

## **A Coordinated Program of Marine Studies for the Gulf and Caribbean**

LIONEL A. WALFORD, *Chief, Branch of Fishery Biology,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

IN THE BIOLOGICAL and oceanographic session, the possibilities of a coordinated program of marine studies for the Gulf and Caribbean were discussed.

The Chairman announced the passage in the last session of Congress of a bill transferring to the Fish and Wildlife Service two ocean going vessels, one to be used primarily for biological-oceanographic studies; the other for exploratory fishing. Congress also appropriated funds for operation of the vessels.

The discussion centered about the program to be carried out by the biological-oceanographic vessel. Funds available this year are sufficient to pay for its reconversion and possibly for a short period of operation.

The Chairman proposed that all research and conservation agencies in the Gulf area having an interest in the program participate in it to the end, that all the facilities and talents available be brought together for a unified comprehensive study of the ecology of the Gulf.

It was brought out in the discussion that many institutions, including universities, conservation bureaus and private research institutions, are engaged in biological or oceanographic research in the Gulf.

The Chairman invited representatives of these agencies to participate with the Fish and Wildlife Service in the use of the new vessel and to assist in making a coordinated program at a meeting to be called later before the reconversion of the vessel is completed. Meanwhile, at the suggestion of Dr. Waldo Schmitt, it was agreed that a digest of existing literature on the biology and oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico should be made immediately. Dr. Paul Galtsoff of the Fish and Wildlife Service will act as organizer, manager and editor of this digest, which will be made cooperatively by all interested workers who will volunteer to contribute to the effort.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will prepare bibliographies for the participants when necessary; and when possible, will furnish stenographic help.

The questions in which the Fish and Wildlife Service is most interested in the new research program are these:

1. How are the various kinds of organisms associated in time, space, and abundance with each other, with the changing environment and with the activities of man?
2. What influences the distribution of the physical and chemical variables constituting the marine environment?