



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### FISHERY SCIENTISTS SEEK DATA ON TUNAS IN PACIFIC WATERS

Dr. O. R. Smith and M. B. Schaefer, aquatic biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service, have reported to Director Albert M. Day their arrival in Honolulu on January 10 after completing the first lap of an extended exploratory trip through Oceania to gather data on the tuna fishes of the Pacific.

The Service scientists are traveling as biological observers aboard the M. V. Oregon, one of the four experimental fishing vessels of the Pacific Exploration Company. The Oregon is outfitted as a bait boat and will be joined in Honolulu by the Alaska, a purse seiner. After a shakedown cruise in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands, the two vessels will proceed westward to the former Japanese Mandated Islands.

The end of the war with Japan provided the United States with an unparalleled opportunity to develop great fisheries for the tunas of the far and mid-Pacific to supplement the great tuna fisheries of the Pacific coast states. At present almost nothing is known by American fishery experts of the extent of the tuna resources or how the populations will react to extensive exploitation.

Service officials expect the exploratory trip to provide information on the distribution of tunas and the most feasible type of gear for catching in each of the areas, as well as to produce biological data of importance to the American tuna industry such as the time of spawning and the location of the spawning areas; feeding habits; and other information as to whether or not the tunas throughout the Pacific belong to one population.

American tuna clippers fish from the Galapagos Islands to Vancouver Island seeking the wide-ranging tunas. A small fishery controlled wholly by Japanese fishermen existed in Hawaii prior to the war. The Japanese developed tuna fisheries at Saipan and probably in other Pacific Islands, including Formosa, and it is known that they range over the entire Pacific.

The capital outlay in tuna clippers, gear and refrigeration and canning plants that will be necessary for American fishery interests to develop this great resource requires the protection afforded by knowledge of the extent of the resource, the interdependence of the tuna population of the various parts of the Pacific, and the causes for shifts in abundance and in range.

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