

Cooperative Fisheries Oceanography Cruise

■ Scientists from the Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recently returned from a 30-day cruise collecting biological and oceanographic information from waters over and surrounding the central North Pacific seamounts.

Specifically, research operations were conducted aboard the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship *TOWNSEND CROMWELL* at Southeast Hancock Seamount, which is located about 200 nautical miles northwest of the Hawaiian Archipelago and just within the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"From a historical standpoint, the results would hopefully provide valuable insight into what once was a viable commercial fishery for Soviet and Japanese fishing ventures," said Richard S. Shomura, director of the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory. Shomura added that the seamounts provided habitat for large concentrations of fish, in particular the target species of fish known as the pelagic armorhead. In the spring of 1985, when catches of armorhead were nearly exhausted by the fishing pressure applied by foreign vessels, the NMFS closed the seamounts within the EEZ to all foreign fishing. The Honolulu Laboratory has since continued to monitor and explore the dynamics associated with abrupt topographical features such as the seamounts present. Chief scientist Michael P. Seki reported that fishery operations on the cruise involved primarily bottom longlines and bottom trawling gear. Collection of oceanographic data involved sampling along predetermined transects with such equipment as an acoustic Doppler current profiler, a geomagnetic electrokinetograph, hydroacoustic echo sounders, various small nets and water bottles.

In addition to Seki, scientific personnel on the cruise were research assistants Russell Y. Ito, Frank A. Parrish, Dennis Therry, and Christopher D. Wilson. Also participating on the cruise were cooperating scientists Dr. Jed Hirota and James Finn from the University of Hawaii Department of Oceanography, and Dr. Peter Koske and Thorsten Knutz from Kiel University in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The *CROMWELL* is operated by the Pacific Marine Center, National Ocean Service, NOAA, and is attached to the Honolulu Laboratory. The Commanding Officer on the *CROMWELL* is LCDR Robert Pawlowski. . . . Richard Shomura