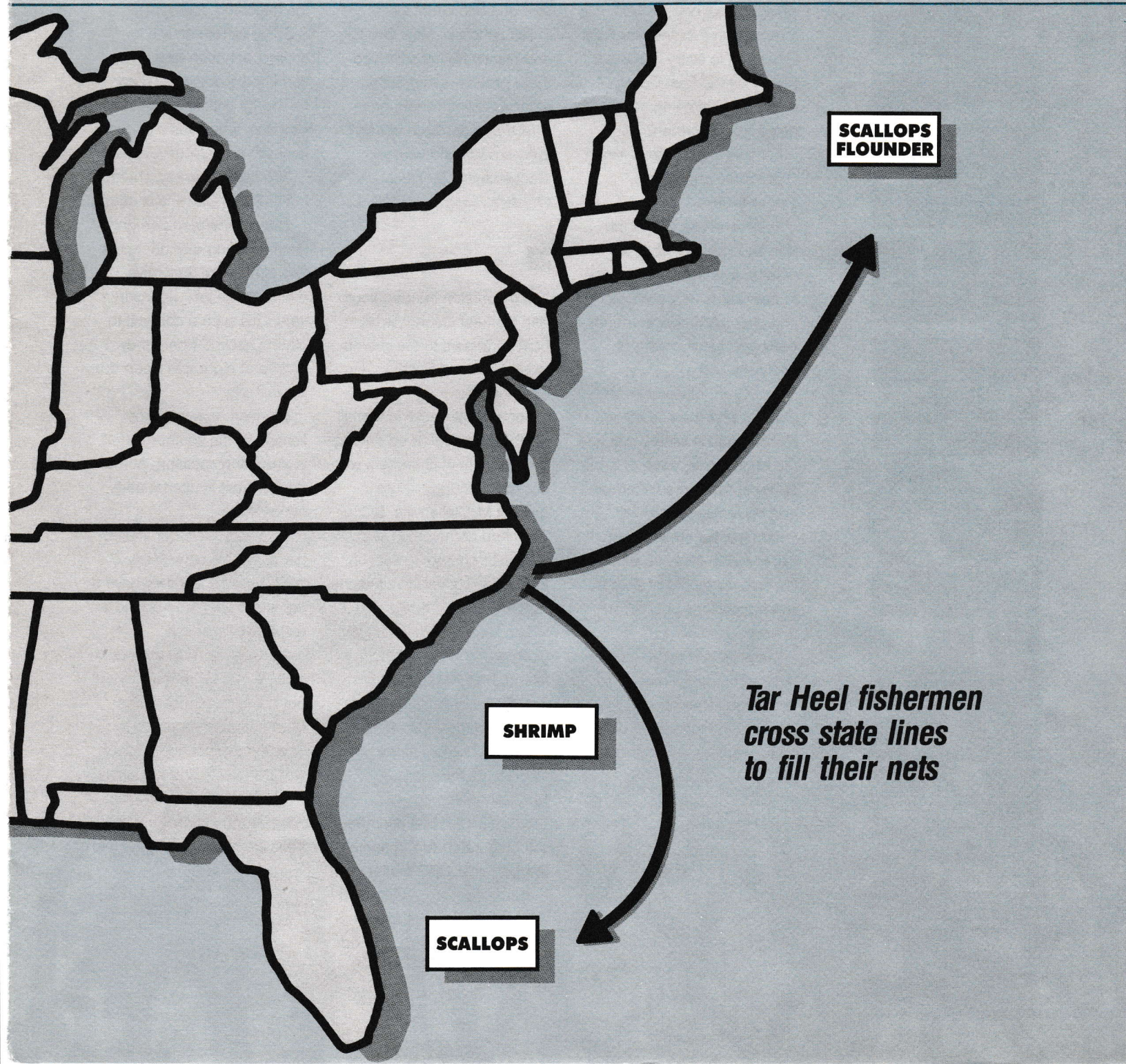




COAST WATCH



**SCALLOPS
FLOUNDER**

SHRIMP

SCALLOPS

*Tar Heel fishermen
cross state lines
to fill their nets*

Researchers find fishermen live up to their reputation

By Kathy Hart

FISHERMEN

North Carolina fishermen have made themselves a reputation.

You can hear it whispered on the docks in McClellanville, S.C.; Cape Canaveral, Fla.; and New Bedford, Mass.

Off one person's lips, it's said with respect; off another's, there's a mixture of spite and jealousy.

But no matter where it's whispered or how it's said, it is a reputation that links Tar Heel fishermen to every major fishery on the East Coast.

Just what is being said about our fishermen?

For one thing, they're smart.

But more importantly, they're mobile.

They're willing to kiss the wife and kids goodbye for months at a time so they can fill their holds with seafood and their pockets with money.

It's a reputation born of necessity.

Sea Grant researcher Mike Orbach says there is no one North Carolina fishery that has the abundance, value or availability to support a fisherman and his family year-round.

Tar Heel fishermen must either switch fisheries within the state or go out-of-state to extend seasons or to follow the fish.

Many fishermen are choosing to cross state lines—to challenge fishermen from New England to Florida and sometimes beyond—for their catch.

But when the harvesters go to other states or regions, it creates unique interdependencies between fishermen, seafood dealers, processors and management agencies.

These interdependencies and the lifestyle of North Carolina's transient fishermen sent three East Carolina University anthropologists roaming out-of-state docks as part of a Sea Grant study.

Jeff Johnson, Mike Orbach and Danny Rasch surveyed three groups of migratory North Carolina fishermen. Rasch and Johnson actually lived among and worked alongside the Tar Heel travelers.

Jeff Johnson headed south with Carteret County small-boat shrimpers to the shrimp-laden shores of South Carolina.

For several weeks in the fall of 1986, Johnson lived among a contingent of shrimpers who docked in muggy, moss-draped McClellanville, S.C. They had come south to extend their shrimping season after a mediocre harvest in the Tar Heel state.

The shrimpers hailed from Downeast towns—Harkers Island, Marshallberg, Davis and Stacy. But, during the fall, home was the 21- to 45-foot boat they docked at the seafood dealer's in McClellanville.

Usually Tar Heel shrimpers sell their catch to the same seafood dealers year after year. In return for their loyalty, the dealers provide the travelers with a few amenities and ad-

vance information about expected shrimp yields.

If North Carolina waters yield a bumper crop of shrimp or the crustaceans are few and far between in Sand-lapper country, fishermen stay home.

It's the so-so years that send shrimpers south. But the shrimpers acknowledge that there are social reasons for the migration, too.

Some fishermen like to shrimp, Johnson says. They find it more enjoyable than fishing for finfish, which they probably would have to do if they stayed in North Carolina.

And fishermen say, shrimping in South Carolina is easy.

There, fishermen can only shrimp during daylight hours. "It's almost like they have a nine-to-five job," Johnson says. "It's such a contrast to North Carolina where they shrimp at night and sleep during the day."

Johnson says for some fishermen the southern jaunt is a working vacation. At the docks, there is often a party atmosphere.

It's a very male-dominated gathering, he says. Many of the fishermen feel they have a reprieve from home-bound responsibilities.

Although families are out of sight, it doesn't mean they are out of mind, Johnson says. Most shrimpers arrange to drive or carpool home every week or two to see the family.

Despite almost yearly migrations, North Carolina's traveling fishermen don't figure into

South Carolina's fishery management plans.

"State management agencies take care of their own," Johnson says. "They hardly know anything about transient fishermen, and they don't know how their decisions affect fishermen in other states."

For now, Tar Heel shrimpers buy a South Carolina commercial fishing license and adhere to Sandlapper regulations just as native fishermen do.

All in all, Johnson was impressed by the ingenuity and mobility of North Carolina's small-boat fishermen.

"Sure I'd seen the big boats on the West Coast travel hundreds of miles to participate in a fishery," Johnson says. "But when you see a fisherman take a 26-foot boat 200 to 300 miles to catch shrimp, that's surprising."

Danny Rasch signed on for the long trips of Wanchese's big boats as they ply northern waters for flounder and sea scallops.

The 80- to 120-foot Wanchese boats usually follow the herds of flounder along the New England coast from March until late fall. But if the sea scallop harvest is favorable, the captains re-rig for the mollusks during the summer.

The trips offshore usually last from nine to 12 days for flounder, 11 days for scallops. And most boats have a five-man crew and captain.

Rasch says the captains establish a rotation system for the crew. Each week one crew member flies home while the

others stay behind to work.

The captain works trip after trip "until he can't stand it anymore," Rasch says. "Then everybody takes a week off."

Rasch says the work, especially aboard the flounder boats, is grueling. From the first haul of flounder until the last, the crew works two hours, then rests two hours. On the scallop boats, the crew works six-hour shifts.

If the catch is poor during a trip, the captain and crew may spend a few extra days at sea netting "shack" fish—nontargeted species such as lobster, mudfish and monkfish. Rasch says that bringing in a good haul of shack fish can mean an extra \$200 to \$500 per crew member.

If you think these Tar Heel fishermen are a tough lot, you should meet their wives, Rasch says. "I have real respect for the wives of these fishermen.

"They can never plan anything," he says. "They never know how long their husbands will be away or how much money the men will make."

That's why Rasch says that it is important for the women to have multiple sources of funding—parents, other relatives or friends.

Besides financial worries, the women must also endure the loneliness of being away from their husbands. That's where the support of a community as tight-knit as Wanchese comes into play, Rasch says.

When North Carolina fishermen finally slide into New Bedford's harbor, they dock at the same pier.

The New Bedford docking system is segregated, Rasch learned. Portuguese fishermen claim one pier; New Bedford natives, another. And the third pier is strictly for North Carolinians.

Off the boats, the North Carolina fishermen stay to themselves, Rasch says. They don't interact with New Englanders unless it's a matter of business.

New Bedford businessmen like the Tar Heel fishermen.

"They tell me the Southerners are more gentle, don't fight as much and are prompt in paying their bills," Rasch says.

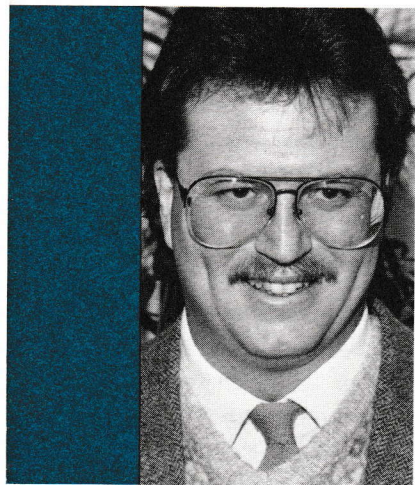
But New Bedford fishermen, native or Portuguese, have different opinions. They consider their southern counterparts "red-neck scum" who take their jobs and steal their fish, Rasch says.

But they shouldn't speak too loudly if they want to sell their catch. North Carolinian Kenny Daniels of the Wanchese Fish Co. buys all the flounder unloaded at the New Bedford docks.

New England fishermen aren't the only ones who don't give North Carolinians much respect. The New England Fishery Management Council ignores Tar Heel flounder

Fishermen take small boats like these south to shrimp





Danny Rasch

fishermen despite a 30-year participation in the fishery, Rasch says.

But the council did recognize North Carolina scallopers in the early 1980s when they entered into a fray over a proposed size limit for sea scallops.

■ Mike Orbach surveyed Carteret County fishermen who periodically dash off to the Florida coast to cash in on the lucrative calico scallop harvests.

In the fall and winter, 20 to 30 North Carolina fishermen occasionally hightail it to Florida's northern Atlantic coast to scoop up calico scallops from newly discovered beds.

All it takes is a call from one of the scallop processors in Florida. Many of the processors have ties or even processing plants back in North Carolina.

In fact, North Carolinians have dominated this Florida fishery since the first large

beds of calico scallops were discovered in 1980.

Fishermen from Wanchese to Swansboro headed south. Nearly half of the scallop fleet working out of the Canaveral docks in the early 1980s were North Carolinians. Some fishermen even moved their families to Florida.

The lure?

"The scallops carried a high value, and it was a dead-easy fishery," Orbach says.

"Everybody knew where the beds were. All the boats had to do was go to the beds, shovel up the scallops, head back to the docks, unload them and go out again. They worked 24 hours a day."

North Carolina processors cashed in, too. Much of the machinery needed for shucking the scallops sat in plants on the shores of Carteret County.

Truckload after truckload of calicoes was hauled to North Carolina for shucking. But eventually the processors moved their equipment south.

And just as the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council set its sights on a calico scallop management plan, the fishery collapsed.

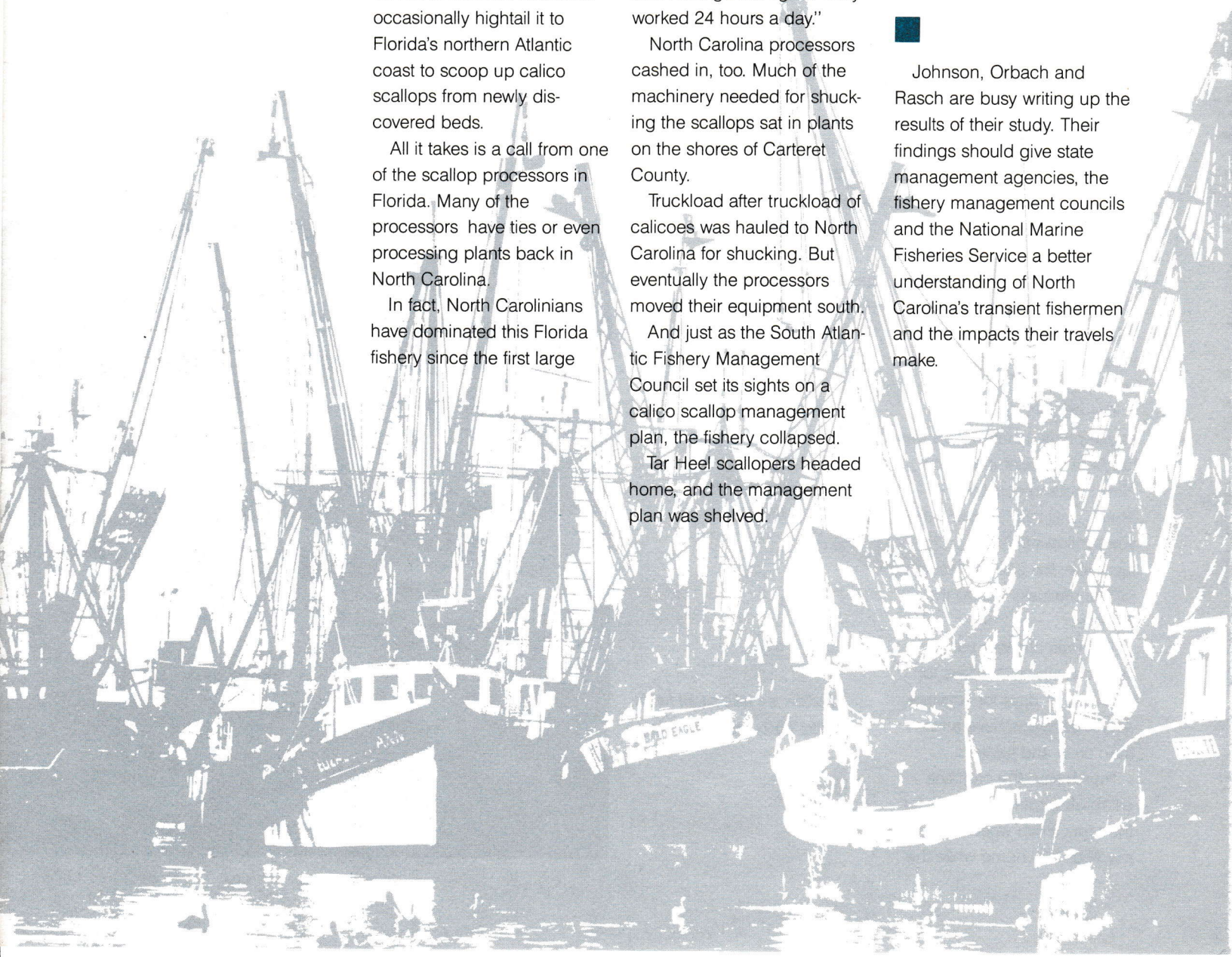
Tar Heel scallopers headed home, and the management plan was shelved.

But in recent years, new beds of the calicoes were found, and processors called in their fishermen friends from North Carolina again.

Because of North Carolina's dominance in the fishery and in the processing, there has been little conflict and resentment over the Tar Heel invasion, Orbach says.

And the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is eager for the results of this study. If the fishery booms again, the council wants to be prepared with as much information as possible, Orbach says.

■ Johnson, Orbach and Rasch are busy writing up the results of their study. Their findings should give state management agencies, the fishery management councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service a better understanding of North Carolina's transient fishermen and the impacts their travels make.



Fishermen explain what lures them to travel

By Nancy Davis

N.C. FISHERMEN

The black lettering on the stern of Punk Daniels' fishing boat proclaims Wanchese as its home port.

But the words are deceiving. The 70-foot "Venus" is just as likely to dock in ports in Maine and Canada as in North Carolina.

The days of the provincial commercial fisherman are gone. To bring in money year-round, Tar Heel fishermen say they must look beyond the waters their grandfathers fished.

The result is a breed of fisherman that is mobile, aggressive, smart, industrious and business-like.

For months at a time, Daniels and fellow Tar Heel fishermen leave home and family hundreds of miles behind. And back in towns like Wanchese, Marshallberg and Supply, wives and children wait for a weekly phone call, a monthly visit and a paycheck in the mail.

And whether they're scalloping off the coast of Maine or shrimping the waters around Key West, Fla., they command respect, and sometimes resentment, from their counterparts in other states.

"Fishing hasn't been real good here in North Carolina, so a lot of these people are having to go far and wide to make it in the business," says UNC Sea Grant Director B.J. Copeland. "Some people are going to be amazed at the distances these guys go for fish."

Some North Carolina fishermen migrate to neighboring states when the pickings are slim here. Others travel as far north as Canada and south to the Florida Keys.

Wanchese fishermen are likely to go north to fish for flounder and scallops.

Fishermen from the state's central and southern coast often travel south to shrimp.

Marshallberg fisherman Jerry Kellum says he would fish in Core Sound all year if he could make a profit on his catches of shrimp, oysters and clams.

"If there's something here, I'll stay here," he says. "But I just move around so I can catch more and make more."

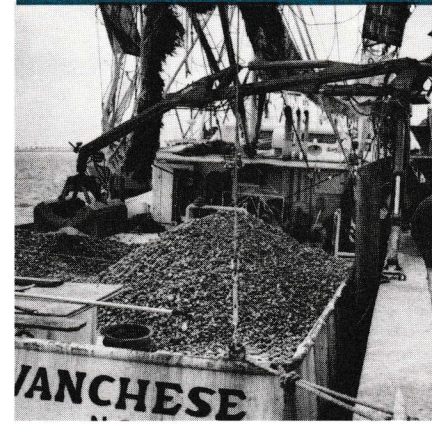
For the past few years, Kellum has taken his 30-foot trawler to South Carolina waters where shrimp have been more plentiful.

Daniels starts fishing on the "Venus" in January around Cape Hatteras for flounder. He works his way north along the coast until he ends up on Georges Banks off the coast of Maine and Canada in April.

If the price of flounder drops, Daniels rigs his boat for catching porgy and sea bass.

Hobucken fisherman Forest Williams owns three boats, ranging from 73 feet to 87 feet.

His crews fish for flounder in New Jersey waters in the fall. They follow the fish south until they're in Virginia Beach by the first of November. Then they work along the Carolina beaches until the fish move back north to deeper waters. When summer approaches, Williams' crews will shrimp off of North and South Carolina or scallop off Cape May, N.J.



Tar Heel fishermen cash in on this bountiful harvest from the Florida coast

North Carolina's traveling fishermen approach their profession for the business it is. They know that a successful fishing season has little to do with luck. It depends on old-fashioned hard work, they say.

And sometimes their success riles the fishermen in other states.

"I reckon sometimes they feel like they'd get along better if out-of-state boats would stay at home," says Red Brooks of Harkers Island.

Daniels, who says some Northern fishermen resent the North Carolina presence in their territory, has a comeback ready for them.

"We just tell them the war's over," he says. "We have to work hard. We don't care whose waters we're in."

Williams says any resentment is unfounded. He likens it to a deer hunt.

"If I was going deer hunting in my own back yard, I'd know where to look and where to kill

me a deer. But if a fellow from Beaufort came over, he wouldn't know where to find him a deer.

"Well, it's the same way up there," Williams says. "We're in their back yard."

"North Carolina fishermen are aggressive. We hear it all around. It's what we do for a living. We're hard workers. It's a real competitive business. When you're in competition, you're going to go that extra mile, and North Carolina fishermen are willing to do that," Williams says.

The hard work pays off in bigger catches, Kellum says. And that can create animosity. "From past experiences, I think North Carolina fishermen catch more than South Carolina boats," he says.

Because North Carolina shrimpers have smaller boats,

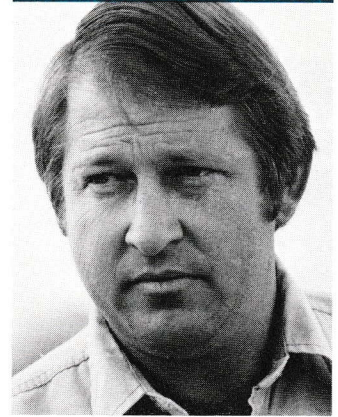
they are able to fish in shallow, nearshore waters. They catch the shrimp as the crustaceans move from their inland nursery grounds offshore to spawn in deeper waters.

South Carolina fishermen believe the Tar Heels catch a disproportionate number of the shrimp before they get to the deeper waters.

Complaints fill the air waves. "I hear them talk about it on the radio. 'Those North Carolina folks are down here cutting us off,'" Kellum says.

But Kellum has some advice for the disgruntled: Get smaller boats so you can compete with North Carolina boats.

Traveling fishermen also must deal with the pressures of being away from their families for weeks, sometimes months, at a time.



Forest Williams

"It's tough being away and staying on a boat," Brooks says. "I'd rather stay at home."

Daniels' crew on the "Venus" may be away from home for as much as a month at a time. They keep in touch with their families in Wanchese via a cellular phone on the boat. And their wives may drive or fly up for a visit every now and then.

Williams admits, "It's a hard way to make a living."

But his crew members manage to get home as often as possible—usually every 10 to 15 days, he says.

Williams says he's heard the wives of his crew members say, "I'm glad he's gone. I was getting tired of him."

But the next day, the phone is ringing. "When is he going to be back in?" they ask.

"It's a honeymoon all over again when they come back in," Williams says.

Kellum says the months away from home are wearing on him, and he's considering moving to South Carolina for good. Oysters and clams are getting scarce in Core Sound, he says. And he figures he can make enough money just shrimping in South Carolina.

But for Williams, moving is not a choice. "I've got six kids in school, and this is my home," he says.

High prices and strong demand for shrimp draw fishermen away from home



THE BACK PAGE

"The Back Page" is an update on Sea Grant activities—on research, marine education and advisory services. It's also a good place to find out about meetings, workshops and new publications. For more information on any of the projects described, contact the Sea Grant offices in Raleigh (919/737-2454). For copies of publications, write UNC Sea Grant, NCSU, Box 8605, Raleigh, N.C. 27695-8605.



If you're fishing for something fun to do this summer, consider North Carolina State University's 37th annual Sport Fishing School. Sponsored by the Department of Zoology and the Division for Lifelong Education, the school will be held June 12 through 17 in Hatteras. It is designed for folks who want to learn more about fishing for offshore big game fish. You'll cruise the Gulf Stream for blue marlin, dolphin, wahoo and tuna. And you'll learn about fishing in the surf, sounds and inlets.

The school is open to anyone, but registration is limited. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult registrant. The cost for the five-day course is \$600. The fee covers classroom and surf instruction, boat charters for two all-day Gulf Stream trips, bait and a fish fry. Lodging is not included. For more information, contact Alice Strickland Warren at the NCSU Division for Lifelong Education, Box 7401, Raleigh, N.C. 27695-7401.

In February, more than 200 people attended Sea Grant's conference on growing hard clams. Participants, including commercial fishermen, aquaculturists, scientists and resource managers, came from as far away as Maine and Florida.

Financial support for the conference was provided in part by the N.C. Biotechnology Center, the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries

Development Foundation.

If you weren't able to attend the conference, but would like information on growing clams, contact Sea Grant advisory agent Skip Kemp at 919/247-4007.



Joyce Taylor, Sea Grant's seafood education specialist, has produced another brochure in her seafood series. *Flaking Fish* describes how to make the flakes by poaching or steaming the fish, then flaking the meat away from the bone for use in other dishes.

Fish flakes provide additional ways to enjoy the nutritional benefits of seafoods. They are high in protein, but low in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium.

You can use fish flakes as the primary ingredient in dishes such as salads and chowders or as an extender in preparations such as deviled crab.

For a copy of *Flaking Fish*, write Sea Grant. Ask for UNC-SG-87-05. The cost is 50 cents.

You also can order copies of the other brochures in the series: *Hooked on Fresh Fish and Shellfish*, UNC-SG-85-08; *Dressing Finfish*, UNC-SG-86-10; and *Bringing the Catch Home*, UNC-SG-86-26. The cost for each of the brochures is 50 cents.



Last year, severe erosion forced several South Nags Head homeowners to pick up and move. Literally. They had to take their belongings . . . and their ocean-front houses . . . to safer inland lots.

Such a move costs from \$15,000 to \$30,000. And until recently, homeowners had to pay every penny.

In December, Congress passed new legislation that changed all that.

The National Flood Insurance Program previously only reimbursed insured homeowners for actual damages to a building from erosion, says Spencer Rogers, Sea Grant's coastal

engineer. Now the law grants insureds two new options in dealing with erosion's threats.

If a structure damaged by erosion cannot be saved, homeowners can receive up to 110 percent of its insured value to cover cleanup or demolition costs.

Homeowners who want to move houses from threatened areas will be eligible for payments of up to 40 percent of the total value of the building or 40 percent of the building insurance coverage. To receive the benefits, homeowners must adhere to certain restrictions, including moving the house to a location behind the 30-year erosion setback line.

To qualify for coverage, threatened buildings must be built along an ocean or inlet shoreline or a "lake or other body of water."

For details of the new program, contact your insurance agent. Or write Spencer Rogers, Sea Grant, Box 130, Kure Beach, N.C. 28449. His number is 919/458-5780.



Dune plants are the soldiers of the botanical world. They protect the dunes as they fight to survive. In the summer, they face intense heat and sunlight. In the winter, they meet the cold. Year-round they withstand ocean waves, salt spray and constantly shifting sands.

These hardy plants help stabilize our dune systems. Their flowers and berries add beauty to the beach, and many provide food.

Discover these fascinating plants with the new book *A Guide to Ocean Dune Plants Common to North Carolina*. Author E. Jean Wilson Kraus, botanist and educator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum, introduces more than 75 species of grasses, vines, herbs, shrubs and trees found on our coastal dunes.

Detailed illustrations and descriptions of each plant, as well as accurate keys, help in identification.

Kraus also introduces the ocean

Continued on next page

dune environment and plant habitats and explains how plants survive the harsh conditions there.

This 80-page book is an excellent guide for botanists and beachgoers. And it is a helpful educational tool. *Ocean Dune Plants* was published by the University of North Carolina Press in collaboration with Sea Grant.

To order, send \$4.50 to Sea Grant. Ask for publication number UNC-SG-87-01.

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Coastwatch is a free newsletter. If you'd like to be added to the mailing list, fill out this form and send it to Sea Grant, Box 8605, NCSU, Raleigh, N.C. 27695-8605.

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