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NEW FEDERAL MARINE LABORATORY DEDICATED IN NORTH CAROLINA

A new Federal laboratory devoted to fisheries research on the Atlantic coast was formally dedicated at Beaufort, N.C., on May 13, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

This marine biological laboratory will serve as headquarters for the shad, striped bass, and menhaden investigations conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service along the Atlantic coast. It replaces the old wooden structure built in 1902 which had long been a landmark in the Beaufort-Morehead City area.

John L. Farley, Service Director, headed the list of speakers at the dedication ceremonies held in conjunction with a two-day meeting of the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society. Other speakers were Dr. L. A. Walford, Chief of the Service's Branch of Fishery Biology, Washington, D. C.; Dr. J. L. McHugh, Virginia Fisheries Laboratory, Gloucester Point, Va.; Dr. G. Robert Lunz, Jr., Bears Bluff Laboratory, Wadmalaw Island, S. C.; and Gerald B. Talbot, Chief of the Service's Middle Atlantic Fisheries Investigations, stationed at Beaufort.

The dedication program took the form of a panel discussion on the place of the marine biological laboratory in fishery research. Director Farley discussed the subject from the administrator's standpoint; Dr. Walford spoke on the future of marine laboratories; while Drs. McHugh and Lunz presented the story from the angle of cooperating State laboratories. Mr. Talbot gave the point of view of the Service biologist working in these laboratories.

Construction of the new Beaufort laboratory began in 1952 and was completed in 1954. It was designed by the Service's Branch of Engineering. By using simplified construction methods, the cost was among the lowest of any buildings recently constructed by the Service. It consists of a laboratory building and a service building. The laboratory building has fully equipped office space and a research area with circulating sea water. The service building contains a heating plant, garage, and shops. The laboratory unit is fully air-conditioned. Both units are of one-story modern design.

The Beaufort laboratory is situated on Pivers Island which lies within Beaufort Harbor about one mile from Beaufort Inlet. It is separated from the mainland and the town of Beaufort by a channel about 150 yards wide.

Beaufort, N. C. was early found to be a place especially well suited for the study of the marine fauna and flora. It was visited in 1860 by such eminent zoologists as Gill and Stimpson, by Coues and Yarrow in 1871-72, and by Professor

Spencer Fullerton Baird, first head of the U.S. Fish Commission, established in 1871. Beaufort soon became a resort for persons interested in biology and for a period of 10 years or so prior to the establishment of a Federal station, professors and students of Johns Hopkins University maintained a laboratory there. In 1899 the first Federal fisheries laboratory at Beaufort was set up in a rented building. In 1900 Congress authorized the erection of a biological station which was completed and opened to investigators for the first time in 1902.

Extensive life history studies and practical fishery experimental work on a variety of species of fish found along the Atlantic coast have been made at Beaufort since establishment of the station. This information, aside from its scientific value, is essential when it becomes necessary to enact regulatory measures to protect the commercial species from overfishing.

For nearly 40 years the old Beaufort station was headquarters for one of the most unusual farming operations ever conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service--that of hatching and rearing diamond-back terrapins. During the period when the farm was in operation, as many as 12,000 young terrapins were released each year in suitable brackish water areas along the coast from Maryland to Louisiana, with the result that they have now become well re-established over much of their former range. This activity was discontinued in 1948 when the objective of the Service in demonstrating hatchery and farming procedures and in restocking depleted areas was considered accomplished.

During World War II the Beaufort laboratory was inactive in fishery research. In 1949, however, it was reopened when the Service concluded an agreement with the Atomic Energy Commission whereby cooperative research on shellfish and other marine organisms, using radioactive tracer methods, was begun at the laboratory. One main objective of the study was to learn more about the accumulation in marine life of radioactive material and its possible effects on shellfish. This work is still going on at Beaufort but in a building separate from the new laboratory.

Limited facilities for visiting investigators will be available in the new laboratory.

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