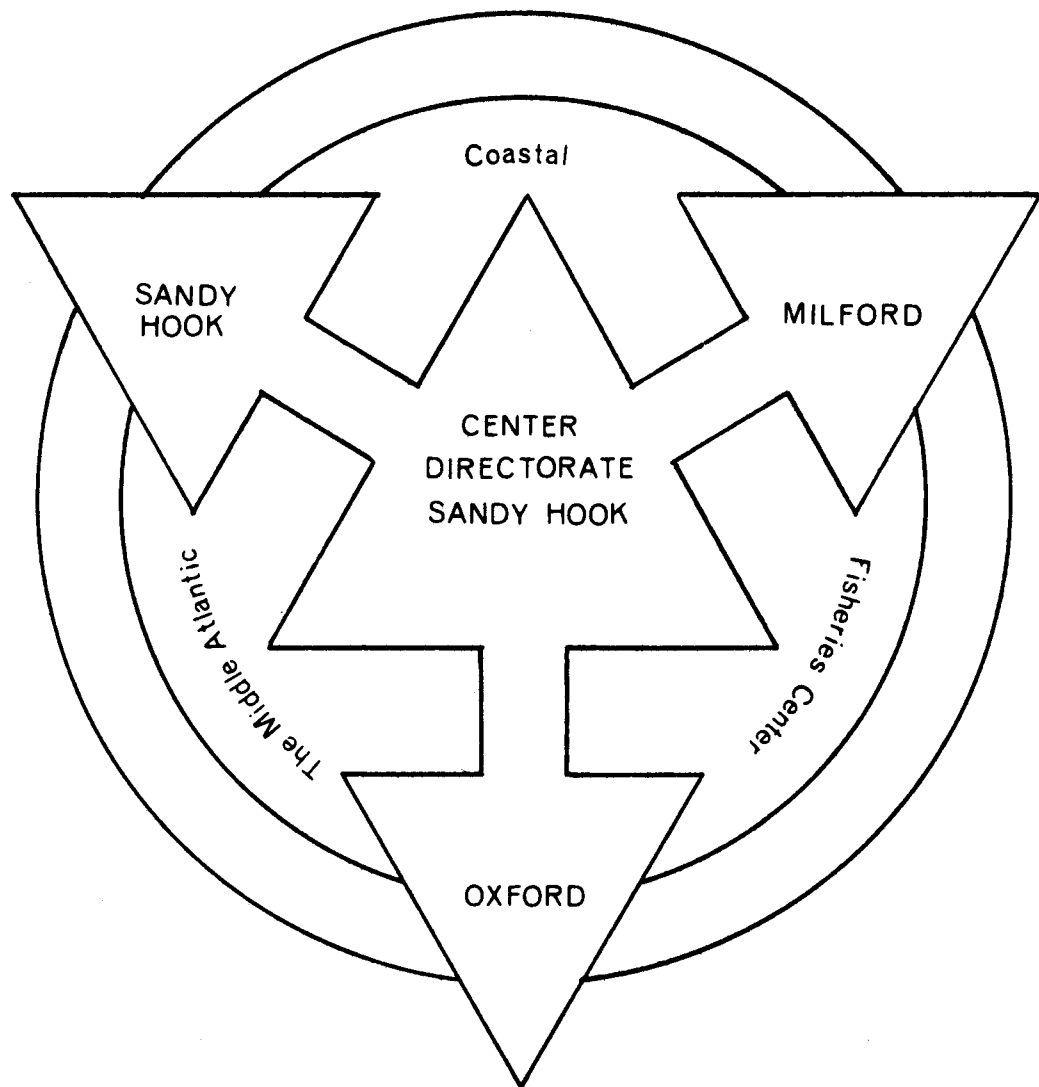


BRIEFING DOCUMENT --
PROGRAM PLANNING AND OPERATIONS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Northeast Region

MIDDLE ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES CENTER



Informal Report No. 80

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I. THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES CENTER

ORGANIZATION The Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center is one of a series of research centers established by the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U. S. Department of Commerce. Each of these centers represents a program consolidation and grouping of several laboratories in different geographical locations.

The Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center is a consolidation and integration of the Sandy Hook (N. J.) Marine Laboratory, the Oxford (Md.) Biological Laboratory, the Milford (Conn.) Biological Laboratory, and the former Ann Arbor (Mich.) Technological Laboratory (now based at Milford). These units (regrouped and subdivided by disciplines) function under direct line authority of the Center Director, Dr. Carl Sindermann, who is responsible to the Associate Director for Resource Research, NMFS, for broad integrated programs of research on living coastal resources. The Center is composed of a Directorate, an associated centralized Administrative Unit, and four major research units. Research facilities of the Center are located at Sandy Hook, N. J., Milford, Conn., Oxford, Md., and Greenbackville, Va. Center headquarters are at Sandy Hook.

MISSION The mission of the Center is to develop, establish, and to prosecute aggressively an integrated, multi-disciplinary research program on the biology and ecology of the living marine coastal organisms of the North Atlantic Ocean, especially in the zoogeographic area known as the Middle Atlantic Bight. This program is to be carried out in full cooperation with other interested Federal and State agencies, and with local academic and other research institutions. The research responsibilities of the major research units are as follows:

NATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, TO WHICH CURRENT
MIDDLE ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES CENTER RESEARCH IS RESPONSIVE:

-Goal: Conserve, protect and allocate the marine fisheries resources of the United States through effective management of commercial and recreational fisheries.

I. Fisheries Management.

A. Resource Surveys/Data Analysis (Line Item)

2. Conduct MARMAP surveys, catch analyses, and prepare assessments for important resource stocks off the Mid-Atlantic coast of the United States (Objective).

-Merrill

B. Fishery Oceanography (Line Item)

13. Provide description and analyses of marine organic production systems in the Mid-Atlantic Bight (Objective).

-Pearce

14. Describe biological, physical and chemical environmental conditions and influence on the living marine resources of the Mid-Atlantic Bight (Objective)

-Pearce, Rosenfield, Hanks

Goal: Support fisheries management which considers marine recreational fisheries in proportion to their significance and maintains the resources at an optimum level to ensure their availability for equitable allocation to recreational use for food and enjoyment.

III. Marine Recreational Fisheries.

A. Marine recreational fisheries (Line Item)

3. Conduct and support research directed toward understanding the biology of recreationally important fish stocks; i.e., life history studies, interrelationships of various stocks, behavioral and ecological characteristics, environmental requirements, to permit management to develop and maintain the full potential benefits from these fishery resources. (Objective).

-Merrill, Rosenfield, Pearce, Hanks

Goal: Increase the national availability and quality of a broad spectrum of aquatic resources for commercial and recreational use through aquacultural research and development and through the hatcheries programs.

IV. Aquaculture/Hatcheries.

A. Aquaculture research and development (Line Item)

2. Conduct the research and development needed to establish the scientific and technical base for the extensive and/or intensive culture of selected species (Objective).

-Hanks Rosenfield

Goal: Assure that adequate consideration and protection are given to living marine and estuarine resources and their habitat requirements in proposed, on-going and completed environmental alterations.

VI. Habitat Protection.

B. Fisheries Habitat Investigations (Line Item)

2. Determine long-term fluctuations and reactions to man's activities in areas of present degradation and effects on resources, with the goal of guiding management strategies for rehabilitation. (Objective)

-Pearce Rosenfield, Hanks

TABULATION OF TASK DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND RELATED NMFS OBJECTIVES

MAC-002	MARMAP SII - Multispecies - Middle Atlantic Bight	1.A.2.; (3.A.3.) ^{1/}
MAC-005	Fishery Analysis - Middle Atlantic Sportfish	1.A.2.; (3.A.3.)
MAC-006	Behavior of Fishes under Environmental Stress	(3.A.3.); 1.B.14; (6.B.2)
MAC-007	Impact of Environmental Change, Middle Atlantic	1.B.14; (6.B.2.)
MAC-008	Biochemical Modeling, Middle Atlantic	1.B.14; (6.B.2.)
MAC-009	Environmental Microbiology and Chemistry, Middle Atlantic .	1.B.14; (6.B.2.)
MAC-015	Physiological Effects of Pollutant Stress	1.B.14; (3.A.3) (6.B.2)
MAC-016	Life Studies: Comparative Pathology	1.B.14; (6.B.2.)
MAC-017	Disease and Environmental Stress	1.B.14; (6.B.2.)
MAC-053	MARMAP SI - Biological Assessment	1.A.2.
MAC-055	MESA-New York Bight Biological Oceanography	(1.B.13); 1.B.14; (6.B.2)
MAC-056	Aquaculture Genetics	4.A.2.
MAC-057	Aspects of Nutritional Requirements of Molluscs	4.A.2.
MAC-058	Aquacultural Control of Molluscan Disease	4.A.2.
MAC-059	Spawning and Rearing of Molluscs	4.A.2.
MAC-060	Biological Assessment - Sportfish	3.A.3; (1.A.2)
MAC-061	Behavioral Measures of Environmental Stress in Marine Fishes: Field and Laboratory Studies	1.B.14; (3.A.3) (6.B.2)
MAC-063	MARMAP II - Multispecies, Coastal Assessment	1.A.2.; (3.A.3)
MAC-064	MARMAP FA - Population Dynamics	(1.A.2.); 3.A.3.
MAC-065	MARMAP SI - Larval Fish Studies (ERDA Reimbursable)	1.A.2.; (3.A.3)

^{1/} () = Non-add

MAC-067	Primary Productivity and its Relationship to Pollution and Coastal Fisheries	1.B.13; (6.B.2.)
MAC-069	Biological Effects of Dredging and Spoil Disposal, New London, CT	6.B.2.
MAC-070	Proliferative Cell Disease in Molluscs	1.B.14.; (6.B.2.)
MAC-071	Recreational Fisheries - Forage Fish - Predator Relations . .	3.A.3. ; (1.A.2.)
MAC-072	Larval and Algal Technical Services	4.A.2.
MAC-073	Effect of Temperature on the Behavior of Marine Invertebrates	1.B.14.; (6.B.2.)
MAC-074	Ecological Baselines of the Outer Continental Shelf	1.B.14.; (6.B.2.)

Administrative Services

OFO-NOS Vessel Liaison

Technical Services

MESA-NYB Liaison

Systems Investigations
Dr. J. Pearce,
Director

Resource Assessment Investigations
Dr. A. Merrill,
Director

Pathobiology Investigations
Dr. A. Rosenfield,
Director

Experimental Biology Investigations
Dr. J. Hanks,
Director

MA-006-EI-
Behavior of Fish
under Stress

MA-002-S2-
Multispecies,
Middle Atlantic

MA-016-EI-Com-
parative Pathol-
ogy

Contaminant
Studies

Aquaculture
Studies

MA-061-EI
Behavior of Fish
under Temperature
Stress (AEC Reim-
bursable)

MAC-005-RF-Fishery
Analysis-M.A.
Sportfish

MA-017-EI-Disease
and Environmental
Stress

MA-014-EI-
Mutagenic
Effects of
Pollutants

MA-059-AQ-
Spawning and
Rearing of
Molluscs

MA-007-EI-Middle
Atlantic Bight

MA-053-SI-Biological
Assessment

MA-058-AQ-Control
of Disease

MA-015-EI-
Physiological
Effects of
Pollutants

MA-057-AQ-
Nutrition of
Molluscs

MA-008-EI-Bio-
chemical Modelling

MA-060-RF-Biological
Assessment-Sportfish

MA-070-EI-Cell
Diseases of Molluscs
(FDA reimbursable)

MA-056-AQ-
Aquaculture
Genetics

MA-009-EI-Micro-
biology and
Chemistry

MA-063-SII-Multi-
species Coastal
Assessment

MA-064-RF-Population
Dynamics

MA-055-EI-MESA-NY
Bight (Reimbursable).

MA-067-EI-Primary
Productivity and
Pollution

MA-065-Larval Fish
(AEC reimbursable)

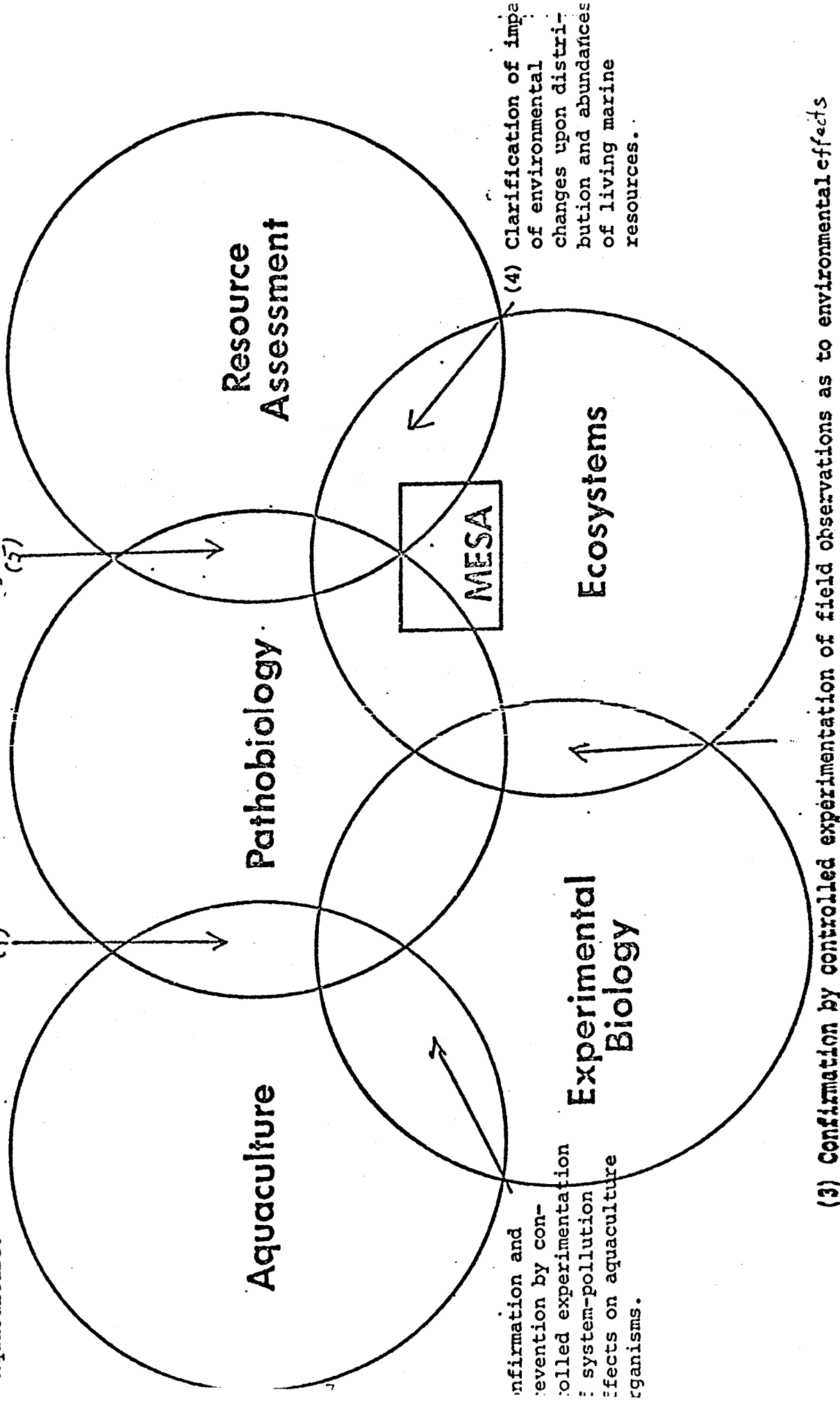
MA-071-RF-Forage-
Predator Relations

MA-069-EI-Biolog-
ical Effects-New
England (Maine Reim-
bursable)

Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center Interrelationships of Research Investigation Groups and the Relative Position of MESA - Funded Studies

ological and Preventative Studies of Larval Diseases, (5) Clarification of impact of pathogen-induced mortalities on the abundances of living marine organisms.

Aquaculture. (1) Critical Review in Inhibiting Commercial Feasibility



III. A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH OF THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES CENTER

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT INVESTIGATIONS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has long been engaged in offshore assessment of fish stocks along the Atlantic coast, especially on the highly productive Georges Bank and Gulf of Maine grounds. More recently, studies have been extended into the mid-Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay regions. In the past, this amount of effort was deemed sufficient to assess the North Atlantic commercial stocks. However, the increase in fishing pressure by foreign fleets, with the concurrent decrease in stocks on the traditional North Atlantic grounds, has caused an increase in fishing intensity in the Middle Atlantic areas. Along with dwindling stocks, there is an apparent degradation of critical estuarine and coastal spawning and nursery grounds. In addition, our technological gains in the field of freezing, holding, processing, and transportation of fishery products have expanded the markets to new inland areas where seafood products had not previously been utilized. Moreover, recreational fishing pressure on these stocks has increased steadily. These factors listed above have put a serious strain on fishery resources along the Atlantic coast of the United States and many are in jeopardy of being depleted by over-fishing. It, therefore, becomes essential that the fishery stocks along the Atlantic coast and adjacent estuaries be assessed as completely as possible in order that wise management policies be established to save them from further depletion.

To properly assess the resources along the entire Atlantic coast, a comprehensive and intensive national program of integrated research has been developed which, in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, involves four investigations. All investigations are working together as one coordinated group called Resource Assessment Investigations, in order that the status of our current and the future commercial and recreational stocks can be predicted. The Center's coastal resource program couples with and complements those being conducted by NMFS Centers to the north and south.

ORGANIZATION: Coastal Survey Investigation, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J. .

ACTIVITY AREA: Middle Atlantic Bight / Resource Assessment / Finfish and Shellfish

OBJECTIVE: To efficiently and effectively utilize the fishery resources of the Middle Atlantic by establishing an adequate data base for management decisions. Resource assessment data, supplemented by existing sources, including fishery statistics, will provide accurate information permitting the development of predictive models for middle Atlantic coastal fisheries resources.

SUMMARY: Fishery stocks in the Middle Atlantic are subjected to a combined influence of increasing fishing pressures and environmental extremes. Fishing pressures have changed drastically in recent years with the influence of foreign fleets offshore and with the recent and rapid development of inshore recreational fishing. Stresses of normal environmental extremes of temperature and salinity have been compounded by a reduction in quality and area of estuarine nursery zones. In recent years the above factors have decreased the yield or catch rate of a number of our utilized fishery resources and in unrealized ways affected unexploited stocks. Many of these fishes migrate not only within the middle Atlantic area but range along the shelf waters of the entire Atlantic coast. These facts demonstrate why a strict regional approach is not practical; and show the need for a cooperative coastwise program utilizing joint data banks for storage of information.

Using standard trawl gear, we will continue our sampling pattern in order to estimate and monitor numbers and distribution of all benthic fish and selected shellfish species with principal emphasis in the Middle Atlantic Bight. Since the life pattern of many inshore finfish incur migrations of not only on a coastal scale but to the offshore waters, we will continue to coordinate and refine sampling systems cooperatively carried on by

Federal and State fishery laboratories both north and south of the region (from Nantucket to Cape Canaveral). Assessment of groundfish will be based on fall and spring surveys, coastwise in concept, particularly to monitor juvenile and adult components. Input statements on age, fecundity, growth, and stock identification will derive from other task units working on these species groups of special interest (sciaenids, flounders, etc.). As a data base of information builds up, we will begin biometrical analyses to estimate the potential yield and harvestable fractions of particular stocks.

Primary recipients of these data will be Federal groups and in-house personnel developing ICNAF and bilateral policies. State agencies and industry representatives (commercial and recreational) will be given requested information to assist in management decisions.

RESOURCES:

FY 74 91.2 K
FY 75 98.0 K

SENIOR STAFF:

Thomas Azarovitz



Northern Leg, Bimonthly (MARMAP) Finfish Survey Cruise. Trawling is by randomly selected stations within each of the above strata. Southern leg extends from Delaware Bay to Cape Hatteras.

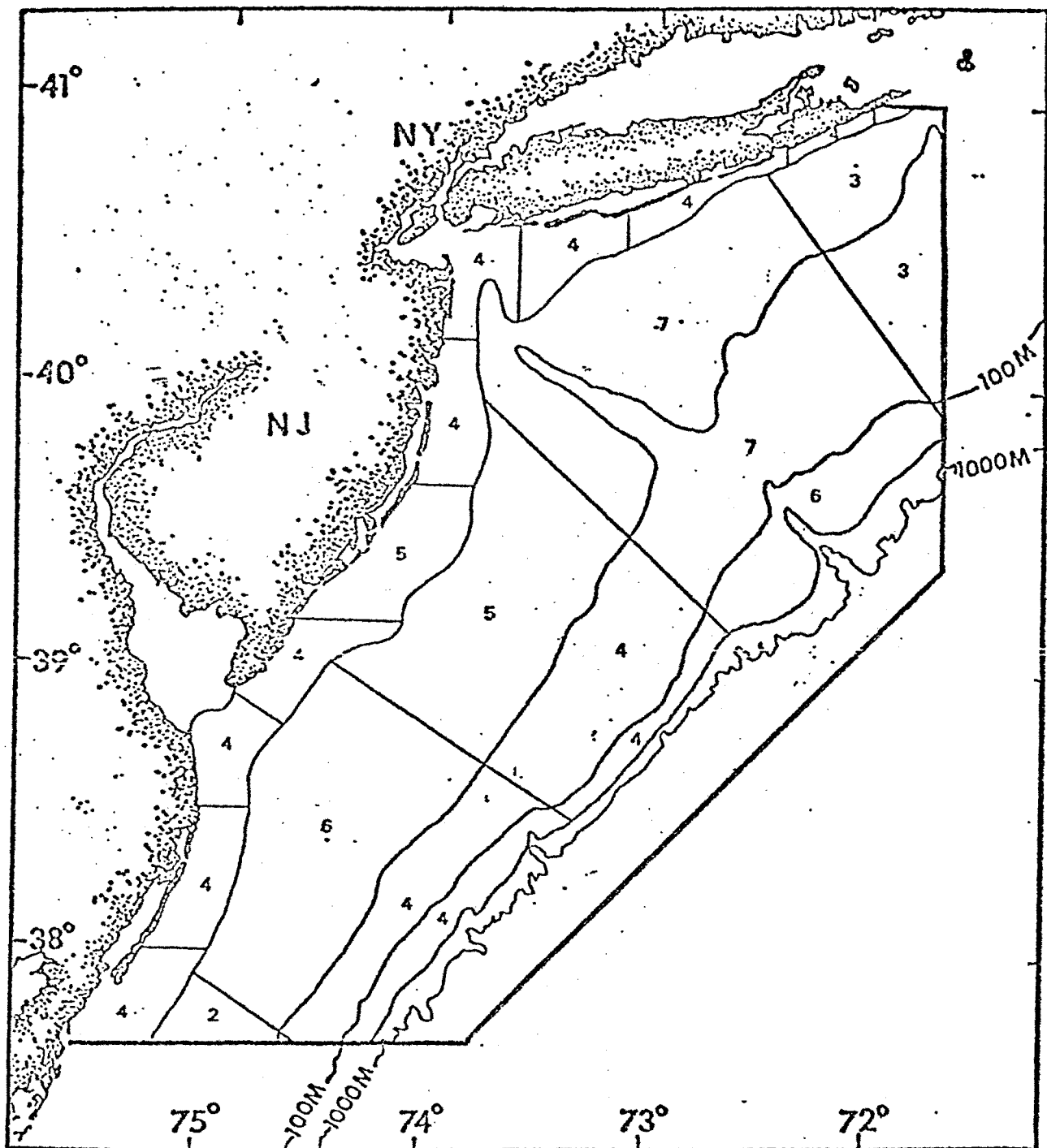


Figure 4. Existing Sampling Strata and Numbers of Stations per Strata.

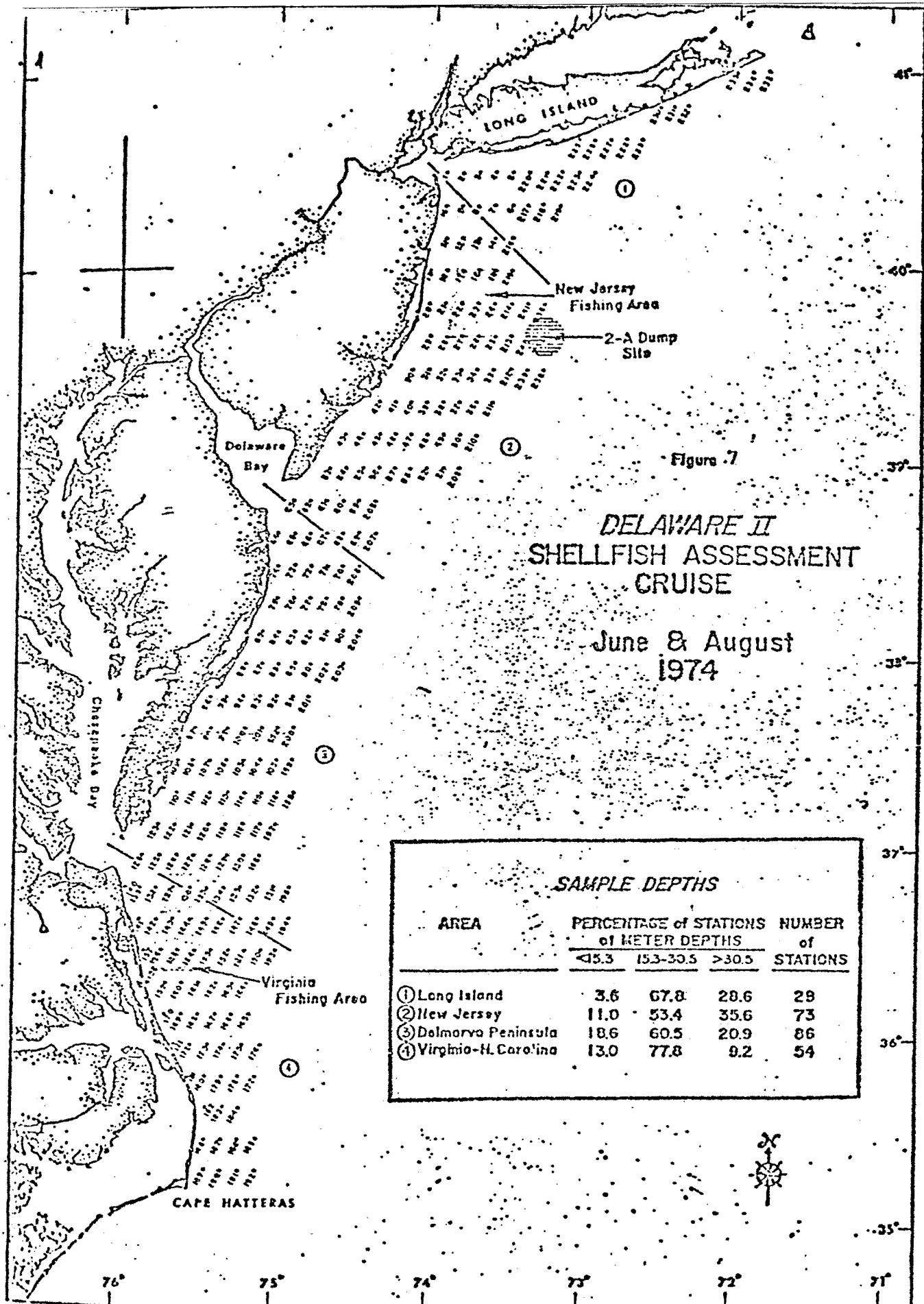


Figure 5-7 Station location and number occupied during the June 13-28, 1974, Delaware II cruise by areas. The depths sampled are analyzed in the table insert. The location of a proposed alternate dump site (2-A) and the locations of two

ORGANIZATION: Resource Assessment, Biological Investigation,
Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center,
NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Life History Agents of Marine Finfishes -
East Coast from Florida to Massachusetts

OBJECTIVE: Fish populations of the Middle Atlantic Bight
have been subjected to encroachment of foreign
fleets, increased U.S. commercial and sport
fisheries, and reduction in quality and area of
suitable spawning and nursery grounds. These
forces have combined with natural fluctuations,
in varying proportions, to jeopardize our coastal
fishery resources to the extent that some are
on the verge of depletion. Unfortunately, our
basic biological knowledge of the life histories
of coastal fishes is inadequate for recommending
immediate and sound national and international
management policies. We are not in a position
to determine recruitment, levels of exploitation,
or the impact of long-term natural fluctuations
and man-made changes in the environment upon our
fishery resources. The scientific base needed
to properly manage our coastal fisheries will
incorporate the understanding of basic biological
components that make up the life history patterns
of coastal species. It is essential that the
assessment of fishery stocks along the Atlantic
coast be augmented in order that proper manage-
ment policies can be established to insure the
maximum sustainable yield of important marine
resources.

SUMMARY: Programs are now underway to:

- 1) collect biological materials pertinent to
selected Atlantic coast sport and commercial
species such as drums, flounders, porgies,
sea basses, during groundfish cruises, and
routine port sampling;
- 2) analyze biological materials to determine one
or more of the following: age composition
and growth rate, sexual development, spawning
season, fecundity, and food and feeding
habits;

- 3) conduct stock and racial identification studies of selected species by means of discriminant function analysis of morphometric and meristic variates;
- 4) record all data collected on the appropriate automatic data processing forms, transfer to punch cards, and incorporate into sorting, listing, and statistical systems;
- 5) retrieve and analyze data for use in technical reports, scientific publications, and special problem areas;
- 6) retrieve data requested by various user groups such as population and environmental analysts NMFS research, industry, sportsmen, management and regulatory agencies.

RESOURCES:

FY 74 . 164.3 K
FY 75 159.1 K

SENIOR STAFF:

Stuart Wilk

ORGANIZATION: Resource Assessment, Life Studies Prerecruits Investigation, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Ichthyoplankton / Distribution and Relative Abundance / Diurnal Movements / Transport / Survival / Fisheries Management

OBJECTIVE: To provide a data base for forecasting and predicting seasonal occurrence, relative abundance, and distribution of eggs and larvae of coastal fishes.

SUMMARY: The increased fishing pressures, both foreign and domestic, and the apparent diminution of suitable spawning and nursery grounds have combined to jeopardize our coastal fishery resources to the extent that some are on the brink of being depleted. To acquire the scientific and technical base to construct sound management policies, we must obtain information about living marine resources that will permit meaningful predictions of distribution, abundance, condition, and availability of these resources.

Emphasizing those species that are found near-shore, field work during the next 3 to 5 years will center around: a) continued investigations of the diurnal activities of young planktonic fishes to acquire an understanding of their associations with such environmental parameters as photoperiod, depth, temperature, salinity, and seasonal thermocline, and to estimate their dispersion rates on the basis of known coastal circulation; b) surveys of selected coastal areas, designed to monitor fluctuations in abundance of larval fishes, to determine their distribution in coastal waters, to attempt to correlate fluctuations in abundance and distribution with hydrographic features, and to learn more about environmental needs of specific fishes.

Six cruises are planned to study diurnal activities of young fishes. Collections from these cruises will contain young of the most important commercial and recreational fishes that spawn in the bight. Of the 10 most important coastal species in terms of total combined sport and commercial catch between New York and Cape Hatteras, only Atlantic mackerel and possibly bluefish are not dependent on the shallow coastal areas. The other species depend on the subtidal zone for spawning and/or nursery areas, and even young bluefish and mackerel utilize this area for foraging to some extent.

We will conduct coastal surveys to monitor fluctuations in abundance and distribution of young fishes in conjunction with ongoing finfish assessment surveys. Plankton collections will be taken at preselected stations in the Middle Atlantic Bight, chosen on the basis of previous cruises designed to study the seasonal distributions of fish eggs and larvae. We will record concomitant measurements of the marine environment on the above cruises and subsequently incorporate pertinent physical data from other sources to establish norms and ranges of variability. These data will be integrated with all available biological data to evaluate the role of the environment in terms of its effect on larval transport, geographic distribution, year-class success and, ultimately, to establish the actual role of the coastal zone in the early life history of economically important fishes.

We will operate with standard gear (as adapted for MARMAP Survey I operations) over enough years so that normal fluctuations and cycles in abundance and distribution of the species and also fluctuations in the natural environment of these species can be ascertained. This information is essential to determine the causes of population fluctuations or declines.

RESOURCES:	FY 74	155.2 K
	FY 75	326.8 K

SENIOR STAFF:	Wallace Smith
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ORGANIZATION: Fishery Analysis Investigation, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Sportfish, Population Dynamics, Middle Atlantic Bight

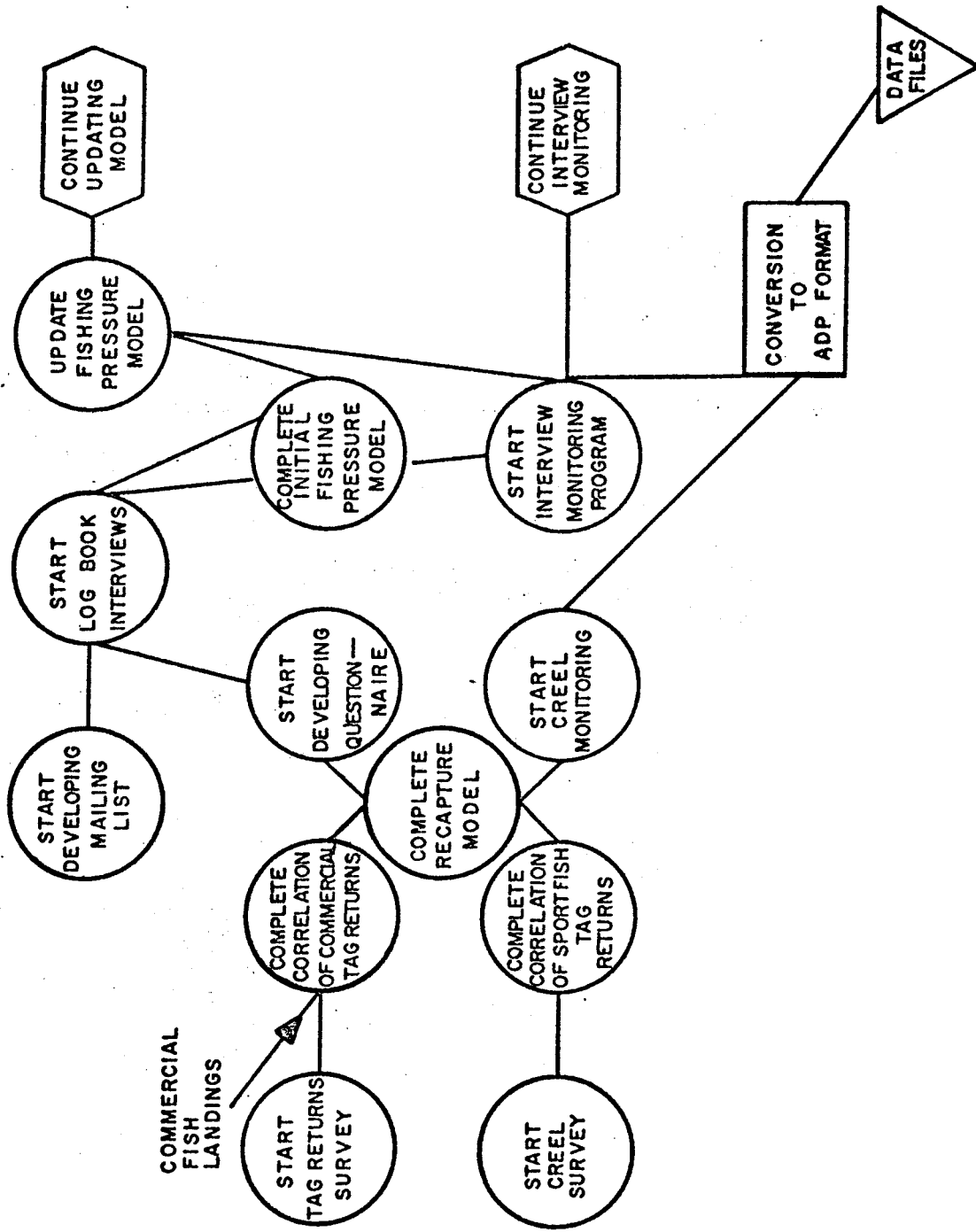
OBJECTIVE: To systematically collect sportfish catch data from selected areas, deriving information on catch composition, success of fishing of various elements of the fishery to determine participation and competition within the recreational fraction and comparisons to the commercial fishery to determine total harvest.

SUMMARY: Successful management of commercial and sportfish resources requires the systematic collection and analysis of commercial and sportfish catch data. This need is being satisfied by the use of port samplers assigned to cover strategic fishing port areas along the Atlantic Bight. The sampling time is stratified by type of fishing, area of fishing and time of fishing. Appropriately expanded, these data will provide realistic estimates of catch rates of species seasonally, and variations in catch composition. Direct biological samples of the catch include size, weight and age analysis of important species. These data from the recreational segments will be contrasted to groundfish survey catch and commercial catch to determine removals and competition between the various harvesting elements. The effort is of a prototype nature anticipating a State-Federal continuing study. The techniques, recording formats and data processing programs will be applied to the cooperative study to ensure continuity and comparability of results. The ultimate goal, vitally needed is a continuous record of the total harvest for the region and for subareas within the area. The task will provide statistically reliable indices to establish a baseline level from which subsequent variations can be related. On these variations management recommendations will result in conservation strategies.

RESOURCES:

FY 74	68.3 K
FY 75	80.5 K

SENIOR STAFF: Anthony Pacheco



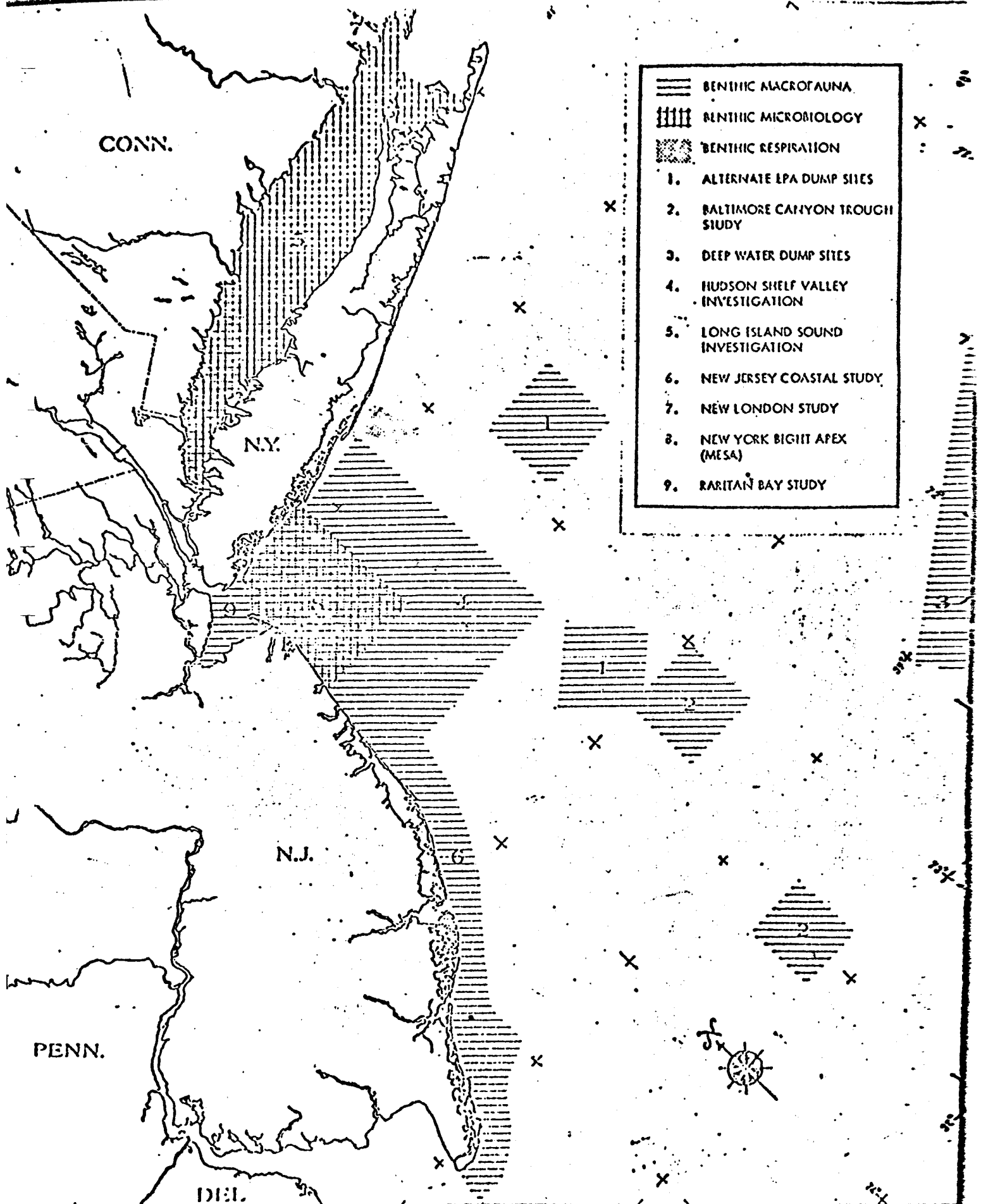
BIOSTATISTICS

ECOSYSTEMS INVESTIGATIONS

To an ever greater extent the yield of marine fisheries is dependent upon water quality in coastal marine environments. Anadromous species of fish and shellfish have traditionally been the first species affected by deteriorated coastal and estuarine waters. There seems little doubt, however, that the deterioration of coastal environments is having or will have an effect on coastal and offshore marine species which reproduce in or migrate through coastal and estuarine ecosystems.

The effects of deteriorated environments do not always impinge directly upon commercial and game finfish or shellfish; rather, polluted waters or physically disrupted environments may result in an elimination of or diminution in the standing crops of invertebrates important as forage species in marine food chains or disrupt the flora and fauna which play an important role in stabilizing marine sediments. Finally, invertebrate species, which are often attached forms unable to avoid polluted waters, are excellent indicator organisms which can be used to assess change in environmental quality.

The Ecosystems Investigations program was developed to provide data for a comprehensive overview of the coastal and estuarine environments of the Middle Atlantic Bight. This program includes a number of closely integrated investigations designed to provide data on baseline distributions and life histories of benthic, natatory and planktonic invertebrates and their relationships to marine and estuarine finfish; to determine the effects of pollution and environmental deterioration on the living resources of coastal and estuarine ecosystems; and to quantitate the distribution and abundance of marine microorganisms and of heavy metals, and to determine their effects on higher plants and animals.



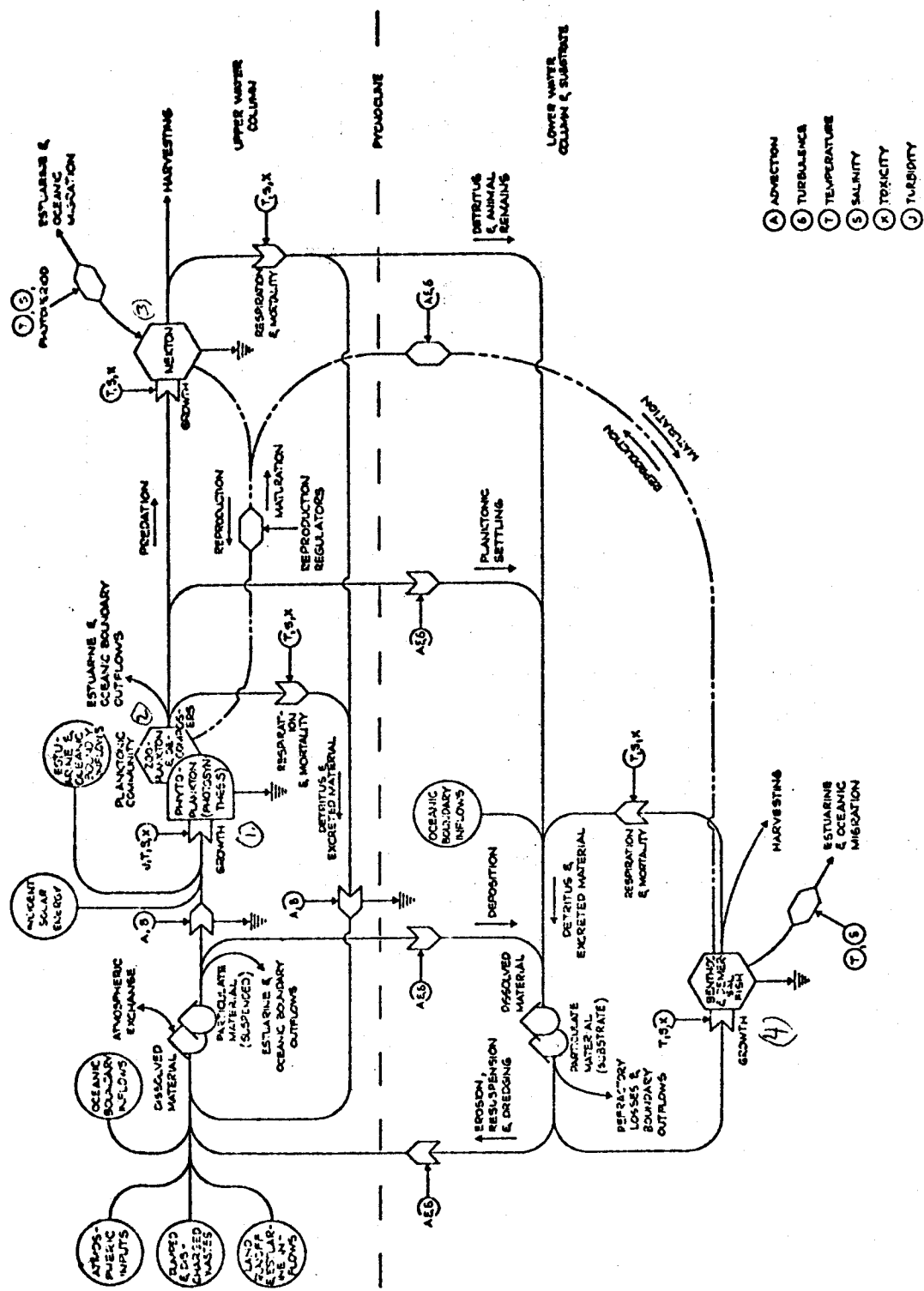


FIGURE 7-1
CONCEPTUAL REPRESENTATION OF ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES
IN THE NEW YORK BIGHT

ORGANIZATION: Sandy Hook Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Benthic baseline impact surveys and dynamics (benthic macrofauna, sediment types and contaminant burdens) in New York Bight Apex and outer Continental Shelf.

OBJECTIVE: To describe present benthic community structure in area of interest and to understand relationships between productivity of water column, benthic assemblages and demersal finfish and shellfish; to determine relationships between sediments and existing contaminant loads on macro - and meiofauna and monitor effects of new impacts and pollution abatement.

SUMMARY: Due to their sensitivity and convenience of study, benthic macrofauna are perhaps the group most suitable for use as biological indicators of environmental contamination. They are also important or dominant constituents in marine finfish food webs. Knowledge of their distribution, abundance, natural and man-induced fluctuations are of value in determining man's effects on the environment and thus are an indispensable aid in managing marine resources.

This investigation routinely uses Smith-McIntyre samplers and other devices to collect sediments, meio - and macrofauna from grids or transects of stations in the above investigation areas. Macrofauna are sieved to the 1 mm level and are identified to species whenever possible. As many as 20 replicate samples are collected per station. Statistical analyses of within-station faunal variability are used to determine the number of grabs which must be sorted to detect given differences in faunal parameters such as number of individuals, number of species, species diversity and equitability.

Effects of sediment type and constituents on macrofauna are examined using regression analysis. Clustering techniques are used to determine affinities between species and between stations. Long-term monitoring of stations selected from the cluster groups will enable detection of changes resulting from present and future impacts.

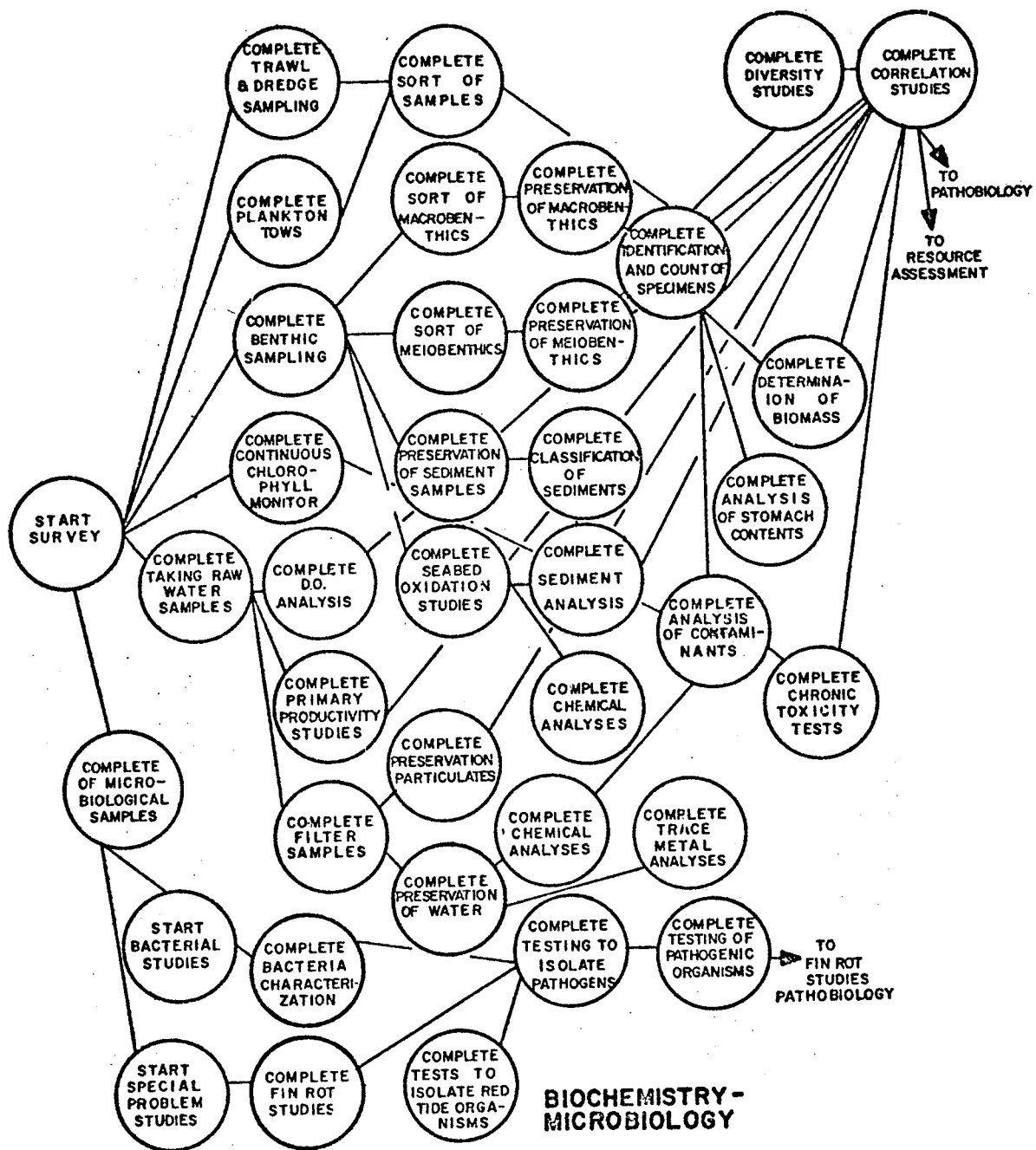
The resulting information is used to understand the relationship between contamination and stress and productivity of living marine resources, particularly cycling between the water column, benthic populations and finfish.

RESOURCES:

FY 74 70.5 K
FY 75 104.8 K

SENIOR STAFF:

Dr. Kneeland McNulty



ORGANIZATION: Sandy Hook Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N.J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Seabed Oxygen Consumption in the New York Bight/ Phytoplankton and Primary Productivity in the Lower Hudson Estuary.

OBJECTIVE: To determine and describe extant baseline conditions. To provide environmental managers with required information for proper management of the system.

SUMMARY: Seabed oxygen consumption measurements are indicative of the quantity of organic carbon (including organic carbon in sewage sludge and other waste and non-waste materials) oxidized per unit area per unit time. The measurement is also an indicator of seabed environmental conditions. Measurements have been made in March, August, December and February 1974-75. During the winter the highest rates of oxidation are associated with the waste disposal areas in the Apex. During the summer, however, the area associated with sewage sludge disposal exhibits depressed rates of oxidation (comparable to winter values) while peripheral areas are elevated. The summer measurements indicate that the area is being overstressed by present waste disposal practices. The proposed alternate waste disposal sites and continental shelf area within the New York Bight will be examined both for baselines and to assist in environmental management. The Apex area will continue to be investigated to determine regulative mechanisms and recovery rates.

In our investigations of phytoplankton and primary productivity in the Lower Hudson Estuary (Raritan, Lower, and Sandy Hook Bays) we are not only establishing baselines but are attempting to compare the distribution and abundance both seasonally and spatially of phytoplankton biomass and production with certain environmental variables to understand the regulation, significance, and contribution of phytoplankton to the New York Bight waters.

Measurements of phytoplankton biomass and production, nutrients, and other environmental variables were made each month beginning November 1973.

We found a shift in size of the phytoplankton from netplankton ($> 20 \mu$), dominating during the fall, winter and spring bloom (March) periods, to nanoplankton ($< 20 \mu$), dominating during the summer.

ORGANIZATION: Sandy Hook Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N. J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Behavior of marine fishes in the field and laboratory; Measures of environmental stress; Light and temperature.

OBJECTIVE: To observe and measure patterns of behavior as related to the normal habits of various marine fish species and to utilize these norms to measure and predict the effects of selected environmental stresses.

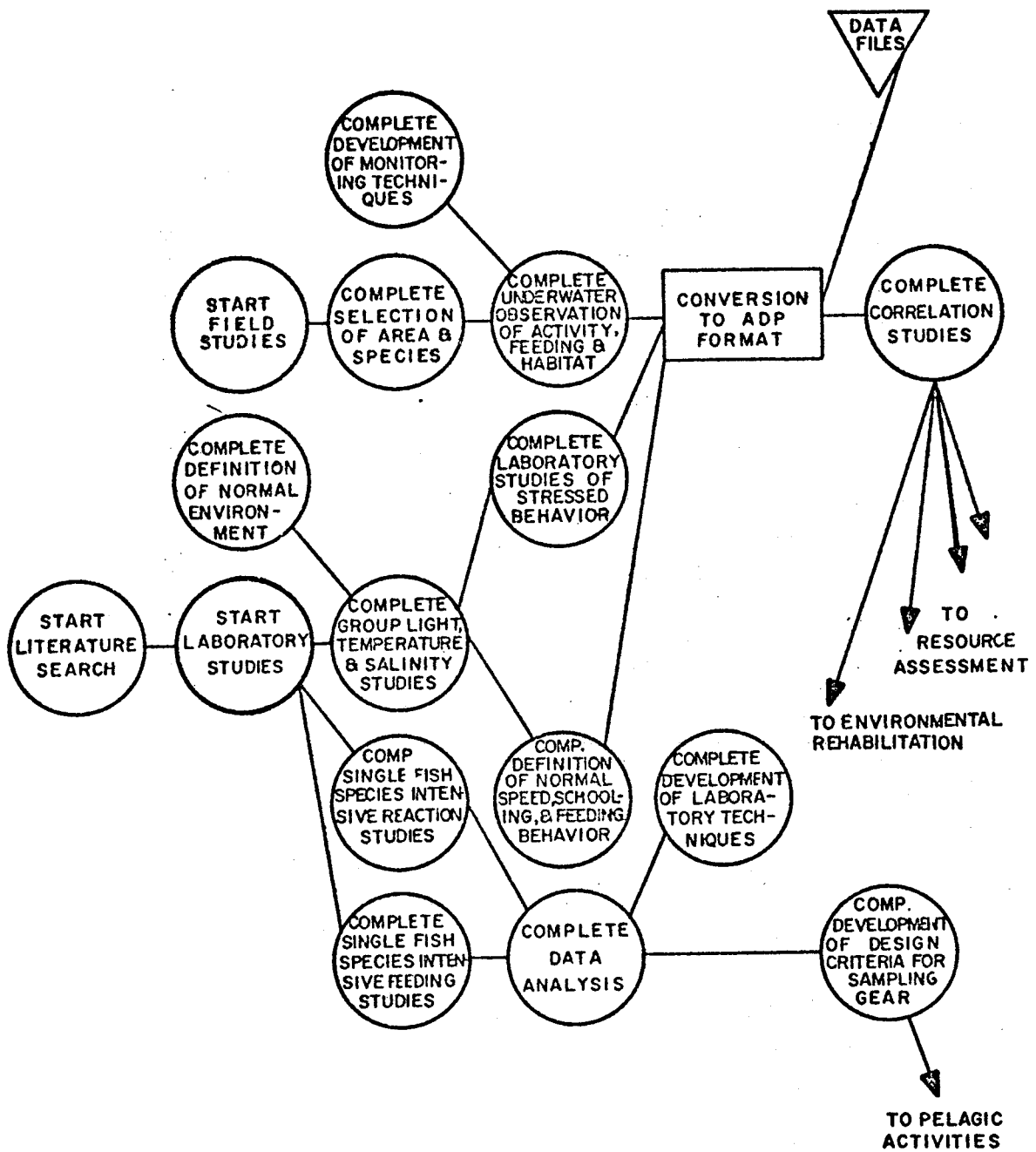
SUMMARY: The major aim of the program has been to study the behavior and life habits of various species of marine fish in both the field and laboratory. The results of these studies have been used to define normal environmental requirements and the effects of pollution stress on established norms of behavior.

Field studies have concentrated on observing and defining feeding habits, daily movements, relation to shelter and social interactions of benthic and demersal species including winter flounder, Pseudopleuronectes americanus, tautog, Tautoga onitis, and cunner, Tautogalabrus adspersus (see below for relevant references). Laboratory studies have centered on measuring rhythms of activity, feeding, schooling and territoriality under both normal and stress in various species including bluefish, Pomatomus saltatrix, Atlantic mackerel, Scomber scombrus, mullet, Mugil cephalus, tautog and cunner. The information gathered from the field studies on the life habits of various species has formed the basis for subsequent laboratory studies, while the laboratory studies concentrate on measuring stress by observing departures from established behavior norms. For example, the results of the field study on the life habits of tautog were largely responsible for our hypothesis regarding this species' response capability, which was subsequently tested and confirmed by experiments performed under controlled laboratory conditions. Much in the same manner results of field studies on cunner will provide the basis for laboratory research on response capability of this species, enabling us to make comparisons between two members of the same family. Comparisons among species studied have shown that the capability of each to survive stress is greatly dependent on the behavioral scope of responsiveness for that species.

Ref: See below for relevant articles and publications.

RESOURCES: FY 74 117.5 K
 FY 75 117.7 K

SENIOR STAFF: Bori L. Olla



BEHAVIOR

ORGANIZATION: Sandy Hook Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, N. J.

ACTIVITY AREA: Benthic baseline impact surveys (sediment types and constituents, benthic macrofauna) in Raritan Bay, Long Island Sound, New Jersey Coast and contiguous Outer Continental Shelf.

OBJECTIVE: To describe present benthic conditions throughout the above areas, determine effects of sediment type and existing contaminant loads on macrofauna, and monitor effects of new impacts.

SUMMARY: Due to their sensitivity and convenience of study, benthic macrofauna are perhaps the group most suitable for use as biological indicators of environmental contamination. They are also often important constituents in marine food webs. Knowledge of their distribution, abundance, natural and man-induced fluctuations are of value in determining man's effects on the environment and thus are an aid in managing marine resources.

This investigation routinely uses Smith-McIntyre samplers to collect sediments and macrofauna from grids or transects of stations in the above survey areas. Macrofauna are sieved to the 1 mm level and are identified to species whenever possible. As many as ten replicate samples are collected per station. Statistical analyses of within-station faunal variability are used to determine the number of grabs which must be sorted to detect given differences in faunal parameters such as number of individuals, number of species, species diversity and equitability.

Effects of sediment type and constituents on macrofauna are examined using regression analysis. Clustering techniques are used to determine affinities between species and between stations. Long-term monitoring of stations selected from the cluster groups will enable detection of changes resulting from present and future impacts.

RESOURCES: FY 74 135.0 K
FY 75 492.9 K

SENIOR STAFF: Robert N. Reid

ORGANIZATION : Sandy Hook Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Highlands, New Jersey.

ACTIVITY AREA: Pollutant heavy metals; metal-organic interactions; effects of metals and metal-organic combinations on living marine resources and on physiological and biochemical subsystems thereof.

SUMMARY : Many of the marine and estuarine environments of the Middle Atlantic coastal area are considerably contaminated with organics and heavy metals resulting from sewage sludge, dredge spoil and chemical dumping which has occurred for more than fifty years (MACFC, Sandy Hook Lab report to Army Corps of Engineers, 1972). Although some quantitative information is available concerning the amounts of metals in marine environments, especially in sediments, far too little is known about binding or chelation to organics, adsorption on particulate material or even inorganic combinations and states of the metals. Knowledge of the forms and combinations of contaminant metals is crucial in understanding their effects upon marine animals.

We are investigating several aspects of this problem, including metal determination in the water column by the sensitive method of anodic stripping polarography, by use of ultraviolet irradiation (220 nm) to destroy organic moieties, by use of ion exchange, filtration, equilibrium dialysis and chromatographic methods to study binding.

The second thrust of our investigation involves analysis of effects of metals, and of their organically bound forms, on living organisms and on biochemical systems within marine animals. Such studies include assays of effects of contaminants on the enzymes, ATPase and glutamic dehydrogenase, and on such physiological mechanisms as osmoregulation, respiration, and metabolism in crabs, lobster, and shrimp.

By combining our chemical studies of metal-organic interactions with investigations of effects on organisms we hope to gain a better understanding of the real role of these contaminants in the marine ecosystem.

RESOURCES : FY 74 89.5 K
FY 75 111.1 K

SENIOR STAFF : Robert K. Tucker

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Environmental Chemistry and Microbiology, Mid-Atlantic Coastal and Offshore Area

OBJECTIVE: To identify and quantify major microbial communities and heavy metal pollutants in marine animals and their environs.

SUMMARY: Contamination and organic loading of the fisheries environment by ocean dumping (dredge and sewage), discharges and runoffs from contiguous land masses results in increase in chemical pollutants, bacterial numbers and types. These pollutants can affect the viability of the fisheries as well as place limitations on their utilization. Thus the identification and quantitation of these pollutants are important for the proper management and expansion (aquaculture) of the fisheries, particularly the inshore areas.

In this investigation the areas of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Offshore regions are being examined for several select heavy metals and bacterial types in the fisheries, food chain organisms and bottom sediments. Although the activity is primarily concerned with the inshore environs, offshore areas are not excluded.

Precedent for the chemical studies of this investigation was established by the mercury problem in the fisheries which surfaced several years ago. Many fish species and marine animals have been examined for the presence of this element. In addition, a survey of over 2,000 individual animals of 40 species of finfish from North Atlantic waters have been examined for mercury. Except for the levels in spiny dogfish, levels of mercury in these fish species were shown to be less than the action level proposed by the F.D.A. The mercury survey has been extended to include the capability of analysis for other elemental chemical species (Cd, Ag, Pb, Sn, Cu, Ni, Sb, Zn, Cr, Fe) as well as in other marine food chain organisms and bottom sediments from select fisheries environments. Areas of the Mid-Atlantic region most thoroughly studied to date, are the New York Bight and Long Island Sound. Sediments from some 160 stations in Long Island have been examined for 11 heavy metals, fecal coliforms and other select pathogenic and toxicogenic bacteria. Studies in

the New York Bight are related to the ocean dumping of sewage and associated problems (migration, alternate sites). New York Bight studies are in cooperation with the MESA project. In addition to obtaining baseline data, uptake and clearance studies of select metals in several animal species are being performed in the laboratory. These are in cooperation with other investigations studying additional aspects of metal toxicities in marine animals.

The microbiological activity of the task is related to outlining areas of fecal contamination of the inshore fisheries environment and looking for the presence of select groups of bacteria. As indicators of fecal pollution, thus the possible presence of pathogenic bacteria, fecal coliforms distribution in the top layer of sediments has been determined in Long Island Sound and New York Bight area.

In addition to fecal coliforms, studies included are total bacterial numbers, both aerobic and anaerobic, presence of certain biochemical types and those organisms which belong to the genus Clostridium and Vibrio. The former genus include perfringens, another indicator of fecal contamination, as well as other toxin producing types - i.e. botulinum. The Vibrio group of organisms are of importance since species belonging to this genus have been implicated in fish diseases, (fin rot) (anguillarum) and diseases in man (parahaemolyticus). Fin rot disease has been shown to occur in the New York Bight fisheries. Results obtained to date show various degrees of fecal pollution in inshore areas as well as variability of numbers of those select groups of bacterial being examined.

RESOURCES: FY 74 194.0 K
 FY 75 156.7 K

SENIOR STAFF: John T. Graiksoki, Ph.D.

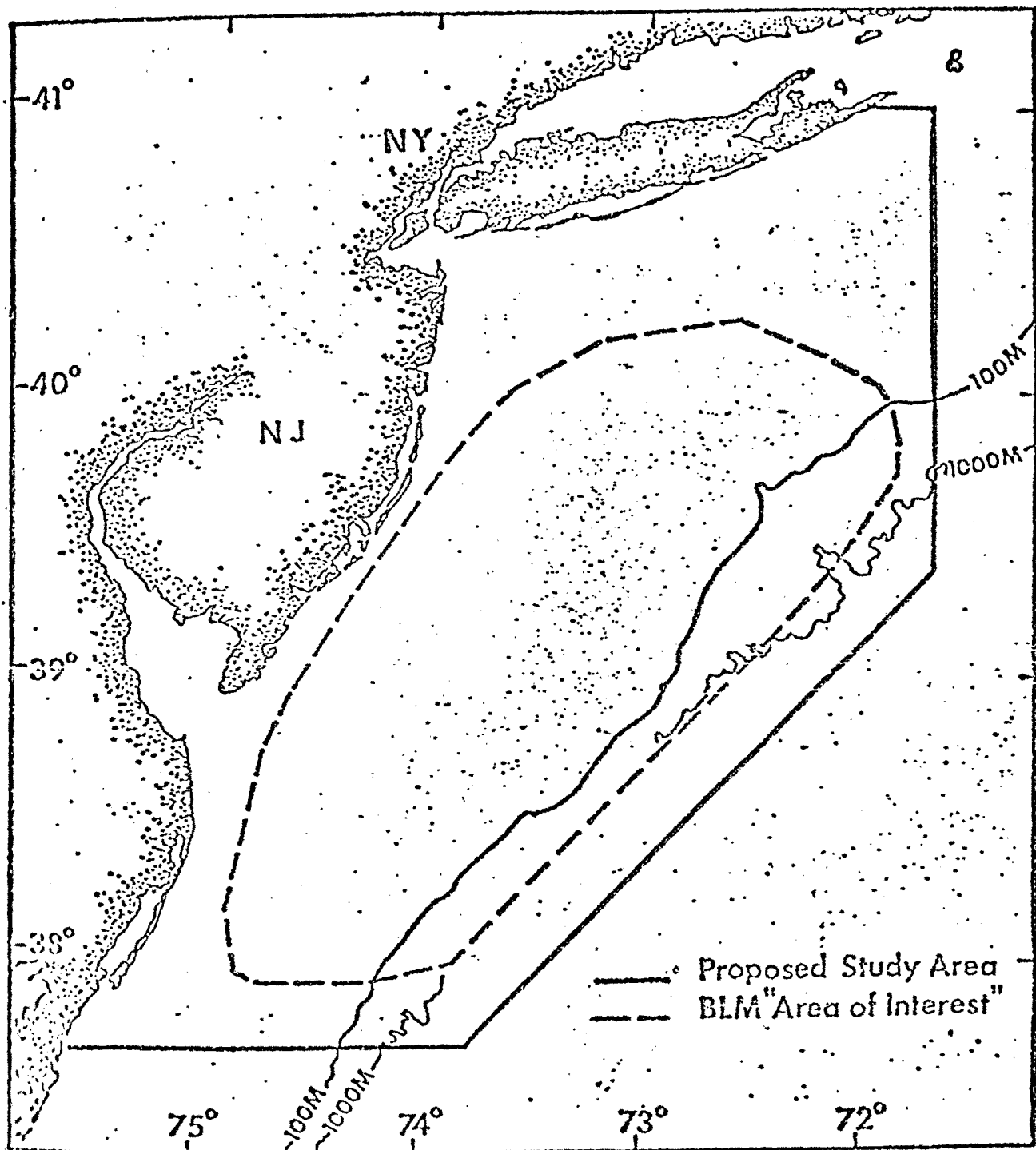


Figure 1. Location of Proposed Study Area

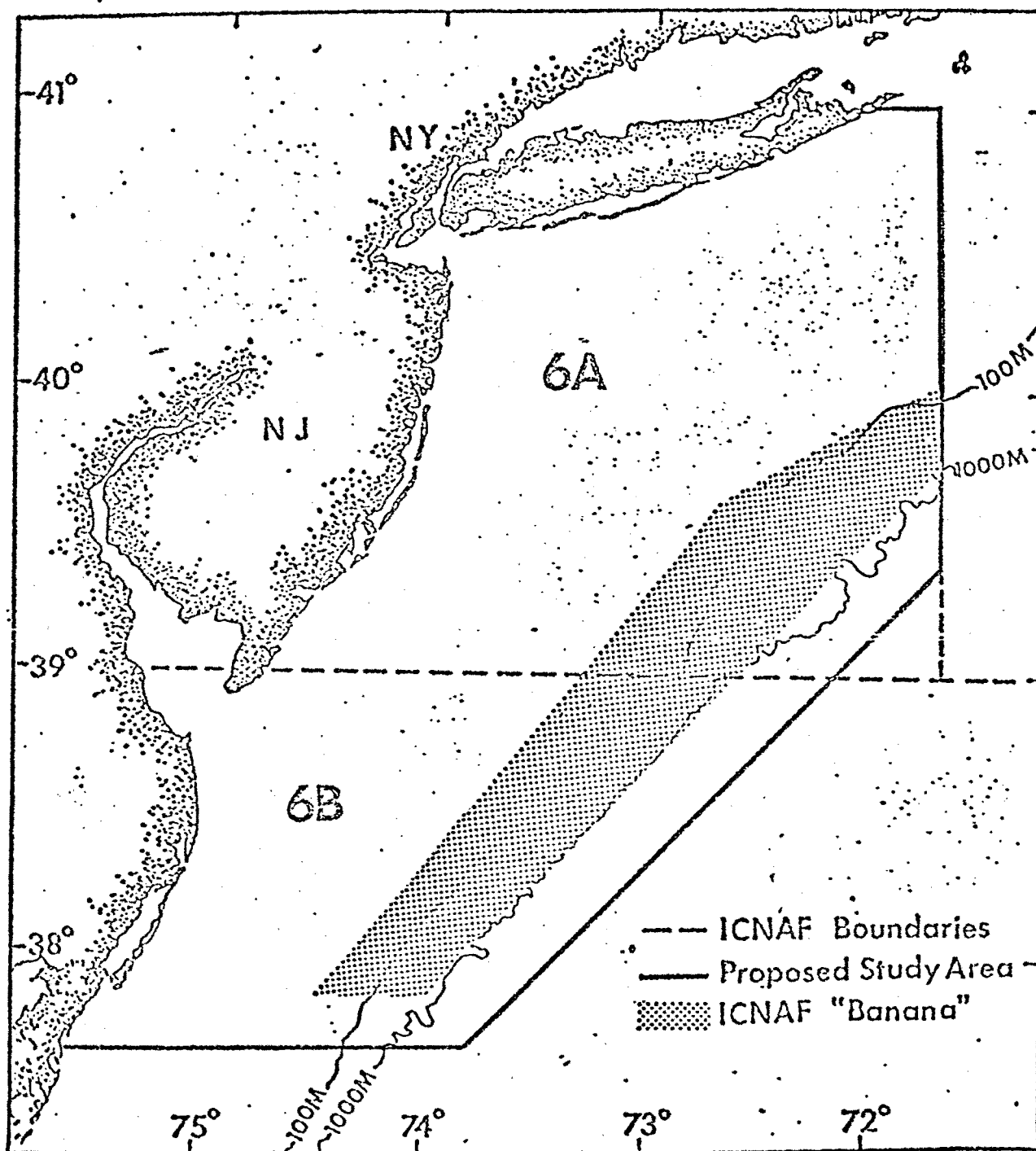


Figure 2. Relationship of ICNAF Areas 6A, 6B and ICNAF "Banana" to Proposed Study Area.

EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY INVESTIGATIONS

There exists, at all levels of both the public and the private sectors, considerable alarm that the living marine resources of the estuarine, coastal and offshore waters of the Middle Atlantic Bight are being adversely affected by extensive offshore dumping of untreated wastes and by run-offs of highly polluted waters. The mode and intensity of such adverse physiological effects is largely unknown. Baseline findings of marine environmental quality cannot be interpreted without such knowledge nor can rational water quality standards be established or enforced when such knowledge is lacking. Quantitative, controlled exposure experiments, both static and chronic, on living organisms, and involving all stages in their life histories, followed by a battery of analytical tests are necessary to permit evaluation, standards-development, successful enforcement, and resource conservation. Present programs are designed to (1) determine lethal effects of a large variety of known pollutants on the larval, juvenile and adult stages of molluscs, crustaceans, and finfish as well as on marine phytoplankton and benthic fauna inasmuch as these form the base of the food chain for all living marine organisms; (2) determine the long-term sub-acute effects of exposure to a large variety of known pollutants on the larval, juvenile and adult stages of molluscs, crustaceans and shellfish; (3) define the physiological and biochemical pathways affected and relate them to the metabolic disorders, tissue abnormalities, etc., which result in death or permanent damage to the living marine organisms; (4) determine effects of marine pollutants on the chromosomes, and genetic development of the American oyster, C. virginica, initially, and on other fish and shellfish; and (5) evaluate findings in terms of specific pollutants and of population genetics. Effective March 1, 1975, funds were reprogrammed within the Center to begin aquaculture studies in genetics, nutrition, and disease, reinstating aquaculture as a major research area of the Center after a hiatus of five years.

Emphasis in the reestablished aquaculture investigations will be placed on molluscan genetics, nutrition, and disease control. Initially, genetics will concentrate on selective breeding of oysters; nutrition will concentrate on definition of algal nutrients for oysters, and disease work will concentrate on hatchery diseases of molluscan larvae. Longer term research, with expected additional funding, will encompass broader objectives, but will continue to emphasize molluscan aquaculture research and development.

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center,
NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Bivalve aquaculture - basic methodology

OBJECTIVE: To develop economically and biologically sound methods for
rearing various species of bivalves of present or potential
economic value in controlled environments.

SUMMARY: This is a new program initiated April 1, 1975. Its major
objective is to develop the basic methodology for rearing
bivalves of commercial value not now being reared as aquaculture
species; in effect, the program seeks to anticipate the future
interest of the shellfish industry in new bivalve aquaculture
candidates. Two species have been chosen for study initially;
they are the bay scallop, Argopecten irradians, and the surf
clam, Spisula solidissima. Some work has already been started
to develop methods for stimulating gametogenesis and spawning
out of season so that subsequent studies of embryological de-
velopment, larval survival and growth and metamorphosis need not
be confined to the natural reproductive season, which is summer
for both species. Modest success in promoting early gametogenesis
in the bay scallop has been achieved and studies of the environ-
mental factors influencing larval development have been initiated.
As a result of previous studies on surf clam culture, in con-
nection with a program now defunct, considerably more is known
of the requirements for successful rearing of this species than
for the bay scallop. Many groups of larvae have been reared to
metamorphosis and beyond. Future work in this area will emphasize
refinement of the culture methods to improve the dependability of
the techniques and the consistency of the results.

Much work is planned which will lead to the development of methods
for rearing the juvenile stages of the two bivalve species to
market; the so-called "grow-out" period. The literature on bivalve
culture shows clearly that rapid growth of the animals during this
period is the sign of a healthy environment. The goal of the pro-
gram at this stage, consequently, is to determine the optimum value
of each environmental factor for maximum survival and growth of the
animals being reared. Many of the studies will be carried out in
a tank-farm facility where the environment is under partial control
of the culturist. Later studies of growth just prior to marketing
will be done with animals transplanted to the field, the only en-
vironment where the large amounts of water, space and food neces-
sary for rapid growth of commercial numbers of near-adult size are
available.

Ref: See below for relevant publications.

RESOURCES: FY 74 148.6 K
FY 75 106.1 K.

SENIOR STAFF: Warren S. Landers

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Aquacultural Genetics; breeding-oriented studies on commercial oysters and related species.

OBJECTIVE: To obtain the kinds of genetic information about oyster breeding (selection and inbreeding) that commercial growers and breeders need for their own breeding and planting programs; also, to work on the development of some difficult-to-come-by hybrids, and on reliable easy methods to obtain these. A limited amount of experimental mutation breeding will be conducted with commercial needs in mind.

SUMMARY: Prior work of this Investigation established a basic cyto-genetic understanding of the oyster and a small amount of such work continues. Inbreeding studies demonstrated the existence in the commercial American oyster, Crassostrea virginica, of some gamete incompatibility barrier, and significant inbreeding depression. Methods were worked out for mass selection and heritability studies but these were suspended when work of the laboratory was re-programmed away from aquaculture. The mutation breeding approach was explored for the oyster, and data at the same time obtained on radiation sensitivity of this shellfish.

Ref. See below for relevant publications.

RESOURCES: FY 75 23.1 K

SENIOR STAFF: Arlene C. Longwell

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center,
NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Mutagenic Effects of Pollutants

OBJECTIVE: To determine whether and at what levels several important marine pollutants are mutagenic for important commercial fish species and key food-chain species. How genetic damage reduces recruitment into the fisheries is the focal point of the research.

SUMMARY: Experimental and field-sampled materials alike are being utilized. Three related approaches are being taken: a genetic test with larval culture, the dominant lethal gene test; a cyto-genetic test of spawned, fertilized eggs; a combined cytological-cyto-genetic study of gametogenesis. Acute short-term and chronic longer-term contaminant exposures are being given, and history of exposure in nature is considered as well. The mutagenicity of some heavy metal contaminants has been established for the commercial American oyster, Crassostrea virginica.

Ref: See below for relevant publications.

RESOURCES: FY 74 61.9 K
FY 75 40.6 K

SENIOR STAFF: Arlene C. Longwell

PUBLICATIONS

MacLean, S. A., A. Crosby Longwell and W. J. Blogoslawski, 1973.
Effects of ozone-treated seawater on the spawned, fertilized, meiotic, and cleaving eggs of the commercial American oyster. *Mutation Research*, 21: 283-285.

Stiles, S. S., and A. Crosby Longwell, 1973.
Fertilization, meiosis and cleavage in eggs from large mass spawnings of Crassostrea virginica Gmelin, the commercial American oyster. *Caryologia*, 26(2): 253-262.

Longwell, A. Crosby, 1974.
Evaluation of the mutagenicity of marine contaminants for marine species as affecting in-shore and off-shore fisheries. Informal Report, pp. 1-54.

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Laboratory culture of microscopic marine algae; Effects of pollutants on growth of marine microscopic algae; Role of microscopic algae in the nutritional support of molluscs in aquaculture systems.

OBJECTIVE: To conduct research on the chemical and physical factors affecting the productivity of phytoplankters in laboratory culture, as well as the natural environment, particularly polluted areas; to determine the role of the phytoplankters in fulfilling the dietary requirements of molluscan species reared in aquaculture.

SUMMARY: An extensive collection of unicellular marine and estuarine microscopic algal strains is being maintained in the laboratory. These cultures serve as sources of standardized material for use in research of this Investigation and are also available to other investigators as a courtesy nationally and internationally. Cultures are maintained on several media formulations and efforts are made to bring and keep all strains in the axenic condition. A simple inexpensive method for the cultivation of large volumes of algae in pure culture was designed and is now in continuous operation to provide food organisms for molluscan research and aquaculture projects at the Milford laboratory. This system has served as the prototype for development of commercial and university aquaculture systems. Experimental studies have recently concentrated on studies of bacterial-algal interaction; the role of organic compounds and the elements, selenium and lithium, potential pollutants, on algal growth. New methods are being tried in efforts to design appropriate systems for critical studies on the nutrition of oyster veliger larvae.

Ref: See below for relevant publications.

RESOURCES: FY 74 57.8 K
FY 75 59.7 K

SENIOR STAFF: Ravenna Ukeles

ORGANIZATION: Milford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, NMFS, NOAA, Milford, Conn.

ACTIVITY AREA: Assessment of physiological changes in various species of marine molluscs, crustaceans, and fish exposed to heavy metals in the laboratory.

OBJECTIVE: To examine in the laboratory, using bioassay, physiological, and biochemical techniques, a selected group of Middle Atlantic Bight coastal animals, to determine the effect of contaminants on their normal life functions. These laboratory experiments, when correlated with contaminant levels in the environment, may indicate that some marine animals are extremely sensitive to minute amounts of pollutants, and that subtle sublethal physiological changes do occur.

SUMMARY: This Investigation has been concerned with the effect of heavy metals on various marine molluscs, crustaceans, and finfish, including various life stages of certain species. Embryos and larvae of hard clams, Mercenaria mercenaria, and oysters, Crassostrea virginica, are being exposed to metal ions through in vivo experiments to determine concentrations that affect normal development of embryos and survival and growth of larvae. Similar studies are under way with larvae of the lobster, Homarus americanus.

A chronic exposure laboratory has been fabricated at this facility to enable us to expose marine animals to sublethal levels of pollutants for varying lengths of time. Various animals, including the lobster, winter flounder (Pseudopleuronectes americanus), striped bass (Morone saxatilis), cunner (Tautoglabrus adspersus), American oyster, hard clam, and surf clam (Spisula solidissima), are currently under study. Both short-term (4 days) and long-term (1-3 months) studies are being conducted to determine physiological and biochemical changes. These studies include respiratory and osmoregulatory changes in larval through adult stages where feasible. Also under examination are changes in key enzyme systems and blood chemistry. Currently under study are magnesium-linked oxidoreductases, enzymes of glycogen and of amino-acid metabolism, and some metallo-enzymes, all of which have shown, in some degree, property changes ascribable to the animals' exposure to cadmium, mercury, or silver.

Ref: See below for relevant publications.

RESOURCES: FY 74 150.7 K
FY 75 165.9 K

SENIOR STAFF: Anthony Calabrese

LABORATORY FLOOR PLAN

- A** Eight 300-gallon holding tanks
- B** Six diluters servicing 12 twenty-gallon aquaria each
- C** Waste treatment
- D** Three diluters servicing 12 sixty-gallon tanks each
- E** Three-tiered shelf with aquaria and tanks for static testing
- F** Sink and wash area

E

A	A	A	A
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B	B
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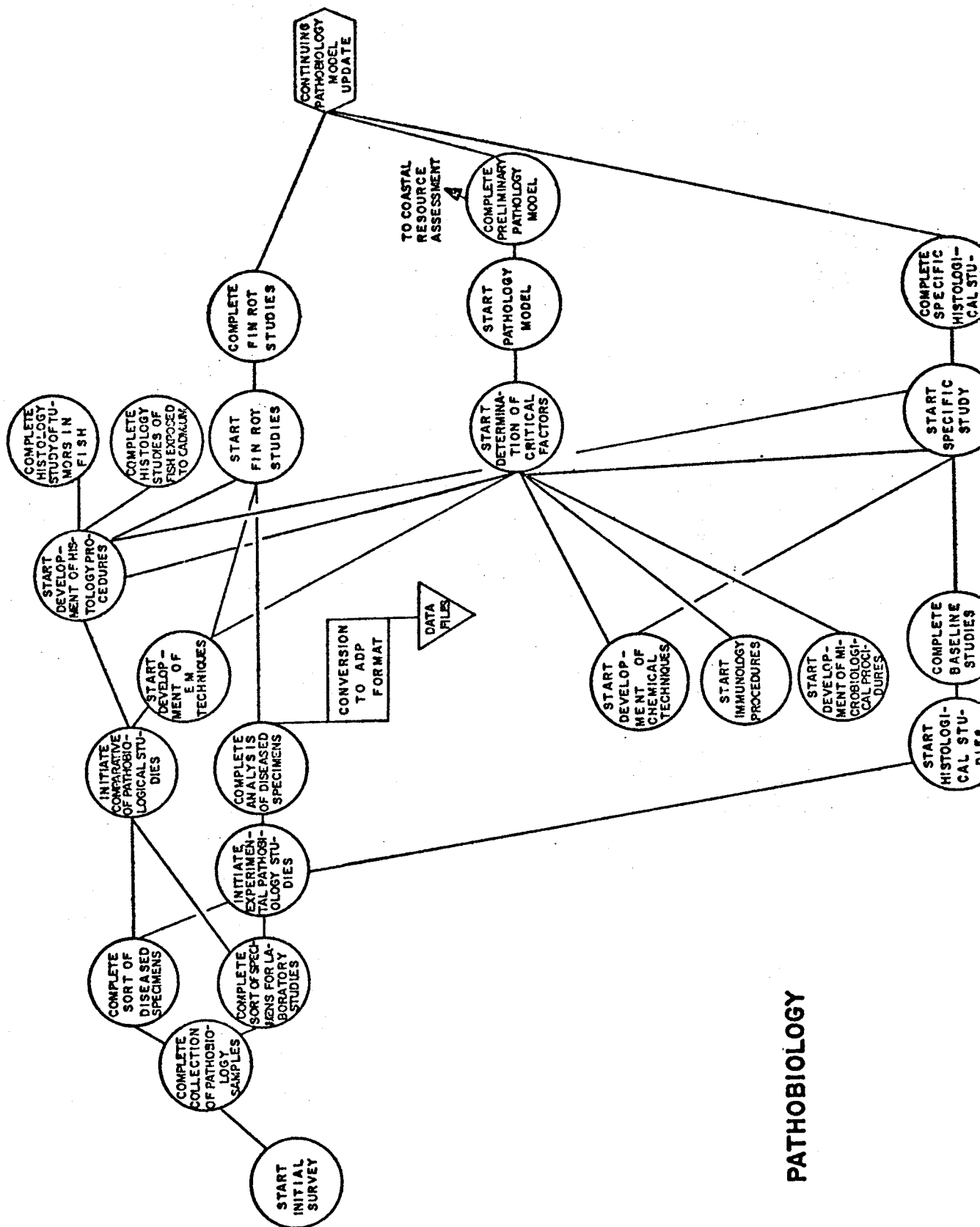
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PATHOBIOLOGY INVESTIGATIONS

Disease- and parasite-induced mortalities are among the paramount factors limiting the abundance of marine fish, crustaceans, and molluscs. Mass mortality of aquatic animals grown under intensive controlled culture conditions is often a consequence of disease. Host susceptibility to disease is directly influenced by environmental stress and there are no ways of knowing what stresses are significant in limiting populations without studying their effects upon the animals themselves. Adequate knowledge of disease prevalence, whether nutritionally, genetically or environmentally induced, is fundamental to the success of resource assessment, prediction and management and, where necessary, for preventative legislation.

One must recognize that it is the exception rather than the rule for abnormalities (pathoses) or mortalities (during any stage of the animal's life history) to be caused by any single extrinsic or intrinsic factor acting alone. Rather, it is usually a combination of infectious and/or noninfectious factors acting competitively, sequentially, complementarily, or synergistically on or in these animals to modify their behavior, physiology, growth, development, reproduction or to render them more susceptible to the same or still other infectious and non-infectious agents or predators.

The Pathobiology Investigations at the Oxford Laboratory have long recognized the need to study the causes of mortalities of all marine animals, and have been pioneers in disease studies. Originally with molluscs, recently with crustaceans, and presently with fish, the Investigations will continually expand their research efforts to effect a multispecies approach to the study of disease. A multispecies study of disease has been substantially more productive than limiting the research effort to only a single species, since from the aspect of comparative and experimental pathology, invaluable basic information has been acquired on both disease processes and defense mechanisms.



PATHOBIOLOGY

PATHOBIOLOGY INVESTIGATIONS
A. ROSENFELD, DIRECTOR

The Pathobiology Investigations have long recognized the need to study the causes of mortalities and abnormalities of marine animals, and have been a pioneer in disease studies. Originally with mollusks, then with crustaceans, and presently with fish, the Investigations have expanded their research efforts to effect a multispecies approach to the study of disease. A multispecies study of disease has been substantially more productive than limiting the research effort to only a single species, since from the aspect of comparative and experimental pathology invaluable information has now been acquired on both disease processes and defense mechanisms for fishery management purposes.

By employing both comparative observational and experimental studies with team approaches, disease research on marine organisms has been conducted within the present Pathobiology Investigations primarily at the Oxford facility. Other projects under Pathobiology Investigations have recently been undertaken at other Center facilities and teams of specialists from Oxford, Milford, and Sandy Hook have conducted "fire-fighting" research at other locations throughout the country.

Research emphasis continues to be placed on studies of problems related to infectious disease. However, the Pathobiology Investigations' staff has long and broad experience in recognizing pathological conditions in cells, tissues, and organs of marine animals. Therefore, we shall continue, in cooperation with other Federal, State, university, and industry laboratories, to examine, diagnose, and describe pathological (abnormal) manifestations in marine animals from nature or under culture conditions that may be attributable to noninfectious agents or combinations of infective and noninfective factors. Furthermore, the Pathobiology Investigations, when deemed advisable and feasible, will award as it has in the past, Investigation and Center supervised contracts to carry out the research necessary to assist in accomplishing our objectives.

The Pathobiology Investigations consist of two research tasks:

1. Comparative Pathobiology with the following subtasks:

- a. Molluscan Pathology - C. A. Farley, Oxford
- b. Crustacean Pathology - P. T. Johnson, Oxford
- c. Fish Pathology - H. W. Newman, Oxford
- d. Control of Larval Mollusk Diseases - W. J. Blogoslawski, Milford

2. Diseases of Environmental Stress with the following subtasks:

- a. Fin Rot Disease in the New York Bight - R. A. Murchelano, Oxford
- b. Microfauna of New York Bight Fish & Benthos - T. K. Sawyer, Oxford
- c. Ultrastructure Studies - J. E. Bodammer, Oxford
- d. Immunity in Marine Fish - R. A. Robohm, Milford
- e. Registry of Marine Pathology - H. S. Tubiash, Oxford

In addition to the above projects, the Pathobiology Investigations during these past few years have been deeply involved in cooperative research projects with several Federal, State, and university laboratories, have maintained an outstanding library for the benefit of all researchers, students, and industry personnel in the area; participated in many workshops, meetings, and discussion seminars; staff members have served on several panels, committees, and program review teams and have published several papers and reports and submitted additional papers to scientific journals for future publication.

DISEASES OF ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS INVESTIGATIONS
R. A. MURCHELANO, CHIEF

ORGANIZATION: Oxford, Milford, and Sandy Hook Laboratories, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oxford, Maryland, Milford, Connecticut, and Highlands, New Jersey.

ACTIVITY AREA: Field and laboratory studies of the diseases of estuarine and marine fishes and crustaceans inhabiting stressed environments.

OBJECTIVE: The major objective of the task is to study disease -- infectious, noninfectious, and environmentally induced -- in marine fishes and crustaceans. Although diagnostic histopathology is employed initially to determine etiology, other biomedical disciplines (bacteriology, cytopathology, immunology, parasitology) are utilized whenever appropriate. Knowledge acquired is of substantial importance in 1) assessing the effects of environmental alterations on economically important aquatic resources (including the role of disease in the limitation of stock size) and 2) countering the impact of disease as a limiting factor in the aquaculture of marine species.

SUMMARY: Field studies have focused on the prevalence of disease in fishes and crustaceans from the New York Bight, an area which has been altered substantially as a consequence of the disposal of sewage sludge, harbor dredge spoils and acid industrial wastes. Laboratory bacteriologic, histologic, and immunologic studies in progress are attempting to determine the etiology of fin rot disease of fishes and gill fouling or "black gill" disease of crustaceans. Both of these diseases are prevalent in the New York Bight and may cause significant mortality. Light and transmission and scanning electron microscopy are being utilized to assess histopathology and cytopathology. A Registry of Marine Pathology (ROMP) has been established to catalog the diseases of marine fishes, crustaceans, and mollusks.

Fin Rot Disease in the New York Bight: Determine the prevalence of fin rot disease in winter and summer flounder from the New York Bight. Determine the etiology of fin rot disease employing bacteriologic, histopathologic, and immunologic studies. Attempt to induce fin rot disease in apparently disease-free winter flounder by the placement of entrapped fish in the New York Bight.

Microfauna of New York Bight Fish and Benthos: Isolate, culture, and identify protozoa in water column and sediments of the New York Bight and in or on tissues of benthic crustaceans. Determine the etiology of "black gill" disease of crabs and lobsters from the Bight apex. Prepare species lists of amoeboid and ciliate protozoa inhabiting the sewage sludge, dredge spoil, and acid waste areas of the New York Bight.

Ultrastructural Studies of Normal and Physiologically Stressed Fish, Crustaceans, and Mollusks: Establish a functional and accessible electron microscope facility. Utilize transmission and scanning electron microscopy to elucidate the pathogenesis of fin rot disease in winter and summer flounder from the New York Bight. Conduct cytologic studies on the phagocytic cells of fishes that have been exposed to heavy metals.

Immunity in Marine Fish: Determine whether environmental pollutants reduce immunity to bacterial diseases. Determine bacterial agglutinin levels in winter flounder with fin rot disease from the New York Bight. Examine the effects of cadmium stress -- short term, high dose and long term, low dose -- on antibody production and phagocytosis in two economically important marine fishes.

Registry of Marine Pathology: Establish a Registry of Marine Pathology at the Oxford Laboratory. To solicit, catalog, and maintain accessions representative of pathology in marine and estuarine fishes, crustaceans, and mollusks. Accessions will include reprints, fixed tissues, and prepared slides.

RESOURCES: FY 80.0 K
 FY 119.7 K

SENIOR STAFF: MURCHELANO, ROBERT ADRIAN, b. Providence, R.I., Feb. 7, 34; m. 58; c. 2. BIOLOGICAL OCEANOGRAPHY. B.A., Brown Univ, 55; M.S., Univ. of R.I., 57; Ph.D., (biol. oceanogr.) Univ. of R.I., 67. Fish. Biol. (Res.), B.C.F., U.S.D.I., 67-70; SUP. FISH. BIOL. (RES.), N.M.F.S., U.S.D.C., 70- U.S.A., 57-60. Wildlife Dis. Assoc., Am. Fish. Soc., Biological Oceanography; Pathobiology Diseases of Fishes. Address: Oxford Laboratory, Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center, Oxford, Maryland 21654.

Publications

Cleverdon, R. C., Leifson, E. and R. Murchelano. 1961. Morphological and physiological types of Gram negative stenohaline marine bacteria. In Proceedings of the First National Coastal and Shallow Water Research Conference, ed. by D.S. Gorsline, pp. 127-130.

Leifson, E., Cosenza, B. J., Murchelano, R. and R. C. Cleverdon. 1964. Motile marine bacteria. I. Techniques, ecology, and general characteristics. J. Bacteriol. 87: 652-666.