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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS EXPLORATORY VESSELS FIND NEW SHRIMP AND YELLOWFIN FISHING AREAS

Discovery of new fishing waters for small, cocktail size shrimp off the State of Washington and the locations of concentrations of yellowfin tuna in the southern part of the Gulf of Mexico were made recently by the exploratory fishing vessels of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis said today.

Prior to the development in the Gulf, yellowfin tuna was not known to be available in the Gulf of Mexico during the period from January to May, the time of their disappearance from the northern waters of that area. The discovery may lead to a year-around tuna fishery. The find was made by the Oregon in the offshore waters of the Gulf of Campeche.

The exploratory work on the shrimp was done by the John N. Cobb. Small shrimp had been found in commercial quantities in the waters off Oregon and California. Work done during the fall of 1955 indicated that there were extensive shrimp beds from Cape Disappointment to Destruction Island, Wash., principally in waters between 50 and 100 fathoms deep. On its April exploratory cruise the Cobb discovered what might become an excellent shrimp fishery off the Gray's Harbor area.

During the test the Gray's Harbor area yielded shrimp at the rate of 2,000 pounds per hour for the best catches. Fairly consistent catches of 500 pounds an hour are reported. One day seven 30-minute drags made during the morning resulted in 5,210 pounds of shrimp. Random samples showed that the shrimp ranged from 110 to 122 per pound.

One commercial shrimp vessel has begun operations in the area.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials feel that the discovery of the shrimping grounds off Washington will be an important addition to the local fishing industry.

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