

TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Additions to the Fleet of U.S. Fishing Vessels

Seventy-four vessels of 5 net tons and over received their first documents as fishing craft during December 1947, bringing the total additions to the fishing fleet to 1,299 for the year. During December, the States of California and North Carolina led in number of craft documented with 10 vessels each, followed by Florida with 9 vessels, and Texas with 8 vessels, according to information received from the Bureau of Customs, Treasury Department.

The documentation of fishing craft during 1947 was greater than any previous year for which data are available. During the years from 1936 to 1939, inclusive, an average of about 376 vessels received their first documents as fishing craft annually. This is only 29 percent of the number of vessels documented in 1947. During the three years 1945, 1946, and 1947, a total of 3,125 vessels received their first documents as fishing craft, an average of 1,041 each year. In 1940, the total number of fishing vessels of 5 net tons and over in the domestic fishing fleet numbered only 5,562.

Vessels Obtaining Their First Documents as Fishing Craft

Section	December		Twelve mos. ending with December	
	1947	1946	1947	1946
	Number	Number	Number	Number
New England	5	4	75	86
Middle Atlantic	3	2	70	74
Chesapeake Bay	7	5	97	71
South Atlantic and Gulf	34	29	490	351
Pacific Coast	14	20	411	375
Great Lakes	3	4	74	76
Alaska	6	1	47	19
Hawaii	2	4	23	17
Unknown	-	-	12	16
Total	74	69	1,299	1,085

Note: Vessels documented by the Bureau of the Customs are craft of 5 net tons and over.

Vessels Obtaining Their First Documents As Fishing Craft, 1936 to 1947, Inclusive

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1936 ¹ ...	435	1939	357	1942	358	1945	741
1937 ...	335	1940	320	1943	358	1946	1,085
1938 ¹ ...	376	1941	354	1944	635	1947	1,299

¹Data are partly estimated.



Dr. Finn Addresses Conference at Quebec

The need for the development of the world fishing industry was emphasized by Dr. D. B. Finn, Director of the Fisheries Division of FAO, at an East Coast Fisheries Conference in the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City, on February 3, according to an FAO release.

"The best figures obtainable show that the population of the world in 1938 was 2,172 million," Dr. Finn said. "In the short period to 1946, this figure has risen to 2,295 million; that is, an increase of 5.7 percent. It is estimated that, if the present trend continues, the population of Asia alone would increase by 400,000,000 during the next 20 years."

Particularly in Asia, Dr. Finn pointed out, where nutritive standards are very low, population pressures already limit the effectiveness of agricultural production, and it is unlikely that even improved methods of irrigation will enable the agriculture of that area to supply the protein foodstuffs needed to cope even in a minimum way with the increase in population. On the other hand, they have the sea, whose richness for the most part is unmeasured, and a technology which is relatively undeveloped.

To stimulate and guide the work of assessing and managing the resources of the sea, FAO proposes to set up a number of regional councils and the first of these will be a council for the Indo-Pacific Ocean. On February 23, representatives of governments concerned will meet at Baguio, in the Philippine Islands, to initiate this council, whose first function will be to collect information about the resources of the area with a view to focusing the attention of member governments on the further development and wise use of the fisheries.



Fishing Research Boat to be Commissioned

Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug on February 19 announced that the commissioning and dedication of the Albatross III, the only ocean fisheries research vessel operating out of the United States, will take place on March 19, at Boston, Mass.

The vessel, a 167-foot converted commercial trawler, recently completed her sea trials and then returned to the shipyard for minor adjustments. The Albatross III is powered with an 800 horsepower diesel engine and is equipped with the latest developments in navigation aids.

The ship will be stationed at the United States Fisheries Laboratory at Woods Hole, Mass., her home port, and will be operated by the Fish and Wildlife Service in North Atlantic waters.

Imports of Fishery Products from Japan, 1947

Trade with Japan was resumed during 1947. However, imports of fishery products to the United States did not start until November 1947, when 247,885 pounds were entered. Crab meat accounted for 241,765 pounds of this total.

Of the 411,759 pounds received from Japan during December, crab meat was the leading item with 133,778 pounds. Some of the other items were fresh and frozen scallops, 5,000 pounds; other shellfish, 74,056 pounds; whole fish, fresh and frozen (does not include fresh-water fish, eels, halibut, swordfish, tuna, or sturgeon), 60,040 pounds; fish, filleted, sliced, or divided (mainly swordfish), 12,079 pounds; and fish roe (not boiled), 33,940 pounds.



Notes on the Fisheries of Maryland

Cold weather--one of nature's forces--got to work in January. During two weeks of continued low temperature and persistent snow and ice in the latter part



of the month, oystering activities ceased almost completely. Prices for both shell and shucked stock rose, even though there had been no post-Christmas slump. Oystermen in the Choptank River resorted to a method of oystering that is seldom necessary. With all their boats locked solidly in ice, and oyster houses eager for shucking stock, a hardy group of men took a dredge out on the ice, cut a hole to lower it through and a narrow channel to pull

it in, and, by using manpower alone, were able to harvest a satisfactory catch.

The immobilization of the oyster fleet was general throughout the State. It was possible to get some shellstock from Virginia, but it arrived mostly frozen and cost more than packers could afford to pay if they were to keep their shucked product on a competitive level. In the face of this, almost all shucking houses in Maryland shut down.

Winter operations for fin-fish were restricted because of danger to nets from ice. Striped bass, one of Maryland's winter standbys, were scarce and brought 40 cents to 50 cents a pound in the Baltimore market. Medium croakers brought 20 cents, and the poor supply was giving many a dealer thoughtful pause.

Crisfield's soft crab freezing industry has become more important than just a side line. Approximately 15 firms have been packaging and freezing soft crabs during 1947. The crabs are frozen both in the round and ready for the pan, with dealers favoring the former. Freezing of soft crabs, for distribution during all 12 months of the year, may minimize the wide price fluctuations which regularly occur in this branch of the fishing industry.

The Maryland Department of Tidewater Fisheries declared winter crab-dredging legal in Chincoteague Bay as of November 15, 1947. The dredgers who rigged up for

it, have already laid by their equipment and switched to other pursuits because of the scarcity of crabs.

A preliminary investigation of fish waste in Maryland was made by the Department of Research and Education at Solomons Island, Md. The discarded materials, ranging from oyster liquor to alewife milt, were listed and their salvage value pointed out in a recently published report entitled "Utilization Plan--Maryland Marine Products." Chemical companies and other manufacturers were invited to test such waste for yields of pharmaceutical substances and to assist in making recommendations for the use of available waste products.



Office of International Trade Reorganized

Announcement of the reorganization of the Office of International Trade was made recently by the Department of Commerce, the purpose of the reorganization being to coordinate and amalgamate the export control functions of the former Export Supply Branch with other functions of the Office of International Trade. In this way, the full resources of the Office of International Trade can be channelled more effectively to develop and implement special programs made necessary from time to time by changing world conditions. Increasing emphasis is being placed upon export control as a means of distributing essential commodities to the most needy areas. Therefore, the Export Supply Branch was abolished as an independently operating part of the Office of International Trade; its functions, together with all others relating specifically to commodities, were combined under a single Commodities Division; and additional responsibilities were placed in the existing Areas Division.

The Office of International Trade now consists of the Office of the Director, the Areas Division, the Commodities Division, the Export Operations Division, and the Intelligence and Services Division.

The Commodities Division has the responsibility of processing export license applications and has also been charged with new duties in helping to carry out the export control program.

Applications for export licenses should continue to be addressed to the Office of International Trade, Washington 25, D. C.



Wholesale and Retail Prices

The wholesale price index for food showed an increase of 0.6 percent by the middle of December. This is a reversal in the trend which had been down for the past two months. The retail index number for all foods, which had remained nearly steady for two months, showed an increase of 2.1 percent. This was the largest increase in any one month since March 1947. The average retail price for the principal varieties of fresh and frozen fish in 56 cities of the United States declined 1 percent between November 15 and December 15. The price of canned pink salmon also in these same cities increased, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor.

Wholesale and Retail Prices

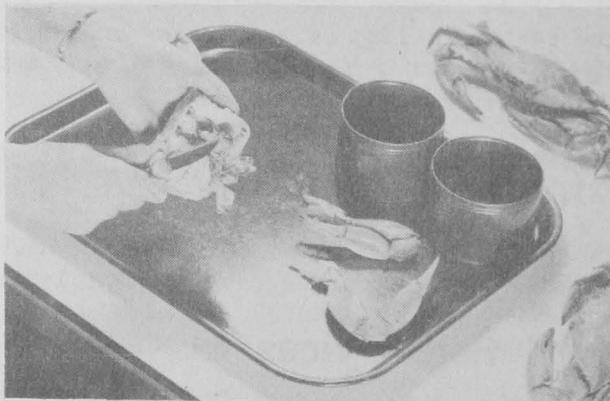
Item	Unit	Percentage change from--		
		Dec. 13, 1947	Nov. 15, 1947	Dec. 14, 1946
Wholesale: (1926 = 100)				
All commodities	Index No.	161.4	+1.8	+15.5
Foods	do	179.0	+0.6	+11.0
Fish:				
Canned salmon, Seattle:				
Pink, No. 1, Tall	\$ per doz. cans	4.95	+1.2	+55.0
Red, No. 1, Tall	do	6.279	0	+17.0
Cod, cured, large shore, Gloucester, Mass.				
	\$ per 100 lbs.	14.5	0	0
Herring, pickled, N. Y.				
	¢ per lb.	12.0	0	0
Salmon, Alaska, smoked, N. Y.				
	do	35.0	0	0
Retail: (1935-39 = 100)				
All foods	Index No.	206.9	+2.1	+11.3
Fish:				
Fresh and canned	do	302.3	0	+13.0
Fresh and frozen	¢ per lb.	42.9	-1.0	0
Canned salmon:				
Pink	¢ per lb. can	51.3	+1.4	*

*Inadequate information.



THE "BOB" METHOD OF PICKING BLUE CRABS

The "Bob" method of crab picking is a rapid way of separating the meat from the shell and is so named because all the legs of the crab are "bobbed" or cut off before the actual picking is begun. It is a method which has been used with good results in some localities for more than a quarter of a century.



Separating the meat from the shell of the crab is still difficult chiefly because of the peculiar anatomy of the crab. Its many shaped body chambers and size variations have steadily resisted efforts to simplify, mechanically, the procedure. Therefore, an efficient picking method is one of the principal factors in a successful commercial operation.

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