

Fisheries lab may be coming to Santa Cruz

Fish
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SANTA CRUZ — A federal fisheries laboratory hopes to relocate from Tiburon to Santa Cruz.

Under the proposal, the National Marine Fisheries Service lab will have a new home next to UC Santa Cruz's Long Marine Lab.

The move would make the area a site for world-class research by three separate institutions. The state is scheduled to open its Oiled Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center near Long Marine Lab this summer. It will treat marine wildlife poisoned by pollution as will study the threatened sea otter.

The Tiburon lab, located about six miles from the Golden Gate Bridge, has studied fish life cycles, population dynamics and fisheries.

"Our mission is mainly work on bottom fishes and on salmon," said Director Alec MacCall.

President Clinton's recent budget proposal includes \$15 million to help relocate the Tiburon center.

"What it means is there will be a whole group of fisheries scientists and fisheries management we never had in this area for colleagues or positions for graduates," said Gary Griggs, director of UCSC's Institute of Marine Sciences.

The area is becoming a magnet for top research, he said.

The move will also give national fisheries scientists new laboratories to perform their research.

"Where we are at is a very old facility," MacCall said of the Tiburon site. "Some of the buildings are over 100 years old. We just had to find a new place. We've been working on it for a long time."

MacCall said any move has yet to be finalized. If the relocation happens, it is expected to take about three to four years.

Scientists at the Tiburon lab provide stock assessments of rockfish to the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Their work includes analyzing commercial fisheries data, including abundance of rockfish stocks.

Another unit of the lab studies the ef-

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fects of environmental change on the distribution and abundance of groundfish. The environmental changes include regular seasonal transformations of the ocean habitat as well as El Nino occurrences.

Yet another unit has been responsible for studying the general physiological health of groundfish populations.

Researchers have also performed assessments of salmon runs from the Klamath and Sacramento rivers.

MacCall added that the location of the lab would compliment the activities of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Sanctuary leaders have no jurisdiction in regulating the area's fisheries. The Tiburon lab, however, provides information to those people who make decisions related to local fisheries.

About 30 people work in the lab. Plans also call for fishery management officials in Santa Rosa to move to the proposed Santa Cruz facility.