

# Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.



## Hotlines - Online Edition



December 2000

### BACTERIAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR SEAFOOD TO BE ESTABLISHED

Southeastern Fisheries Association, with the help and expertise of Dr. Steve Otwell and the University of Florida's Institute of Food Science and Human Nutrition, are developing bacterial specifications for inclusion in the SFA Quality Control Codebook. Bob Jones and Dr. Otwell have had one prep meeting to discuss protocols. Preliminary meetings with SFA's Steering Committee and other experts could occur in December with a formal meeting open to members and invited non-members in January. Adoption of the SFA Bacterial Specifications will be finalized. The meeting will be held on the campus of U of F in Gainesville, Florida.

Rumor has it that CONSUMER REPORT magazine will publish a story in February highly critical of fish sampled nationally at certain chain stores. To be prepared for this impending bad publicity, the association will determine where any problems may exist validate our seafood products to be safe, wholesome and nutritious. Any member interested in attending the meeting in January should contact Bob Jones at 850/224-0612. Meeting notices will be mailed separately.

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

### INFORMATION CONCERNING SEAFOOD TRUCK INSPECTIONS NEEDED

The Association has received several complaints of truck drivers being held up for 3 hours or more with seafood products scattered on the floor of the truck and not put back in the proper place by the inspecting officers after they were measured and examined. SFA is interested in getting factual statements from any member whose seafood truck has been stopped in Florida by FWC officers and searched in a manner the driver feels was excessive. FWC officials have assured SFA that this situation will be investigated, and if necessary, appropriate changes made to procedures in use. SFA is concerned there are no written protocols for stopping and searching. The word "seafood" on the truck is not reason to search. That smacks of selective law enforcement and not acceptable. If you feel your truck drivers have been targeted by FWC, please contact Bob Jones by fax, 850/222-3663.

### 20/20 TV PROGRAM TO AIR TOXIC FISH STORY

It must be "sweep" time when television networks try to get the most viewers to increase their ad revenue cash flow. Many times TV shows select what they believe is a hot topic to get audiences around America to tune in to their expose'. They seem to look for targets that can't fight back. This winter the 20/20 folks are going to hammer swordfish, king mackerel and other species that have any mercury in them then condemn seafood suppliers for

not "protecting mothers and children from mercury in seafood". The per capita consumption of swordfish is so low it could be defined as a non-issue. There is some naturally occurring methyl mercury in some fish. It is not added by processing nor is it there because of our inability to process seafood in a sanitary manner.

20/20 probably doesn't even know much about the king mackerel fishery nor are they aware that king mackerel containing the highest percentage of mercury are generally those fish caught by recreational anglers who get huge amounts of prize money for winning a Kingfish Tournament. Recreational anglers are allocated about 70% of the king mackerel resource. Thousands of speeding boats pouring out of Mayport into the South Atlantic Ocean is pulse fishing at its finest and the thrust of this big money tournament is to bring in the largest three fish. The fish are weighed and then somehow many of them find their way into the fish market through a loophole in the law that allows tournaments to sell their catch. These king mackerel are generally bigger than 39 inches, which seems to be the size where the mercury content begins to be higher than 1 PPM.

The size of the king mackerel in the commercial catch on average is much less than trophy king mackerel and below the FDA guideline of 1 PPM. Do you think 20/20

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Seasons Greetings 

**Antigone Hajducek... Tig**

President



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it could be hypothesized that this dust from the mercury mining in Algeria has led to the decline of corals throughout the Caribbean including Florida, and to increased red tides. The complete USGS Information Sheet will be posted at <http://www.southeasternfish.org> in the near future.

FWC's IG, James T.

Knight, concluded in an addendum to his report concerning the pornography found on deputy general counsel Charles Shelfer's computer that, "There are no actual images contained in the report that the investigation considered to be child pornography". The Inspector General further stated in his remarks to the St. Petersburg Times, "there is no evidence that Shelfer ever "clicked" on any of these links...and there is no evidence that any of the links actually contained child pornography". The web sites listed in the Inspector general's report found on Shelfer's computer included such titles as "Click here for preteen XXX," "No Daddy!," "Hidden Camera Pix of Tiny Teens," "Japanese schoolgirls." And "Six\*Teen\*Little Girls Gallery."



**ST. JOHNS RIVER CHAPTER OF OFF PRESENTS SHRIMP PROGRAM**

On October 23, 2000, Florida and Georgia industry members met with Lt. Colonel Julie Jones and Bill Teehan of the FWC to go over shrimp issues on the East Coast of Florida:

As a result of that meeting the following has been requested of the state and federal agencies.

- From June 1 through August 31 "Brown Shrimp Season" open 24/7 no night closure.
- Closed September 1 through March 31 from 8:00 PM until 5:00 AM (night trawling)
- Limit trawl size: Total measurement of trawls attached to trawl doors. Total 200-foot rope.
- Limit trawls to (4) 50' trawls or (2) 100 foot trawls (total of 200 feet per vessel actively being fished) (measurement excludes try nets and all other trawls on board.
- Measurement for enforcement purposes: From brail line (first tie of the chain to the last tie of the chain) 50-foot/foot rope.
- Area affected: Florida waters, (Florida-Georgia line, from 2 miles out to 3 miles) outside waters within the

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will say a word about all the large king mackerel that goes into the recreational consumer's refrigerator or ends up for sale on the regular market? Do you think they even know? Do you think they care?

**AFRICAN DUST CAUSES WIDE-SPREAD ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRESS**

The USGS in collaboration with the NASA/GODDARD Spaceflight Center began a study to identify microbes and pesticides transported across the Atlantic in African soil dust. "Our studies thus far indicate hundreds of viable microorganisms are making the aerial journey in each gram of dust apparently protected within the particles or shielded by overlying dust clouds. The smallest particles (one-micrometer) were found to contain 2 parts per millions of the element mercury, which is many times greater than the amounts normally found in the air. The mercury may have originated from open-pit mercury mines in Algeria and from the rock formations from which the mercury is mined." Without pushing the panic button,



**HOW MANY BABY TURTLES DOES EACH MAHI-MAHI EAT?**

In a recent article by Susan Cocking of the Miami Herald, she notes that Charter Boat Captain, Ed Kattel Jr. of Islamorada, Florida, had an interesting experience. He was cleaning the 15 dolphin (mahi-mahi) his party caught on a weed line in about 700 feet of water, when they discovered a loggerhead turtle about the size of your palm and reached further into the fish and pulled out three green turtles. A woman on the dock accused the poor Captain of killing the turtles which he didn't. The fish killed the turtles but he found himself in a precarious position for it is illegal to possess endangered turtles either alive or dead. How will NMFS write this citation up if they decide to charge the Captain?

**SPEAKING OF TURTLES**

The endangered green turtle set a record this year by making 2,396 nests in Brevard County alone. Almost a 50% increase from the previous record year. The shrimp industry should be saluted for their contribution to turtle protection by all government agencies involved in turtle protection. It wasn't too many years ago when there was a turtle fishery in Florida and collecting, cooking and eating turtle eggs was perfectly legal. On Florida's East Coast it is doubtful that any turtles made it to the water during the "Hoover Days" as finding food was the Minorcan population's main activity.

**INSPECTOR GENERAL CLEARS WILDLIFE OFFICIAL**

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territorial waters of the State of Florida.

- Ask the South Atlantic Fishery management Council to adopt these same rules in the EEZ.

**DACS ADMINISTRATIVE SHELLFISH FINES TO BE CHALLENGED**

Under Florida statute 597.020, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has published a proposed rule allowing themselves to levy administrative fines and then use the revenue at a later date to pay for inspections. The industry looks at this as a "speed trap" system been outlawed in most instances. DACS inspectors can levy fines up to \$1,000 per day based on a subjective inspection to determine deficiencies. In addition to the fines, the fees for certification, i.e. for the privilege of providing jobs, there is now a \$300 fee on top of the \$500? Wholesale seafood dealer's license that is already required.

**KUDO TO FAWCC OR "SOMETHING YOU WON'T READ IN THE SPORTS PRESS"**

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has said for over a year that they intend to enforce the law equally. They took a giant step validating that philosophy when on September 28, 2000 a person by the name of Karl W. Wickstrom was cited for excessive speed in a Manatee slow speed area. According to the citation this Mr. Wickstrom was born in 1935 and lives in Stuart, Florida. He may or may not be the same Karl W. Wickstrom who published so much hatred against commercial fishermen in the Florida Sportsman magazine. According to law enforcement officials at FAWCC, a Mr. Karl Wickstrom, paid a \$50 fine on October 2, 2000 and the case was closed. A \$50 fine for potentially killing an endangered species is ridiculously low. The Manatee slaughter in Florida must be curtailed. Kudos' also to Gov-

We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly..... We would look forward to serving you and your company!

ernor Jeb Bush for elevating these needless mammal killings to the highest level of the Executive Branch. There is **no** movement to **ban** boating, only to force boaters to slow down in known and **POSTED** Manatee areas. Is that too much to require to save these marvelous critters?

**MANATEE DEATHS DUE TO BOATING TO REACH ALL TIME HIGH**

According to news reports, the number of Manatees slated to die during 2000 will be very high. The unintentional killing of so many Manatees by boaters each year is pathetic. Hard core opponents to boat speed limits like Tampa Tribune's Frank Sergeant and Florida Sportsman's Karl Wickstrom should figure out a way to work with those who wish to protect this endangered species from annihilation. SFA would be willing to serve as moderator to bring both sides together on a plan that would protect the Manatee while at the same time allow for the pursuit of sport fishing.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ENDANGERED SPECIES IS KILLING ANOTHER ENDANGERED SPECIES?**

In an article in the Garden States Seafood newsletter published by Nils Stolpe, reference is made to an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* entitled "Murderous Otters Prey on Seal Pups." It seems two California sea otters are behaving badly by "molesting the young seals, attempt rough sex with them and, ultimately, shoves their snouts underwater until they drown or die of shock trauma". What a dilemma. Will the sea otters be taken away from their habitat or will nature take its course.

**GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETS IN TEXAS**

The GOMFMC meets in Galveston Island, Texas, January 15-19, 2000. Among the many items to be discussed will be:

- The National Artificial Reef Plan ( 1/15 - 9:00 am)
- Reef Fish Management Committee ( 1/15 - 1:00 PM)
- Shrimp Management Committee (committee recommendations on Draft Shrimp Amendment 10 & 11, public

hearing summaries (1/16 - 9:30 am)

- Law Enforcement Plan (1/16 - 4:00 PM)
- **PUBLIC TESTIMONY** -Dolphin/Wahoo, Shrimp Amendment 11, Reef Fish TACS and Regulatory Action (1/17 - 8:45 am)
- Reef Fish Management Committee (1/18 - 8:30 am)
- Shrimp Management Committee (1/18 - 1:30 PM)

**HACCP TRAINING AVAILABLE AT YOUR FACILITY**

If you have need for HACCP training, please contact SFA at 850/224-0612 for scheduling of training at your facility. All effort will be made to conduct the training at the time and day most convenient to those in need of help. If you should receive an official WARNING LETTER from FDA, you should contact the office immediately for the 30-day clock begins the day you receive your certified warning.

**FWC BIOLOGIST RESIGNS AND ANOTHER ONE IS SUSPENDED**

According to a December 10, 2000, report in the St. Petersburg Times, FWC's Jorge Laguna has resigned over allegations he used his state owned computer on state time to visit X-rated web sites. "Laguna got in trouble by exchanging titillating e-mails with "Christy -145- a fake identity created by investigators who were out to nail him" according to the article by Times reporters Craig Pittman and Julie Hauserman. Teehan looked at racy sites and spent time at other non-work sites and he was suspended for only 5 days according to the story in the Times. To read the full story you can go to: [http://www/sptimes/News/121000/State/Another\\_fisheries\\_emp.shtml](http://www/sptimes/News/121000/State/Another_fisheries_emp.shtml).





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