



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW EXPLORATORY FISHING VESSEL FOR ALASKAN WATERS TO BE LAUNCHED

The motor vessel US FWS John N. Cobb will be launched January 14, 1950 at the shipyards of the Western Boat Building Company, Tacoma, Washington, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman said today. The John N. Cobb will be used in the waters off the Pacific Northwest and Alaska to explore untapped fishery resources -- with special emphasis at first on albacore tuna.

The entirely new 93-foot vessel is constructed of wood and is to be equipped with all the latest navigational equipment -- including radar, loran, two depth-finding devices, and electro-mechanical steering. An experimental-sized refrigerated hold, bait tanks, brine wells, and all the fishing equipment for seining, long-line fishing and trawling are part of the equipment, as well as some experimental rigs of unorthodox design.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to commission the vessel in a Seattle ceremony about February 15, and tentative plans are laid for an "open-house" for the benefit of interested fishermen and others in the area. After a shakedown cruise and brief test period, the John N. Cobb will sail to Alaskan waters to begin its fishery explorations. Tuna is a relatively new industry in Alaska and the exploratory vessel will investigate the potentialities of tuna in the area.

The Service's exploratory fishing vessel Oregon prospected for tuna in Alaskan waters last fall. The Oregon landed tuna off a southeastern Alaska location that may be the farthest north that tuna have ever been captured by commercial fishery methods.

A published report on the ground fish potential of the northern Bering Sea, the result of earlier exploratory investigations, is expected to be ready for distribution within a few weeks. The vessel US FWS John N. Cobb was named after John Nathan Cobb, a foremost fishery expert in the early Bureau of Fisheries, a predecessor organization of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Cobb, who died in 1930, was also noted for his authoritative books on salmon and the Pacific cod. In 1919, Cobb helped organize, and became first dean of, the College of Fisheries of the University of Washington in Seattle.

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