

Dredging crew breaks harbor's sandbar

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SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

A dredging crew reopened the Santa Cruz harbor mouth Friday morning, two weeks after a sandbar walled in more than 1,000 boats.

"We are wide open," operations manager Kimbra Eldridge said. The mouth had been all but impassable since Dec. 23, blocking crab fishermen who complained they were losing thousands of dollars because they couldn't reach their crab pots.

Eldridge said boaters should be mindful of potentially hazardous breaking surf at the harbor entrance, and check with the office for the latest conditions.

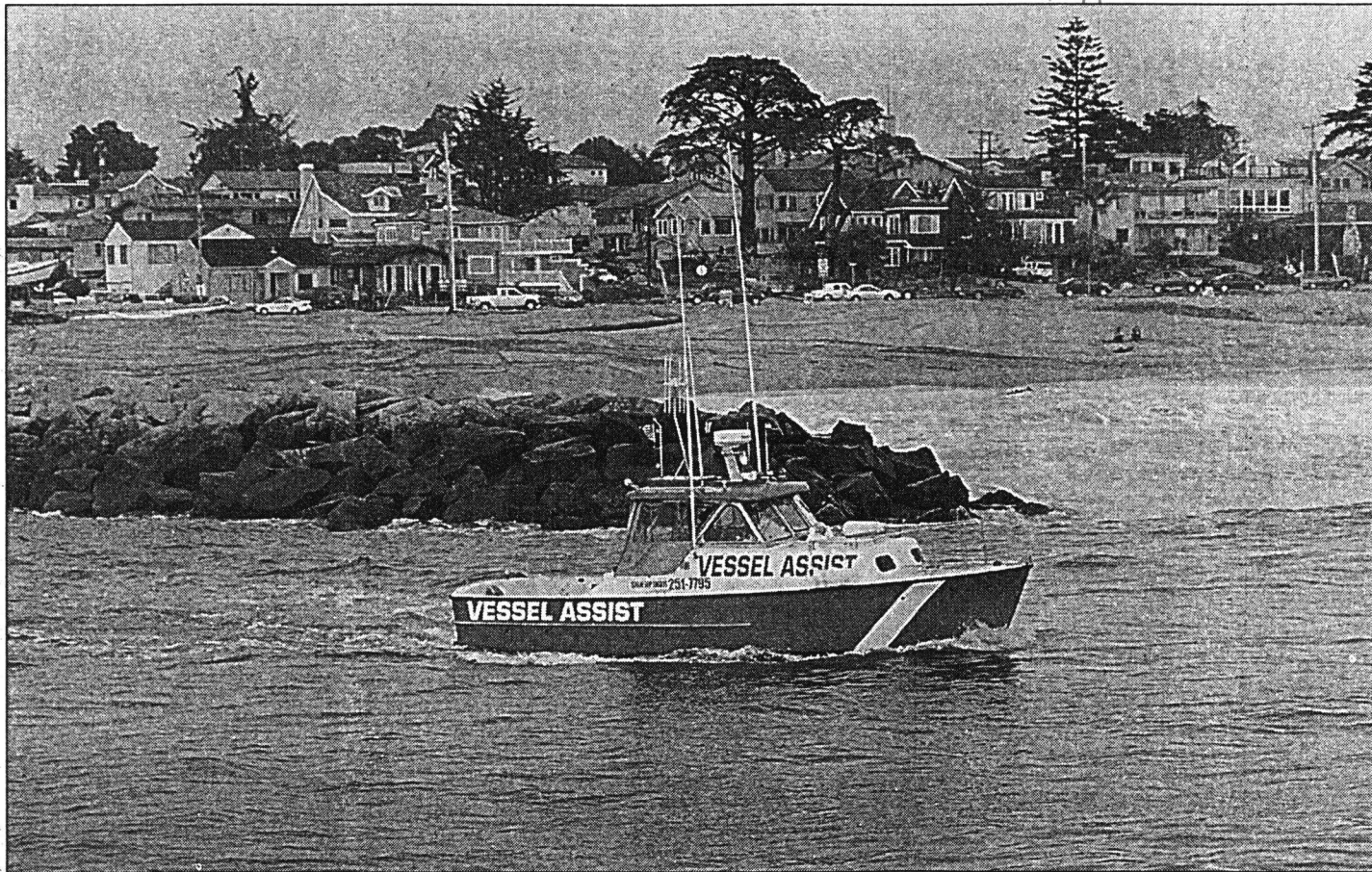
She also said the harbor district would be enforcing the ban on illegal surfing at the mouth.

During the blockage, the area became an ideal but illegal surfing spot, with some pros riding the waves, and curious surfers traveling from as far as Newport Beach to check out the action.

But Eldridge said that interest led to some problems. Last Saturday, a harbor district patrol boat managed to sneak out of the mouth on an ebb tide to rescue a man and his dog who were swept out of a canoe.

While leaving the harbor mouth, the boat had a near-collision with a surfer.

The man and dog were rescued at Steamer Lane with help from a group of legal surfers.



The Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor is open again, allowing nearly 1,000 boats to travel freely again.

Dan Coyro/Sentinel