 1 million clams from being dredged,** New Jersey clambers were hired to move them from Tuckerton Creek, the State Division of Fish, Game, and Shell Fisheries reports. Because the area was condemned for shellfish harvesting, clambers received special permits from the Shellfish Control Section to relay the salvaged clams to some 82 leased one-third acre lots in Little Egg Harbor for depuration. Besides saving the clams from the dredge, the operation provided work for clambers after an extremely rough winter. . . .

. . . . **"Oceans '77," the annual joint international conference** and

exhibit of the Marine Technology Society and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers is set for 17, 18, and 19 October in Los Angeles, Calif., at the Bonaventure Hotel. Simon Ramo, general chairman of the conference, said that the meeting will highlight discussion of recent developments in ocean technology and its impact on public policy and education, with a focus on the Pacific Rim. . . .

. . . . **Maryland's mysterious menhaden mortality has again begun and ended** with no real hint as to the causes of the nearly annual die off, the State Fisheries Administration reports. Hundreds of menhaden began dying in May and it was predicted that millions might perish until the die-off ebbed in late June. The high mortality of menhaden—a figure comparable to losses in previous years—is related to the super abundance of the species in the Chesapeake Bay during the last several years, according to Administration officials, but not to the appearance of the highly visible yellowish tree pollen which accumulates on the water at about the same time. Other species of fish also die in much smaller numbers, but their deaths are attributed to "the environmental stresses placed on all fish during the spring," the Administration said . . . .

. . . . **A California striped bass has set a new record** for carrying a Department of Fish and Game tag. A 30-pound striper caught 5 December 1976 in the Sacramento River near Garcia Bend by Michael Viduya of North Highlands, carried its tag for 18 years, 7 months. The fish had been tagged in Broad Slough during May 1958. Since the fish was tagged as a 25-inch, 7½-pound 5-year-old, its age was estimated at 23 years when caught. Meanwhile, another striper caught in Newport Bay during November by Kevin Leong of Fountain Valley, claimed the record for farthest southward movement of a striper tagged in the estuary. The male bass was tagged 2 April 1974 near Schad Landing on the Sacramento River as a 4-year-old measuring 17½ inches long. It was the first evidence of an estuary-tagged bass moving south of Monterey . . . .