

Clam Enhancement, Grouper Aging, and a Redfish Law

. . . **South Carolina's commercial fishermen had** a "good but not great" year in 1976, according to the Fisheries Statistics Section, South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department. Total shrimp catch—the state's major commercial fishery—was 8.4 million pounds (heads on), down 5 percent from 1975. The total value was constant at \$10.7 million. The crab catch dropped 19 percent to 5.3 million pounds, a \$900,000 value. Oyster landings topped 1.2 million pounds of meat (380,000 bushels), up 17 percent from 1975, with the value up 26 percent to \$780,000. Finfish landings were up 60 percent to 5.7 million pounds with a value of \$1.1 million. . . .

. . . **An experimental program to enhance littleneck and butter clam** populations on some public beaches in Washington State's Puget Sound has been announced by the Washington Department of Fisheries. A private firm will provide from 50,000 to 200,000 clam seeds from each species. The program will be patterned after similar experiments with manila clams and is limited to beaches where the Department previously did manila clam research. If successful, a great impact on Puget Sound sport and commercial shellfish harvests is foreseen. . . .

. . . **Alaska's Board of Fisheries has upheld its December 1976 ruling** adopting a 28-inch minimum length for both commercial troll-caught and sport-caught king (chinook) salmon, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reports. The change became effective 1 June. Another regulation was adopted requiring king crab fishing ves-

sels to be inspected 48 hours before fishing in a nonexclusive registration area and 24 hours before fishing in an exclusive area. New shellfish regulations require that dungeness crab pots have two escape rings at least 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter beginning 1 May 1979. The board also ruled that a shrimp trawl vessel is considered to have ceased fishing when its otter doors or trawl beam are visible at the surface of the water or aboard the vessel. . . .

. . . **Consumption of grayfish, or dogfish, is being promoted** by University of Rhode Island food science researchers. The scientists are frying it in bite-sized pieces, adding it to chowders, salting it for preservation, and making it into a sausage, and they report agreeable results. Looked down on by Canadian and American fishermen, the gray fish is reportedly used to make fish and chips in Scotland. It has about 15 percent protein and only 400 calories in a large serving and, the URI scientists suggest, could add variety to seafood meals, though they don't intend for it to take the place of more popular species. . . .

. . . **The South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department is developing a method to determine the age of large grouper and other commercial fish** species without damaging the market value of the catch. Biologists are using cordless electric drills to bore a hole in the fish's skull underneath the gill cover to remove the otolith without damaging the head, as such fish are usually sold with the head on. Commercial landings of snapper and grouper in South Carolina rose

from an annual average of 43,000 pounds during the period of 1970-1974 to more than 450,000 pounds in 1976. They are also a favorite of recreational anglers. . . .

. . . **California's annual and perplexing die-off of striped bass** spread farther upstream from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta this year than ever before, according to the Department of Fish and Game. This year the die-off area extended from Crockett in the Carquinez Straits at the western end of Suisun Bay east to Antioch. In previous years as many as 15,000 stripers have succumbed mysteriously between mid-May and September in that area. Though the causes of death are unknown, studies have pointed to such factors as low dissolved oxygen, presence of hydrogen sulfide, and spawning stress. . . .

. . . **California has a new law increasing the amount of Pacific mackerel** that can be taken incidentally with other species from 18 to 40 percent by weight the Department of Fish and Game reports. Commercial fishermen complained that the increased incidence of Pacific mackerel schooling with jack mackerel—and the difficulty in determining the species composition of the mackerel schools—was interfering with jack mackerel fishing. The difference between the 18 percent Pacific or blue mackerel formerly permitted and the 40 percent under the new law will count against the fishing industry's 1977-78 harvest quota of 1,500 tons, the department noted. . . .

. . . **A new Texas law limits the amount of redfish or red drum** which can be taken from Texas waters by sport and commercial fishermen, according to the Parks and Wildlife Department. Major provisions call for a daily bag limit of 10 redfish over 14 inches long and 20 in possession for sport fishermen, and a limit of 200 pounds of redfish per day for commercial fishermen. Sport fishermen may not possess more than two redfish over 35 inches long. The act also sets a 1.4-1.6 million pound quota for redfish for the entire coast per year. . . .