

Part I

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

1 July 1970-30 June 1971

REPORT OF THE CALCOFI COMMITTEE

This volume primarily contains papers presented at the Annual CalCOFI Conference, November 23-25, 1970, as invited contributions to a symposium entitled *Pollutants and Contaminants in the California Current*. Some newsworthy concurrent events were: the Santa Barbara oil spill, February 1969; a shipment of canned mackerel found to contain a DDT concentration above the legal tolerance, December 1969; several lots of canned tuna found to contain mercury concentrations above the legal tolerance, December 1970.

The symposium was therefore timely in examining the state of knowledge of microconstituents in the sea and the measures being taken or planned to minimize possible hazards.

Most speakers were: representatives of public agencies with responsibilities for control of the use of hazardous substances; those directly responsible for safe and efficient operation of waste disposal facilities; and scientists studying distribution and effects of potentially hazardous waste and spilled materials in marine environments. Most of these individuals had only recently been assigned responsibilities with respect to marine pollution or had become interested in it as a field of study in the last few months or years. The speakers clearly were open-minded on questions concerning the origin, extent, effects, and control of pollutants in the sea.

Scientific presentations were concerned chiefly with heavy metals, pesticides and petroleum. Studies in

lagoons, harbors, sediments in shallow water near sewer outfalls, and water and organisms in the open sea were described. One participant discussed the occurrence of the lipids or fat-soluble substances that occur naturally in many marine organisms and which are similar to components of petroleum. One presentation described the coastal sea water circulation, which is a major factor in the spread and dilution of materials originating on land. Another speaker discussed the results of a pollution abatement program.

The public officials presented a vivid picture of the number and variety of ways in which pollutants affect or may affect public health and safety and thus require complex, comprehensive, and novel means of monitoring and control.

The general conclusion was that while it is doubtful that catastrophe is imminent, various kinds of pollution already warrant careful study and monitoring. At this date pollution in the sea has been measured or observed with certainty only locally around outfalls, harbors, river mouths and spills. However the waste disposal requirements of the growing population of coastal California, and the importance of the resources of the California Current to the citizens, dictate the necessity of planning effective controls to be applied when and where needed. *Izadore Barrett, Herbert Frey, John Isaacs, and Marston Sargent, August 1972.*