

## MENHADEN SYMPOSIUM

MONDAY – OCTOBER 29, 1973

*Chairman* – Joseph V. Colson, *Executive Director, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, New Orleans, Louisiana*

### Why Hold a Menhaden Symposium?

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A tremendously expanded shrimp research program directed toward biological studies and coordinated management of Gulf of Mexico shrimp stocks was reported at the 15th GCFI in 1962 by Joseph Kutkuhn of the former Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. At the height of these efforts funding approached three-quarters of a million dollars per year and some work continues today. Many excellent studies resulted from this work contributing substantially to our ability to predict seasons and abundance of shrimp and better life history information.

Nine years later at the 24th GCFI, Richard T. Whiteleather announced a new "State-Federal Management Initiative" having among other purposes the objective of commencing specific management programs for Gulf fisheries. Again at GCFI in 1972, Robert F. Hutton described the "State-Federal Fisheries Management Program" intended to assist the states in developing management plans for fisheries.

To my knowledge there exists nowhere any coordinated management of major stocks of pink, white or brown shrimp, although individual Gulf states, notably Louisiana, have successfully managed their own shrimp populations.

In this context, progress toward coordinated management of the Gulf shrimp fisheries was recommended for a session of the 26th GCFI by the Executive Committee of the Institute. There was no progress to report. I invited industry, state and federal participation in a menhaden symposium, because the menhaden industry had voluntarily requested seasonal regulations in Louisiana subsequently adopted in neighboring states, and the establishment of a subcommittee for menhaden in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission implied coordination of future management for the menhaden resource.

Overall I hoped to increase communication between resource managers and industry and through open discussions to indicate management trends for other fisheries. More specifically the purposes of this symposium are: (1) to demonstrate to the fishing community at large how constructive actions and cooperative efforts could be used to plan for management of other fisheries; (2) to report on the establishment of a fishing season initiated by the Louisiana menhaden industry and evaluate it; (3) to review existing legal, economic and biological knowledge about the menhaden fishery and identify deficiencies; and (4) to consider the desirability of alternatives to existing conservation measures.