

From Gerry Wright at the University of Idaho CPSU comes the word of a report by L. W. Barnthouse *et al* in *Bioscience*. Vol. 34, No. 1, on the controversy that raged, largely in the courtroom, over the siting of nuclear power plants on the Hudson River, and the resultant effect of cooling water entrainment and impingement on the striped bass fishery. This issue, which spans more than a decade, focused on the development of a succession of increasingly complex mathematical simulation models. These models developed by industry and agency experts respectively, either predicted that cooling water use would have a negligible or substantial impact on the striped bass population (depending on viewpoint). In the long run, this controversy was not resolved through the use of such models. Rather, an accord was reached only after several years of intensive data gathering, which in turn allowed the development of relatively simple empirical models.

The authors therefore conclude that although complex simulation models can be useful for focusing long-term research and monitoring programs needed to solve the pressing environmental problems of the day, the models themselves do not present a shortcut to solutions to those problems. They further point out, this being the case, that biologists as well as the courts must recognize the limitations of their science and recognize that decisions relative to environmental impacts will often have to be made on the bases of incomplete information rather than being deferred indefinitely in the hope that scientists will come up with definitive solutions.