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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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GEAR RESEARCH VESSEL COMMISSIONED

A new gear research and exploratory fishing vessel, the "George M. Bowers", was commissioned January 7 in Miami, Fla., by the Fish and Wildlife Service, according to Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay.

This addition to the Service's fleet of exploratory fishing vessels has a wooden hull and is 73 feet long. It was built with funds provided by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act of 1954 which was designed to promote fishery technological, biological and market studies. It was constructed for the Fish and Wildlife Service by the Tampa Steamways, and will be based in Miami.

The "George M. Bowers" is especially equipped for research work on fishing gear and will be primarily a gear research vessel but can be used for deep sea exploration also. The wooden hull was chosen because a wooden vessel is better suited to the electronic equipment which will be used in the research program. Among other things, the "Bowers" has underwater television equipment which will permit close study of fishing gear operation under water, the effect of gear on any fish habitat on the bottom of the waters, escapement through the nets and numerous other technical questions which have been plaguing commercial fisheries for years.

Director John L. Farley accepted the vessel for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The vessel is named after George M. Bowers, Commissioner of Fisheries, from 1898 to 1913. His son, George M. Bowers, Jr., gave a brief biographical sketch of his father. The new vessel will be under the command of Captain A. M. Morgan.

For an indefinite period the "George M. Bowers" will work close to Miami because the extremely clear water there makes it well adaptable to the type of research to be pursued. Its immediate objective will be to assist in shrimp exploration on the southeast Atlantic Coast, a project also financed by the Saltonstall-Kennedy funds.

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