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FEATURE MATERIAL

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT RESEARCH LABORATORY AIDS ALASKA FISHERY

A fishery biological laboratory at Auke Bay, Alaska, built in 1960 by the Department of the Interior with an investment of \$600,000 and operated at an annual budget of \$1,200,000, is the hub of a far-flung research program geared to improving the 49th State's leading money-producing resource.

Alaska's fish harvest in 1962 was worth \$48 million at dockside and \$126 million at the processor level.

Studies in the laboratory range from research on the possible effects of the proposed Rampart Dam on the world's longest salmon run on the Yukon River to life history studies of Alaska's popular cocktail shrimp. The Yukon River salmon run, 2,000 miles in length, is important as a source of food and income for natives who live on or near the river.

The laboratory is operated by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service. It has a staff of 35 scientists and 15 clerks and technical aides. Seasonal workers, most of them student biologists, help with field examinations. Recently as many as 100 such workers were employed on one project in one season. Much of the research is done in cooperation with the State of Alaska.

The laboratory site was chosen because of its ideal location. It is between freshwater Auke Lake and saltwater Auke Bay, making possible a great variety of studies on the effect of salinity changes on salmon during various stages of the life cycle. It is adjacent to Juneau and accessible by sea and air. The laboratory is being equipped to test field situations under controlled conditions. Basic research is conducted on herring, king crab, shrimp, the five species of salmon--red, chum, coho, pink and king--and on the food and predatory species associated with them. Physical environmental studies on lakes, streams and the ocean itself are part of the program.

Scientific studies at the laboratory include the long-established biological programs at Little Port Walter and at Karluk and Brooks Lakes, and at the newer projects at Kasitsna Bay, Olsen Bay, Traitors Cove, Naknek River, Hollis, Old Tom's Creek, Yukon River, Wood River and Kvichak. The studies at Hollis, Wood River, and Kvichak are under contract to the Fisheries Research Institute of the University of Washington.

The Little Port Walter research station includes 2,500 acres of watershed being held in natural state so environmental changes made by nature, not man, can be studied and their effect upon the survival and reproduction of salmon studied.

The largest single program is the Bristol Bay red salmon research, with headquarters at the town of King Salmon. Some 100 seasonal workers have been engaged in studies designed to understand red salmon problems and predict the runs. At Karluk Lake, on Kodiak Island, other red salmon studies are being pursued. Red salmon generally spend two years in inland lakes before making their pilgrimage to sea and Karluk offers an excellent opportunity to study the environmental effect on the growth and survival of young fish.

The biology of shrimp and king crab is studied at Kasitsna Bay, across from Homer on Cook Inlet. Olsen Bay, 40 miles from Cordova, is the site of research on salmon which have shown a preference to spawn in the intertidal sections of streams rather than run up towards headwaters as is customary; at Traitors Cove is the principal chum salmon research station where the effects of temperature, predation, competition for food, flooding, and other environmental factors on survival and growth of salmon in freshwater are investigated.

At Old Tom's Creek, near Ketchikan, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and the Forest Service are jointly studying the effects of pesticides upon fish life. At Hollis, near Ketchikan, the Fisheries Research Institute is investigating the effects of logging upon a salmon fishery.

The Auke Bay laboratory is a two-story structure with facilities for red salmon studies, ocean studies, biometrics, and river salmon research. It is equipped with an aquarium laboratory, a library, a museum, and conference rooms. There are also dock and warehouse facilities.

In addition to the Auke Bay laboratory and its field stations, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries has regional offices at Juneau and a technological laboratory at Ketchikan.

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