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— Jim Christman
Scammon captain

Scammon's skipper courts a new lady

SANTA CRUZ — There's a brawny newcomer in the Small Craft Harbor that's been turning the heads of fishermen and yacht owners — the Shana Rae, brought from northern waters by Jim Christman, skipper of Long Marine Lab's research boat Scammon.

Christman says research group has outgrown Scammon, a 10-year-old converted 40-foot Navy launch, and has begun a search for a replacement.

Christman took a leave of absence and worked the 50-foot Delta Whaleback Shana Rae in what he called the world's toughest conditions — the Alaskan salmon fishery.

For two months, he hauled 58,000 pounds of salmon between Alaskan seiners in Prince William Sound and the canneries ashore, and the experience convinced him Shana Rae is the type of vessel Long Marine Lab needs.

He brought it back here to show it off, and convince others.

The boat has been steadily hauling deckloads of students, professors, divers and possible donors on working and pleasure ex-

peditions into the bay and beyond.

Christman and his group must raise the \$500,000 purchase price from private sources. "There's no use in looking for state or federal money," he says. "There isn't any."

"The Scammon is a good local boat, but it should never go out of the bay. It's just not built for open water. This year, about half our trips were out of the bay. And lately we've been telling our own people to charter more expensive outside boats. We are a support organization for the faculty and graduate level people, and we're failing our mission."

Biology Professor John Pearse, who took a class out on the boat Saturday, was enthusiastic about its capabilities.

"Most of our classes have 25 to 30 students," he said. "Scammon can only hold 15 at the most, and then it's packed. They can all fit here with room to spare."

The boat can also snip some 10,000 meters of line, enough to explore the bottom of the Monterey Canyon at the edge of the bay.

"It's the source of all the nutrients and life in our bay," Pearse said, "and we don't know much about it. It's so near, and so inaccessible to us with Scammon. It's frustrating."

"A boat like the Shana Rae is much more seaworthy and safe," added Christman. "Comparing it with the Scammon is like comparing an MG Midget with a flatbed truck. Six or eight people can live aboard for two weeks at a time; we can go from Juneau to Mazatlan, work up to 600 miles out, and there's space to build a lab, and to put a small machine shop below decks."

"I brought it through water on the way here the Scammon would never survive — the kind I'm afraid of running into one day. We can't keep going out to the Channel Islands and the Farallons without risking an accident."

Christman will keep the boat here until early January, when he will return it to its berth in Seattle.

Before he goes, he hopes to generate enough interest to get the fund-raising rolling.

"We need this boat, and we need some generous donors," he said.