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INTERIOR OFFICIAL TO HEAD UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO WORLD TUNA MEETING IN CALIFORNIA

Donald L. McKernan, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, will head the United States delegation to the World Scientific Meeting on the Biology of Tunas and Related Species, sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The United States is host for the conference, July 2 to 14, at the Art Center in La Jolla, La Jolla, Calif.

Following success of the World Scientific Meeting on the Biology of Sardines and Related Species in September 1959, in Rome, Italy, the value of holding expert meetings on various species of fishes was recognized. The convening of this meeting on the biology of the tuna and related species was approved at the Eleventh Session of the FAO Conference in Rome in November 1961.

The World Tuna Meeting will bring together about 200 to 250 scientists from 15 to 20 governments and private institutions engaged in studying the identity, distribution, behavior, and potential yields of stocks of tunas. Unfortunately, because of the lack of financial assistance, some worthy scientists from foreign countries will not be able to attend, Director McKernan said.

The objectives of the La Jolla meeting will be to appraise known scientific factors, gaps in knowledge, theories and concepts, and methods and equipment, and to consider and recommend future lines of endeavor, national and international, in the study of the biology of world tuna resources.

The tunas--yellowfin, skipjack, albacore, bluefin, and little tuna--and the tunalike fishes, bonito and yellowtail, roam the oceans; they know no geographical boundaries. As late as the turn of this century, tunas had

little or no commercial value. They were not considered edible, and fishermen who found them on their lines usually threw them back into the sea.

Then, in 1903, the Pacific sardine failed to appear in the San Pedro, Calif., area. One packer, in an effort to keep his cannery operating, canned 700 cases of tuna and distributed them to wholesalers. Repeat orders were received, and the fishery grew rapidly. The tunas are now one of the leading fishery resources of the United States, as well as of many other nations whose tuna fisheries continue to advance. FAO statistics for 1960 show a world catch of about two million tons of tunas, bonitos, mackerels, and their relatives. Almost half this catch were true tunas.

Director McKernan said canned tuna now is a familiar item in almost every American home and on every grocer's shelf. He explained that it is economical, nutritionally excellent because of its animal protein of superior quality along with its valuable vitamins and minerals, easy to prepare, and universal in taste appeal. Because of its versatility, it is probably the most frequently served canned fish in the United States, appearing in an infinite variety of tuna salads, tuna chowders, tuna casseroles, tuna pot pies, tuna and egg scramble, tuna a la king, tuna sandwiches, and in other dishes with an international flavor like tuna foo yung, tuna a la Stroganoff, and tuna pizza.

The Department of the Interior reported that the recent and rapid development of tuna fisheries throughout the world has emphasized the need for tuna research workers to meet and discuss the biological and oceanographic research programs now being conducted, and to consider the coordination of their work. New methods of fishing and high prices are increasing the danger of over-fishing, particularly of the yellowfin stocks. Serious consideration must be given to such matters, the Department added.

The World Tuna Meeting will be conducted in the three official languages of FAO--English, French, and Spanish. The Japanese will provide their own interpreters with some help from the United States. In addition to the regular work sessions of the meeting, many special events have been arranged for the conferees and their wives, including special luncheons, receptions, a picnic, visits to homes in the San Diego area, industry tours, the showing of research and fishing films, and visits to tourist attractions.

Mr. McKernan's alternates to the meeting will be Dr. O. E. Sette, Director of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory at Stanford, Calif., and Vernon E. Brock, Director of the Bureau's Biological Laboratory, Washington, D. C. Other members of the United States delegation include Dr. Roger Revelle, Science Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior; Stuart Blow, Office of Special Assistant for Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of State; and several other officials of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, as governmental advisers. The nongovernmental advisers include Dr. F. N. Spiess, Acting Director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, Calif.; Dr. Richard Van Cleve,

Dean, College of Fisheries, University of Washington, Seattle; Sigurd J. Westrheim of the Oregon Fish Commission; and Phil M. Roedel of the California Department of Fish and Game.

Preparatory arrangements for this important world meeting were handled by a subcommittee appointed by the United States FAO Interagency Committee. Dr. J. L. McHugh, Chief of the Division of Biological Research, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, was chairman.

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