

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 Drill-
ing" SN: 10/9/82, p. 234).

Having spent three years in Louisiana work-
ing 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 informa-
tion is very difficult to obtain.

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

I was distressed to read the negative com-
ments 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. How-
ever, 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 hap-
pens," why don't Shell and other oil companies
offer constructive criticism and put up the fund-
ing 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 Ore-
gon — 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 in-
telligence and were hoping for an increase in its
population. It's my conviction that EPA or Inter-
ior Department officials who claim to be repre-
senting 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 per-
fectly O.K. if we hunt indiscriminately for
"sport," but we sure can't let nature be in bal-
ance.

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.

NOVEMBER 6, 1982

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