

# COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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## THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE--TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS

By Albert M. Day\*

### HOOVER COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

It is hardly proper for me as Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, one of the agencies that is proposed for reorganization by the Hoover Commission.<sup>1/</sup> to discuss whether that Commission's recommendations are sound and should be adopted. Rather, I prefer to make some general observations about the background of the Hoover Commission Report on this particular subject and explain what the Fish and Wildlife Service is attempting to do to aid in the broad development and utilization of the highly important fishery resources of this Nation.

In the first instance, it should be well understood that the final recommendations of the Hoover Commission resulted only after a great deal of conflicting and diverse testimony on this important subject had been given careful consideration. The whole problem is complex because fishery management is complex. It must always be woven into the intricate patterns of land and water uses and human needs in our expanding civilization. This fact is well emphasized when we recognize that the three different task forces studying the organization of the Government came out with three different recommendations when it came to fish and wildlife matters.



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The report of one committee would have dispersed the conservation agencies through the Government and would have put the Fish and Wildlife Service in a Public Works Department. The Agricultural Committee recommended a transfer to Agriculture of all major public land administration activities and functions, including the Fish and Wildlife Service. The task force on Natural Resources proposed to abolish the Interior Department and create in its place a Department of Natural Resources, among which would have been a division of the present Fish and Wildlife Service into a Fisheries Service and a Wildlife Service, each separately administered. The final recommendations of the entire Commission were that only the commercial fisheries activities of the Service should be transferred to the Department of Commerce. As evidence of the diversity of opinion among the members

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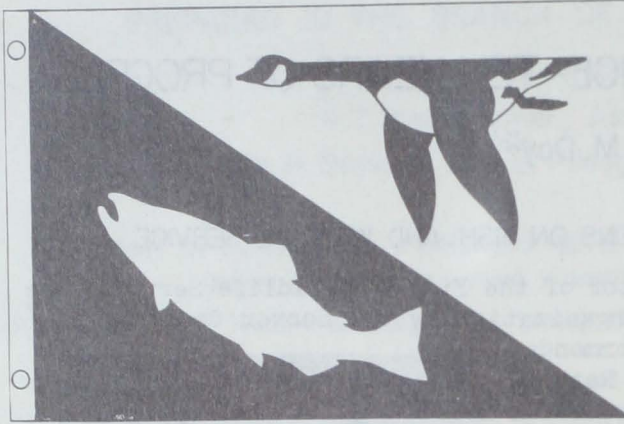
<sup>1/</sup>See Commercial Fisheries Review, April 1949, pp. 21-4.

Note: This article was adapted from an address ("Ten Years of Fishery Activities Under the Fish and Wildlife Service") delivered by the author at the 43rd Annual Convention of the National Cannery Association, Atlantic City, N. J., January 28, 1950.



of the Commission, it should be noted that dissents to this proposal were expressed by Vice-Chairman Dean Acheson and Commissioners James Forrestal, James K. Pollack, and James H. Rowe, Jr.

With this divergence of opinion among the members of the Hoover Commission and the various task forces as to the proper place in Government for the Federal



FLAG OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE.

responsibility for fishery activities, it is not surprising that the resultant reactions of the public also have been mixed. The American Fisheries Society, organized in 1872 and now the oldest scientific biological organization in the United States, at a meeting in Winnipeg, Canada, last September, passed a resolution endorsing the task force recommendations of the "Report on Natural Resources," with the exception that the Society opposed that portion of the report which recommends the separation of fisheries administration from wildlife administration.

Likewise, a meeting of the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners, also meeting in Winnipeg, in September, passed a resolution endorsing the general purposes of the Natural Resources task force report, but also stated that they opposed the recommendation of the report which would separate fisheries from wildlife in the present Fish and Wildlife Service. Within the past few weeks, the Executive Officers and the Legislative Committee of the International Association again reaffirmed to Secretary Chapman their strong opposition to this proposal. The International Association is made up of representatives of all of the State conservation departments in the country, the great bulk of which administers both fisheries and wildlife in a single organization of the State. In fact, of the 48 States, only 8 have separate departments devoted to commercial fisheries. In the other 40, commercial and sport fishery and wildlife management activities are all in the same department. The same, of course, is true, in Alaska.



SPENCER F. BAIRD, ONE OF THE THREE VESSELS WHICH HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED A FIVE-YEAR STUDY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC FISHERIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE REHABILITATION OF THE PHILIPPINES.

To the contrary, the Pacific Fisheries Conference, composed largely of members of industry operating on the West Coast and in Alaska, by action taken at a recent meeting in California, adopted the following resolution, and I quote:



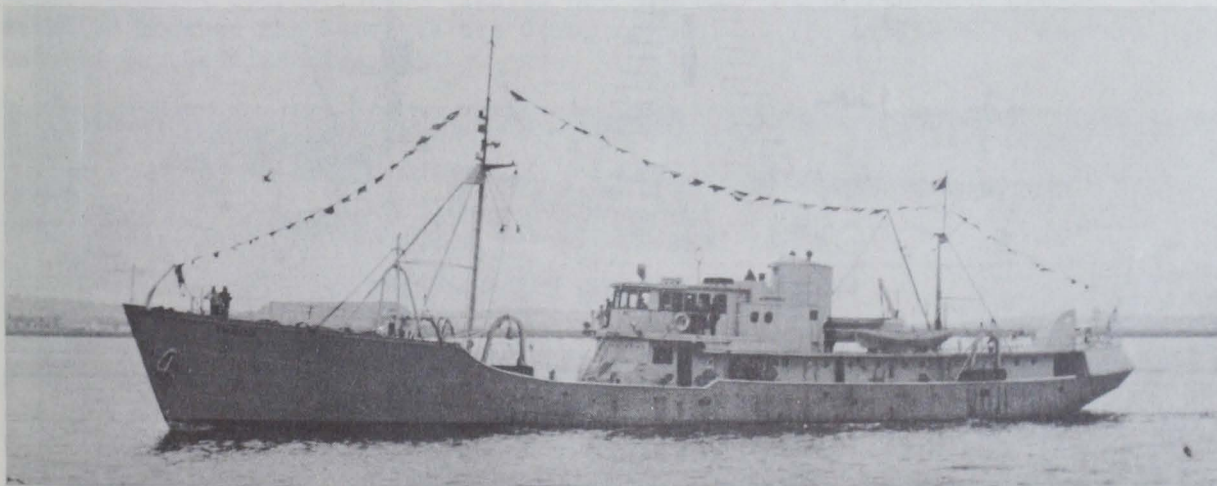
"Whereas, the consolidation by Executive Order of the former Bureau of Fisheries and the former Bureau of Biological Survey into one Bureau in the Department of the Interior, called the Fish and Wildlife Service, has been demonstrated as unsound, illogical and ineffective, and has not served to further the sound, efficient administration of fisheries, and whereas the Commission for the reorganization of the Executive Branch of the Government, commonly referred to as the Hoover Commission, recommended that the administration of fisheries should be separated from the administration of wildlife: Now, Therefore,

"Be it resolved, that the Conference heartily endorses the recommendation that such separation should be made and also urges that the re-established Division of Fisheries should be transferred in toto to the Department of Commerce or to a new Department of Natural Resources if such a Department should be created and now, in whichever Department placed, fisheries should be under direct charge of an officer of the rank of Assistant Secretary."

It is to the assertion of the Pacific Fisheries Conference that the present organization has been demonstrated as "unsound, illogical, ineffective, and has not served to further the sound, efficient administration of fisheries" that I wish to direct my remarks today. I challenge that statement as incorrect and I call upon the drafters of the resolution to furnish proof of their assertions. The present organization is sound, it is logical, and it is effective. In the ten years it has been in effect, it has done more to further the interests of fishery management, conservation, and utilization than was accomplished in the three or four decades previously.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Memories about public affairs and previous events are short, and I feel that many are unfamiliar with the background and do not know the original reasons for the consolidation of the Bureau of Fisheries and the Bureau of Biological Survey. Such moves are seldom made without good reasons, as was the case in this instance. At the time of the merger in 1940, both of these predecessor agencies were weak and to a considerable extent were discredited in the public mind. The Biological



ALBATROSS III, A SERVICE RESEARCH VESSEL CARRYING ON INVESTIGATIONS IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN FROM THE GRAND BANKS TO THE CAROLINAS.



Survey, which I joined in 1918 and in which, together with the present Fish and Wildlife Service, I have served continuously ever since, had suffered from weak administration for several years prior to the merger.

Waterfowl, coming under Federal regulation under a treaty with Canada, had been consistently declining over a period of years. The only remedy that the Bureau seemed to be able to prescribe was ever-shortened seasons and ever-smaller bag limits. Because of resultant public dissatisfaction and clamor, President Roosevelt appointed a special committee of citizens to study the problem and to recommend remedies. "Ding" Darling, the famous cartoonist, prominent in conservation circles in the Midwest, served on this special study committee. It recommended a positive action program--the acquisition and restoration of marshes along with severe restrictions on the take by hunters. Darling was induced to serve as Chief of the Biological Survey, an organization that had been virtually leaderless since the disability retirement of the previous bureau chief. He remained less than two years and was succeeded by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, an outstanding scientist and able administrator, but in 1940, when the merger came about, the public had not yet regained confidence in the efficiency of the administration of the Biological Survey.

A similar situation existed in the Bureau of Fisheries. It was a small organization and the morale of its employees, as well as the confidence of the public, suffered severely because of the quality of its leadership. Controversy raged, particularly in the Alaska fisheries field, where the Bureau then had, and still



THE HENRY O'MALLEY, ONE OF THE THREE SERVICE VESSELS DOING EXPLORATORY FISHING IN THE WATERS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC.



has as the Fish and Wildlife Service, sole regulatory authority over the extremely valuable salmon and herring fisheries. We are still trying to live down some of the things that happened in Alaska in those days.

Government reorganizers concluded that there might be a strengthening of the administration of both fisheries and wildlife programs if the two closely related small bureaus were merged into one larger group. This has been the trend of government for many years and, with the exception of the recommendations for the transfer of the commercial fishery activities to the Department of Commerce, was also the philosophy of the Hoover Commission.

When the merger of the Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries came about in 1940, the Biological Survey was on its way back into public esteem under the leadership of Dr. Gabrielson. It was, therefore, logical that he should become the first Director of the new Fish and Wildlife Service. As a minor employee in Washington at the time of this "shotgun wedding" of the two Bureaus, with Secretary Ickes, incidentally, holding the old double-barreled gun on us, I can personally testify that it was an unpopular move with the employees of both Bureaus, particularly those who revere tradition and the "good old days" of the past. I also know that the proposal to return to those "good old days" does not fall upon completely unsympathetic ears with some of the present organization. It is difficult to understand their philosophy, because I cannot think of a single individual who has not personally benefited in rank and salary by the creation of a larger and more important agency. With some, tradition is truly a potent factor.

But, of more importance to you and the other people we are paid to serve, did the mandatory trip to the altar pay off? Let us merely check the records.

#### APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISHERY WORK

First, let's review the appropriations for fishery work for the past 20 years--the ten years of operations under the present Fish and Wildlife Service and the ten years immediately preceding. Granted that during recent years, the costs of operations have risen and appropriations have been more liberal to take care of these factors, appropriation figures are probably still the best over-all yardstick to measure the services the Government gives its citizens in matters pertaining to the fisheries.



A FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PATROL BOAT (BLUE WING) IN ALASKA.



In 1930, Federal fishery appropriations amounted to \$2,498,550; in 1940, \$2,421,075. That represents a decrease during the 10-year period of almost \$100,000. The average for that period was approximately \$2,000,000 per year. The fishery appropriations for the fiscal year 1950 amount to \$10,875,251. Of even greater significance, the Budget which the President sent to the Congress recently and which Fish and Wildlife Service representatives justified before the Appropriations Committees several weeks ago carries proposed appropriations for fishery items amounting to approximately \$12,000,000 for the fiscal year beginning next July 1.

To be more specific as to items in which you are most interested, the work of the Branch of Commercial Fisheries received \$229,540 in 1940; \$668,500 in 1950. The Branch of Fishery Biology received \$390,835 in 1940 as compared with \$1,546,000 in 1950; Alaska Fisheries, including the Pribilofs, from \$516,460 to \$1,480,100 in those 10 years. And the wildlife appropriations have likewise increased at the same time. In 1940, they amounted to \$6,149,343, almost three times the then appropriated sums for fishery activities. For 1950, they amounted to \$16,502,049. This sum included Duck Stamp and Pittman-Robertson revenues.

#### EXPLORATORY FISHERIES RESEARCH

At the time of the merger, not a single research or exploratory vessel was owned and operated by the Bureau of Fisheries. Now, the Albatross III is carrying



THE OREGON, ONE OF TWO VESSELS RECENTLY ACQUIRED FOR THE SERVICE'S EXPLORATION PROGRAM IN THE GULF OF MEXICO, IS NOW UNDERGOING CONVERSION AT PASCAGOULA, MISS.

on investigations extending from the Grand Banks to the Carolinas on the Atlantic Coast. Within recent months, two vessels, the Oregon and Alaska, have been acquired through special legislation and appropriations and are now stationed in the Gulf of Mexico. One will do exploratory fishing and the other will do biological research. A new vessel, the John N. Cobb, was commissioned at Seattle, Washington, in January 1950 to carry out exploratory and experimental fishing in the North Pacific, reaching far into Arctic waters. The Black Douglas is carrying on experimental and biological work

in an effort to find answers to some of the perplexing problems surrounding the pilchard fishery off the coast of California and lower Mexico. The Hugh M. Smith is conducting biological and oceanographic research, while the Henry O'Malley and the John R. Manning are doing exploratory fishing in the waters of the South Pacific in a program that has been developed in close cooperation with the tuna fishing industry of the West Coast. The Spencer F. Baird, the Theodore N. Gill, and the David Starr Jordan, three well-equipped research and exploratory vessels, are now completing a five-year study of the South Pacific fisheries in connection with the rehabilitation of the Philippines. It is planned that the Theodore N. Gill will soon be stationed in the Great Lakes to undertake the difficult study of the decline in that great fishery, made possible by special legislation and appro-



priations passed by this Congress. And that adds up to 11 large vessels compared with not a single one at the time of the merger.

In the entire previous history of the Bureau of Fisheries, reaching back to 1871, in fact, there were never at one time more than three ships doing that sort of work and that occurred for only two years. None had been in service since 1932--eight years before the merger.

### FISHERIES LABORATORIES REHABILITATED

Ten years ago, the famous laboratory at Woods Hole, steeped in traditions of fishery research and oceanography since the days of Spencer Fullerton Baird, had been virtually abandoned. Within the past two years, we have rehabilitated the station, have transferred the scientific staff of the New England area there for headquarters, and the Albatross III is now berthed at Woods Hole.

The Laboratory at Beaufort, North Carolina, is being reconditioned and important studies in cooperation with the Atomic Energy Commission are being conducted at that point.

A new laboratory is being constructed in Hawaii and the technology laboratory at Ketchikan, Alaska, has within recent months been enlarged and expanded. During that decade, a small laboratory was constructed in Puerto Rico, and fisheries research in the Caribbean area was carried on. In addition, the research stations at College Park, Maryland; Milford, Connecticut; Seattle, Washington; and Pensacola, Florida; have been expanded.

### SERVICE PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES MATTERS

Never in the 80 years of Government participation in matters pertaining to the fisheries has there been such great activity in the international field as there has been during the past few years. That is perfectly logical because of the increasing influence of the United States in world affairs. I should like to cite some of the more recent developments, however, as proof that fishery matters are not suffering at the hand of the present organization.

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention, concluded just a year ago and ratified by the President last September 1, brings 11 Nations having common interests in the North Atlantic fishing grounds under Treaty arrangements for the first time in history. The fisheries of this great area have been the battleground for some exceedingly tough international problems that date back to days prior to American independence.

A Convention between the United States and Mexico for the establishment of an International Commission for the Scientific Investigation of Tuna was signed at Mexico City in January 1949, and has been ratified by the President. A similar Convention between the United States and Costa Rica for the establishment of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission was signed at Washington in May 1949, and was ratified by the President on September 1, 1949.

Three years ago, 22 nations, including Canada and the United States, met in Washington and arrived at an international agreement which established the International Whaling Commission, empowered to conduct investigations and regulate whaling throughout all the marine waters of the globe.

In 1946, a Treaty was negotiated with Canada for the protection and management of the Great Lakes fisheries. This, so far, has been the least effective of the Treaty programs because of opposition of one or two States surrounding the Great Lakes.

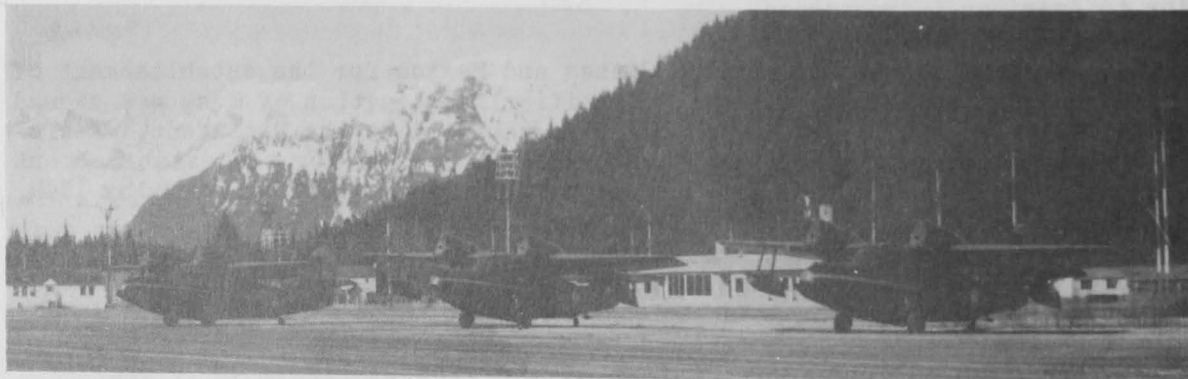
I have mentioned some of the more recent developments, but I should record also the continuing activities in connection with the Sockeye Salmon Commission which came into being in 1936, and which has now assumed regulatory powers after the first ten years of investigation. This has included the construction of the \$2,000,000 fishway at Hells Gate on the Fraser River. I serve as one of the American members of this Commission. Assistant Director James is a member of the Halibut Commission, established in 1937, which has done a remarkable job of restoring the stocks of halibut along the stretches of the North Pacific Coast.

### ALASKA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

In the field of management of the fisheries of Alaska, I am proud of the progress that is being made. For the first time in history, we are now developing a closely integrated program, using all available manpower and equipment for enforcing both the fishery and wildlife laws and regulations in a joint operation. Enforcement of the fishery regulations is now vastly improved because of the use of Alaska game agents as well as about a dozen transferred from the States each season.

During the war years, the fishing regulations were probably more liberal than they should have been. This was due to the pressure for food for our own people and our allies. Many of our trained personnel were in the Army and Navy and many Service ships were devoted to military uses. Inadequate observations and patrol, together with overfishing, created a serious depletion in the Alaska fishery. I am happy to say that it looks as though the situation is improving rapidly. Following severe restrictions during the past three years, the South-eastern Alaska pack of pink salmon responded to the point where the pack last year not only returned to but also exceeded the previous normal 20-year average.

Two large vessels have recently been secured by transfer from the Navy to augment our Alaskan fleet, and several smaller ships have been built as a result of new appropriations by the Congress. In the Service's combined Alaskan operations, there are now owned and operated 18 vessels ranging from 40 feet to 150 feet in size, with 11 additional patrol vessels ranging from 30 to 40 feet. There are also about 100 speed boats used in fishery patrol. Within the past three months, the Service has taken over from the Army one of the best equipped



THREE SERVICE PATROL AIRCRAFT USED IN ALASKA. SHOWS PLANES AT JUNEAU AIRPORT.



marine shops on the Pacific Coast. It is located at Juneau and is valued, at least, at \$500,000. Surplus planes have been made available since the end of the war, and we now have a very excellent fleet of 20 planes which services both fishery and game agents in the Territory. Congress, last year, appropriated \$250,000 for a new airplane hangar and shop at Anchorage, and as a result our facilities for observation and patrol will be much improved in future years. Moreover, Alaska regulations are now being made and enforced without fear or favor.

### CORRELATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Ten years ago, there were no effective means of correlating the needs of fish and wildlife with the construction programs of the Army Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. That is not the case today. The Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a River Basin staff whose responsibility it is to review the plans of the construction agencies while the projects are in the making. We work in close coordination with these two bureaus. Much has been done to protect and increase the fishery potentials in the reservoirs because of this service.

The relations of the Fish and Wildlife Service with the Congress and the Bureau of the Budget are excellent. The needs of both fisheries and wildlife are given sympathetic attention both as to appropriations and as to legislation. This, in my opinion, is due in large part to the fact that practically every member of the Congress has a personal interest in something that the Fish and Wildlife Service is doing. I doubt that there is another single agency of Government that has such wide interest for so many people as do the varied activities of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

### SPORT FISHING AND HUNTING

Last year, there were 15½ million people who bought fishing licenses and almost 13 million who bought hunting licenses. Another 2 million bought duck stamps to hunt ducks and geese. Many probably purchased all three kinds of licenses, but yet the fact remains that approximately one out of every five people in the United States is influenced in some degree by the activities of this Service. As such, the single organization known as the Fish and Wildlife Service wields much more power and influence than either the Bureau of Fisheries or the Biological Survey ever did before or would ever do again, if they were reconstituted separately.



### FISH FACTS

DO YOU KNOW . . .

That more than half of all species of vertebrates (animals with backbones) are fish . . .

--Fishery Leaflet 132