

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The application has been submitted in accordance with 7 CFR Part 340, which regulates the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and products.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Petrie, Document Control Officer, Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection, Biotechnology Permit Unit, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 847, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782, (301) 436-5874.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR Part 340, "Introduction of Organisms and Products Altered or Produced Through Genetic Engineering Which Are Plant Pests or Which There is Reason to Believe Are Plant Pests," require a person to obtain a permit before introducing (importing, moving interstate, or releasing into the environment) in the United States, certain genetically engineered organisms and products that are considered "regulated articles." The regulations set forth procedures for obtaining a permit for the release into the environment of a regulated article, and for obtaining a limited permit for the importation or interstate movement of a regulated article.

Pursuant to these regulations, APHIS has received the following application for a permit to release a genetically engineered organism into the environment, which is being reviewed by the Agency:

Accession No.	Date Received	Organism	Field Test Location
88-333-02	11-28-88	Genetically engineered insect-resistant tobacco.	North Carolina.

Done at Washington, DC, this 3rd day of January 1989.

James W. Glosser,
Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 89-265 Filed 1-5-89; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-34-M

Soil Conservation Service

Whitewater Creek Watershed, AL

AGENCY: Soil Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of a finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy

Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Guidelines (40 CFR Part 1500); and the Soil Conservation Service Guidelines (7 CFR Part 650); the Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Whitewater Creek Watershed, Pike and Coffee Counties, Alabama.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ernest V. Todd, State Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, 665 Opelika Road, Auburn, Alabama 36830, telephone (205) 821-8070.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Ernest V. Todd, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project concerns a plan for reducing excessive erosion (20 tons per acre annually) on sloping cropland and reducing land voiding and depreciation. The planned works of improvement include land use conversation on 160 acres of marginal cropland, accelerated conservation land treatment on 8,070 acres of cropland, and installation of 14 grade stabilization structures.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting Ernest V. Todd.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

(This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.904—Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention—and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.)

Ernest V. Todd,
State Conservationist.

Dated: December 29, 1988.

[FR Doc. 89-207 Filed 1-5-89; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Announcement of Monterey Bay, CA As An Active Candidate for National Marine Sanctuary Designation; Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan; Intent To Hold Public Scoping Meetings on the Proposal To Designate Monterey Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary

AGENCY: Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: By direction of Congress (Pub. L. 100-627, section 205), NOAA is naming Monterey Bay, off the Coast of California, an Active Candidate for designation as a National Marine Sanctuary and will proceed with the subsequent steps in the evaluation process. The study area under consideration for Sanctuary designation includes the coastal waters between Pigeon Point in San Mateo County and Point Sur in Monterey County and extending from the mean high tide line from these sites seaward, 14.5 nautical miles on a southwesterly heading of 240°.

Selection of a site as an Active Candidate formally begins the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process; NOAA will prepare an environmental impact statement and management plan to examine the management and regulatory alternatives associated with Sanctuary designation. To initiate this process NOAA will hold scoping meetings in the Monterey Bay area of California to solicit information and comments from individuals, organizations and government agencies on the range and significance of issues related to Sanctuary designation and management.

A scoping meeting will be held on January 25, 1989 from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. in the Monterey Conference Center, 1 Portola Drive, Monterey, CA 93940. A second scoping meeting will be held on January 26, 1989 from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. in the Chambers of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, Room 500, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-4069. All interested persons are invited to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph A. Uravitch, Chief, or Franklin

Christhill, Regional Manager, Marine and Estuarine Management Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1825 Connecticut Avenue NW., Suite 714, Washington, DC 20235, (202/673-5126).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Selection Procedures

Title III of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*, authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to designate ocean waters as National Marine Sanctuaries to protect their distinctive conservation, recreational ecological, historical, research, educational or esthetic qualities. The Act is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), Marine and Estuarine Management Division (MEMD). Selection of a site as an Active Candidate formally triggers the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental impact analysis process.

On November 7, 1988, Pub. L. 100-627, the reauthorization of Title III of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*) ("the Act"), was signed into law. Section 205 of Pub. L. 100-627 directs that the Secretary of Commerce designate the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary no later than December 31, 1989. This directive by Congress automatically advances Monterey Bay to Active Candidate status.

Subsequent steps include a public hearing, preparation of a final environmental impact statement and management plan and a recommendation of approval to the Secretary of Commerce. Opportunities for comment exist throughout this process and will be announced in the *Federal Register*, the local media, and other appropriate channels.

Section 303 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1433) and regulations for the National Marine Sanctuary Program (at 15 CFR 922.33) establish procedures for the evaluation of the suitability of Active Candidates as National Marine Sanctuaries. In developing the Sanctuary proposal, NOAA will determine to what extent designation will fulfill the purposes and policies of section 303(a) of the Act; and whether:

(1) The area is of special national significance due to its resource or human-use values;

(2) Existing State and Federal authorities are inadequate to ensure coordinated and comprehensive conservation and management of the area, including resource protection, scientific research and public education;

(3) Designation of the area as a National Marine Sanctuary will facilitate coordinated and comprehensive conservation and management of the area, including resource protection, scientific research and public education; and

(4) The area is of a size and nature that will permit comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management. Further, based on section 303(b) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1433), NOAA will consider:

(1) The area's natural resource and ecological qualities, including its contribution to biological productivity, maintenance of ecosystem structure, maintenance of ecologically or commercially important or threatened species or species assemblages, and the biographic representation of the site;

(2) The area's historical, cultural, archeological, or paleontological significance;

(3) The present and potential uses of the area that depend on maintenance of the area's resources, including commercial and recreational fishing, subsistence uses, other commercial and recreational activities, and research and education;

(4) The present and potential activities that may adversely affect the factors identified in the consideration listed above;

(5) The existing State and Federal regulatory and management authorities applicable to the area and the adequacy of those authorities to fulfill the purposes and policies of the Act;

(6) The manageability of the area, including such factors as its size, its ability to be identified as a discrete ecological unit with definable boundaries, its accessibility, and its suitability for monitoring and enforcement activities;

(7) The public benefits to be derived from Sanctuary status, with emphasis on the benefits of long-term protection of nationally significant resources, vital habitats, and resources which generate tourism;

(8) The negative impacts produced by management restrictions on income-generating activities such as living and non-living resources development;

(9) The socioeconomic effects of Sanctuary designation; and

(10) The fiscal capability of NOAA to manage the area as a National Marine Sanctuary.

In preparing the environmental impact statement and management plan (EIS/MP) to examine the management and regulatory alternatives associated with Sanctuary designation, NOAA will solicit comments from interested persons, groups and organizations, heads of interested Federal agencies, and responsible officials of State and local governments. This will be done during scoping meetings to be held in the Monterey Bay area, prior to preparation of the EIS/MP, and during public hearings to receive comments on the draft EIS/MP.

Past History

The State of California nominated the Monterey Bay area in 1977, along with nine other marine areas offshore for consideration as National Marine Sanctuaries. In response to these nominations, NOAA selected three sites for further consideration: Channel Islands, Point Reyes-Farallon Islands, and the Monterey Bay area. In December 1978, NOAA released an Issue Paper on these three sites, presenting several boundary and regulatory options for each proposal. Public hearings on the Issue Paper were held and, based on the responses, NOAA declared all three sites as Active Candidates on August 10, 1979.

This process led to the designation of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary on September 21, 1980, and the Point Reyes-Farallons Islands National Marine Sanctuary (later renamed Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary) on January 16, 1981. In 1980, NOAA determined that work on the proposed Monterey Bay Sanctuary would be delayed due to the complex analyses and corresponding staff time required for the other two California sites.

On December 14, 1983, NOAA removed Monterey Bay from the list of active candidates for three reasons: (1) The existence of two other National Marine Sanctuaries in California (Channel Islands and Gulf of the Farallones) which protect similar marine resources and the Program's policy, established in 1980, to consider a diverse array of sites and resources; (2) the proposed area's relatively large size and the surveillance and enforcement burdens this would impose on NOAA; and (3) the wealth of existing marine conservation programs already in place in the Monterey Bay area.

In 1988, when Congress reauthorized and amended Title III of the Act, it specified in section 205 of Pub. L. 100-627, that NOAA designate Monterey Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary by

December 31, 1989. This statutory requirement has therefore reinstated Monterey Bay as an Active Candidate for Sanctuary status.

Natural Resources

Monterey Bay is located within the Eastern Pacific Boreal Region which incorporates a vast area of the North Pacific, and more specifically, within the Oregonian biogeographical province encompassing the North American coast from Point Conception to the Canadian border. The Sanctuary study area includes the coastal waters between Pigeon Point, San Mateo County (37°11'N, 122°24'W) and Point Sur in Monterey County (36°18'N, 121°52'W) and extending from the mean high tide line from these sites seaward 14.5 nautical miles on a heading of 240°.

Oceanographic Characteristics

Typical of the Oregonian province, the Bay is strongly influenced by cool, relatively clear waters dominated by the California current. The Monterey Submarine Canyon results in a strong upwelling of nutrient-rich water. Consequently, the nearshore waters are highly productive, supporting diverse floral and faunal assemblages.

Circulation within the Bay is influenced by a variety of factors: offshore currents, seasonal periods of upwelling, winds, the Monterey Submarine Canyon, and river discharges.

Geological Features and Habitat

The area is characterized by a narrow continental shelf fringed by a variety of coastal types. The underlying rock types range from pre-Tertiary granites with some intrusions south of Monterey Bay to softer sedimentary rocks underlying Monterey Bay and areas to the north. Covering these rocks in most areas are three sedimentary types: rocky substrate dominate in nearshore areas north and south of Monterey Bay; fine sand and coarser sand are found in the Bay's nearshore areas; and mud which predominates offshore except for a large sandy shelf extending off Point Sur. The Monterey Submarine Canyon has a mixture of mud and sand with some rock outcrops. Fringing the waters of the area, the shoreline ranges from rocky and mountainous south of the Bay to sand dunes from Seaside north to Moss Landing and to sand bluffs to the north. There are also numerous small and some large rivers that empty into the Bay with one large estuary, Elkhorn Slough, and several smaller ones.

While there are submarine canyons elsewhere in the Oregonian province,

the Monterey Submarine Canyon is unique in its size, configuration, and proximity to shore. This canyon, along with adjacent submarine canyons, enriches local water through strong seasonal upwellings, modifies currents and provides habitat for pelagic communities. Monterey Bay itself is a rare geological feature along the Pacific coast as it is one of the few large bays. This fact lends additional importance to this area as a resting and staging area for migrating birds.

The diversity of rock types, sediment types and shoreline characteristics in combination with the nutrient rich waters and substantial underwater relief all combine to form several habitat assemblages. This variety of assemblages is one of the major determinants of the rich intertidal and subtidal communities and represents the range of habitats to be found in the Oregonian province.

Flora and Fauna

Monterey Bay has a highly diverse floral and faunal component. Algal diversity is extremely high and the concentrations of pinnipeds and some seabirds is outstanding. The fish stock, particularly in Monterey Bay, is rich and the variety of crustaceans is high.

The Bay has the most diverse algal community in North America, with about 450 to 500 species of west coast algae represented. The diversity of habitat assemblages, rich nutrients close to shore, the high quality waters and the location of the Bay quite close to the overlap of the Californian and Oregonian biogeographic provinces, account for this diversity.

The habitats created by the variety of substrate, kelp beds, the canyon complex and the nutrient rich waters support rich fish stocks and substantial invertebrate populations. The various environments within the study area support different fish communities, with Monterey Bay and the granitic substrate just to the south supporting the highest diversity. The invertebrate diversity also reflects the variety of habitat types. Over 300 species of invertebrates have been reported off Point Año Nuevo.

The area also supports one of the greatest diversities of marine mammals in the world. Among these are several endangered species, including the California gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), finback whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*), and the threatened California sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*).

All species of pinnipeds commonly found off the central and northern California coast are found in the

Monterey Bay area. Año Nuevo is one of the most important sites and has been cited as the most important pinniped rookery and resting area in central and northern California.

The area also encompasses approximately one-third of the entire sea otter range in California. The majority of otters are found south of the Monterey Peninsula (females and pups) with the northern peripheral group of the entire population found between Soquel Point and Elkhorn Slough.

Most of the cetacean species known to frequent the central and northern California coast have been sighted in the area. Many, such as the gray whale, pass through the area while on a northerly or southerly migratory route. However, the edge of the canyon complex does serve as an excellent feeding area due to strong nutrient upwellings.

Monterey Bay plays a major role for avifauna as a staging habitat during both migrations and as wintering and summer habitat. Bird species diversity is very high. The area is attractive due to the nutrient waters and resulting rich food resources, the protected bay environment, and location along the Pacific flyway. Breeding populations are generally small and scattered. The entire world population of the Ashy Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) (5000-10,000) can be found feeding in the area immediately above the Monterey Submarine Canyon from August to November.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitats are areas that are essential for spawning and breeding and are crucial to the survival of particular species. Because of the highly productive waters of the Bay area, several critical habitats have been identified in Monterey Bay and its surrounding waters.

The California sea otter is an endangered species whose females and pups are found primarily in the sheltered coves south of Monterey Peninsula. The highest densities of otters occur in rocky nearshore areas within the 20 meter isobath in the dense kelp canopy. These areas have been identified as critical breeding and feeding locations essential to existence of current and future populations of sea otters.

Earth's entire population of Ashy Storm-Petrels feed over the Monterey Canyon from August to November. Waters over the canyon are a critical feeding area that is important to survival of the species.

Point Año Nuevo is a critical breeding habitat for elephant seals (*Migrona*

angustirostris), Stellar sea lions (*Eumatopias jubata*) and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). Año Nuevo Island, with its small surface area, is the focus of virtually all pinniped breeding activity taking place in the area, and may be the key to the continued survival of these populations in central and northern California.

Año Nuevo Island is also a critical habitat for breeding elephant seals as well as the mainland Point Año Nuevo. The marine environment immediately around the island and mainland point may also be critical. However, the extent of feeding activity taking place in the waters near the island is unknown.

There are other very important sites, including the spawning grounds of the market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) in Monterey Bay and the nesting sites for seabirds along the shoreline and on small offshore rocks.

Human Uses

Research Opportunities

The biological and physical characteristics of Monterey Bay combine to provide outstanding opportunities for scientific research on many aspects of marine ecosystems. The diverse habitats are readily accessible to researchers.

Six major research facilities are found in the area. These institutions are exceptional resources with a long history of research and large databases possessing a considerable amount of baseline information on the Bay and its resources.

The Hopkins Marine Station is located in Pacific Grove. As part of Stanford University, its primary research efforts focus on cellular and developmental biology, immunology, and neurobiology of intertidal organisms. Other research is focused on the ecology of the rocky intertidal zone of the Hopkins Marine Life Refuge offshore of the laboratory grounds.

The Moss Landing Marine Laboratory of San Jose State University is located along the central coast of Monterey Bay. Its researchers conduct a variety of research including oceanography, ichthyology, marine algae, invertebrates, and marine mammal and seabird behavior. The Laboratory operates the R/V *Point Sur* for its oceanographic research.

The Long Marine Laboratories and the Center for Coastal and Marine Studies of the University of California at Santa Cruz also conduct a variety of research projects on topics such as cetaceans, pinnipeds (especially at Año Nuevo), sea otters, invertebrates, and plankton.

The Naval Postgraduate School is located near downtown Monterey and is operated by the United States Navy. The research focus at this institution is exclusively on physical oceanography. The school shares access to the oceanographic research vessel maintained by the Moss Landing Marine Laboratory.

The Granite Canyon Marine Laboratory, located along the Big Sur coastline just south of Carmel, is operated by the California Department of Fish and Game. Its primary research emphasis is on aquaculture and water quality monitoring.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is a privately owned institution with a variety of research interests focused on the Bay and the Monterey Canyon. The recent establishment of the Monterey Bay Research Institute, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's research arm, will enable the Aquarium to devote resources to studying several aspects of the Bay's ecosystems. Extensive research is planned to examine the Monterey Canyon via a remote-operated unmanned submersible. Other research efforts will be wide-ranging and include biological, chemical, physical, and geological oceanography and studies on the canyon's benthic and pelagic habitats.

Tourism and Recreational Uses

The diverse resources of Monterey Bay are enjoyed by the residents of this area as well as the numerous visitors. The population of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties was 544,000 in 1985 and is projected to increase to 755,000 by 2005. The projected growth is based in large part on the attractiveness of the area's natural beauty.

Since the late 1800's, Monterey Bay has served as a major tourist destination. The most recent estimate of visitors to the area by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments was approximately 18 million annually, indicating the important role tourism plays in supporting the local economy.

The 16 State beaches along the Bay's shoreline attracted over 3.5 million visitors during the last six months of 1988. The Monterey Bay Aquarium, opened in 1984, attracts nearly 2 million visitors annually. The Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve operates an interpretive center which serves 30,000 to 40,000 visitors per year. The Año Nuevo State Reserve has an interpretive center and offers guided tours around the Reserve to observe the elephant seal breeding colonies established on the mainland. Annual visitors to this area number approximately 150,000. The Point Lobos

State Reserve just south of Carmel receives approximately 300,000 visitors per year.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

The area also supports several economic activities. The most important activity directly dependent on the resources is commercial fishing, which played an important role in the history of Monterey Bay and continues to be an important activity. Landings in excess of 10 million dollars are made yearly and account for approximately five percent of the total California harvest. Fishing takes place throughout the Bay and its offshore waters. The major commercial finfish species are the northern anchovy (*Eugraulis mordax*), rockfish (*Sebastes* spp), mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*), albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*), salmon (*Salmonidae*), and sablefish (*Anoplopoma timbria*). Squid are primarily in the southern half of the Bay and along the Big Sur coast. The commercial fisheries catch of 1988 accounted for 8.9 million dollars in wholesale value.

Related to fisheries are the several aquaculture operations within the Monterey Bay area. Dependent in large part on a clean source of ocean waters, some operations collect organisms directly from the Bay while others grow and produce their own supplies through captive breeding. Algae, abalone, oysters, salmon, and sea hares are being raised in the various aquaculture ventures.

Making a more interest use of the area are the commercial ships which regularly traverse the outer reaches of the area as part of the route from San Francisco to Los Angeles, with infrequent vessel traffic to Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, or Monterey. Although this traffic is not yet a major concern, contingency plans designed to react to oil spills resulting from tanker accidents are being formulated.

Oil and gas exploration in the Bay area is being considered. On November 16, 1988, the Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service issued a Call for Information and Nomination for Oil and Gas Lease Sale #119, an area which overlaps a portion of the proposed Sanctuary study area.

Another use of the Bay area is for dredge and waste disposal. A site off Moss Landing is used for discharged dredge spoils. Municipal and industrial wastes are dumped into the waters at various outfalls. Non-point agricultural runoff is also entering the Bay.

Military uses of the area are rare, but onshore target practice necessitates prohibiting boats within a designated

area offshore of Fort Ord on an occasional basis.

Existing Protection of Marine Resources

Several agencies operate programs to protect significant resources within the Monterey Bay area and to provide recreational and interpretive opportunities. California Parks and Recreation and the California Department of Fish and Game manage 15 state beaches, 2 state reserves, 2 state parks, 1 wildlife area and ecological Reserve, Pacific Grove Marine Life Refuge, Point Lobos State Reserve, Carmel Bay Ecological Reserve, and the California Sea Otter Game Refuge. Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve provides resource management and protection to one of the most important estuaries in central California. Los Padres National Forest protects coastal resources where it borders the sea.

These programs have placed considerable emphasis on the protection of coastal resources but have not given the same attention to marine resources. Some critical marine areas, such as the waters around Año Nuevo Island and over the Monterey Submarine Canyon, receive no special attention by resource managers. Other areas, such as the waters of the Big Sur coastline, receive limited protection. A limiting factor that may hamper resource management is the lack of a mechanism to establish research priorities and coordination, and develop contingency plans for potential accidents.

With current resources of existing programs being limited, the coordination of resource protection and management programs is essential. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary could provide an important role in such coordination.

The Designation Process

The management plan to be prepared for the proposed Sanctuary will specify the goals and objectives of Sanctuary designation and describe programs for resource protection, research and interpretation. The various administrative and regulatory alternatives to Sanctuary management will be analyzed in the environmental impact statement.

Opportunities for public participation in NOAA's development of an environmental impact statement and management plan will be provided through the January scoping meetings, solicitation of comments on the draft environmental impact statement and management plan, and formal public hearings.

The January scoping meetings will

attempt to identify issues in establishing a Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and generate suggestions for resolving them. Topics for discussion will include the following: (1) Boundary alternatives, (2) Management alternatives, (3) Resource protection, (4) Research opportunities and (5) Interpretive opportunities.

Dated: January 2, 1989.

Thomas J. Maginnis,

Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management.

[FR Doc. 89-278 Filed 1-5-89; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-08-M

1987 Survey of Striped Bass Fisheries

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of survey results.

SUMMARY: NOAA publishes the results of a survey of Atlantic coast striped bass fisheries for 1987. The report of survey results is required by the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. The intent is to provide information on the status of the striped bass fisheries.

ADDRESS: Copies of the survey results are available from David G. Deuel, NOAA/NMFS, 1335 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David G. Deuel, 301 427-2347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comprehensive Annual Survey of the Atlantic Striped Bass Fisheries—Calendar Year 1987

Section 6 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (Pub. L. No. 98-613, 16 U.S.C. 1851) required the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a comprehensive annual survey of the Atlantic striped bass fisheries. Each survey was to include, but not be limited to, a compilation and assessment of the recreational and commercial landings of striped bass in the coastal states during the period considered in the survey. The results of each annual survey were to be published in the *Federal Register*. This report presents data for calendar year 1987 as required by section 6 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (The Act).

The Act was signed into law on October 31, 1984. Under the Act, no funds were authorized for appropriation for activities in fiscal year 1985. For fiscal years 1986 and 1987, funds were authorized but not appropriated. Thus, for calendar years 1985 and 1986, no funds were appropriated for conduct of

the comprehensive annual survey and no separate surveys were conducted on the Atlantic striped bass fisheries. However, the National Marine Fisheries Service, of the U.S. Department of Commerce, routinely collects data on all U.S. commercial fisheries and on marine recreational fishing on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts. Data from these surveys are used in this report to satisfy the requirements of section 6 of the Act.

A description of the statistical survey procedures for the commercial landings may be found in "Fishery Statistics of the United States 1977" (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1984), and for the recreational fishery data in "Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, 1986" (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1987).

The Act addresses striped bass from Maine through North Carolina; the data presented here are for the same area. Commercial landings of striped bass in 1987 were 0.4 million pounds, an increase of 0.1 million pounds over the 1986 landings of 0.3 million pounds. The 1986 landings were the lowest on record. Maximum landings of 14.7 million pounds were recorded in 1973, and since then landings have steadily declined. Part of the decline since 1982 has resulted from restrictive regulations on the commercial fishery. Average landings for the 20 year period from 1968 to 1987 were 6.3 million pounds. However, from 1968 to 1987, landings averaged 9.9 million pounds, while from 1978 to 1987, landings averaged only 2.6 million pounds. For the last 5 years, an average of 1.3 million pounds was landed. Commercial landings by state from 1980 through 1987 are shown in Table 1. Figure 1 shows annual commercial landings from 1962 through 1987.

Estimates of catch and harvest of striped bass by recreational fishermen are available from the marine recreational fishery statistics surveys from 1979 through 1987. Catch is defined as the total number of fish caught, including those released alive. Harvest is the number of fish which are removed from the population. Estimated weights are available for the fish harvested. The reliability of the survey estimates is greater for species which occur more frequently in the catch than for those which occur infrequently in the catch. In recent years, with the striped bass stocks at low levels, the estimates for striped bass are less reliable than those for other species such as bluefish, winter flounder, or scup, which occur frequently in the catch. In addition, there is high variability of striped bass