



Captain Neil Cheshire: Guiding the RV Franklin from Bondi to the Bismark Sea.

If Neil Cheshire were free to choose any job he wanted, odds are he'd plump for the one he already has. Captaining the RV Franklin offers every opportunity to indulge his passion for the sea and its inhabitants.

The RV Franklin, which plies Australian waters from the tropics to the sub Antarctic, is one of two research vessels operated by CSIRO's Marine Laboratories. Complementing the Franklin's investigations of ocean physics and chemistry is the FRV Southern Surveyor, a 66-metre converted trawler used primarily for studying the ocean's biological diversity. Both vessels gather information vital to the management of Australia's marine environment.

my for carp?

overseas. If the study finds that further research is warranted, a detailed proposal will be developed. Such research would have to determine what effects the virus might have in the Australian environment. For example, it would need to prove that native species and farmed fish would not be affected. Even if research into SVCV proceeds, biological control of carp is many years away.

Contact: Niell Byrne, CSIRO AAIL, Private Bag 24, Geelong 3220, Vic. (052) 27 5000, fax (052) 27 5555, email: aahl@dah.csiro.au.

Cheshire, who first went to sea at 16, has captained the 55 m Franklin since its commissioning in 1985. Since then he has taken the ship to 58° south, west to Christmas Island, south-east to New Zealand's fjords, and north to the Marshall and Caroline Islands, as well as most points between. There was even a stint off Bondi Beach during work for the Sydney Water Board.

Captaining the Franklin has enabled Cheshire to extend his love of the sea to sea birds and the natural sciences. 'This is far more interesting than trundling fuel oil or general cargoes around the Pacific,' he says. His 37 years at sea also included a stint carrying newsprint from the eastern provinces of Canada across the Atlantic. No wonder more tropical climes attracted him.

Cheshire's articles and notes on birds have been published in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and his observations in isolated regions, as well as his collection of some 2000 seabird photographs, are highly valued.

'Most of the ocean is not well known and the birdlife in many of the places we go to has not been studied,' he says. 'I'm fortunate in being able to obtain all the environmental information from the scientists.'

'I enjoy working with scientists, and while my primary function is the safety of the ship and ship operation, if the scientists are having a good voyage and getting good results, it gives me a sense of satisfaction.'

During the next 12 months, Cheshire will guide the Franklin around the coastal

waters of New Guinea on four voyages to investigate the effects of rivers and the sediment load on the tropical oceans, to Tasmania's west coast to study a current that originates in Western Australia's Leeuwin Current, to the Bismark Sea for seafloor drilling and to the Equator in the Indian Ocean, to measure the exchange of heat and water between the ocean and atmosphere.

Next January, Cheshire will bring the ship back home to Hobart for the first time in two years, after working from the Western Australian ports of Fremantle and Dampier.

The Franklin is a National facility. This means it is used equally for research by CSIRO divisions, universities and the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and in joint projects with international institutions. The projects take between 10 and 30 days at sea. Scientists and support staff have 12-hour watches in an around-the-clock program of constant ocean sampling to maximise the time and cost of this \$4 million a year research operation.

Research schedules for the Franklin and the Southern Surveyor, for 1998 and beyond, will be completed shortly. Inquiries for research projects can be made to David Vaudrey on 0419 348 486 for the Franklin, or, for the Southern Surveyor, to John Wallace on (002) 32 5335.