



University of North Carolina Sea Grant Program NEWSLETTER

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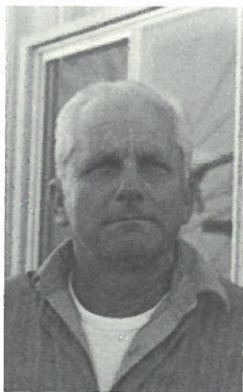
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Trawlers jam Wanchese harbor while Tarheel fishermen wait for calmer winds.

Winter fishing

A game of wait-and-see



Capt. Daniels

An ear to the weather report, an eye to the sky

Capt. Charles Daniels didn't look one bit worried. He wasn't pacing up and down the dock or checking his watch or even looking nervously toward the ocean. In fact, he seemed more than glad just to sit back and talk about everything from football to women's liberation.

In similar situations, other men would have hurled a curse or two and planted a scowl across their brow.

The sun had barely peeped over the horizon and already plans he'd made just the day before had to be ditched. Capt. Charles had gotten up early, eager to crank up his trusty vessel, the Mitzi Kay, and nose her out of Wanchese for a three hour trip to the Atlantic's flounder fishing grounds.

But by 8 o'clock that morning, Capt. Charles knew it would be another day of hanging around the dock, tinkering with his boat, chewing the fat with other captains—and just waiting.

It was the weather that changed his plans. The
(See "Trawl," page 3)

What becomes of Tarheel fish between dock and dinner plate

Fish and seafood products lining freezer counters in North Carolina supermarkets may have been caught by Tarheel fishermen.

But chances are that before North Carolina-caught fish arrived at your local grocery, they took a detour north.

Most seafood landed by North Carolina's commercial fishermen gets to the Tarheel consumer in a round-about way. Usually fishermen sell their catches to a dealer, with prices they receive depending on the quality of the fish, its current and predicted supply and demand.

Dealers sell most of their fish by phone and ship it by truck out of the state to markets in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and the Hampton Roads area. These markets become further distribution points.

Processors are among the biggest buyers from the fish markets. They prepare and package fish and shellfish, turning it into hundreds of different seafood products. Food wholesalers and retailers distribute seafood products to local supermarkets.

In the last few years, the long detour between the state's docks and its dinner plates has shortened as the number of Tarheel processors has grown. During 1973-74, 11 new seafood receiving and/or processing plants were built in the state. There were a dozen major plant expansions during the same period. Estimated total capital investment in both new and expanded plants was \$4.1 million. More than 400 new jobs were created.

Although data is not complete, estimates are that North Carolina plants now process 35 per cent of the state's total landings. That's up from an estimated 15 per cent processed in-state in 1969.

"There's no question that there's room for further expansion of seafood processing and handling facilities in North Carolina," according to Alvah Ward, coordinator of the state's seafood industries development program, a division of the N. C. Department of Natural and Economic Resources. In addition to the need for more icing and sorting facilities, Ward stressed the need for "further processing," processing that moves into heading, gutting and filleting.

Processing plants don't need to be built on the waterfront, according to Dr. Frank Thomas, Sea Grant advisory services agent who works closely with the seafood processing industry. In view of some new Environmental Protection Agency regulations, it may be better not to build on the waterfront, he said. Several new processing plants were built inland, he added.

Although information is incomplete, Ward believes that more fresh fish is moving to North Carolina's inland than ever before. Much fresh fish makes its way into North and South Carolina coastal resort areas, he said. Fish caught in the central coastal area—from Sneads Ferry to Washington, N. C.—is more likely to move inland than that caught in the northeastern reaches of the state, he said. Most of that travels north, he added. Fish caught in the southern district is distributed northward and inland, according to Thomas.

A UNC Sea Grant research project which begins this month should shed more light on seafood marketing. Researchers Drs. Richard Summey and R. M. Piper of the East Carolina University School of Business are tracing the route seafood follows from fishermen to distributor and are trying to pinpoint problems in the marketing system. Information gained in this study promises to be useful to investors interested in seafood processing.

The Coastal Plains Regional Commission, an agency seeking to improve the economic well-being of coastal regions in the two Carolinas and Georgia, has named seafood marketing as a high priority problem area. A CPRC ad hoc committee is studying seafood marketing problems and is advising the governors of the three states on their findings.

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Wanchese could be distribution point

Much of the state's commercial catch goes north simply because there is no major distribution point in North Carolina. Currently dealers ship their purchases of Tarheel fish to large northern cities for distribution.

But looking to the future, a major distribution point in the state makes sense, especially with tougher processing pollution controls on the horizon, says Alvah Ward, seafood industries program coordinator.

Distribution would be a significant part of activities at the proposed Port of Wanchese, Ward said in an interview. The Advisory Budget Commission has approved and included in its recommendations to the 1975 General Assembly funds for capital improvements in the Wanchese Harbor Project, a development proposed by the state of North Carolina and the federal government.

The proposed harbor complex would provide basic facilities such as water, sewer and streets around which privately-owned seafood industries could be built. Improvement of Wanchese harbor and deepening and stabilization of Oregon Inlet are included in the proposed project.

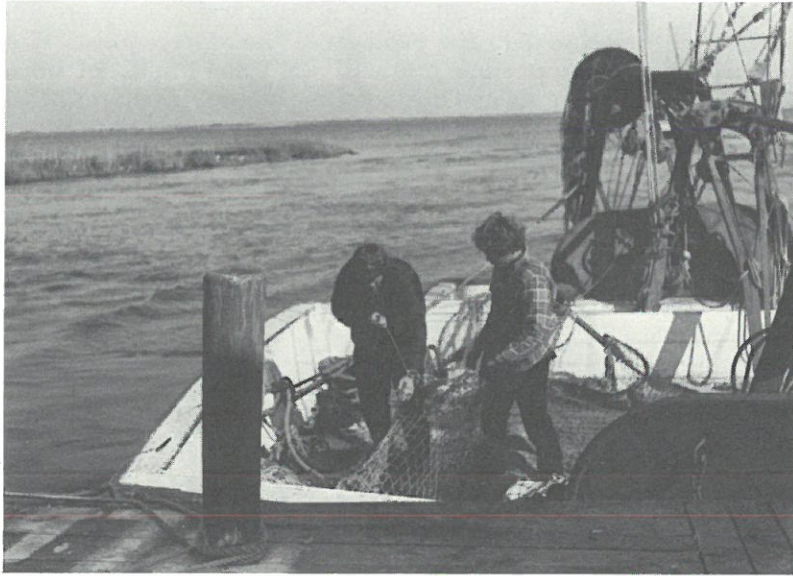
"In addition to bringing fishermen, processors and support industries together, such a facility would bring in a large volume of the product so it could move from one point," Ward said.

"Depending on the Environmental Protection Agency's stance on future pollution abatement system requirements, seafood companies may find that centralized disposal systems make good economic sense," Ward added.

A central facility could also encourage further investment in North Carolina's seafood industry, he said.

All about Sea Grant

Sea Grant in North Carolina, a 28-page booklet reviewing activities of the UNC Sea Grant Program during 1973, is available free upon request. Write UNC Sea Grant Program, 1235 Burlington Laboratories, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N. C. 27607 for your copy.



Billy Carl Tillett and Steve Daniels take advantage of a day in port to repair nets.

Trawl fishing: It's around-the-clock work

(Continued from page 1)

man on the radio had promised gusty winds for that December afternoon, winds that can make life on a 50 foot boat like the Mitzi Kay miserable and treacherous. But in 30 years of fishing, Capt. Charles had learned not to argue with the weather. Sometime along the way he came to the conclusion that all you can do about the weather is live with it—especially if you're winter fishing. Waiting for the weather to cooperate is just part of life for the men who make a living fishing from December into April.

In a village like Wanchese, winter's coming is signaled by more than a dip in temperature. Sometime in November, the men whose boats plied Pamlico Sound fishing for croaker, spot and shrimp last summer and fall grab an extra sweatshirt and get their boats ready to churn beyond the Outer Banks into the Atlantic.

For shrimpers, converting their vessels for "trawl fishing," as flounder fishing is called, requires replacing shrimping gear that reaches out from the sides of the boat with rigging off the back, or stern, of the boat. For those who "long net"—a type of summer fishing that uses three skiffs and as much as 2,000 yards of net—the change to winter fishing means putting the three skiffs in mothballs and dusting off the boat used only for winter trawling. The Mitzi Kay, a vessel that has served several captains for almost half-century now, is used only for winter fishing.

When the weather does cooperate, North Carolina's commercial fishermen can be found between the "edge" of the continental shelf and the eastern shores of the Outer Banks.

Some believe trawling for flounder is the toughest kind of fishing. "The work itself isn't that

hard," said Hughes Tillet, Sea Grant advisory agent who fished out of Wanchese for 30 years. "It's the hours. They drag (nets) day and night. When they leave Wanchese, they don't cut off their motors until they get back," Tillet added, holding a match to his pipe. "Many of them leave on Monday and don't get in until Friday—and that's working around the clock," he said.

Steve Daniels, husky 21-year-old son of Capt. Charles, knows well the hours trawl fishermen work. Along with Robert Daniels, Steve and his dad are up and down around the clock, hauling in

"It's the hours. They drag night and day."

the Mitzi Kay's nets about every two hours. After the catch is on deck, the work of sorting out trash fish and stashing the flounder and other marketable fish in the ice hold begins.

With breezes whipping off the wintry Atlantic, work on the deck can be cold business. But according to Tillet, "when it's cold, a man's not going to be long getting them (the fish) in the hold."

Back inside the cabin, heat from the engine thaws frozen fingers and noses, until it's time to start over again, hauling in the nets and sorting.

On the dock in Wanchese, Capt. Charles was taking it easy. His plans to fish that December day had been changed—and he knew they would probably be changed many more times—by the weather. But that's kind of a way of life for him. Already he was looking forward to that evening's Christmas play practice at the church. Tomorrow, he would be up early again, ready to roll with whatever punches old man weather decided to deliver.

Outer Banks film available for loan

"Waterbound—Our Changing Outer Banks," a film about North Carolina's barrier islands, is available for loan to groups.

An outgrowth of Sea Grant-supported research by East Carolina University geologists Drs. S. R. Riggs and M. P. O'Connor, the 16 mm, color film tells the story of the changing shape of the state's Outer Banks. It surveys the geologic processes which have and are continuing to act on the state's coastline. The film further outlines man's attempts to challenge these processes.

To borrow the film, write UNC Sea Grant Program, 1235 Burlington Laboratories, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N. C. 27607. Requests for the film should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the viewing date and should include dates preferred for showing. Sea Grant asks that borrowers return the film in the same condition as it was received within three days of the showing and that return postage be paid.

Copies of the film may be purchased for \$83.38. Contact the UNC Sea Grant Program office for further details.

Conference planned for marine fisheries staff

North Carolina marine fisheries personnel will be able to take advantage of a workshop on resource conservation in February.

Sponsored by the N. C. Department of Natural and Economic Resources, the short course will be held in Morehead City and Edenton. Sea Grant is cooperating in arranging the program.

During the two-day event, marine fisheries personnel will review and explore the purpose of environmental legislation relating to control of erosion and pollution, dredge and fill, dune pro-

tection and channelization.

An early afternoon session will survey problems related to the geology of the state's coast. Workshop participants will study the impact of storms, currents and obstructions on nearby shorelines.

In the late afternoon, the interaction and the role of other divisions in the Department of Natural and Economic Resources which are involved in solving marine fisheries will be reviewed.

The second day of the workshop will include an interpersonal communications course for fisheries enforcement officials.

Sea Grant agents whom you should know

Following is a list of Sea Grant agents who work closely with fishermen and the fishing industry. They are available for questions and assistance.

For help with fishing equipment, methods, handling and business management:

Jim McGee, assistant director of continuing education, East Carolina University, Greenville. Phone 758-6324.

Hughes Tillet, advisory agent headquartered in Wanchese. Phone 473-3937.

Summer Midgett, advisory agent headquartered in Camden. Phone 336-4790.

For assistance in handling and processing:

Frank B. Thomas, extension food scientist, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Phone 737-2956.

Ted Miller, director of seafood lab, Morehead City. Phone 726-7341.

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