

CHICAGO RECEIPTS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS, 1947

By C. M. Reardon*

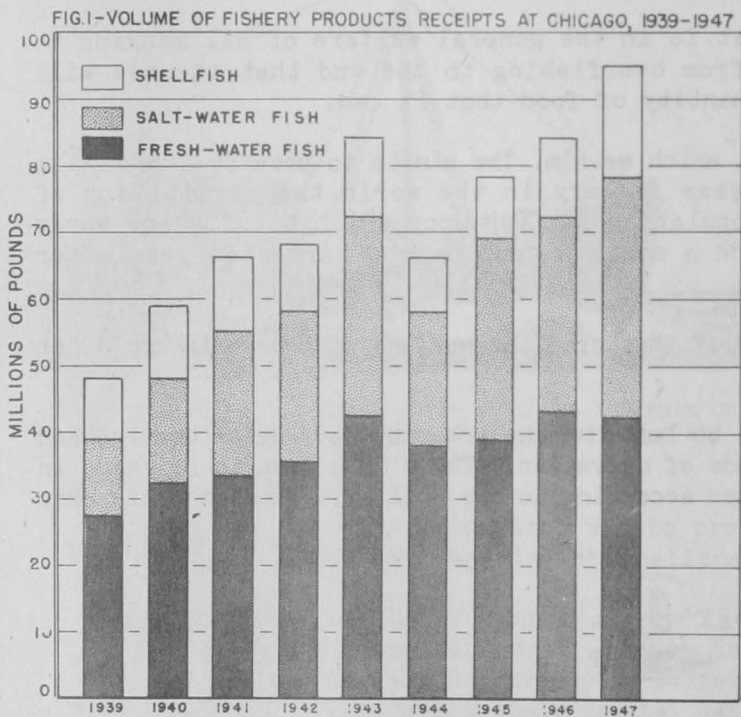
INTRODUCTION

Receipts of fresh and frozen fishery products in the Chicago wholesale market during 1947 totaled 94,650,000 pounds. This was the greatest volume reported since the establishment of the Chicago Market News Office in 1938, surpassing the previous peak totals in 1943 and 1946 by over 10,000,000 pounds (Figure 1).

Receipts for 1947 exceeded those in 1946 by 12 percent. The gain was in the salt-water and shellfish arrivals. Salt-water varieties exceeded those for 1946 by 22 percent, shellfish receipts were up 35 percent, but fresh-water arrivals declined 2 percent.

SOURCES OF RECEIPTS

British Columbia was the principal source of shipments, contributing 17 percent or 15,774,000 pounds of the total; however, 68 percent of this amount was caught by United States vessels and transported through Canada to the United States in bond. Massachusetts was in second place, shipping 12 percent or 11,608,000 pounds of the total--a gain of 57 percent over 1946. Wisconsin ranked third in importance with 10 percent, or 9,915,000 pounds of the total receipts--a gain of 5 percent over the preceding year. Other States contributing 5 percent or more each to the total receipts, in the order of their importance, were Michigan, Louisiana, and Minnesota. Besides British Columbia, other Canadian Provinces contributing important receipts were Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Alberta.



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RECEIPTS BY SPECIES

The number of fishery items received at Chicago, divided into classifications of fresh, frozen, filleted, steaks, etc., totaled 162. Of this total, 55 were

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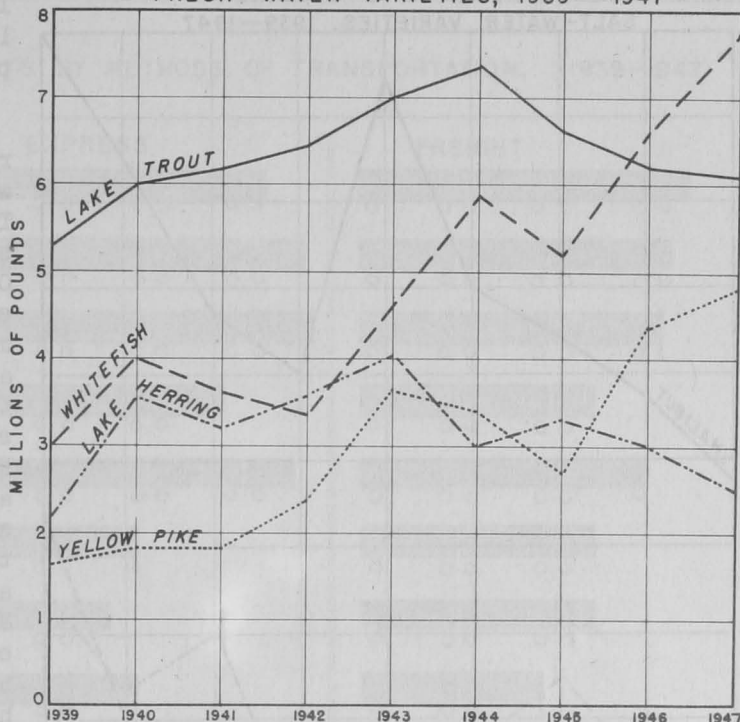
fresh-water varieties, 79 were salt-water varieties, and 28 were shellfish and miscellaneous aquatic items.

Of the fresh-water varieties received, whitefish led with a total of 7,728,000 pounds, followed by lake trout with 6,118,000 pounds, and yellow pike with 4,791,000 pounds (Figure 2). These three species accounted for 37 percent of the fresh-water total of 41,652,000 pounds. Following these were carp, buffalofish, chubs, and yellow perch, all over 2,500,000 pounds each.

Halibut led the salt-water items with 12,106,000 pounds (the greatest amount of halibut received since the establishment of the Chicago Market News Office), followed by frozen rosefish fillets with 6,275,000 pounds, salmon (all species) with 5,519,000 pounds, and cod with 4,591,000 pounds (Figure 3). These four varieties made up 79 percent of all salt-water arrivals.

Shrimp receipts accounted for 63 percent of the shellfish arrivals and totaled 10,728,000 pounds, the heaviest receipts since 1938 when the collection of market news data was begun. Second in importance among the shellfish arrivals was oysters with 2,453,000 pounds, followed by frozen spiny lobster tails, scallops, clams, lobsters, and squid.

FIG. 2 — CHICAGO RECEIPTS OF LEADING FRESH-WATER VARIETIES, 1939—1947



METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

During 1947, motor trucks transported 28,479,000 pounds, or 30 percent of the total receipts—65 percent above the 1946 total (Figure 4). Chief reasons for the return of the truck as a major factor in transportation of fishery products to Chicago are larger units, the increased use of cheaply-operated diesel power, and the ease with which shipments can be re-routed, adaptability of door-to-door deliveries, and the savings of time on short hauls.

Railway express moved 32,181,000 pounds or 34 percent of the total in 1947—a decline of 10 percent compared with 1946.

Rail freight handled 33,990,000 pounds, or 36 percent—a gain of 8 percent over 1946. The gain in rail freight shipments was due mainly to the growing importance of frozen fishery products on the Chicago market, which can be handled readily by the slower but cheaper rail freight.

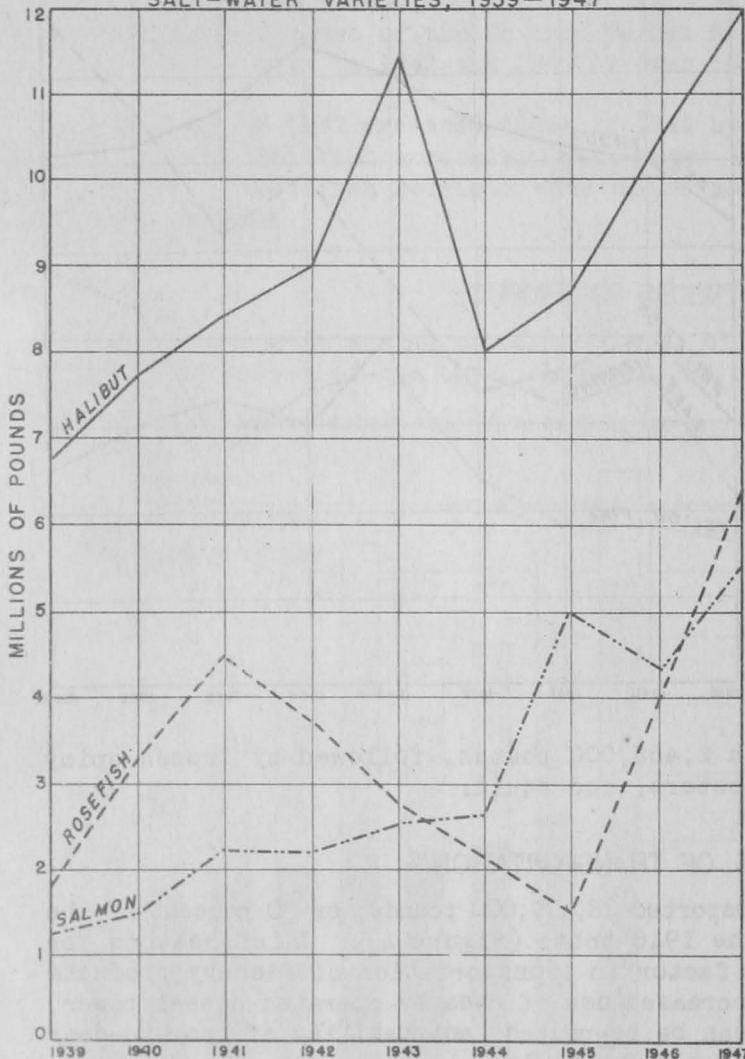
The bulk of the domestic receipts was handled by motor truck while the major portion of the imports was moved by rail freight. Some arrivals of fishery products were received by air express, but the total was relatively unimportant.

SEASONS

Receipts during 1947 were heaviest in October (the same as in 1946) followed by September, and November.

The greatest quantity of fresh-water varieties was delivered in October with April second in importance, and March third. Contributing to the October fresh-water arrivals were large deliveries of chubs, lake trout, lake herring, whitefish, yellow perch, and yellow pike.

FIG. 3 — CHICAGO RECEIPTS OF LEADING SALT-WATER VARIETIES, 1939-1947



Salt-water arrivals also reached their peak in October with July second and June third. The chief reason for the large salt-water deliveries during October was the late halibut season which delayed by two months the usual heavy halibut arrivals that generally reach their peak earlier. At the start of the 1947 Pacific Coast halibut season in May, a dispute arose between fishermen and vessel owners at Seattle that continued through May and June, and the landings of halibut at Seattle did not start until early in July. Although halibut arrivals in Chicago were heaviest in August, heavy receipts continued through September, October, and November.

September led all other months in arrivals of frozen rosefish fillets with 876,000 pounds, followed by July, August, and October.

Receipts of salmon (all species) reached a maximum in November when 829,000 pounds arrived, followed by October

with 778,000 pounds, February with 746,000 pounds, March with 712,000 pounds, and April with 560,000 pounds.

Shrimp receipts reached their highest monthly total in September when 1,475,000 pounds were received, followed closely by May with 1,440,000 pounds, and October with 1,322,000 pounds.

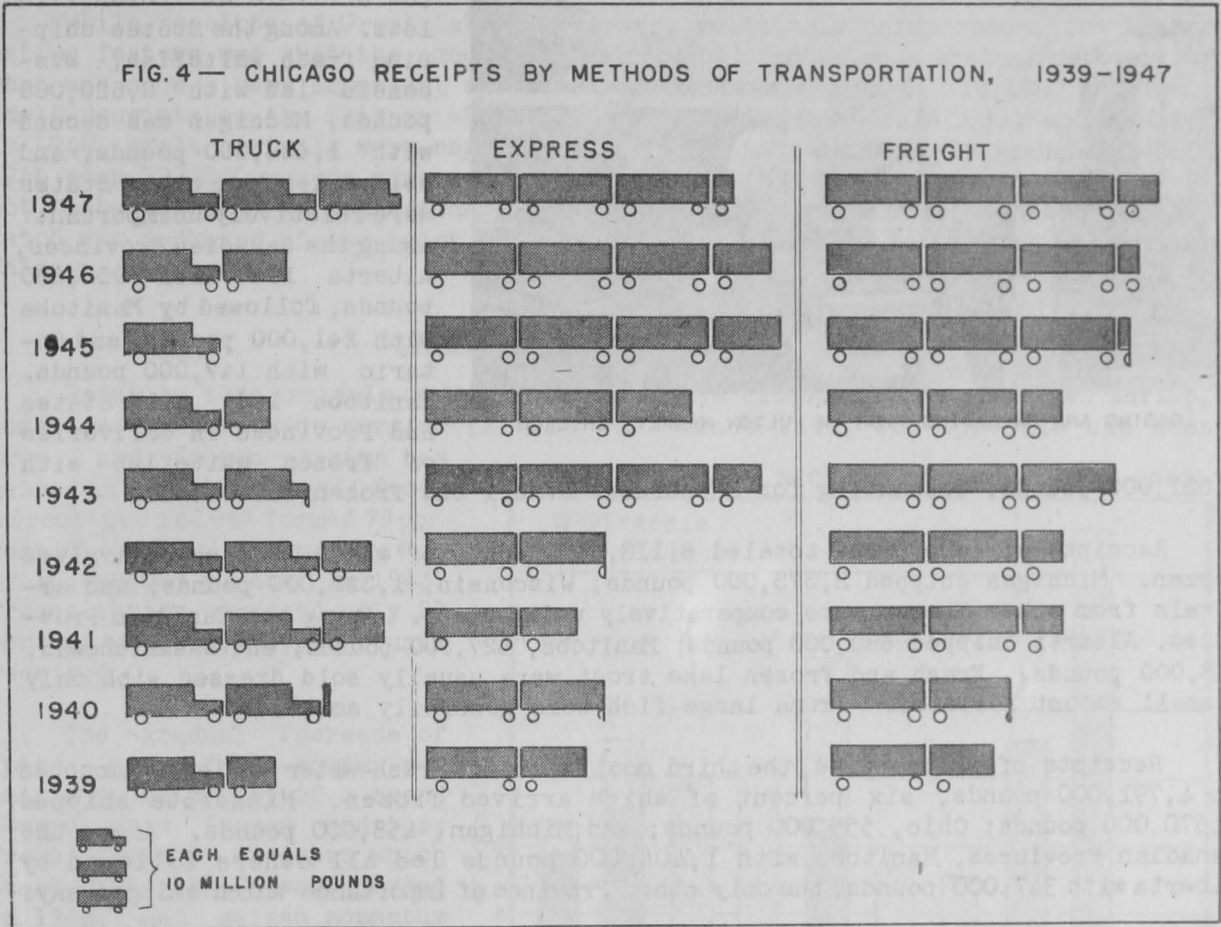
MARKET CONDITIONS AND PRICES

Market conditions throughout the year were erratic as the demand fluctuated from light to moderate, rarely becoming heavy. Supplies usually took care of the

demand but, at times, the demand dropped leaving dealers with large supplies of unsold fish.

Large cold-storage holdings of halibut during the four months leading up to the opening of the 1948 halibut season sent halibut prices down to levels below the 1947 ex-vessel prices on the Pacific. The expected lower prices for the 1948 halibut catch influenced the halibut market which steadily weakened with the approach of the 1948 season. Salmon prices held steady all year.

FIG. 4 — CHICAGO RECEIPTS BY METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION, 1939-1947



For the first time since the lifting of Office of Price Administration controls in 1946, shrimp prices, during the last months in 1947, showed declines. While they did not drop to the level under OPA, a marked decline began during the latter part of October and continued into 1948. The decline was due chiefly to large cold-storage holdings and a lighter demand.

Changing economic conditions also influenced the buying of other high-priced fishery products. Prices for nearly all fishery products underwent frequent changes throughout 1947. Prices fluctuated more frequently and drastically in 1947 than at any time in the past six years. The increased demand expected by local dealers during the Lenten season and the Hebrew holiday periods did not materialize. The buying, in general, on the Chicago Wholesale Fish Market in 1947 fell far below that of recent years.

LEADING VARIETIES AND MARKET FORMS

Whitefish, the most important fresh-water item on the Chicago wholesale market, totaled 7,728,000 pounds in 1947, of which 24 percent arrived frozen. The 1947 receipts were the greatest since 1938. Whitefish usually arrived on the market dressed although a small portion was received round at certain times of the year.



LOADING AND UNLOADING FISH IN FULTON MARKET, CHICAGO

Some quantities were filleted fresh, and there were a few arrivals of frozen fillets. Among the States shipping fresh whitefish, Wisconsin led with 2,620,000 pounds, Michigan was second with 1,488,000 pounds, and deliveries from other States were relatively unimportant. Among the Canadian Provinces, Alberta led with 958,000 pounds, followed by Manitoba with 241,000 pounds, and Ontario with 147,000 pounds. Manitoba led all States and Provinces in deliveries of frozen whitefish with

1,521,000 pounds, accounting for 86 percent of all the frozen whitefish.

Receipts of lake trout totaled 6,118,000 pounds of which 17 percent arrived frozen. Michigan shipped 2,373,000 pounds; Wisconsin, 1,322,000 pounds; and arrivals from other States were comparatively unimportant. Among the Canadian Provinces, Alberta shipped 680,000 pounds; Manitoba, 627,000 pounds; and Saskatchewan, 446,000 pounds. Fresh and frozen lake trout were usually sold dressed with only a small amount filleted. Extra large fish were generally smoked.

Receipts of yellow pike, the third most important fresh-water variety, amounted to 4,791,000 pounds, six percent of which arrived frozen. Minnesota shipped 1,570,000 pounds; Ohio, 555,000 pounds; and Michigan, 458,000 pounds. Among the Canadian Provinces, Manitoba with 1,404,000 pounds led all others followed by Alberta with 347,000 pounds, the only other Province of importance which shipped any.

Chub receipts during 1947 totaled 2,785,000 pounds at Chicago. Fish shippers in Illinois supplied the largest quantity of chubs--963,000 pounds, followed by Wisconsin and Michigan with 909,000 pounds and 848,000 pounds each, respectively. Nearly all chubs were utilized for smoking and commanded consistently high prices throughout the year.

Yellow perch receipts amounted to 2,722,000 pounds, less than one percent of which were frozen. Ohio, the chief source of this variety, shipped 570,000 pounds; Michigan, 506,000 pounds; and Minnesota, 383,000 pounds. Among the Canadian Provinces, Manitoba was first with 303,000 pounds, Ontario was second with 248,000 pounds, and Alberta third with 146,000 pounds. Yellow perch usually arrived round. Large quantities were cut into butterfly fillets, and only negligible quantities were frozen round.

Shipments of lake herring totaled 2,390,000 pounds. Minnesota shipped 1,118,000 pounds; Wisconsin, 790,000 pounds; and Michigan, 465,000 pounds. Herring usually

arrived and were sold on the local market dressed, although a small percentage were filleted and frozen. Some lake herring were smoked when the supply of chubs was scarce.

Arrivals of sauger totaled 1,423,000 pounds, of which 39 percent were frozen. Manitoba shipped 792,000 pounds fresh and 481,000 pounds frozen, and accounted for 90 percent of the total receipts. Saugers were usually sold round and dressed with a large percentage being filleted.

While receipts of Great Lakes smelt were relatively unimportant, the interesting feature was that the amount of the receipts indicated a gradual recovery of what was once a very important species among Chicago arrivals. In 1940 and 1941, smelt receipts on the Chicago wholesale market approximated 2,000,000 pounds yearly. In 1942, smelt arrivals were negligible, but have increased slowly each year until 1946 when 702,000 pounds were received. The 648,000 pounds received in 1947 is not to be taken as an indication of a decline in catch because much of the 1947 catch was packaged at the point of production and shipped to markets other than Chicago.

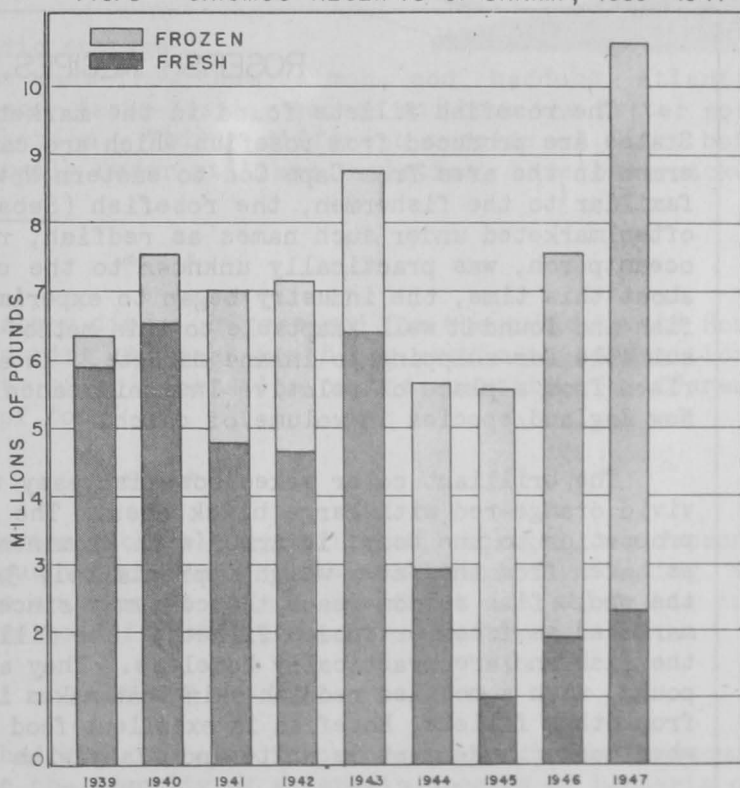
FROZEN FISHERY PRODUCTS

Prior to 1944 arrivals of fresh shrimp always exceeded those of frozen shrimp, sometimes by very wide margins (Figure 5). Since 1944, the opposite has been true, and frozen shrimp has gained in importance until frozen receipts in 1947 formed 79 percent of the total shrimp arrivals of 10,728,000 pounds. In 1943, frozen shrimp composed only 27 percent of the 8,793,000 pounds received.

The gradual increase of frozen over fresh shrimp receipts is only part of a trend toward more frozen and less fresh fishery products which started in the Chicago market in 1946, and gained momentum in 1947 with indications that it would continue in 1948.

An additional indication of the general increase in the handling of frozen fish and frozen packaged fishery products was the increased receipts of halibut fillets and steaks from Alaska. At least one company filleted the bulk of its chicken halibut while other companies steaked and packaged a good portion of their purchases of halibut. Local dealers predict that a still greater portion of the 1948 and 1949 halibut catch will be processed into fillets and steaks.

FIG. 5 — CHICAGO RECEIPTS OF SHRIMP, 1939—1947



Other species arriving frozen in increasing quantities on the Chicago market were cod, haddock, hake, whiting, and several species of lesser importance.

Some of the chief reasons for the growing use of frozen fishery products were advanced packaging methods, attractive display cases for frozen packaged fish, and the ease with which frozen packaged fish can compete with other frozen packaged food products. From the dealers standpoint, the use of more packaged fishery products will eliminate transportation of large quantities of round and dressed fish over long distances resulting in savings in transportation costs. This should result in lowering the price per pound and improving quality as fillets and steaks will be processed and frozen at production points.

Many chain stores, fish and butcher markets, and small grocers, now feature frozen food cabinets containing packaged fishery products, such as, packaged fillets, shrimp, scallops, and spiny lobster tails, along with frozen packaged fruits and vegetables. Some shops also display packaged precooked frozen fishery items.



ROSEFISH RECIPES

The rosefish fillets found in the markets throughout the United States are produced from rosefish which are caught by New England fishermen in the area from Cape Cod to eastern Nova Scotia. Although long familiar to the fishermen, the rosefish (Sebastes marinus), which is often marketed under such names as redfish, red perch, sea perch, or ocean perch, was practically unknown to the consumer until 1935. At about this time, the industry began to experiment with filleting rosefish and found it well adaptable to this method of preparation and hence, suitable for shipping to inland markets. In a few years, rosefish has risen from a place of relative insignificance to rank first among the New England species in volume of catch.

The brilliant color makes rosefish easy to identify, for it is a vivid orange-red with large black eyes. The head, which is large in proportion to the body, is armed with prominent spines. Most rosefish as taken from the water weigh approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound. However, the whole fish seldom reach the consumer since nearly all rosefish are marketed as fresh or frozen fillets. The fillets are the side cuts of the fish and are practically boneless. They are small, about 8 to the pound, with a mottled reddish skin that makes it easy to tell them apart from other fillets. Rosefish is excellent food fish with firm flesh and, when cooked, the meat is white and flaky with a delicate flavor.

This leaflet contains several tested recipes for rosefish fillets.

--Fishery Leaflet 285