

SCIENCE NEWS

The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

A Science Service Publication
Volume 122, No. 19, November 6, 1982

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Subscription Department
231 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$27.50; 2 yrs., \$47.50; 3
yrs., \$67.00. (Foreign postage \$5.00 additional per
year.) Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice
is required. Please state exactly how magazine is to
be addressed. Include zip code. For new
subscriptions only call (1) 800-247-2160. Printed in
U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington,
D. C. Title registered as trademark U. S. and Canadian
Patent Offices. Published every Saturday by
SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc. 1719 N St., N.W.,
Washington, D. C. 20036. (202-785-2255)
ISSN 0036-8423

Letters

Trying to find answers

I read with interest the recent article by Julie Ann Miller ("A Lobster's Look at Offshore Drilling" SN: 10/9/82, p. 234).

Having spent three years in Louisiana working for the State Coastal Management Office, it is very obvious that far too little is known about the effects of oil and gas drilling on both the offshore and wetland habitats.

Neither the oil companies nor the regulators have enough definitive information on which to base evaluations of impact. Often this information is very difficult to obtain.

An effort must be made, however, to assess potential impacts of recovering a nonrenewable resource on the marine and estuarine habitat, whose resources are also valuable and are, in fact, renewable.

I was distressed to read the negative comments registered by Shell on the validity of Derby and Atema's results. It is true that purely laboratory experiments may be of limited value in reflecting what occurs at oil rig sites. However, there is some value nevertheless.

Since research funding is shrinking daily, the

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Cover: Seen through a special filter is a "preform" — the solid glass rod from which hair-thin optical fiber is drawn. One 30-inch preform can be drawn into 10 miles of optical fiber. Fiber optics technology is one area where the United States has not given up its lead or market share to the Japanese. (Photo courtesy of Bell Labs)



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scope of research endeavors must be limited. Rather than degrading the validity of results as having "nothing to do with what actually happens," why don't Shell and other oil companies offer constructive criticism and put up the funding to allow for this needed research to allow for a proper scope of work.

Any valid attempt to find the answers to these questions is better than nothing at all!

William W. Burke, III
Baton Rouge, La.

Ask the people

As regards the controversy over the 1080 ban ("Coyote Poison: To Have or Have Not" SN: 10/16/82, p. 248), I think everyone has forgotten to ask rural people who live among coyotes how they feel about them. In spring and summer 1979 a graduate student and I collected stories about coyotes from rural people all over Oregon — and Oregon has a large population of coyotes, sheep ranchers and trappers. We found a great deal of interest in and respect for the coyote. Very few people said they wanted the elimination of the coyote — about 5 percent of our sample — and we noticed that those farmers who did seemed to be "sloppy" farmers, either careless or overextended. Most sheep farmers

wanted limited, selective control and seemed willing to do their part to protect their sheep. Trappers, of course, respected the coyote's intelligence and were hoping for an increase in its population. It's my conviction that EPA or Interior Department officials who claim to be representing rancher-trapper demands for 1080 are trying to pull the wool over our eyes.

R. L. Hall, Ph.D.
Corvallis, Ore.

I am not surprised to see again the issue of using Compound 1080 on coyotes. We in America arrogate unto ourselves the right to poison en masse and at random anything that keeps us from that great dollar profit. It is perfectly O.K. if we hunt indiscriminately for "sport," but we sure can't let nature be in balance.

Why can't we do what the Basques in this country and the shepherds of the old world have done: raise dogs who protect the sheep. There are any number of breeds that kill wolves and coyotes without hurting the sheep. They are cheap, efficient, and — best of all — safe.

E. M. Meeker
Tulsa, Okla.

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