Fishery Notes

Great Lakes Fish Stocking Hits New High

More than 26 million hatchery-reared fish were released in the Great Lakes and tributary waters during 1976 according to final planting statistics from the eight Great Lakes states and the Canadian Province of Ontario reports the *Great Lakes News Letter*. This record total is more than 2 million higher than was proposed at the time the planting schedules for 1976 were first reported. (The total excludes planting of eggs and fry, the initial growth stages.)

The principal species planted during 1976 were (in millions): lake trout 7.4, chinook salmon 6.7, and coho salmon 6.2; together they accounted for about 78 percent of the year's total. The record number of lake trout came primarily from federal hatcheries and their plantings were scheduled by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission which coordinates the lake trout rehabilitation program. Other species were reared and stocked by state and provincial agencies. Additional major species in the federal-state-provincial stocking programs were some 3.2 million rainbow trout and/or steelhead (lake-run rainbows) yearlings and fingerlings and over 1.7 million young brown trout. Other members of the trout-salmon family that were released in smaller quantities during the year were brook trout, splake (brook × lake trout hybrid), Atlantic salmon, and tiger trout (brook × brown trout hybrid). Other species planted in singular locations were fingerling saugers and muskellunge in the Sandusky Bay and Erie, Pa. sections, respectively, of Lake Erie, while more than 41 million herring fry from Minnesota hatchery facilities went into the western end of Lake Superior.

Lake Michigan waters received nearly half (47 percent) of the fish stocked in the Great Lakes during 1976, with releases of the principal species by the four bordering states totaling (in millions): chinook 3.4, coho 3.3, lake trout 2.6, rainbow/steelhead 1.8, and brown trout 1.0. For Lake Superior, about 3.0 million of the 4.5 million fish planted were lake trout, and most of the remainder were young coho, chinook, and rainbow, each having total releases in the 400,000 range.

Fish planting totals for the other lakes in 1976 were (in millions): Huron 3.8, Erie 3.5, and Ontario 2.1. Original stocking schedules for Lake Ontario were substantially reduced when traces of a chemical contaminant, Mirex, were found in the lake. As a result, the release of some of New York's supply of young lake trout and salmon was shifted to Lake Erie.

New Marine Traffic Rules Now in Effect

New International Rules of the Road for marine traffic took effect 15 July 1977 for all U.S. vessels on the high seas.

Appearing in the 31 March issue of the Federal Register, the 1972 International Collision Regulations replaced the 1960 International Rules. The new regulations were ratified by the United States last November.

"The 1972 International Collision Regulations are quite similar to the 1960 Rules, but in some specific cases significant changes have been made," said a Coast Guard spokesman. "Most notable of these are the provisions for 'early action' by the 'stand-on' (previously the 'privileged') vessel; new lights for vessels 'constrained by their draft'; new sound signals for vessels overtaking in a narrow channel; a requirement for 'safe speed' at all times to replace the old 'moderate speed' rule; and new emphasis on the duties and responsibilities of the lookout."

The International Collision Regulations include technical specifications for lights, shapes, and whistle signalling devices to replace the vague requirements of the 1960 Rules. A rulemaking document entitled "Alternative Compliance" and appearing in the same Federal Register specifies the manner by which vessels of special construction and purpose may, for the first time, be certified to deviate from these new international requirements.

As previously announced by the Commandant, the Coast Guard does not require vessels of less than 20 meters (65 feet) to be retrofited to meet the technical specifications of the new rules. Such vessels are acceptable if they are properly fitted and showing lights in general conformance with the requirements of the 1960 International Rules of the Road. Other technical specifications recognizing the limitations of smaller vessels but paralleling the requirements of the new Rules of the Road will be published later and will apply to vessels built after 1 August 1978, the start of model year 1979.

The Coast Guard publication "Rules of the Road, International-Inland", CG-169, has been revised to reflect the new International Rules of the Road and is available to the public through Coast Guard Marine Inspection Offices.

Planning the IDOE Future

The U.S. Program for the International Decade of Ocean Exploration (IDOE) will end as scheduled in 1980. Plans are now underway to design the ocean research program that will follow the IDOE. The goal will be to identify promising directions for marine research, their potential contributions to national ocean interests over the next 5-10 years, and the management approach most appropriate for carrying out these programs.

The basis for this planning effort will be four workshops in each of the major oceanographic disciplines: physical, biological, chemical, and geological. A final workshop, planned and organized by the National Academy of Sciences, will bring together the recommendations from these workshops and report them to the National Science Foundation in late 1977.

The Office for the IDOE invites the interest and participation of the scientific community in planning for the post-1980 program. Comments, recommendations, and requests for additional details may be sent to: Head, Office for the International Decade of Ocean Exploration, National Science Foundation, Washington, DC 20550.