



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MOBILE LABORATORY TO STUDY SEA-WATER CONDITIONS IN NEW JERSEY AREA

The Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that a mobile trailer laboratory is being sent to the New Jersey Coast to study a mysterious condition of the sea water which has caused burns to fishermen's hands and caused nets to disintegrate within a few days after exposure.

Samples of water taken from the area and tested in the Service's College Park laboratory indicate that the condition is of a bacterial nature and not chemical pollution. According to Albert M. Day, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, the mobile laboratory will attempt to make on-the-spot analyses of the water in various localities along the coast. Water samples will be tested for bacterial count and chemical reaction.

Reports forwarded to Washington by Mr. Dudley Smith, Sports Editor of the Ocean County Leader, Point Pleasant, New Jersey, describing the presence of patches of discolored water and dead fish floating at sea aroused fears that the New Jersey coast might be suffering from a scourge of "red tide" which had such disastrous effects on the Florida west coast during the past summer.

On the receipt of the reports, Dr. Walter A. Chipman, Aquatic Biologist of the Fish and Wildlife Service, made investigations with the aid of a Coast Guard boat and Navy airship. He reports that a few patches of colored water were found but no mortality of fish was discovered that could be attributed to water conditions. Chemical analysis and study of the minute floating sea life responsible for the water discoloration showed that organisms normally present in the sea were abundant. The conditions were entirely different from those on the Florida coast, however. Fears of the occurrence of the "red tide" in New Jersey are, therefore, groundless. Since the destruction of commercial fish netting is widespread and serious, technologists and bacteriologists of the Service will immediately investigate the conditions which are causing loss to the commercial fisheries, in an effort to find a solution.

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