

Government to Replace Fisheries Lab

Scientists Frown On Effort to Curb Shrimp Industry

Committee Issues Report On Alleged Destruction Of Food Fish by Trawls

The effect of the shrimp trawling in Pamlico Sound on the yield of commercial fish is not as destructive as has been alleged during recent months. Although it is well known that the shrimp trawlers do kill large numbers of young commercial fish, this in itself is not necessarily responsible for the very small catches of fish in recent years.

This was the opinion of a technical committee composed of scientists of fishery laboratories of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and the U. S. Fishery laboratory which reviewed critically the evidence of destruction of small fish in Pamlico Sound before a recent section meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

C. E. Atkinson of the U. S. Fishery laboratory at Beaufort, who acted as chairman for this committee, stated that in 1948 when the failure of the croaker fishery in Chesapeake Bay first became critical, attention was directed to the possible relationship between the intensive shrimp fishery in Pamlico Sound and the absence of croakers in the Chesapeake.

Actually, there is no evidence from tagging or other studies which indicates a migration of Pamlico fish into the Chesapeake area, the chairman stated. Even the croaker spawning apparently takes place off the mouth of Chesapeake Bay and the several North Carolina inlets immediately adjacent to the nursery areas.

Attached to the report was a copy of a paper by Dr. E. W. Roelofs, Institute of Fisheries Research, Morehead City, which is the most complete work that has been done on this problem.

The committee stressed the fact that all fish are subject to extreme large natural mortalities which would far overshadow any damage (Continued on Page 5)

Fishermen Trudge Home



Harkers Islanders Captain Stacy Davis, William B. Guthrie, Harold W. Yeomans, and H. Clark Davis cast lengthy shadows as they walk down the beach after a day's try. See story on Harkers Island page 16.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Davis Count 77 Descendants

Seventy-seven living descendants—that's the score for Mr. and Mrs. Bert S. Davis of Harkers Island—and there are not many couples who can beat it.

They have eight children, five girls and three boys, 52 grandchildren, and 17 great grand children.

Mr. Davis, who will be 73 on his next birthday, March 23, works at Way Brothers fish house, Beaufort. He lives there during the week and goes home on weekends.

Mrs. Davis is the former Nacy Salter of Atlantic. Although Mr. Davis was born at Croatan in Dare county and lived eight years in Elizabeth City, Harkers Island has been his home for the past 65 years.

He's been connected with the fish business all his life, either fishing or running buy boats.

When asked if he could keep track of all his family, he laughed and shook his head, then remarked proudly, "But they all come home on Saturday and Sunday!"

Fishing Improves; State Makes Gains

Shellfish taxes in North Carolina for the fiscal year 1950-51 dropped one thousand dollars from the previous year, but overall tax collections netted approximately five thousand dollars more, according to the report made by the division of commercial fisheries.

The classification, "shellfish" does not include oysters. The oyster tax for the 1950-51 fiscal year also increased over that of 1949-50 by \$900.

The total amount received in taxes besides "shellfish" and oysters for 1950-51 was \$54,199.25 as against \$49,200 the previous year. The state appropriation for 1950-51 was \$55,382 making the total revenue for the commercial fisheries division last year \$130,045.25.

With the exception of shrimp, all shell fisheries made increased catches during the 1950-51 fiscal year as compared with the year prior. The number of shrimpers doubled, according to license statistics. There were 678 resident shrimpers in 1949-50 and 1,147 in 1950-51. Thirty-six non-resident licenses were issued in 1949-50 and 35 in 1950-51. Pounds of shrimp taken during 1950-51 totaled 3,207,420 as compared with 4,693,546 the previous year.

No licenses were issued to non-resident menhaden boats in 1950-51. Menhaden non-resident crewmen for the recently ended fiscal year numbered 337 as compared with 820 the previous year.

According to division of commercial fishery statistics 73 menhaden boats fished North Carolina waters in 1950-51, an increase of seven over the year before.

Statistics substantiate statements that the scallop industry is reviving. Five hundred thirty-two gallons were taken in 1949-50 and 8,400 gallons was the catch in 1950-51.

Other statistics follow:

1949-50	1950-51
Clams—	
41,809 bushels	52,624 bushels
Hard crabs—	
18,198 barrels	22,212 barrels
Soft crabs—	
15,158 dozen	23,929 dozen
Oysters—	
113,292 tubs	124,657 tubs

A long-range building program, which in its entirety will exceed \$100,000, has been initiated on Piver's Island and will include replacement of the existing United States Fish and Wildlife laboratory. The announcement of the new construction plan was made today by C. E. Atkinson, chief, middle and south Atlantic fishery investigations.

Materials are already on hand to begin building the first unit, a one-story fireproof building which will house the power plant, machine shops and provide storage facilities. The frame buildings now serving those purposes will be torn down.

As the new and modern research laboratory, offices, and dormitories go up, the existing three-story structure, for many years a landmark on Piver's Island and in the Beaufort area, will be dismantled. The building program will continue over a period of six years.

To begin the work the last session of Congress appropriated \$20,000, Atkinson said, and an architect has been contacted to design buildings which will fit into the present layout and island surroundings. Homes in which scientists live and the recently remodeled radio-isotope laboratory will not be replaced.

After a thorough inspection of the present laboratory by federal engineers in the spring, it was recommended, Atkinson reported, that immediate steps be taken to replace the present building with funds annually allowed for repair and maintenance. Parts of the present structure were found to have deteriorated to such an extent that repair would be very costly, he added.

Site of the new structure will be generally the same as the present one. Completion of the program will bring to realization a long-time dream of the Fish and Wildlife Service to have a modern research laboratory, Atkinson concluded.

Institute Tests Heavy Dredge

At the request of the commercial fisheries committee the Institute of Fisheries Research is investigating the effect of heavy dredges on oyster beds.

Dr. A. F. Chestnut, shellfish specialist, is conducting the investigation, using 225-pound and 165-pound dredges. At present the only dredge permitted by law is the 100-pound dredge.

The shellfish specialist started investigations in Hyde county waters Tuesday, Oct. 30. Attempts are being made to determine the effect of the heavy dredge on different types of bottom and on the oysters themselves.

W. A. Ellison, jr., director of the institute, said it may be found that the heavy dredges completely tear up the rock, thus removing places of attachment for oysters, or the dredge may break the oyster bills (edges of oysters) causing the shellfish to die.

George Clark, oyster dealer of Belhaven, has put one of his large boats at the disposal of the commercial fisheries division for use by the institute.

Director Ellison said that the heavy dredges are used extensively by owners of private beds in Maryland and he intends to check on effects of their use there. A report on the institute's findings is expected to be ready by the second week in December.

State Seeks Bids
The Department of Purchase and Contract of the state of North Carolina has requested sealed bids on sale of the Pamlico vessel in the state fleet. Bids will be accepted by the Department of Purchase and Contract until Thursday.

Duke Investigator Studies Fishes Of Rough Grounds

Dr. H. F. Kritzler, resident investigator at Duke Marine laboratory, Piver's Island, is conducting an extensive study of fishes in the rough grounds off this coast—grounds that are not fished by small boats and fished only recently by large trawlers equipped with rollers.

Although his interest is primarily scientific, he believes that there may be the possibility of new fisheries, and thus the opening of new doors in commercial fishing.

One of the most interesting fish taken on the rough grounds is the "ribbon fish," a West Indian fish which at present is listed as being found only "as far north as Pensacola, Fla." Says Dr. Kritzler, "This type of fish is common offshore," but he believes the North Carolina species is a sub-species of the "ribbon fish" found farther south or a species in its own right—his opinion at present leans more toward the latter.

Called 'High Hat'
Because of the fish's high dorsal fin, some Florida natives call it the "high hat," and other smaller relatives are called cubbyu. As for the term "ribbon," this derives from the fact that the fish is marked over its grey body with a wide black stripe running from the lower part of its high fin back to the tail and also has another stripe running down, behind its eye, toward its ventral fin.

Dr. Kritzler has one specimen that is 14 inches long. "They ought to be good eating, because they belong to the croaker family," declared the scientist. He plans to cook himself a mess of ribbon fish soon and find out.

Ribbon fish apparently don't take bait, they feed at night, and have been found only in trawli nets.

Dr. Kritzler has many types of unfamiliar and beautiful fish which have been taken on the rough grounds off this coast. The butterfly fish is common on rough grounds east of Cape Lookout and between Cape Fear and New river. The angel fish, highly esteemed as an edible delicacy in the West Indies, is found in nearby waters. There is also the locust lobster which can be taken by trawl at night.

Food Prejudice
Dr. Kritzler points out that many persons pass up delectable seafood merely because they are prejudiced against it. For example he says that squid is no more repulsive looking than an oyster or clam, yet people refuse to eat it. Conchs, he added, are not pretty either, and yet he says that "conchburger" and "squidburger" are good eating.

Among the trawlers equipped to work the rough grounds in which Dr. Kritzler is interested are the Clay of Atlantic, the Victory of Morehead City and Norfolk, the Fulcher, also of Atlantic, and the Half Moon of Vandemere.

Committee to Meet
The executive committee of the Institute of Fisheries Research will hold its quarterly meeting Monday at the institute, Morehead City.

Sidewalk Skipper

Capt. Bonner Willis, who is fishing for Lambert Morris's fish factory, Beaufort, had a catch of 400, 000 menhaden for the week ending Nov. 3.

Machine and Supply co., Beaufort, recently installed a 110 Diesel in the deep sea trawler, The Clay, owned by Clayton Fulcher of Atlantic. They also put a 110 in the Old Crow, trawler out of Southport owned by T. H. Watts, and two 110s in the tug Damyank out of Wilmington.

Machine and Supply, widely-known boat outfitters, handles Sonar depth recorders, radio-telephones, automatic pilots, and direction finders. Willie Ippock and Bob Slater, owners and operators, have announced the addition of the Wayne Electronics line and electric service station.

A couple weeks ago William Way of Way Brothers fish house, Beaufort, remarked, "It looks as though the fall fishing season's over with." The season started out good, but nor'easters fouled things up. Fishing for Way Brothers are the Johnny and Elinore, operated by

Charlie Owens, Beaufort; Two Brothers, skippered by Ashton Styron, Harkers Island; Sea Horse, owned by Dr. Luther Fulcher and operated by Fred Guthrie, Harkers Island; and Lively Lady, fished by William Harry Bates, Beaufort.

Shrimpers shake their heads when it comes to talking about the fall shrimping season. There just wasn't none. Ordinarily the latter part of October and November see good shrimp catches, but not this year.

During October the size of the (Continued on Page 3)

Fisheries Division Does Not Plan Plane Purchase

Purchase of a plane for use by the law enforcement division of commercial fisheries is out of the picture at present, Commissioner C. D. Kirkpatrick remarked today. "There are not enough funds," he added, "and furthermore, if we would get a plane, all the fishermen would soon recognize it and that would be no good at all." He stated that from time to time the division may hire a plane for checking fishing grounds.