



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### FWS INAUGURATES ENGINEERING STUDY OF SHIP FOR FREEZING FISH AT SEA

A contract has been awarded by the Fish and Wildlife Service for an engineering study of a new North Atlantic trawler equipped to freeze fish at sea, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The \$15,000 contract, which may lead to significant improvement in New England's commercial fishing operations, has been awarded to Dwight Simpson and Associates, naval architects located in Boston, Massachusetts.

The request for this study was made by the New England Committee for Aid to the Groundfish Industry. The study will include development of a preliminary design and will incorporate the principles and techniques for handling and freezing fish at sea developed over the past six years by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds for the study will be provided by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act for improving domestic fisheries.

The preliminary findings and design will be used by interested segments of the New England fishing industry for calculating the earning capacity of the proposed vessel under conditions met in the New England fishery.

If these determinations are favorable and if the decision is made to construct such a vessel, the actual construction is expected to be undertaken in the industry.

Since the fish can be frozen immediately after being taken aboard, the craft will permit fishermen to range farther from port and to remain at sea until a full load of fish is obtained. It will assure the landing of fish in much better condition and provide the consumer with a more uniformly high-quality product. It will also permit the processor to stockpile the fish and to establish regular production schedules for handling them.

Under present conditions, vessels depend upon ice to preserve the cargo and must return to port after ten days of fishing, often only partially loaded. Processors are faced with alternate periods of glut and scarcity with little or no chance of stockpiling the catch.

Basic specifications laid down by the Fish and Wildlife Service are that the plans must provide for a steel-hull, diesel-powered trawler capable of operating in any fishing weather and at distances much beyond present limits. It must be more than 140-feet long with sufficient space for the refrigeration equipment necessary for freezing at sea, sufficient "payload" space to permit profitable operation, and have the mechanical equipment necessary to handle fish with utmost care.

The Service's exploratory fishing vessel Delaware in recent months has returned with two 100,000-pound loads of fish fresh-frozen at sea and delivered the loads in a "sea fresh" condition. These were large-scale tests of techniques and equipment. Portions of these fish were used for further experimental studies ashore and the balance sold at auction.

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