DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1940.

Not only do vessels designed primarily for specialized fishery activities constitute a valuable reserve for use in naval operations in event of war, but both fisheries personnel and materiel already have been extensively levied upon by the Navy in national defense preparations, it is pointed out in the annual report of the Bureau of Fisheries for the 1940 fiscal year.

Submitting to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes the final report of the Bureau as an independent agency, since on June 30th it was consolidated with the Bureau of Biological Survey to form the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department, Acting Commissioner Charles E. Jackson said:

"These specialized fisheries vessels could be augmented by hundreds of fishing craft and thus form a defense unit that would contribute materially to the conduct of naval operations."

In addition to emphasizing the availability of the industry's equipment for defense service, the report calls attention to the fact that its supervision over the Alaskan salmon catch also comprises an important defense factor. For example, the pack of this food commodity was increased 25 percent in the one year between 1916 and 1917, to meet the last World War emergency.

"This increased production on short notice," the report explains, "is indicative of the ability of the Bureau so to regulate these fisheries as constantly to

maintain a reserve upon which to draw. The Bureau has remained congnizant of the real and potential value of this vast food resource entrusted to its keeping and has constantly maintained a balance sufficient that, should the need arise, production can again be stepped up to the required level."

Six new scientific laboratories providing increased facilities for future fisheries research were begun or completed by the Bureau during the year. Including three biological and three technological laboratories, the new additions bring the number of such scientific establishments to eleven. Chief among the new technological laboratories is the one recently completed at College Park, Maryland set up primarily to make study of fishery byproducts, to consider technological methods as applied to food values, and to improve processes of capture and manufacture.

A laboratory at Ketchikan, Alaska, will be established for purely technological research on fishery products, including the improvement of methods for the manufacture of fishery products and byproducts and particularly the development of new ones. A third new technological laboratory, under construction at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, will have identical purposes.

Among the new biological laboratories is the Albatross III, a vessel constituting a floating laboratory and first of its kind in such service for a decade. Its staff will study, on the fishery grounds, variations in supply of the commercial fishes; their migration habits, local abundance, and methods of capture and handling. Incidental to this work will be thorough oceanographic investigations including studies of ocean currents, weather conditions, and salinity, as applicable to fishery science.

Second of the new biological laboratories is at Little Port Walter (Alaska), where will be carried on biological studies of natural production and variations