

OCEANOGRAPHY

**Sargasso Sea Contains  
10,000,000 Tons of Seaweed**

THE Sargasso Sea, famed in legend as the "graveyard of lost ships," contains 10,000,000 tons of floating seaweed. This figure was arrived at through recent researches carried on by Prof. A. E. Parr, of the Bingham Oceanographic Laboratory at Yale University, which, in cooperation with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, has been collecting data on the distribution and abundance of the drifting Sargasso weeds in the North Atlantic Ocean.

An expedition sponsored jointly by Yale and Woods Hole this season made long tows through the western part of the Sargasso Sea area, using nets of fixed dimensions in an effort to determine the quantity of floating weeds present so as to get a more solid foundation to work upon in the further study of the problems of the weeds and the animal life they harbor.

"The cumulative towing distance with these nets actually in the water is now over 2,000 nautical miles, and from the results of these tows we are able to say that the total amount of the floating Sargasso weeds covering the area of about 2,000,000 square miles between Bermuda, the Azores and the West Indies, must be expressed in millions of tons net weight, the actual amount being probably around 10,000,000 tons," Prof. Parr said.

"Though the accuracy of this figure is, of course, not very great as yet, it nevertheless represents a great step forward from the previous state of our knowledge about the Sargasso weed, when we were not even able to state with assurance whether we were dealing with tens or hundreds or thousands, millions or perhaps even billions of tons.

"Ten million tons of weeds, impressive as the figure may seem at first glance, is actually a very small quantity compared, for instance, with the plant growth on two million square miles of fertile land, which will yield about one billion tons per year or more, but it is nevertheless sufficient to provide for the existence of a unique and peculiar floating community of animals and plants which is now the subject of further investigations by the cooperating institutions."

*Science News Letter, December 8, 1934*

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WD/TR

Editor.

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