

## El Niño Blamed for 25% Drop in California Landings

California's commercial fishermen are hoping for a return to normal weather conditions this year after suffering through a warm-weather El Niño weather pattern that contributed to a 25 percent drop in landings for 1983, State officials report. Preliminary figures from the California Department of Fish and Game show a total 1983 commercial catch of 513,242,858 pounds, compared with 687,808,987 in 1982. These figures include landings in California ports of fish taken north and south of the state.

A comparable 25 percent decline was noted for the 25 leading species taken in California waters—from 456,877,393 pounds in 1982 to 343,245,778 pounds in 1983. Revenue for the same 25 species dipped from \$105,468,897 to

\$102,238,455, a 3 percent drop. In poundage, the take of squid dropped 92 percent; anchovies, 91 percent; and salmon, 86 percent. Other notable losers were shrimp, down 74 percent; crab, down 70 percent; and rockfish, down 35 percent.

Hardest hit in the pocketbook were the salmon fishermen and the California Department of Fish and Game. Salmon fishermen saw their estimated earnings plummet from \$18,841,266 in 1982 to \$1,787,930 in 1983—a 90 percent drop. The Department of Fish and Game lost 25 percent of its commercial fish tax base. Fish taxes vary from \$0.006 to \$0.05 a pound, depending on the species.

Combined Pacific and jack mackerel

landings dominated the commercial catch, both in 1982, with 121,048,046 pounds landed, and in 1983, with 107,485,464 pounds landed. Revenue to mackerel fishermen declined from \$10,089,450 to \$9,136,624, a comparatively modest drop of 9 percent.

Thanks to El Niño, the biggest gainers for the year were skipjack and yellowfin tuna fishermen, with landings from California waters eclipsing all previous records. Skipjack tuna jumped from tenth in the rankings to second, with a 383 percent gain. The 1983 landings were 41,453,923 pounds, up 32,879,484 pounds the previous year. Yellowfin tuna jumped from tenth on the list to third, with a 256 percent gain. The catch for 1983 was 39,478,096 pounds, compared with 11,084,567 pounds for 1982. The return to fishermen for the 1983 catch of skipjack tuna was \$15,337,951, compared with \$3,687,008 for the previous year. The return on yellowfin tuna was \$18,949,486, compared with \$5,985,666 in 1982.

In price per pound, swordfish retained its number one ranking, although that price fell from \$3.02 a pound in 1982 to \$2.55 in 1983. Salmon prices dropped

### Galveston Bay Oyster Season Closes Early

The oystering season in Texas' Galveston Bay System was closed by 1 April to prevent the public reefs from being depleted, as Parks and Wildlife Department data showed an increase in fishing pressure this year over historic levels. The report said the numbers of oyster boats in the bay increased through February, rather than decreasing as in the past.

The last time the bay was closed was during 1978 and 1979, when biological samples indicated abundance of oysters was the lowest in more than 20 years. During the summer of 1980, crews spread 52,000 cubic yards of oyster shell over about 700 acres of reefs in Galveston Bay. The new shell enhanced each acre with about 1.5 million baby oysters, and it was expected that the surviving

oysters would grow to market size by the 1982-83 oyster season.

The harvest in 1982-83 reached a record 7 million pounds. The previous record of 4.5 million pounds was in the mid-1960's. Texas officials believe that the closure of the bay in 1978-79, the enhancement activities in 1980, and subsequent favorable weather conditions all contributed to the record harvest.

### Eximbank Backs Loans for Exports to Brazil

A new \$1.5 billion facility to guarantee loans for U.S. exports to Brazil was started by the U.S. Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) on 1 October 1983. The facility is available through 30 September 1984. Although in place, the facility could not be utilized until negotiations in progress between Exim-

bank and Banco do Brazil designated the U.S. and Brazilian banks which were to extend and process loans under it.

U.S. exporters of dry salted cod are especially favored to use the facility. CACEX, the Foreign Trade Department of Banco do Brazil, has prepared a list of priority products which could be imported in Brazil under the facility and dry salted cod appears as the second item. Due to Brazil's current financial difficulties, the importation of fishery products in that country has been banned, with the exception of smoked or dry salted products. Payment for imports has been effected with 180-day letters-of-credit.

For additional information, interested U.S. codfish exporters should contact Christine Fletcher, Eximbank, telephone (202) 566-8892; or Milton Rose, National Marine Fisheries Service, telephone (202) 634-7451.

from \$2.57 a pound in 1982 to \$2.03 in 1983, possibly because of large supplies available from other sources.

## **IPHC Ups Halibut Quota to 43 Million Pounds**

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), which manages the Pacific halibut fishery on behalf of Canada and the United States, recommended to the governments of Canada and the United States this year that catch limits for 1984 be raised to 43.0 million pounds—12.4 million pounds more than in 1983. The Commission's scientific staff reported that the halibut resource is rebuilding throughout its range, and particularly in the Gulf of Alaska, and the abundance of young halibut entering the fishery also is increasing. The present decrease in incidental catch of halibut in fisheries targeting on other species has undoubtedly contributed to the stock improvement according to the IPHC. However, the Commission expressed concern that incidental catches will again increase with the developing domestic groundfish fishery unless definitive steps are taken to reduce these losses.

The Commission received regulatory proposals from the scientific staff, from Canadian and United States fishermen and processors, and from other fishery agencies. The Commission recommended to the governments the following catch limits: Area 2A (all waters south of British Columbia), 0.3 million pounds; Area 2B (the waters off British Columbia), 9.0 million pounds; Area 2C (the waters off southeastern Alaska), 5.7 million pounds; Area 3A (Cape Spencer to Cape Trinity), 18.0 million pounds; Area 3B (Cape Trinity to Unimak Island), 7.0 million pounds; Area 4A (Unimak Island to 170° W and S of 56° 20' N, exclusive of the Bering Sea closed area), 1.2 million pounds; Area 4B (Aleutian Chain W of 172° W and S of 56° 20' N), 1.0 million pounds; Area 4C (the Bering Sea flats N and W of the closed area), 0.4 million pounds; Area 4D (Bering Sea edge N of 56° 20' N), 0.4 million pounds; and Area 4E (Be-

ring Sea flats east of 168° W exclusive of the closed area), 50,000 pounds.

During 1984, the Commission will manage Area 2 on the basis of the 60-40 percent division of catch between the Canadian and United States zones. The Commission is recommending management on a biological basis for 1985. The Commission also recommended a succession of open and closed periods, as well as that fishery officers inspect the holds of halibut vessels clearing into and out of Area 4 at Dutch Harbor.

The Commission also recommended that all vessels that land halibut, including sport charter boats, be licensed annually to provide more accurate, complete, and timely information for management of the halibut fishery. The Commission's Conference Board, consisting of delegates from fishermen's groups from Oregon to the northern Bering Sea, unanimously supported continuation of IPHC as the management authority for Pacific halibut.

The Commission also recommended that the sport fishery for halibut in 1984 open on 1 March and close on 31 October as in 1983, and that the daily sport catch limit and possession limit be two halibut of any size, the same as last year. The Commission further recommended that all charter vessels that participate in the sport fishery be licensed by IPHC to provide more complete information on the sport fishery for halibut.

The next annual meeting of the Commission will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, 28-31 January 1985. Michael Hunter was elected chairman, and Robert McVey was elected vice chairman for the coming year. Other Commissioners are Sigurd Brynjolfson, Richard Eliason, Donald McLeod, and George Wade. (Source: IPHC.)

## ***New Halibut License System***

Beginning this year, all vessels that fish commercially for Pacific halibut, including guided sport charter vessels that retain halibut, are required to have an annual license issued by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The license is valid for halibut

fishing only during the calendar year for which it is issued. Earlier vessel licenses are no longer valid.

The new license is free, and available only from the Commission in Seattle, Wash., upon its receipt of a completed "Application for Vessel License for the Halibut Fishery". Application forms can be obtained from Customs officers and Federal or State fishery officers. In ports where Customs and fishery officers are not available, application forms may be obtained from harbor masters or halibut processors, or by written request from the Commission.

The license must be on board the vessel at all times, be available for inspection by Customs or fishery officers, or by representatives of the Commission, and is in addition to any other license required under U.S., Canadian, State, or Provincial laws. Additional information and application forms are available from the International Pacific Halibut Commission, P.O. Box 95009, Seattle, WA 98145-2009.

## ***California Rears, Plants More Striped Bass***

The effort by California's Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to enhance ocean sport fishing in Southern California continued this year with the scheduled plants of 10,000 yearling striped bass in San Diego County waters. DFG marine biologist John Duffy said 5,000 of the fish were stocked on 14 February in the San Luis Rey River and 5,000 at Mission Bay.

The 10,000 striped bass are part of a 20,000-fish allocation for Southland waters authorized this year. Ocean Fisheries Unit Manager John Sunada said 5,000 fish were planted in Alamitos Bay, Los Angeles County, on 7 February and another 5,000 striped bass in Newport Bay, Orange County, on 9 February. The four 1984 plants raised the total number of striped bass planted in Southern California ocean waters to 191,611 since the program began in 1974. The bass are raised at the DFG's Central Valleys Hatchery near Elk Grove. (Source: California Department of Fish and Game.)

## Trophy Anglers Have Another Great Year

World game fish records approved by the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) during 1983 totaled 619, nearly as many as the all-time high of 633 records granted during 1982. Included were 20 new all-tackle records (heaviest catch of a species), 329 saltwater line-class records, 158 freshwater line-class records, and 112 new fly rod records (64 freshwater and 48 marine).

Record claims processed by the Association during the year numbered close to 1,000. IGFA President Elwood K. Harry attributed the continued high number of record applications to an increased awareness among anglers of the many existing record opportunities in vacant line and tippet class categories.

### All-Tackle Records

Largest all-time angling records were set from Alaska to Europe, the Orient and the South Pacific. A 288-pound 12-ounce dogtooth tuna caught off Korea last October surpassed a record set in 1980 by almost 95 pounds. The all-tackle record for giant trevally was broken twice off Hawaii with fish weighing 118 pounds and 137 pounds 9 ounces. And a record 468-pound white sturgeon made angling history in California, breaking a world record of 407 pounds established in 1979; also recorded was a huge 57-pound 13-ounce carp taken in the Potomac River, Washington, D.C., and many others.

### Line-Class Records

Of the 158 new world records established in freshwater line-class categories, the greatest number (40) were in the 1 kg (2-pound) line class. New records were set for 48 of the 74 freshwater species currently listed by IGFA, with 20 new marks established for various basses, 21 for salmon, and 19 for trout. Most new records were established for northern pike and chinook salmon (9 each), as well as coho salmon

and lake trout (8 records each).

Saltwater line-class categories accounted for the greatest number of records during the year, 329 (108 in the 8 kg (16-pound) line-class category). Many records were also established in the "new" ultra-light line class categories, with 52 new marks in the 1 kg (2-pound) line class and 74 in the 2 kg (4-pound) category.

Records were established for 69 of the 77 saltwater species currently listed by IGFA. The most records were set for Atlantic cod (13), lingcod (12), black drum and albacore (11 each), and barracuda and Pacific bonito (10 each). Other popular species for record-setters during the year were bluefish, bonefish, crevalle jack and snook (9 records each); tarpon and Atlantic bonito (8 records each); and blackfin tuna, weakfish, permit, and pollack (7 each).

## IGFA Sponsors First World Angling Conference

The First World Angling Conference, sponsored by the International Game Fish Association, was held in Cap D'Agde, France 12-18 September 1984. It provided, says Elwood K. Harry, IGFA President, "A unique opportunity to hear expert viewpoints on sport-fishing subjects, exchange ideas with anglers and authorities from around the world, and enjoy a vast amount of fishing film presentations."

Wednesday, 12 September, was devoted to registration and orientation; the following three days featured a tight agenda of panels, speakers, and audio-visual presentations on recreational fishing and conservation. Sunday, then, saw a day-long International Fishing Film Festival when top-rated fishing films from around the world

Flyrodders set 64 new records for freshwater species and 48 for marine fish during the past year. The greatest number of freshwater fly fishing records (22) were set in the 4 kg (8-pound) tippet class category, and the most saltwater records (21) were in the 2 kg (4-pound) tippet class.

New fly rod records were established for 28 different freshwater species and 23 types of saltwater fishes. Saltwater flyrodders also set five new tippet class records for red drum and black skipjack, four for spotted seatrout, and three each for dolphin, crevalle jack, pollack, and tarpon (including a 91-pound catch on 8-pound tippet).

Despite the outpouring of new record catches by anglers, IGFA foresees many new records in coming months, owing in part to the expansion of its record programs which have opened many opportunities for the average weekend angler to join the ranks of world record holders. Also, beginning this year, IGFA will be accepting all-tackle record applications for species not currently included on their record lists. For further information, contact IGFA, 3000 East Las Olas Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316-1616.

were shown. Monday was again devoted to talks and panel discussions. And, Tuesday, 18 September, was again devoted to films.

For several years the IGFA has recognized the need for such a World Angling Conference, especially in view of the environmental problems, water pollution and contamination, reduction of fishing habitat, dwindling stocks of many species, etc., as well as many management problems. Thus, this was the first global conference where such problems could be compared worldwide, and solutions to them sought.

The first conference day, 13 September, was devoted to sportfishing reports from around the world, including national fishing histories, outlooks, and problems. Session two focused on fisheries habitat, including discussions of the worldwide acid rain problem, causes and effects of fish contamination,

and ways to overcome damage to fisheries through habitat restoration.

Fisheries research was the theme of Session three. Fish tag and release programs and the role of satellites in research and management were among the scheduled topics. Session four dealt with management of recreational fisheries, including a review and evaluation of international management efforts and the role of artificial reefs in fishery management. Recreational fisheries development was the theme of the last session including discussions of the purposes and values of fishing clubs and tournaments.

### **California Legislature Reopens Mackerel Season**

About 300 tons of Pacific mackerel landed in early April in California as purse seiners out of San Pedro returned to a fishery reopened by emergency legislation signed into law 5 April by Governor George Deukmejian. The legislation, AB 834 authored by Assemblyman Gerald Felando of Los Angeles, permitted the take of 2,500 tons of Pacific mackerel a month for the final three months of the season, April through June.

The season was closed in early February after the fishing fleet logged in a total catch exceeding 26,000 tons, 4,000 more tons than the 22,000 tons originally allocated by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The additional tonnage was authorized by the Department in January largely on the basis of financial hardships facing the fishermen. As provided by law, California's Department of Fish and Game sets a seasonal quota based on an amount equal to 20 percent of the Pacific mackerel in excess of 20,000 tons total population north of Punta Eugenia, Baja California.

The intent is to safeguard a fishery that has recovered remarkably from a collapse in the 1960's. In 1970, a moratorium was placed on the take of Pacific mackerel after landings during 1967-69 averaged only 1,100 tons per year. On 1 October 1977, the fishery was reopened, and mackerel landings have averaged 33,000 tons during the last five

seasons. Two weak year classes, however, could be a sign that overfishing may hurt the resource. Both the 1982 and 1983 year classes appear to be unusually weak, DFG marine biologists say. They caution that overharvesting at this time could have a significant impact on the resource in future years. Biologists point to the decline of the sardine and the Pacific mackerel as two historical examples of overfishing. The bill signed into law 5 April also extended to the Fish and Game Commission the authority to raise or lower future Pacific mackerel quotas set by the department. (Source: California Department of Fish and Game.)

### ***Oregon's 1983 Shrimp Landings Down 65%***

Preliminary landings of shrimp in Oregon for the 1983 fishery totaled 6,394,000 pounds compared with 18,463,000 pounds in 1982, for a decrease of 65 percent. The 1983 Oregon shrimp season showed a maximum of 101 vessels operating during May, and a minimum of 35 vessels during September. During October the number of vessels increased to 50, and a total of 326,000 pounds were landed.

The largest volume of shrimp were found in the Cape Blanco to Cape Arago area and the Mudhole area during April. By June much of the volume was found off the coast of Washington. Landings and effort continued to remain almost entirely off the coast of Washington through the end of the season.

### **Texas Mullet Catch Sets State Record**

Bill Fritch of LaMarque, Tex., set a state record that may never be broken when he braved the record-breaking cold weather to go fishing on 28 December at a pond near Galveston Bay's Swan Lake area. The 13.8-pound saltwater mullet he pulled in that day establishes a new category for the species in the record book. It may last a long time, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials, because mullet are plankton and algae eaters which are rarely caught

on hook and line. Fritch was using a shrimp-baited treble hook, and apparently hooked the fish near its gill cover.

### **Fisheries Economics and Trade Conference Held**

A conference on "Economic Recovery, Fisheries Economics and Seafood Trade" was held in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 19-23 August 1984. It featured speakers from private and governmental sectors and the academic communities of more than 15 countries. Discussion focused on the relationships among global economic conditions, fisheries management, and international seafood trade patterns. Cooperative research and data sharing processes were also discussed in this, the second conference of the International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade (IIFET).

The International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade was organized to promote discussion of factors affecting international trade in seafoods. Designed to be attractive to individuals from governments, industry, and universities from all over the world, a major goal of the organization is to facilitate cooperative research and data exchange. Membership in the organization is open to anyone for a nominal fee (US\$10.00 annually). Further information and membership application forms are available through IIFET, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331, USA.

In addition to a series of overview papers on fisheries issues and seafood trade, conference sessions were held on the following topics: Economic recovery and seafood trade; seafood demand characteristics, import requirements, and economic recovery in selected regions; the new ocean regime (implications for harvest and trade); external debt in developing countries and seafood trade; financing seafood exports; seafood trade and fisheries management (macro vs. micro models); information exchange working group; multinational economic communities, fisheries policies, and seafood trade policies; multinational arrangements.