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For further information, contact: Sea Grant Program, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Clark 260, Woods Hole, MA 02543, (508) 457-2000, Ext. 2398.

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***"Poisons in Your Seafood: The Myths &  
Realities of Marine Biotoxins & Red Tides"***  
April 6, 1993

World-renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution biologist and red tide specialist Dr. Donald M. Anderson addresses the sensitive issue of marine biotoxins and seafood safety. His presentation featured slides and a discussion of the various types of biotoxins that occur in waters around the globe. Dr. Anderson explained that some microscopic algae can produce tiny quantities of extraordinarily potent poisons. When a large-scale bloom of these toxic algae occurs, the phenomenon is commonly called red tide. Toxins may accumulate at different levels of the food chain and can expose consumers of seafood (human or otherwise) to potentially fatal health risks. For the large majority of us who enjoy boating or snorkeling or those of us who simply enjoy eating fish, clams, oysters, or mussels, it is important to be aware of these origins, effects, and the fate of these toxins.

Dr. Anderson, who remains an avid -- albeit cautious -- consumer of fish and seafood, points out that exercising a degree of care in choosing where you buy your seafood and where it was landed is essential. He also offers his thoughts on an issue of genuine concern to many scientists, that is, have marine biotoxins and red tide events become more widespread, and if so, can this be attributed to man's effect on the environment? (*Approximately 90 minutes*)