

BCF Points Resources On Continental Shelf

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries (BCF) acted today to identify certain shellfish, crustaceans, and sponges as resources of the Continental Shelf.

The species which inhabit the U.S. Continental Shelf include: tanner, king, and stone crabs; red and pink abalone; Japanese abalone; queen conch; and four kinds of sponges.

H.E. Crowther, BCF director, said that the current list is the first of a series to be issued based on studies being made by Bureau scientists.

Other marine animals of importance to U.S. fisheries will be included on future lists when details of documentation are completed.

A Federal law enacted in 1964, known as the "Bartlett Act," describes fishery resources of the Continental Shelf as those

which at the harvestable stage "are immobile or are unable to move except in constant physical contact with the seabed or the subsoil of the Continental Shelf."

Under the provisions of the law, foreign flag vessels may not take species so defined by the Secretary from the U.S. Continental Shelf, except as provided by law or under international agreement to which the United States is a party.

This definition is also used in the 1964 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf to which the United States is a signatory.