



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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In an effort to bring the South Atlantic fisheries into maximum food production a new type fishing vessel which operates several kinds of gear but requires only a small crew will be launched at noon November 17 at St. Augustine, Florida, and accepted for a 6-month period of experimental fishing by representatives of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The launching of the 65-foot JEFF DAVIS will be attended by members of the fishing industry of the South Atlantic and Gulf coasts, State conservation officials from Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, and representatives of the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The JEFF DAVIS combines features of the southern shrimp trawler and the most efficient type of Pacific coast purse seiner and was built in the yards of the Diesel Engine Sales Company for the Burgman Tractor Company of Jacksonville. As a service to the fishing industry, the Burgman Company is lending the vessel to the Fish and Wildlife Service for a period of six months, during which its adaptability to several different types of fishing will be demonstrated.

Because it is equipped to trawl for shrimp and also to use a purse seine, the JEFF DAVIS can operate throughout the year and in several different fisheries. The type of vessel in most common use in the South--the shrimp trawler--is unable to catch surface fish like menhaden, mackerel, or mullet. Heretofore, purse seines have been used only to a limited extent in southern waters and have been confined to the menhaden fishery.

A further advantage of the new-type vessel is its conservation of man power. The JEFF DAVIS is effectively handled by a crew of ten men, while the ordinary Atlantic coast menhaden seiner requires about 23 men. Also, the large seiners must be accompanied by two smaller accessory boats from which the net is set, while the JEFF DAVIS sets the seine directly from a turntable at the stern of the boat, as is done on the Pacific coast.

Carl B. Carlson, a fishery engineer of the Fish and Wildlife Service and formerly a west coast fisherman, will act as Captain of the JEFF DAVIS during the period of experimental fishing and will direct the operations. The crew will be furnished by the Burgman Tractor Company, which will also pay the cost of operation. As compensation for this expense, all fish caught will be the property of the owner of the vessel.