

# FISH TALES

## NEW JERSEY FISH AND SEAFOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INITIATES QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

**FISH TALES**, a quarterly publication is published by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Fish and Seafood Development Program. It provides current information about the industry, upcoming events that may be of interest, a seafood column with recipes, seafood trivia and a column for readers to express their viewpoints on industry and marine related issues. **FISH TALES** will be distributed to the State Senate and Assembly, Federal Legislators, shorefront mayors, retailers, wholesalers, Foundations, DEP personnel, International Trade personnel, the Farm Bureau, the Board of Agriculture, the Commercial Fishermen Association, NFI personnel, marine extension agents, home economists, seafood marketing specialists and Fish Commission members. The newsletter is designed to open channels of communication and provide a regular flow of information to these individuals. We look forward to any comments or suggestions you may have regarding this publication

## AMERICAN FISHING INDUSTRY TORPEDOED BY FOREIGN IMPORTS

**P**er capita seafood consumption in the United States has remained relatively stagnant over the past fifty years. The current figure is approximately 15 pounds per person, a figure lagging far behind those for beef and poultry. Consider also that 60% of that seafood is imported product often from nations like Canada, Iceland and New Zealand where the industry enjoys a hefty government subsidy. In 1987, the trade imbalance in fishery products through the Port of New York and New Jersey was 194,791 tons in volume and \$880,092,449 in value.

Adding to this problem is decreasing consumer confidence in locally harvested product. Consumers assume that shellfish from South America is far safer than domestic product simply because they are not acutely aware of pollution problems in other parts of the world.

# FISH





**Shellfish is the number one food import in the United States.**

Ability to compete in a worldwide market is becoming increasingly important especially with the coming unification of European markets in 1992. Foreign markets are critical to the survival of New Jersey's 300 year old fishing industry because many of the resources off our coast are underutilized in the domestic market but are in high demand in both Europe and Asia. At this significant juncture, there are major cut backs in federal and state spending to support American fisheries development.

Funding for the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program which provides federal matching grants to support a variety of fishery initiatives has been drastically cut. An area that has been hard hit is the subsidy that allowed American seafood companies to participate in foreign trade shows. Participation by seafood companies will be shifted to a cost recovery basis according to current plans while agricultural products still have major subsidies in a wide spectrum of foreign trade shows. Although seafood companies can participate in the USA pavilion, there are a limited number of booths and not all the seafood companies that would like to participate can be accommodated.

Loss of the dedicated seafood pavilion also diminishes the impact that was formerly created by the impressive American fishing exhibit. With a number of companies participating jointly, the overall scope of our industry was clearly visible and prospec-

tive buyers flocked to the exhibit. Other countries have major fishery pavilions and certainly a country with the size and scope of seafood resources that we boast could put forth a better effort.

The New Jersey Division of International Trade and the Department of Agriculture recently teamed up to present a wide assortment of New Jersey seafood products to thousands of trade visitors from over 130 countries at the ANUGA 89 World Food Mart in Cologne, West Germany. Sales made by New Jersey companies as a direct result of show participation are expected to top 8 million dollars. This level of participation was made possible by the federal subsidy program. Federal subsidies through the National Marine Fisheries Service allowed a number of American seafood companies to begin developing international markets. A steady growth pattern has been established by those companies and many of their sister companies are following this trend.

In the past, Saltonstall-Kennedy funds have had other major impacts on the growth of our local industry. Squid is a product that has enjoyed a dramatic rise in popularity in both American and foreign markets. Thanks to the efforts of some far-sighted New Jersey processors working with a variety of federal and state programs; cleaned, frozen products that eliminated some of the handling problems were developed and the market is burgeoning. Several processors in Newark and Jersey City



have even developed a "fry and eat" breaded squid ring for calamari fans.

S-K funds have assisted in developing a promotional package to help attract surimi processors to the East Coast and those efforts are starting to pay off with renewed interest in locating plants that can bring jobs and ratables into our region. These facilities would utilize many of our local resources.



In a state effort to develop large scale markets for underutilized local resources, cases of prototype canned mackerel produced from frozen at sea product provided by Lund's Fishery in Cape May were flown to Germany to test market acceptance. The project was so successful that two canneries have volunteered to become involved in a joint venture research and development effort. Hopefully, the culmination of this project will be a refined product that can provide an alternative market for New Jersey harvested mackerel. At present, we are harvesting 75,100 metric tons of mackerel while an estimated additional 134,000 metric tons go untouched each year.

Another product that New Jersey fishermen would like to market in Europe is dogfish, a small shark which is very abundant in our local waters. The product is well accepted in England where it is a traditional ingredient in fish and chips and in Germany where it is smoked and marketed as "schillerlocken." To date, because we don't have the facilities to process

these products we have not been able to explore this important market.

To achieve the same dramatic success that we have had with our squid industry, we need a combination of federal, state and industry dollars to develop alternative markets for our fish and seafood. Emerging growth companies need assistance in both product development and marketing. However, funding at both the federal and state level has been cut.

Thanks to cooperation from the Division of International Trade, the New Jersey fishing industry is also looking east toward the Orient and will be participating in the Foodex 90 show in Tokyo in March. Products to be highlighted at this show include soft shell crabs, lobsters, swordfish, tunas, clams, squid, mackerel and frozen at sea shrimp harvested by New Jersey boats. The Japanese consumer has a high regard for seafood and is willing to pay a premium price for the well handled products produced by New Jersey fishermen.

All of these efforts are designed to assist our local small New Jersey seafood companies enter the export and value-added market for seafood products. Such projects can greatly assist in reducing the huge deficit in fishery products, providing jobs and ratables for the state, and insuring the future of our food supply. Without strong state and federal programs, many of these markets will go unexplored.

1. What is the number one selling seafood item in America?



## THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY IN NEW JERSEY

**W**hen you mention New Jersey industry, not many people think of our thriving, growing fish and seafood industry. Local fishermen have been harvesting the bounty of the sea for over three hundred years and many are using new technology that would amaze their forefathers.

New Jersey has six major commercial fishing ports including Belford, Point Pleasant, Atlantic City, Barnegat Light, Cape May and Port Norris. These ports provide us with an assortment of products including tilefish, swordfish, tuna, weakfish, whiting, mackerel, butterfish, sea bass, flounders, squid, lobsters, scallops, crabs, oysters and a wide variety of clams including surf clams, ocean quahogs, hard clams and soft clams. New Jersey is home port to over 1700 commercial fishing boats not to mention the huge recreational fleet that operates out of state marinas.

Atlantic City is not only famous for its casinos but also as the center of our important sea clam industry. New Jersey is the leading producer of surf clams (37.2 million pounds) and ocean quahogs (17.5 million pounds) in the nation. Surf clams are commonly used for breaded clam strips and ocean quahogs are often found in soups and chowders. Chances are the next time you enjoy either of these two foods, the clams came from New Jersey.

Several companies have been developing clam processing vessels that actually travel out to the harvest grounds and process the clams at sea. These immediate and innovative methods of processing can provide

top quality product without many of the problems encountered when clams are processed on land.

The "Atlantic Prince" a state of the art processing vessel operates out of Cape May. The crew nets, processes, freezes and packs its catch at sea. The success of this operation has spurred further development of New Jersey owned processing vessels. Two smaller vessels plus two large vessels are currently being built. These innovative New Jersey projects are opening new fishing grounds and are helping to Americanize our fishery. One New Jersey vessel is actually harvesting deep-water shrimp.

When you consider that 60% of all the seafood consumed in the United States is imported, new technology becomes extremely important. Given the fishery resources located off our coast which consist of many underutilized species such as mackerel, squid and butterfish, it becomes increasingly important to develop a thriving export market as well as a growing domestic market.

Squid, long a favorite of Oriental and Mediterranean cuisines, is enjoying a burgeoning domestic market thanks to the efforts of some North Jersey based processors. Ruggiero Seafoods was a pioneer in developing an easy to prepare breaded squid ring as well as a number of cleaned and frozen squid products. Their plant grew from a store front operation to a modern plant that takes up an entire city block. Recognizing the growing market for squid in Japan, B & G Lobster & Shrimp recently opened their own processing plant in Jersey City.

In 1988 the John T. Handy Company opened a major crab shedding operation in Port Norris. The facility has 800 tanks holding over 320,000 crabs. The tanks are leased to local baymen who use the state of the art facility to shed their crabs. During the first summer of operation over one million pounds of soft crabs were produced. Currently, there is a waiting list of crabbers who would like to lease tanks. The development of this facility has provided a major boost for the depressed economy in the area. In the area of freshwater fisheries, New Jersey

boasts a modern aquaculture facility



producing red tilapia for the growing market. These fish are raised in an indoor recirculating system in crystal clear spring water. They are fed a special diet rich in vitamins and minerals. Because these fish are raised in an ideal environment they are consistent in flavor, taste and size. To continue this growth pattern we need a combination of innovative industry initiatives coupled with concerned government programs.

**NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD-  
SMART FOOD FOR SMART PEOPLE!!!**

### **NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD**

In order to counteract a repeat of 1988's negative media publicity concerning pollution problems, the Fish and Seafood Development Program along with industry support developed a positive, proactive media outreach effort. The campaign consists of a positive seafood image that is used in point of purchase materials, press releases, media appearances and public participation events.

On May 8, 1989 we unveiled our "New Jersey Seafood "Smart Food For Smart People" promotional campaign at an industry meeting. At that time promotional materials consisting of buttons, bumper stickers, banners, T-shirts, aprons, table tents, brochures, recipe cards, a radio jingle, stickers and posters were made available for purchase. For greater exposure, these materials were developed in such a way that they can be used by all sectors of the industry including harvesters, processors, wholesalers, retailers, restaurateurs, charterboat operators, and organizers of seafood festivals.

This spring we will be taking the campaign on the road in a major effort to get all sectors of the seafood industry involved in using these promotional materials. As a result, it is hoped that a common theme will develop product recognition. To obtain any of these materials or for further information, please call our office at (609) 292-2472.



## CLAMMERS LOOK TOWARD DEPURATION TO STRENGTHEN INDUSTRY

**D**epuration or controlled purification is a process that uses a managed environment to reduce the level of bacteria and viruses in live shellfish. Shellfish are brought to a plant and placed into a tank containing purified water for a period of 48 hours. During that time, the shellfish metabolize and purge the contents of their digestive tracts. Shellfish are then sampled and bacterial counts are run to ensure that the product is well within guidelines developed by the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. The depuration process is also important for shellfish such as soft clams and mussels that tend to accumulate sand and grit which are purged. Anyone who has ever been served gritty clams or mussels can appreciate the value of this extra step.

Because depuration is a controlled process, the time period for effective purging is shortened. Currently north Jersey clammers rely on the relay system in which they truck their clams to Ocean County and replant them on leased beds. This process means that clammers have to harvest their catch twice. In addition to the added effort, many of the clams are lost on the relay beds.

The hard clam industry valued at 3.8 million dollars represents a major harvest for New Jersey commercial fishermen. Although water quality off our coast has been steadily improving, there are a number of waters that are only open to conditional harvest. In order to maximize our production capabilities for both hard and



soft clams, there is a need for a state of the art depuration facility. Such a facility can not only allow us to make better use of our marine resources but

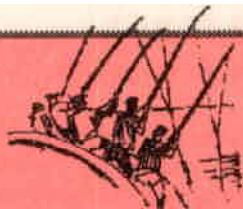
it can also demonstrate the state's commitment to the production of high quality seafood. This positive image can provide a major boost to our fish & seafood industry statewide.

At present, there are only six shellfish depuration plants operating in the United States. Europe has a number of plants and many foreign countries will not accept any shellfish that has not been depurated. If depuration is the wave of the future, this is a major opportunity for New Jersey to be riding the crest.



2. What American president hosted a dinner party with 23 different dishes made with oysters?
3. What is the derivative of the word mackerel?





### FISHING FOR INDUSTRY COMMENTS

This column of Fish Tales will provide space for those who would like to express their viewpoints on industry and marine related issues. We welcome any statements, comments, suggestions or criticisms you may have on any issue concerning the fish and seafood industry. We may not be able to publish every submission we receive, but we will do our best to include as many as possible. If you would like to contribute, please submit your comments to:

The New Jersey Department of  
Agriculture, Fish and Seafood  
Development Program,  
CN 330 Room 204  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625.

*This is your chance to  
speak out and be heard! We  
look forward to hearing  
from you.*

### Dear Editor:

*Two years after PCB warnings came out and medical waste was washing up on our shores I found myself uncertain about my future. People turned away from eating seafood and the price of fish plummeted. In one of the busiest times of my fishing year I found myself at a financial standstill.*

*Last spring, during the height of the shad season, I once again found myself contemplating my future. The problem this time was the abundance of striped bass. The stripers has become such a disproportionate part of our catch that I had to stop fishing for a while.*

*Out of a sense of frustration with the fishing industry, I started putting my thoughts and concerns on paper. I mailed a letter stating my concerns to every New Jersey state legislator, and much to my dismay, I only received 3 responses. In addition I have written to many newspapers and have been interviewed several times.*

*The message I am trying to broadcast is simple: there is no way ordinary commercial fishermen can fight bad press or discriminatory legislation.*

*I don't understand how a state senator can introduce a bill making the striper a game fish and banning striper netting without studying the negative impact on the state's commercial fishermen. Maybe the state senator doesn't realize how perilous it is to work on the ocean, day in and day out, only then to be stabbed in the back by the state legislature.*

*New Jersey commercial gill-net fishermen produce high quality fish. Our gear is very selective and has low environmental impact. I am willing to work and share information with anyone who will promote New Jersey's commercial fishermen.*

**Thank-you,  
Eric Spelling**

**Fishing vessel: Native Sun**



## SEAFOOD PROCESSING—KEY TO THE FUTURE

**T**he greater New York/New Jersey area comprises one of the greatest seafood consuming regions in the world, and for many years, locally landed fish were sold directly into the fresh fish market in the New York/Philadelphia corridor. Since seafood is a seasonal commodity and few alternative markets have been developed, the industry is at the mercy of drastic price swings dictated by supply and demand pressures. Although there are over 600 species of finfish and shellfish commercially available in this region, consumer demand is centered on a very few species. This results in extremely high prices which trigger consumer resistance. These problems have been exacerbated by recent concerns over food safety.

In order to increase our economic base, there is a need for the development of value-added products utilizing both traditional and lesser known species. Unfortunately, the lack of processing facilities is one of the weakest links in the development of the New Jersey seafood industry. These facilities would allow local fishermen to harvest many of the underexploited species and increase the effectiveness of their trips. Alternative markets could also serve to reduce some of the harvest pressure on traditional species.

The future of our local seafood industry will be determined by the business development activities of today. The Fish and Seafood Development Program has concentrated on promoting the industry statewide and selling the state as a site for processing facilities. Processing facilities and the development of worldwide markets can

provide alternative outlets for local harvest.

New Jersey has an untapped wealth of underutilized species such as whiting, red hake, mackerel, dogfish and squid. It has been estimated that New Jersey has the potential to harvest 450 metric tons of these species annually. Unfortunately, these species tend to have little demand in the domestic market but are in high demand in the export market. To enter these important foreign markets, our products need some level of processing. Several New Jersey companies have developed very successful markets handling mackerel and squid but there is still a great deal of area for market penetration. Another promising area is the development of a surimi operation. New Jersey whiting and red hake have been shown to produce high grade surimi in tests conducted by the Japanese Surimi Association. A local surimi plant could also make better use of individual fish harvested by producing a lower grade product from frame mince.

The most effective and cost efficient business development strategies rely heavily on vertical integration, thus insuring supply of raw material and controlling quality at a number of steps in the processing sequence. These operations, in many cases, also allow for better waste stream management operations that make use of frame mince and fishery by-products.

Industry development is a number one priority for the 1990's. If you would like further information please contact us the Fish & Seafood Development Program.





## INTERESTED IN HIGHER PROFITS?

**T**hen invest in staff training.

Almost every survey conducted indicates that Americans are confused about buying and preparing seafood for home consumption. That's why restaurant sales soar while retail sales remain stagnant. How can you get over these barriers? By training your counter people to become seafood experts.

What is the answer to "Is It Fresh?" A simple yes, of course, or an explanation of what to look for in selecting fresh fish? The second more elaborate answer can make the customer feel more comfortable with his or her purchase and convey the feeling that the clerk cares both about the product and about the customer. The development of a user friendly environment can add significantly to your customer base.

What's the best way to train your personnel? Well, there are a variety of training programs available. The New England Fisheries Development Association offers an intensive three day Fish School. For more information contact Karla Ruzicka at (617) 542-8890. Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn offers a five day intensive program for counter personnel and a one semester course in Seafood Retailing. For more information contact August Tuosto 718-934-5525. You can also arrange for a training program through the Fish and Seafood Development Program 609-984-6757.

4. What is the average per capita consumption of fish and seafood in the USA?

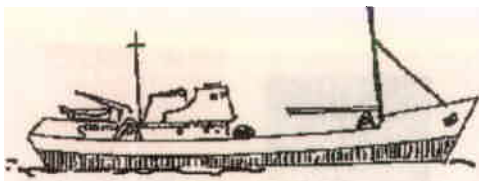


## NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD SUPPLIERS DIRECTORY



**T**he 1989-1990 New Jersey Seafood Suppliers Directory has been updated and revised by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Fish and Seafood Development Program. The Directory is designed to serve as a handy reference guide for fish and seafood buyers to familiarize themselves with New Jersey fish and seafood suppliers and the products they supply. The first section of the New Jersey Seafood Suppliers Directory includes each supplier's name, address, telephone and fax number, contact person and major products supplied. The second section of the directory includes a list of fish and seafood products in alphabetical order, along with the names of suppliers who provide each product. Species descriptions of locally harvested finfish and shellfish are also included. This year these species names were translated into various languages so that the publication could be distributed at international tradeshows, as well as domestic. The directory was printed courtesy of the New Jersey Division of International Trade.

The 1989 New Jersey Seafood Suppliers Directory is a must item for every seafood buyer and complimentary copies can be obtained from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Fish and Seafood Development Program, CN 330 Room 204, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. For further information call (609) 292-2472.



## SURVEY RESULTS

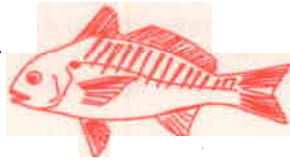
### Trade shows are effective for developing new business

The New Jersey Fish and Seafood Development Program participates in several major national and international trade shows throughout the year. These shows have proven to be a cost effective way for our Program to collect trade leads for the industry. In a recent industry survey we asked NJ seafood wholesalers if they participate in trade shows, which ones they felt were most important, if they were effective for developing new business and if they found trade leads useful.

In response to these questions, 76% of those surveyed participate in Trade Shows. The Boston Seafood Show, the New York Seafood Show and ANUGA were deemed as "most important". Larger volume firms placed more emphasis on the major overseas show (ANUGA) and national show (Boston), while smaller firms placed more emphasis on local and regional events. There was substantial interest among wholesalers to participate in a trade mission to Japan. A total of 44% of the firms indicated such interest. Almost all of those who responded (91%) felt that trade shows were effective for developing new business. Overall 82% of those surveyed found trade leads to be useful, with larger firms reflecting a more positive opinion of their value.

All and all trade show participation allows our Program to maintain an image for New Jersey seafood, initiate contact with potential customers and introduce new products. The Fish and Seafood Development Program will be participating in the following trade shows:

5. Which State Legislature considered a bill to make it illegal to use tomatoes in clam chowder?





## TRADE SHOWS

**January 19-21      Convention Hall, Ocean City, Maryland**

### **The 16th Annual East Coast Commercial Fishermen's Trade Expo and 1st Annual East Coast Aquaculture Trade Expo.**

Program staff will be on hand in Ocean City to discuss aquaculture possibilities in New Jersey and distribute promotional materials. This year the Maryland Watermen's Association is introducing the 1st Annual East Coast Aquaculture Trade Expo which will run concurrently with the group's annual Commercial Fishermen's Trade Expo. Our program is happy to be part of this introduction.

**March 13-17      Foodex, Japan**

### **New Jersey Seafood Heads East**

Thanks to cooperation from the Division of International Trade, the New Jersey fishing industry is also looking east toward the Orient and will be participating in the Foodex 90 show in Tokyo. Products to be highlighted at this show include soft shell crabs, lobsters, swordfish, tunas, clams, squid, mackerel and frozen at sea shrimp harvested by New Jersey boats. The Japanese consumer has a high regard for seafood and is willing to pay a premium for the well handled products produced by New Jersey fishermen.

**March 20-22      Hynes Convention Center, Boston, Ma.**

### **The International Boston Seafood Show**

Our Program will be participating in the Boston Seafood Show, March 20-22, where staff will focus efforts on increasing the visibility of our "New Jersey Seafood-Smart Food For Smart People" promotional campaign and distribute promotional materials. The Boston Seafood Show is the world's largest gathering of exhibitors and buyers, representing all sectors of the seafood industry. This year there will be over 900 exhibits representing seafood industry businesses from over 25 countries.

6. Who was the first person on record to charter a fishing boat in New Jersey?



## SMORGASBORD OF SUMMER FESTIVITIES

**W**hat happens every summer, costs nothing or little to attend, attracts enthusiastic tourists and residents by the thousands and offers new opportunities to market seafood?

Seafood Festivals, that's what! After all, New Jersey is a seaside state and what better way is there to focus people's attention on the seafood industry. Thousands of people attend these day long events, sampling local seafood and viewing educational exhibits dealing with the marine environment and seafood preparation. While seafood festivals are fun for the whole family providing good food and drink plus entertainment, they are very often serious in underlying purpose.

Many chambers of commerce, civic groups and volunteer agencies have seen value in using local products to point out the unique characteristics of a region. Seafood festivals provide the local industry and other related agencies and organizations a perfect opportunity to boost seafood's image and sales and spread the word about New Jersey's bounties.

This past summer the Fish and Seafood Development Program participated and helped organize many of these events. Even though our Program was understaffed and all of

these events were held on week-ends, we made the extra effort to support the sponsors of these events.

Festival participation included the Belmar Seafood Festival, the Seventh Annual Barnegat Bay Crab Race, the Beach Haven Chowder Cook-Off, the Second Annual Clam Festival & Clam Shucking Competition, the Lambertville Shad Festival, the Clearwater Festival and the Point Pleasant Blessing of the Fleet. At all of these events program staff focused on increasing the visibility of our "New Jersey Seafood-Smart Food For Smart People" promotional campaign and logo and making the public more aware of the high quality seafood produced by and available in New Jersey.

In a recent New Jersey Seafood Wholesalers Survey, New Jersey suppliers were asked to indicate the most effective means of promoting seafood in the state and seafood festivals were deemed one of the most important.

All & all it seems that seafood festivals are a great place to increase the visibility of New Jersey seafood and to get out the message that

**"New Jersey Seafood is Smart Food For Smart People."**



## **UPCOMING NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD FESTIVALS**

*April 28-29*

The Lambertville Shad Festival, Lambertville. Contact:  
The Lambertville Chamber of Commerce at (609) 397-0055

*June 2*

The New Jersey Seafood Festival, Belmar. Contact:  
Nona Henderson at (201) 932-9157

*August 26*

The 8th Annual Barnegat Bay Crab Race, Seaside Heights. Contact:  
Toms River Chamber of Commerce at (201) 349-0220

*September 15-16*

The Third Annual Clam Carnival and Clam Shucking Competition,  
The Village Green at Smithville. Contact: Linda May at (609) 748-1222

*September 15-16*

The Point Pleasant Seafood Festival, Point Pleasant. Contact:  
The Greater Point Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce at  
(201) 899-2424

*September 15-16*

Chowder Cook-Off, Beach Haven. Contact: The Southern Ocean  
County Chamber of Commerce at (609) 494-7221

*October 6-7*

Commercial Township Seafood Festival, Mauricetown Fire Hall,  
Mauricetown.

### **ANSWERS to SEA FOOD TRIVIA**

1. Canned tuna over 3 pounds per capita annually
2. "Honest Abe" Lincoln
3. French for "pimp of the sea"
4. Fifteen pounds in 1988, down 0.4 from 1987
5. Maine
6. George Washington

## NEW JERSEY SEAFOOD CHALLENGE

Some of the finest chefs in New Jersey will prepare their favorite seafood dishes at the Fifth Annual New Jersey State Seafood Challenge on January 19, 1990 at the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School in Brick.

Sponsored by the Garden State Restaurant Association and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, this competition showcases the broad range of New Jersey seafood, innovative preparation techniques and some of the state's finest chefs. New Jersey's 1990 Seafood Challenge winner will receive a Revere Bowl and \$1,000 to compete in the American Seafood Challenge in New Orleans from March 14-17. The American Seafood Challenge evolved from a 1984 wager between the Governors of Virginia and Florida. Each Governor insisted that his state made the best seafood chowder. Over the years, that initial "Challenge" has grown to become a culinary event of national proportions. Food critics have called it "the finest culinary competition ever held in this country". Chefs will be responsible for the preparation of "signature" entrees, as well as a selection of appetizers and entrees from a "mystery market". Chefs' dishes will be rated on a point system based on 8 different criteria, including innovation and originality, utilization of ingredients, preparation, cleanliness and timing. The American Seafood Challenge is one of the very few cooking competitions that includes workmanship and appearance as well as taste when judging contestant entries.



During those frosty winter days, seafood soups, stews and chowders cooked up with seafood caught fresh off the Jersey shore can warm the cockles of your heart. What better comfort foods than those that can be traced back to our Old World heritage! Most of these dishes were made with whatever vegetables and seafoods were on-hand at the moment so they offer a great opportunity to express your creativity and use up some of those items lurking in the back of your refrigerator or freezer.

Chowders originated in the fishing villages of Brittany in France where a cry of "*faire la chaudiere*," or prepare the pot, heralded a potluck supper. Each fisherman would add something to the pot—vegetables, finfish, shellfish or spices—and then sit down to enjoy the communal feast. These original chowders didn't contain milk or tomatoes. As the term *chaudiere* made its way from

the fishing villages of Newfoundland down through New England, it became anglicized to chowder and a great American tradition was born.

During colonial times, tomatoes, or "love apples" as they were sometimes called, were considered to be disgusting at best and possibly poisonous, and all chowders were milk-based. Gradually a great controversy arose. New Englanders staunchly stood behind their milk-based chowders while renegades in New York developed a tomato-based chowder. Some say that it was a Manhattan restaurateur who wanted to save money on his menu who originated the recipe. The debate came to a head in 1939 when a bill was introduced into the Maine legislature that they would make it illegal to add tomatoes to a chowder in Maine. The debate rages to this very day and most seafood connoisseurs still have their favorite chowder.

**Bouillabaisse**, with its own spicy legend, is probably the most famous of the French fish soups. Venus, goddess of love, was thought to have created the first bouillabaisse as a sleeping potion for her husband, Vulcan. All so that she could pursue her own erotic interests. English writer, William Makepeace Thackeray, was so enamored of the dish that he penned an "Ode to Bouillabaisse."

"The term bouillabaisse is derived from the word "bouiabaisso" meaning stop boil although all bouillabaissees should be boiled to ensure that the oil is well mixed with the other liquids. Recipes are almost as individual as the number of seafood chefs. Of all the possible combinations of ingredients, there are several points of agreement: a bouillabaisse must be made with at least five different kinds of fish to add good flavor; onions, tomatoes, garlic, and saffron must always be used; and Marseille is the bouillabaisse capitol of the world. After that, it is every chef for himself or herself. Bouillabaissees are traditionally accompanied by a rouille, a mixture of bread crumbs, red pepper and garlic, for those who would like to add a little extra spice.

Another popular soup, **bourride**, is the ultimate experience for garlic lovers or aioliophiles. Large pieces of fish are cooked in a broth thickened with egg yolks and mayonnaise that make a warm, golden brown sauce. Bourride is traditionally served over French bread and each diner adds additional aioli mayonnaise to taste. The Phoenicians are credited with originating this recipe, and bourride and bouillabaisse are still among the most popular dishes on the Cote D Azur. A very nice thought at this time of year.

**Matelots** are essentially a fishy version of coq au vin. They are an inland specialty which was prepared when farmers drained their farm ponds to harvest the fish. The principal ingredients are freshwater fish, onions and mushrooms simmered in wine. Although we usually think of white wine as the perfect accompaniment to fish, most matelots are made with a hearty red wine. Recipes for matelots were extremely popular in colonial cookbooks.

Similar dishes are **meurettes** and **paucheuses** that vary according to district and availability of ingredients.



Cioppino, a spicy, tomato based seafood stew popular in California, supposedly was named for the Portuguese and Italian fishermen who would ask their neighbors to "chip in" seafood to add to the stew pot. However, there is a fish stew popular in the Ligurian Region of Italy called ciuppino. The California version boasts the addition of shellfish. No matter what the origin, there is still a heated debate between chefs in San Pedro and San Francisco who would like to lay claim to the recipe.

Zarzueta is a popular fish stew in the Catalonian region of Spain. The dish was named for a light operetta because of the medley of fine fish flavors. If you want to be grand and add lobster, it becomes opera de pescado. In these dishes, the finfish and shellfish are fried before they are added to the stew pot.

Not to be out done, the Italians have suppa di pesce (fish soup) and zuppa di vongole (clam soup). Writer Alexander Dumas regarded zuppa di vongole as one of the best dishes served in Naples.

Many of the French soups brought to Canada by the early settlers traveled south with the Acadians and became the gumbos of Louisiana cajun and creole cookery. Seafood gumbos vary from family to family and there are many secret recipes. The base of all gumbos is a roux, a mixture of flour and butter that is heated until it is golden brown. Popular ingredients include shrimp, oysters, sausage, and chicken. Gumbos are thickened with either okra or file which is a powder made from dried sassafras. As a matter of fact, the African word for okra is ngombo. However the Choctaw Indian word for sassafras is kombo. Maybe gumbo is a combination of the two. File was originally used when okra was out of season.

Bisques are lighter soups, generally made with pureed shellfish. Billi-bi, a rich cream of mussel soup, was created at Maxim's in Paris for American tin magnate William B. Leeds; and quickly became a worldwide favorite. Many of our most esteemed food critics consider this the greatest soup ever created. To add color and texture contrast, whole mussels are used to garnish the finished dish.

Fish stews, chowders and stews are traditional fishermen's fare and can be made with a wide variety of finfish, shellfish and vegetables. Be creative! If you prefer large chunks of fish, try some of the firmer species such as cod, pollock, haddock, hake, and blackfish, monkfish and sea bass. Of course, shellfish are always an excellent addition.

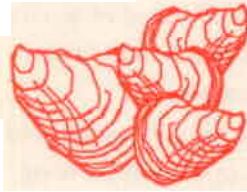
Most of these dishes are hearty enough to be served as a main course with some French bread and a little salad. The spicier varieties are especially welcome after skating, sledding, or even a tedious day shoveling snow.

***Bon appetite!!***



## OYSTER STEW

- 1 quart shucked oysters, with liquor
- 8 Tablespoons margarine, cut into pieces
- 8 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 8 pats of butter
- 2 Tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley



Heat the oysters in their liquor over high heat until edges begin to curl—two to three minutes. With the liquor still piping hot, add the margarine and the milk with the salt and pepper. Do not boil or overcook this stew or the oysters will get tough.

Ladle stew into serving dishes. Top each serving with a pat of butter and sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley. Serves 8

## CIOPPINO

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 can (28 ounces) plum tomatoes
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crumbled Salt and pepper
- 1-1/2 to 2 pounds firm white fleshed fish cut into chunks



Saute onion, green pepper, carrot, celery and garlic in oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until onion is tender. Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, wine, bay leaf, basil, salt and pepper to taste. Break apart tomatoes with spoon. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes. Discard bay leaf. Add fish, placing firmest fish on bottom. Simmer, covered, 8 to 10 minutes or until fish begins to flake when tested with a fork. Serve with sourdough bread, if desired. Serves 6.

*\*Use fish such as cod, haddock, halibut, monkfish, pollock, sea bass, swordfish, whiting or grouper.*



## BOUILLABAISSE

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 8 ounces clam juice
- 2 cups water
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 4 medium tomatoes, peeled, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1-1/2 teaspoons finely chopped thyme or
- 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon dried leaf thyme
- 1 teaspoon saffron threads or 1/8 teaspoon powdered saffron
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2 lbs. firm-texture, skinless fish fillets
- 1 to 1-1/2 lbs. cooked, in-shell lobster tails, thawed if frozen
- 18 mussels, debearded
- 18 scallops
- 1 recipe Rouille, see below
- 1/4 inch thick slices of French bread dried in the oven (3-4 per person)



### Prepare Rouille

Heat oil in a large heavy kettle. Add onions and garlic; over medium heat, saute about 5 minutes. Add clam juice, water, wine, tomatoes, parsley, thyme, bay leaf and saffron. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cut fish into pieces, about 2" x 1".

Add fish pieces to stock mixture; gently simmer 2 to 3 minutes.

Cut lobster tails into 1-inch pieces, cutting through flesh and shell. Scrub mussels to remove dirt from shells; discard any mussels that do not close. Add lobster pieces and cleaned mussels to stock mixture. Cook until mussels open, 3 to 6 minutes; cooking, add scallops. Remove bay leaf. Serves 8

## ROUILLE

- 1/2 cup fresh white bread crumbs
- 1 cup water
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2-3 small hot red peppers, fresh or dried
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4-5 drops Tabasco
- 1 Tablespoon paprika
- 2-3 spoonfuls of broth from boillabaisse

Soak the bread crumbs in the 1 cup of water, press out excess. **IN A BLENDER:** Put the soaked, squeezed-out bread in the blender with garlic, red peppers, and olive oil, blend until pasty. Add the Tabasco, paprika, and broth, blend until creamy. Makes about 1 cup.

Put bread slices in individual deep soup plates and moisten with broth. Arrange a selection of fish & shellfish on top of each. Serve at once with the rouille passed separately.

## BILLI-BI SOUP

- 48 mussels (2 quarts) scrubbed and cleaned
- 1/4 cup onion, chopped
- 3 Tablespoons shallots, chopped
- 2 sprigs parsley
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups heavy cream
- Pinch of cayenne
- Salt and pepper to taste



Combine mussels, onion, shallots, parsley and wine in large kettle. Cover and steam for 5-7 minutes or until the shells have opened.

Pour broth through a strainer lined with cheesecloth or through paper coffee filters. Add the cream to the liquid and heat but do not boil. Season to taste with cayenne, salt and pepper.

Garnish each bowl with a few mussels. Use the remaining mussels in another dish. Serves 4

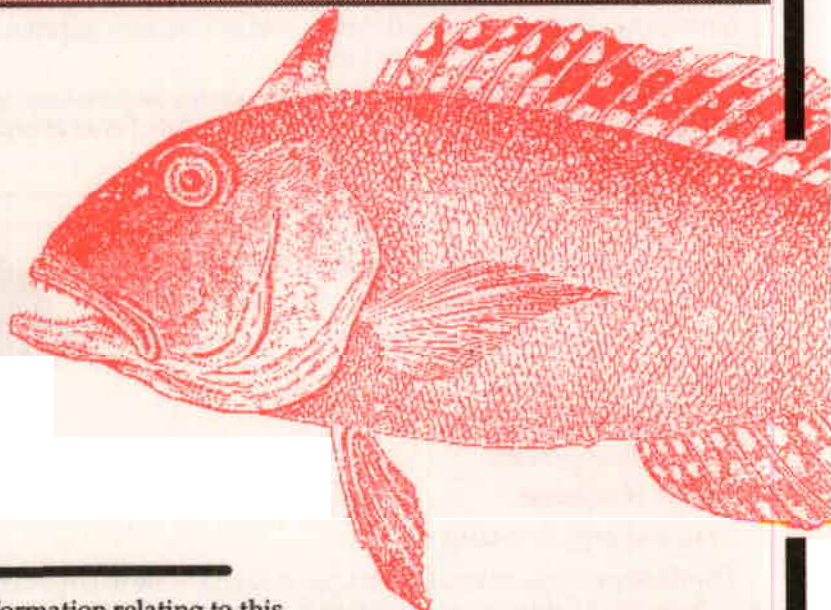


## CONFUSED ABOUT SEAFOOD SAFETY

Over the past few years, a great deal of concern and misinformation has been raised about the safety of seafood products. Last October a committee was formed with representatives of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection, Health, and the Fisheries Development Commission to compile a list of major questions or concerns, and to produce technically correct answers to those questions. After much deliberation and input from the organizations, a seafood safety brochure was developed.

THE SEAFOOD SAFETY BROCHURE was designed for distribution to seafood wholesalers, retailers, restaurateurs, consumer educators others interested in the safety of seafood products. It was developed to answer their questions and those of their customers.

Funding for this publication was provided by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Tex Center at Rutgers. Copies can be obtained through our office.



For any information relating to this publication or to receive any of our program's promotional materials please contact:

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