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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS COMPLETES COMMITMENT OF FIRST YEAR'S FUNDS
UNDER SALTONSTALL-KENNEDY FISHERY PROGRAM

"The American commercial fishing industry is now in a better position to realize its production and marketing potential than at any previous time in its long history," Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis declared today when he announced the signing of contracts totaling \$705,000 for fishery research and market development projects.

These new contracts, between the Fish and Wildlife Service and college and research organizations, complete the commitment of the \$3 million authorized for fiscal year 1955 under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act (P.L. 466, 83d Congress). This legislation, designed to promote trade in domestically produced fishery products, provides that an amount equal to 30 percent of duties collected under the customs laws on fishery products shall be transferred annually for three years from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior.

Expanded production and the development of new markets for fishery products are expected to result from this coordinated Government-industry program which has been drafted to produce practical results for the industry in the shortest possible time.

Acting Secretary Davis commended the American Fisheries Advisory Committee for its assistance in the research and development program. "The advice and counsel given to us by this group of experts from the commercial fishing industry for the best use of Saltonstall-Kennedy funds has been of inestimable value in getting this program off to such a splendid start," Mr. Davis said. "We look forward to working in close partnership with this Committee."

The Advisory Committee consists of 19 representatives of all segments of the American fishing industry from all sections of the country.

The final contracts signed for fiscal year 1955 include the following:

Salmon--\$25,000, for one year, with the Alaska Department of Fisheries, to study the effect of predation on the mortality of Alaska salmon in their stream and ocean environments. Voracious fishes, birds, and marine mammals are known to destroy large quantities of salmon. Information gained from this study will serve as the basis of policies regarding the reduction of certain predator populations for the sake of improving the abundance of salmon. This contract brings the salmon research activities under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act to a total of about \$215,000 for the 1955 fiscal year.

North Atlantic trawl fishes—\$200,000, for three years, with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Mass., for an investigation of climatic and oceanographic factors influencing the abundance and distribution of Atlantic fish populations. With previous allocations of about \$270,000 for North Atlantic activities, this contract brings the total to about \$470,000.

Gulf of Mexico—\$20,000, for one year, with the University of Miami Marine Laboratory, in Florida, to make a biological study of the Florida sponge grounds and the extent and density of the sponge population supporting the industry which operated in extraterritorial waters. An epidemic wasting disease has twice (1938-39 and 1948-49) seriously reduced the quantity of marketable sponges. Effective biological management of the sponge fishery and administration of the Federal Sponge Law are dependent upon reliable biological data. Previous allocations of about \$53,000 were made for biological research in the Gulf of Mexico primarily on the study of causes and control of toxic red tide on the Florida west coast.

Publications—\$15,000, with the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D. C., for the publication of a much needed volume on fishery biology which will contain in easily referenced tabular form data already collected on certain species for such items as chemical composition, temperature tolerances, salinity preferences and tolerances, breeding habits, average life spans, and mortality rates.

Middle Atlantic oysters—\$83,989, covering three contracts for research on oyster drills (marine snails) which cause millions of dollars in losses each year to the oyster crop. One of these contracts for \$24,000 extending for three years, has been signed with the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory to study the life history of oyster drills. Under a three-year contract with the University of North Carolina, for \$16,844, a comparative study will be made of the structure and functions of the snail's drilling organs to develop control possibilities. A third three-year contract with the Oyster Institute of North America, for \$43,145, will center on experimental salt water pond cultivation of oysters and clams under protected conditions. Approximately \$65,000 was previously allocated for study of oyster predators and seed oysters.

Channel catfish—\$20,300, with the University of Oklahoma, to develop improved techniques for the propagation of this species which is a choice one in the Midwest, South, and Southeast. Commercial fish farms have attempted to rear these catfish to meet stocking demands but have failed for lack of knowledge about the fish and its requirements.

Gulf of Mexico explorations—\$39,000, with the Gulf Marine Ways, Inc., Pascagoula, Miss., for an overhaul of the electrical system on the research vessel Oregon which conducts exploratory fishing operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

Gear development and research—\$70,000 for the purchase and outfitting of a gear research vessel to replace the Pompano at Coral Gables, Fla. Such a vessel is needed to conduct experiments with new and improved types of fishing gear, underwater television, electronic devices, and other methods of locating and catching fish designed to increase the efficiency of commercial fisherman.

Development of voluntary standards—\$12,000 has been allocated to make an educational and training film showing the application of voluntary Federal standards and conditions to the inspection and grading of fish and fishery products. A contract for \$14,898 has been signed with the University of Massachusetts, at

Amherst, for a study of the principal characteristics of breaded shrimp as now commercially packed. A contract for \$6,000 has been negotiated with the University of Florida, at Gainesville, for the development of grades and standards for natural sponges to aid in the marketing of this product. A \$10,000 contract with the California Fish and Game Commission covers a study for improvement in methods of freezing skipjack tuna at sea. A contract is pending for \$16,500 with Arthur D. Little, Inc., of Boston, Mass., a commercial research organization, covering a study of the modification of fish oils by chemical treatment and the testing of these products for applications in such industrial products as coatings, water-proofings, and improved surface finishes. Other standards work so far undertaken is being financed with allocations of about \$100,000.

Commercial fishery economic studies--A \$50,000 contract with Oregon State College, at Corvallis, for 18 months, will cover a study of the economics of fish distribution on the Pacific coast to determine: (1) consumption and prices of different varieties of fish in the major Pacific coast consuming centers; and (2) the market potential for fish in the Pacific coast States. The project will undertake to survey major fish consuming markets in California, Oregon, and Washington to determine sources of supply, marketing channels and practices, and prices.

An allocation of \$50,000 will permit a study of the fishing industry's hull and protection and indemnity insurance problems. A contract is now under negotiation. Rates and premiums for this insurance have reached phenomenal levels in many segments of the industry. Vessel operations on all coasts have been hampered by this condition. Recommendations resulting from the project should lead to better operating conditions under present insuring methods or new and better insuring methods, both of which should result in lower insurance costs for commercial fishermen. These contracts bring to a total of \$243,000 the economics studies being conducted under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act in fiscal year 1955.

Marketing of fishery products--A contract for \$24,950 has been signed with A. V. Wood & Company, of New York City, for a study of the marketing of fishery products in Philadelphia, Cleveland, St. Louis, Detroit, Baltimore, Atlanta, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Houston, to determine local consumption of fishery products. This is a field in which information is almost totally lacking. The study is expected to provide background for the orderly expansion of market news, statistics, and economic coverage.

Expansion of education and market development activities--\$24,000 has been earmarked for the replacement of the Fish and Wildlife Service's educational motion picture prints. Heavy circulation of these Service-supervised productions has caused such deterioration that it is necessary to replace many of the prints and obtain a larger number of copies in order to meet distribution demands. \$10,000 has been set aside for preparation of a group of fishery educational exhibits for use at national conventions. \$13,000 has been allocated for the preparation of an educational motion picture on nutritive values of fishery products. This film will give the general public a better understanding of the dietary advantages to be gained by eating fish and shellfish. Previous allocations for educational and market development activities amounted to about \$255,000.

In placing all of these new contracts, the Fish and Wildlife Service has tried to avail itself of the most experienced groups active in each particular field and located where contract research, Service research, and industry assistance could be best integrated.

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