

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKING - SEA GRANT PROGRAM LINKAGES

In 1984, a formal compact was developed officially designating the states of New York (NY), New Jersey (NJ), Delaware (DE), Maryland (MD), VA and North Carolina (NC) as members of the Sea Grant Mid-Atlantic Advisory Program. Many of the VA SGMAP programs that are considered regional or national in nature are done in cooperation with members of this formal grouping. The workshops on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) training, aquaculture, beach management liability and recreational fishing tag-and-release programs continue to be good examples of this partnership.

Of particular merit are the annual regionally sponsored aquaculture, wild fisheries and educational seminars that are held in conjunction with the East Coast Fisherman's Expo in Ocean City, MD. This year (1998), the marine educators in the region conducted educational programs for the children of the parents that attended the Expo which were extremely successful. The organizers of the show, the MD Watermen's Association, requested that we conduct the same types of programs for 1999.

The mid-Atlantic SGMAP staff and program leaders meet formally twice yearly for planning and staff training. The meeting held in conjunction with the East Coast Fisherman's Expo is designated for staff training (*Pfiesteria* in the mid-Atlantic region, Crisis Management and How to Handle the Media) and the late spring meeting is designated for regional program development. Next spring, the group is being hosted by NC Sea Grant and will encourage the involvement of Sea Grant Directors and Communicators. In the past, NC and NY were treated as "fringe" states because of their membership with other Sea Grant regional organizations. At the mid-Atlantic SGMAP meeting in June 1998, the group decided to admit NC and NY as equal standing partners. As a result, we anticipate that the mid-Atlantic SGMAP interactions will become more responsive to regional needs and opportunities.

Listed below are some of the projects and programs that involved other Sea Grant programs, both within and outside the mid-Atlantic region. Of particular merit are the HACCP regional workshops, the upcoming symposium on catch and release mortalities and the Florida (FL) fisherman's retraining program.

- **Soft Crab HACCP Training; MD and FL Sea Grant.** Provide specialized HACCP training for Soft Crab Producers through personal instruction workshops and generic HACCP program material. A Model HACCP Program for the production of fresh and frozen raw soft crabs was produced and used within the training workshops. A total of 518 soft crab producers have been trained through five workshops held in MD and VA, with two more workshops planned the remainder of 1998 and two (one in MD and one in VA) each year through 2000-2001.
- **Quality Assurance for Aquacultured Catfish; Mississippi (MS) Sea Grant.** This cooperative project evaluated quality in grow-out ponds as it affects the prevalence of pathogenic bacteria and the quality of catfish fillets. The project indicated that aquacultured catfish are a safe and wholesome food.

- **Workshop to Improve Competitiveness and Viability of Blue Crab Processing Industry; MD, NC, Georgia (GA) and MS Grant.** A strategic planning document was completed that outlines sensory research needs and priorities for the blue crab and related species processing industry on a regional and national basis. This project was funded by VA Sea Grant program development funds. A research proposal (C-3) was developed as a result of this interaction.
- **Seafood HACCP Alliance.** The Seafood HACCP Alliance and all its associated activities utilized a national networking approach to accomplish its goals. Information on the Alliance has been previously described in the special achievements section.
- **National Fisheries Institute (NFI) Seafood Committee.** The Committee will utilize twelve (12) seafood science programs at Sea Grant institutions to address issues related to seafood and quality. The Committee is planning a conference on product recalls to be presented in the fall of 1998.
- **Three-Day HACCP Training Courses; NC and MD Sea Grant.** HACCP programs were presented with the participation of MAP personnel from the neighboring states. VA SGMAP personnel traveled to MD and NC to assist in the presentation of HACCP programs. Also, NC personnel traveled to VA to assist in the VA training effort. VA SGMAP also presented two programs in West VA (WV) since it did not have direct access to a Sea Grant program within the state.
- **Tri-State Seafood Committee; NC and MD Sea Grant.** The Tri-State Seafood Committee will be producing a blue crab HACCP and sanitation manual for east coast blue crab processors. The manual is anticipated to be published sometime during 1999.
- **Seafood HACCP Alliance; Louisiana (LA), NY, NC, MD, DE, FL, Alabama (AL) Sea Grant and others to be named.** The Seafood HACCP Alliance will be publishing a sanitation manual to complement the HACCP manual. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) HACCP regulation requires that firms develop a Standard Sanitary Operating Procedures (SSOP) checklist to ensure compliance with part of the FDA Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) regulation. A one-day training program will be developed to assist industry in complying with both the SSOP and GMP requirements. VA SGMAP will produce one chapter for the manual and assist in the production of another.
- **Workshop to Monitor and Evaluate the Economic Impacts of *Pfiesteria* Outbreaks; MD, NC and DE Sea Grant; possibly NY, South Carolina (SC) and FL.** The workshop, scheduled for the late fall of 1998, will be a collaborative effort between Sea Grant programs to develop a protocol for the assessment of the economic impacts and private and social costs of *Pfiesteria*. This workshop is a result of the regional Sea Grant proposal on *Pfiesteria* which was approved for funding in July 1998.
- **Aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic, 1997; MD, DE and NJ Sea Grant.** Conference co-chair and session organizer/moderator for a regional aquaculture conference. The conference presented information to aquaculture entrepreneurs on topics of interest. At the request of the VA Shellfish Growers Assoc. and other shellfish culturists in other states, a special session was organized on algal food production. This special session attracted over 75 shellfish culturists from SC to New England.
- **Mid-Atlantic Commercial Fisherman and Aquaculture Trade Show; Ocean City, MD, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999; NC, MD, DE, NJ and NY Sea Grant.** Assist in the regionally coordinated fisherman/aquaculture trade show and seminar series. Coordinate and conduct seminars on topics of interest. Attendance at these seminars exceed 1,000 annually.

- **Displaced Net-Fishermen Retraining Program, 1997; FL Sea Grant.** Provided expert training in soft shell crab production for commercial fishermen in FL displaced from the net fishery. Conducted nine training workshops throughout the state of FL on proper handling and shedding technology. Over 250 commercial fishermen received this training in order to participate in the FL Sea Grant/FL Department (Dept.) of Agriculture financial assistance part of the retraining program.
- **Mid-Atlantic Commercial Fisherman and Aquaculture Trade Show; Ocean City, MD, 1998 and 1999, “Jr. Waterman’s Expo”;** MD Sea Grant. Initiated, developed and conducted educational activities for over 100 children and parents in conjunction with the Expo. This first time effort was requested in 1998 by the MD Watermen’s Association.
- **National Conference on Release Mortality in Marine Recreational Fisheries, 1995; NY, NJ, DE and NC Sea Grant.** Conference, first of its kind in North America, attracted broad range of speakers and participants from most coastal states (90 attendees); conference highlights published in *Salt Water Sportsman*, *Sport Fishing* and *Marlin*, nationally recognized saltwater fishing magazines, as well as in *The Fisherman* and the *NC Fishing Report*, regional saltwater sportfishing publications; conference set stage for National Sea Grant Office proposal for a national symposium on outreach and education needs regarding catch and release issues in marine recreational fisheries. Co-sponsored with Mark Malchoff, NY Sea Grant.
- **National Symposium on Catch and Release in Marine Recreational Fisheries, 1998-99.** National Sea Grant Office, National Strategic Investments Program’s National Outreach Competition to strengthen Sea Grant Outreach components and their partners; NY and NC Sea Grant Marine Extension Program’s (SGMEP) were collaborators on the funded proposal, one of 11 funded projects throughout the U.S. The steering committee consists of members from NY, NC, GA and California (CA) SGMEP’s, all acting as co-sponsors of the event. The Symposium is designed to fill a void in collaboration on catch and release issues in marine recreational fisheries, given that two national symposia on catch and release issues in freshwater fisheries were convened in 1977 and 1988 (both in CA) and no similar efforts were planned in North America or on other continents. The steering committee consists of representatives from the above referenced state Sea Grant Programs as well as persons representing the Massachusetts (MA) Division of Marine Fisheries, Texas (TX) A & M Univ. (University) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Atlantic Coast and Northeast Region Recreational Fisheries Coordinators and Coordinator of Southeast Fisheries and Science Center’s Cooperative Tagging Program. Additional sponsors verbally committed to date include the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the American Fisheries Society (AFS). The meeting is Scheduled for December 5-8, 1999 in VA Beach, VA.
- **The Bridge Project, 1997-1999; Oregon (OR), Ohio (OH) and MS-AL Sea Grant.** On-line clearinghouse for national and regional marine education materials, cooperatively administered with the National Marine Educators Assoc. (NMEA).
- **MARED, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998; All Sea Grant Programs.** mared@vims.edu is the national Sea Grant marine educators list (35 subscribers), used for discussion and announcements on topics of interest to the Sea Grant marine education network. VIMS/W&M SGMAP supports this as a contribution to the network and receive no specific funding for it.
- **Pathfinder, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999; MS-AL, NC, DE, NH and OR Sea Grant, others.** Regional summer teachers’ marine science courses.
- **Global Change Electronic Communications, 1995, 1996; Wisconsin (WI), MS-AL, Hawaii (HI) and New Hampshire (NH) Sea Grant.** This project handled electronic communications for the Global Change Teleconference project, providing a list-serv for participants and a website, also provided national communications and linkage with the NASA/Earthlink trained global change educators.