which porpoises may become trapped.

Such refinements have reduced porpoise mortality from an average 3.8 deaths per ton of tuna caught in 1971 by the U.S. fleet to 0.26 per ton in 1977. This death toll is low enough to permit porpoise populations to increase, and, while the matter may continue to be debated in emotional terms, the authors cautiously conclude that porpoise deaths are "perhaps no longer a major ecological problem."

A Plea for Conservation

"The Real Meaning of the Energy Crunch" by Daniel Yergin, in *The New York Times Magazine* (June 4, 1978), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

A serious real energy crisis—avoidable only if Americans drastically cut their consumption of oil—will arrive in the middle or late 1980s. It will be marked by astronomical prices for OPEC oil caused by an increase in world demand from the current 28–31 million barrels per day to an estimated 45 million barrels per day, the uppermost limit of OPEC production.

A dramatic rise in oil prices (double or triple present levels), continues Yergin, a member of the Harvard Business School's Energy Research Project, will bring about a resurgence of hyperinflation, reduced investment and purchasing power in the industrial nations, severe balance-of-payments problems, widespread unemployment, and, perhaps, "a major recession, even a world depression." The political effects, he adds, will be just as severe; nations will fight each other for oil, and the Soviets may feel compelled to "take bold risks" to extend their influence over the Persian Gulf oil-producing states.

Global dependence on Saudi Arabia, which controls one-fourth of the world's oil and therefore controls OPEC, will make the Saudis the linchpin of the world economy. A natural disaster, a terrorist attack, or a coup d'état in Saudi Arabia could have a shattering impact on world events.

Yergin discounts the importance of new oil from Alaska and the North Sea (Alaska will only make up for declining oil production in the lower 48 states, and North Sea production will peak at 5 or 6 million barrels per day in 1985). He says the development of nuclear power is stalemated by "cost, technical problems, environmental risks, doubts about safety, and, most recently, the dispute over nuclear proliferation." Coal and solar energy are inadequate alternatives.

Americans, Yergin concludes, must stop assuming that "big technology" and alternative energy sources will fill the gap and must begin to recognize the importance of reducing world demand for oil through conservation. The United States, he contends, can cut its energy use by at least 30 percent without significant changes in the American standard of living by "an adroit mixture" of incentives, regulation, public education, and energy-pricing policies. Reduced energy consumption may be difficult to achieve politically, but it is essential.