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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH TO BE FROZEN AT SEA IN NEW TESTS

A project to freeze fish at sea for later processing on shore is the chief item on the technological research program of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries for the new fiscal year.

Specific recommendations of the fishing industry have been incorporated in the new program, Andrew W. Anderson chief of the Branch, said today in releasing the details of the proposed research activities.

The recommendations were presented at a conference held in Washington on July 14. Fish and Wildlife Service officials met with representatives of varied fields in the fishing industry at that time.

The practice of freezing fish at sea for later processing on shore has been considered impractical by the fishing industry, Mr. Anderson said. But preliminary tests, using new techniques, have encouraged the industry to request additional research.

The fish will be frozen aboard fishing vessels soon after catching, and will then be defrosted on shore. At that time, fillets will be cut, refrozen, and stored. If the experiments show that the quality remains high in the fish originally frozen at sea, the Fish and Wildlife Service will then test and recommend new refrigeration and processing methods for the fishing industry.

Fishing vessels will be able to remain at sea for longer periods of time if the tests are successful, Mr. Anderson declared. Valuable by-products will be saved because the fish will no longer need to be dressed at sea, and labor and production problems in shore plants will be decreased because of the even supply of frozen fish for filleting, he added.

Another important activity of the new technological research program is a plan to prepare canned sandwich spreads of chum salmon, mackerel, lake herring, rockfish, and pollock for use in the Federal-financed school lunch program. This work may develop another commercial outlet for these species.

Canned fish spreads are now on the commercial market, but they are expensively prepared, and are not suitable for school lunch consumption. Sandwich fish spreads made by the Fish and Wildlife Service have already been used in two Maryland elementary schools, and they were favorably received.

James M. Lemon, chief of the Branch's Technological Section, will be in charge of the research work to be conducted at Fish and Wildlife Service laboratories in Seattle, Wash.; Boston, Mass.; College Park, Md.; and Ketchikan, Alaska.

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