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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SHRIMP INDUSTRY STUDIES CONTINUE

A nationwide survey of merchandizing practices in the shrimp industry was launched today when Department of the Interior officials met with representatives of the A. C. Nielsen Company, marketing research firm under Government contract to carry out the work, Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis announced today.

The survey will be supervised by the Fish and Wildlife Service which let the \$13,784, ten-month contract in implementing provisions of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act. This act, created in the 83d Congress and signed into law by President Eisenhower last year, is designed to "promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products in commerce."

Research aimed at improving sales and distribution of shrimp products through wholesale and retail marketing channels will be the principal feature of the survey. Consumer-preference tests also will be conducted, in New York City, Chicago, Harrisburg, Pa., and Waterloo, Iowa.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will coordinate this work with other studies of the shrimp industry being conducted with Saltonstall-Kennedy funds. Contracts previously let by the Service for economic research into the industry have resulted in the following activities: Accountants of the Federal Trade Commission are currently engaged in cost studies of shrimp-vessel and shrimp packing-plant operations; the research firm of Harwell, Knowles and Associates is making a general study of shrimp-vessel efficiency; work practices on shrimp vessels and operating efficiency in shrimp processing plants are being studied by the First Research Corporation of Florida; and the University of Miami's bureau of business and economic research is probing the problems of primary shrimp marketing and ex-vessel sales.

Other aspects of the shrimp industry are being studied by Fish and Wildlife Service specialists on a noncontract basis. These aspects include the historical development of our domestic fisheries; potential fishery resources; demand for shrimp products; domestic and foreign markets; foreign competition; and differences between retail and fisherman prices. The objectives of these studies are: to reduce operating costs of vessels and plants through technical advances; to increase consumption through improved distribution, product quality, and merchandizing; and to effect an output that will assure maximum total income.

The American shrimp industry--one of the most lucrative of all our commercial fishing enterprises--produces about 225,000,000 pounds of shrimp annually, valued at around \$50,000,000, according to Fish and Wildlife Service estimates. The industry provides a livelihood for approximately 15,000 fishermen and contributes to the income of another 15,000 employees in shore establishments numbering around 600. Shrimp are distributed domestically by 1,500 wholesale firms and 170,000 retail stores.