UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Flanagan - Interior 5634

For Release to PM's, JUNE 13, 1963

FISHERIES ADVISORY GROUP WOULD PROTECT ESTUARIES ESSENTIAL TO MARINE LIFE

Protection of estuaries essential as spawning grounds and nursery areas for valuable fisheries and recognition of the joint interest of sport and commercial fishermen in pesticides and pesticide research were stressed by the American Fisheries Advisory Committee at its recent meeting in Washington, D. C., the Department of the Interior reports.

The Committee also recommended that there be continued improvement in the quality of fishery products offered to the consumer, that there be an increase in the research and exploratory efforts on bluefin tuna and swordfish in the Atlantic Ocean, and that the commercial fishing values of large reservoirs be studied.

The American Fisheries Advisory Committee, a group of 20 fisheries experts selected by the Secretary of the Interior, was established under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act of 1954. This law provides for research and educational programs which will improve the economic status of the domestic fishing industry and make valuable protein from the sea more readily availabe to the consumer. The law is administered by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service.

In discussing estuaries, committee members pointed out that many important fisheries depend upon inshore brackish water environment. Weakfish, drum, tarpon, menhaden, shrimp, and oysters seek this brackish water during a portion of their lives. To destroy this environment by fills or to change it by dikes or modify the chemical composition by altering the enriched, mineral-laden fresh water or the ocean water or to ruin it with pollution and pesticides eliminates an essential link in the life chain, the Committee said.

In speaking to the group, Senator Leverett Saltonstall, co-author of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, urged studies of the effect of water pollution upon marine life, development of underutilized resources as a possible solution to hunger throughout the world, and modernization of fishing fleets and shore facilities.

Chairman Benjamin Smith, of the United States delegation to the International Convention for the High Seas Fisheries of the North Pacific Ocean stressed the international aspects of commercial fisheries.

Frank P. Briggs, assistant Secretary of the Interior and ex officio chairman of the Committee, said its next meeting will be in Honolulu, Hawaii, January 22-24, 1964.

x x x

P.N. 30310-63