



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's, JUNE 12, 1950

#### NEW EXPLORATORY FISHING VESSEL--JOHN N. COBB--SAILS FOR TUNA

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service exploratory fishing vessel, John N. Cobb, sailed from Seattle June 10 on a four-month fishing cruise in the offshore waters of the North Pacific, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman announced today.

The Cobb will search for untapped resources of albacore tuna in waters off Oregon, Washington and Alaska. The primary objectives of the cruise are to locate commercial concentrations of albacore, determine their pattern of abundance, trace their general migration, and to find the most effective means of catching the tuna commercially.

The 93-foot, all-wood vessel was launched in January and commissioned in mid-February, at which time it sailed to Alaskan waters on a shakedown cruise, looking for commercial quantities of shrimp. The Cobb is equipped with the latest navigational equipment, including radar, loran, depth-finding devices, and electro-mechanical steering.

Tuna fishing is relatively new in Alaska. If commercial quantities of albacore can be located, Fish and Wildlife Service officials pointed out, an additional source of income will become available to fishing vessel operators in that area.

The Cobb will make daily broadcasts to the commercial fishing vessels in order to locate schools of albacore tuna. In addition, the vessel will report weather conditions, its exact position, and other information of value to fishermen. Through the use of radio direction finders, fishing vessels at sea may take a "fix" on the Cobb and accurately determine their own location.

The exploratory work for albacore tuna is divided into two phases, the first of which is to attempt to locate tuna in the early stages of their inshore migration, determine the direction of their approach, their speed of inshore movement, and the depths and environment in which they are found.

The second phase is to trace the movement of the tuna to determine whether substantial numbers may follow a northward migration to within range of Alaska. An attempt will be made to determine the time of their appearance in such waters and to note environment and oceanographic conditions associated with the appearance of tuna. Commercial possibilities will be appraised.

In following the tuna, the exploratory fishermen will pay particular attention to the relationship of currents of warm water--which gradually move north

during the summer--to the pattern of tuna migration. Seamount areas will be checked to determine whether the up-welling in these areas may create favorable feeding conditions for the tuna.

The Cobb's fishing equipment includes surface troll jigs, deep trolling lures, phosphorescent lures (for use at night or in deep, murky water), gill nets, long line gear, and a tank for live bait. Crewmen plan to devise various methods of using this gear to determine by the catch at what depths the tuna travel and similar facts needed for commercial fishermen.

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