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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW RESEARCH LABORATORY TO TACKLE PROBLEMS OF GULF FISHERIES

Problems related to finding, catching, and processing Gulf of Mexico fish and shellfish will be tackled at the new fishery laboratory to be constructed this year at Pascagoula, Mississippi, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton said today.

Contract for the construction of the new laboratory and auxiliary buildings has been awarded to the Oden Construction Company of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for \$165,000. Engineers of the Service's Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, will exercise general supervision of construction. In addition to the fisheries research building, there will be a net facility and a smaller structure to be used for fishing gear fabrication.

Research on methods and techniques for providing the highest quality pack of shrimp, oysters, tuna and other south Atlantic and Gulf seafoods will be one of the main tasks of the new laboratory. Heretofore technological work for the Gulf and south Atlantic areas was handled through the Service's laboratory at College Park, Maryland.

The new installation will provide facilities for the exploratory fishing and gear development program now being conducted in the Gulf area. The Service's exploratory fishing vessel Oregon, which operates in the Gulf of Mexico, is based at Pascagoula in connection with this program.

Office space also will be furnished in the new laboratory for local personnel engaged in statistical work and the educational and market development programs.

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