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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS ISSUES ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1954

"A realistic and carefully calculated conservation program to preserve our fish and wildlife resources for tomorrow must be based upon continuous, painstaking research," Director John L. Farley stated in the Fish and Wildlife Service's annual report for fiscal year 1954, released today.

Major research projects covered in the report included those directed toward the discovery of latent sources of fish which constitute food resources for the future. The Service Director declared that great underfished resources of herring exist in the north Atlantic and west Pacific, of pilchard in the south Atlantic and south Pacific, of tunas in the central Pacific and south Atlantic, of cod in the north Pacific and the Atlantic.

In the central Pacific, the results obtained by Service vessels scouting for tuna indicate that expansion of the Hawaiian tuna industry will depend largely on measures to increase the geographical area that the fleet can cover through construction of larger, better-equipped vessels, and improvement of the fishermen's navigational abilities.

New beds of deep-water red shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico were discovered by the Service's exploratory-fishing vessel Oregon. These now appear almost certain to become of commercial importance. The Oregon also made an important discovery of yellowfin tuna in the western Gulf. Exploratory cruises are planned to determine whether the yellowfin resources would support a new commercial fishery.

Research which continued throughout the year on the red tide problem on the west coast of Florida further confirmed earlier theories that river effluents carrying organic nutrients, and the correct combination of temperature and wind conditions, produce a suitable environment for rapid reproduction of Gymnodinium brevis, the fish-killing plague.

Major emphasis in the Great Lakes fishery program was put on controlling the sea lamprey through further testing and refining of electrical barriers, completing research studies on lamprey biology, testing larvicides, and continuing a survey of streams tributary to Lake Superior.

At the Service's fishery laboratory at Woods Hole, Mass., one of the most important research projects is the study of biological effects on the haddock of the regulation of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries which makes it illegal to fish for haddock on Georges Bank or in the Gulf of Maine with a net having meshes of less than 4½ inches inside dimension. Use of this larger mesh saves small unmarketable fish and should increase the yield from each year class that enters the fishery.

In his annual report, Director Farley also pointed to numerous advancements in the field of wildlife research and management.

A nation-wide inventory of wetlands subject to drainage was completed on June 30, 1954. Included are about 65 million acres representing better than 90 percent of all such areas important to waterfowl. These areas are shown on county and State maps, classified as to water conditions and native vegetation, and evaluated from the standpoint of their usefulness to waterfowl. The inventory will show other Federal and State agencies where waterfowl values deserve special protection and will serve as a basic guide for deciding where and how much wetland should be set aside and managed for waterfowl.

During the fiscal year 1954, Federal-State cooperation in the management of waterfowl was strengthened. Flyway Councils, whose membership includes all State conservation departments, are realizing the problem is continental in scope and, in view of the many local situations that arise, extremely complicated.

Part of the Pribilof Islands fur-seal receipts were again available in fiscal year 1954 for equipment and added personnel to enforce the Alaska Game Law. This, together with the excellent cooperation of military authorities, greatly improved the protection of fish and wildlife in the Territory. Enforcement problems are increasing in Alaska because of new roads, the use of surplus military equipment, home-built tundra crawlers, and a new junior-size combination tractor-caterpillar capable of traversing most of the terrain.

The Service's research program on wildlife concerns species desirable for their sporting utilization as well as those having other values. Many forms detrimental to man's interest require intensive management as well. Consequently, future investigative programs are intensifying work on several bird-pests of growing crops, small mammals as they prevent or complicate reforestation, and various rodents which are competitive with livestock interests on rangeland.

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