Letters to the Editor

Certification means $$$!

It recently came to our attention that AFS Certified Fisheries Scientists in the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation receive a 5% pay hike upon being certified. We asked Fish Chief Jack Herring to document this fact in a letter to us which he has done and which we are pleased to publish here.—The Editor.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation submitted the information you supplied to us on the AFS certification program to the State of Mississippi Personnel Board. We requested that certification qualify an individual for an "Education Benchmark" salary increase. The Personnel Board approved this request due in part to the excellent supporting information you supplied us.

This Education Benchmark is a salary increase not to exceed 5%.

This certainly is a positive step toward a higher level of professionalism in our state.

Thanks for the excellent and prompt support.

Jack Herring
Chief of Fisheries
Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation
Jackson, Mississippi

Aren't Sea Turtles Excellent Fishes?

Some time ago, I submitted an article to the editor of *Fisheries* describing the international program aimed at preventing extinction of Kemp's ridley sea turtle, *Lepidochelys kempi*, the most endangered of the sea turtle species. I received a cordial letter from the associate editor explaining that the article was not acceptable because the focus of *Fisheries* is finfishes. Accepting this response at the time, I was more intent on publishing the article and submitted it elsewhere (Caillouet 1984). I also tried without success to have announced in *Fisheries* the First International Symposium on Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Biology, Conservation and Management, held 1–4 October 1985, in Galveston, Texas.

In retrospect, it is not at all clear to me why the focus of *Fisheries* should be on finfishes. For example, some of the most valuable fisheries in the world are based on crustaceans. Fishery scientists have not lost interest in marine mammals because over exploitation has reduced their populations. Likewise, sea turtles have been exploited by man for thousands of years, producing a wide variety of useful products. Are sea turtles to be written off by fisheries enthusiasts merely because their populations have reached dangerously low levels? My guess is that populations of sea turtles might not have declined to such levels had more attention been paid toward management of fisheries for these highly migratory reptiles. Greater rather than less visibility of the problems they face is needed to obtain support for conservation and management strategies required to restore sea turtles to former levels of abundance.

I suggest that the American Fisheries Society and the staff of *Fisheries* reconsider their policy of excluding papers from *Fisheries* dealing with sea turtles. Worldwide interest in sea turtles is increasing, and *Fisheries* should not continue to ignore "so excellent a fishe" (Carr 1984).

Charles W. Caillouet, Jr.
Galveston, Texas

Literature Cited

Caillouet, C. W., Jr. 1984. Essai de prevention de l'extinction de la Tortue de Kemp. Les Carnets de Zoologie (Bulletin of the Zoological Society of Quebec) 44(2):28–34.

Carr, A. 1984. So excellent a fishe: a natural history of sea turtles. Revised edition. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY. 280 pp.

We decided not to publish this manuscript. Our response to the author follows.

Thank you for your letter of October 18 and for your reasoned defense of your ridley turtle manuscript and its appropriateness for publication in *Fisheries*.

As you might guess, we receive more good manuscripts than we are able to publish. Accordingly, we do our best to accept those papers that offer the broadest appeal to our very diverse membership. We also try, whenever possible, to select papers that have strong fisheries policy implications.

I imply no disparagement of your paper whatsoever when I make the subjective judgement that I do not think it is right for *Fisheries*.

I sincerely hope that you are able to find a satisfactory vehicle for bringing your paper to the attention of the scientific community.

Carl R. Sullivan
Editor, *Fisheries*

A case for environmental activism

I agree entirely with Rosen and Starnes in their reply to Dr. Kaczynski that AFS members should be aware of the constant pressure to alter fisheries habitat by dam builders and others who plan public work projects that will affect the quality of the streams or blockade migration, etc. The fate of the Columbia River salmon runs, well documented in my book *The Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead: Their Fight for Survival* (University of Washington Press, 1981) shows that biologists were heavily involved in trying to stem the rush of the public agencies (notably the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation), private power companies, and public utility districts to turn the great river into a series of lakes with up to 100-foot dams which the fish have to hurdle both as juveniles and adults. They were the ones who gave Congress the real facts, outlined what would happen to the resource if all the projects were built and how society would suffer the consequences. Congress did not listen to the biologists or the heads of the fishery agencies,