

Scripps expeditions

February 19, 1960

Nine long oceanographic expeditions are being planned by the University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography for the remainder of 1960. Two of them will take vessels into waters never visited before by the University research fleet-- the Caribbean Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The ships will sail approximately 90,000 miles in the course of these cruises. Not counted in this total are shorter cruises made periodically along the California and Baja California coast.

March will see the research vessel Orca in the Gulf of California engaged in geological studies. The sea floor and the land beneath it will be investigated by a newly-modified instrument called the sonoprobe. Beaches in the region will also be studied.

In April, Spencer F. Baird will sail several thousand miles west of Cape Mendocino studying earth magnetism. Such researches help describe the structure of the upper layers of the earth.

The following month, two expeditions will set sail. One will travel to the tip of Baja California for investigations of oceanographic conditions at the time tropical tuna migrate to the area and to study oceanic "fronts," boundaries between two water masses. The other will cross the Equator and travel to five degrees south before making port in Honolulu. This expedition will be known as Tethys Expedition. It is named after a sea-nymph in Grecian mythology. It has two principal objects. The first is to take samples of the small creatures of the oceans that live at a depth of about two miles. The distribution of these will be compared with that of near-surface animals, which are better known. In addition, geological studies will be conducted south of Hawaii.

Leaving in mid-May will be Limbo Expedition. This gets its name from the fact that it will make no ports of call. The vessel Horizon will sail to a point about halfway between California and Hawaii and there will remain for several weeks measuring currents in waters three miles deep. The only other measurements in such deep water have been made in the Atlantic.

By summer, the University's largest vessel, a 1,900-ton Navy ARS which is now being reconditioned for oceanographic exploration, is expected to make a shakedown cruise to Hawaii. Some scientific work may be conducted on the voyage, but it will be secondary to testing the ship and her new equipment.

In August, Scripps' longest expedition to date will sail from San Diego. This is Monsoon Expedition, which will take the ARS-27 across the Pacific and Indian Oceans to Mauritius, an island off the coast of Africa.

After Mauritius she will visit Indonesia and Australia before returning home. A total of 33,000 miles will be sailed. This means it will go more than halfway around the world and back. The chief purposes of the trip are sediment studies in tropical waters and geological-geophysical investigation in the Indian Ocean. These latter are part of an international program in that area. One American and one Russian vessel are already working there.

For three months, starting September 15, Horizon will engage in studies of the Peru Current, traveling as far south as northern Chile.

In November, Spencer F. Baird will be sent to the Caribbean Sea. Using a new device invented abroad, scientists will attempt to take sediment samples from depths of more than 150 feet. These would be the deepest such samples ever taken. This expedition will be made in cooperation with The University of Miami.