TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Additions to the Fleet of U. S. Fishing Vessels

A total of 64 vessels of 5 net tons and over received their first documents a fishing craft during April 1952--38 less than in April 1951. Alaska led with 23 vessels, followed by Washington with 10 vessels and California with 7 vessels, the Treasury Department Bureau of Customs reported.

Vessels Obtaining Their First Documents as Fishing Craft, April 1952

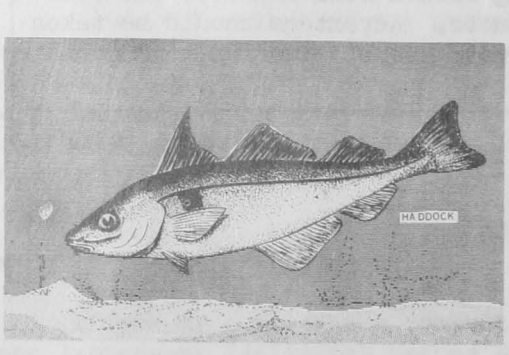
Section	April		Four mos. ending with Apr.		Total
	1952	1951	1952	1951	1951
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
New England	2	3	6	8	36
Middle Atlantic	3	2	12	15	34
Chesapeake Bay	2	2	19	6	36
South Atlantic	3	9	29	31	118
Gulf	13	21	39	68	173
Pacific Coast	18	43	52	81	284
Great Lakes	-	4	4	5	25
Alaska	23	18	47	29	71
Hawaii	-	-	-	1	3
Total	64	102	208	244	780

NOTE: VESSELS HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE VARIOUS SECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR HOME PORT.

Advisory Committee to U. S. Commissioners on Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Treaty Meets

Members of the Advisory Committee to the United States Commissioners on the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Treaty met at Boston on May 15 to discuss the forthcoming meeting of the International Commission.

When the full Commission meets June 30 to July 9 at St. Andrews, it will consider a regulation under which boats fishing for haddock on Georges Bank would increase the sizes of net meshes from the prese size of about 3 inches to a full 3-3/4 inches That regulation is being proposed to prevent the destruction of millions of pounds of smal unmarketable haddock. The U.S. Fish and Wild life Service recommended to the Committee tha "check" boats be used so that the effect of t proposed regulation upon haddock stocks may studied accurately.



The Advisory Committee, made up of repre sentatives of labor, industry, and the publi agreed with the Service officials who said that for statistical purposes several

"check" boats should be allowed to use the smaller-mesh nets. The Service spokeman said he believed six or eight "check" boats would be necessary and that they would be allowed to use the smaller-mesh nets only under Government supervision. The Committee approved a plan under which a limited number of fishing vessels will be excepted from the proposed new larger-mesh net regulations if the regulations are accepted by the International Commission. The members of the Committee recommended that the plan for allowing exceptions to the larger-mesh nets be rotated to cover as many boats as possible over a period of several years.

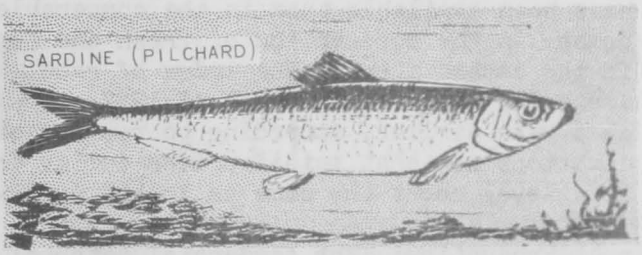
Patrick McHugh, Secretary-Treasurer of the Atlantic Fishermen's Union (AFL), was designated by the Committee to act as its official delegate to the St. Andrews meeting. Thomas D. Rice, Executive Secretary of the Massachusetts Fisheries Association, was designated as alternate.

Francis W. Sargent, Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and one of the three U. S. treaty commissioners, presided at the Committee meeting. Dr. John L. Kask, Assistant Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a U. S. Commissioner, attended.

The International Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Commission is made up of six nations--the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, and Spain. Four other nations--Portugal, Italy, Norway, and France--have signed the treaty, but have not yet ratified the agreement.

California Sardine Reduction Quota for 1952-53 Announced

California fish processors who reduce sardines (pilchards) into commercial oils and meals will have a maximum quota of 100,000 tons for reduction in the 1952-53 fishing season. The California Fish and Game Commission lowered the annual quota by one third after hearing a report from the Marine Fisheries Laboratory that only 1,022 tons were reduced in the 1951-52 season when the Commission had set a maximum quota of 150,000 tons. The action was taken at the Commission's May meeting in Alameda.



At the same time, Commissioners granted 90 applications to reduce sardines for other than human food use. (Last season 97 applications were granted.) Each permittee's individual quota for the coming season will amount to about 1,100 tons.

The establishment of an annual reduction quota is the Commission's only regulatory power over the California commercial fishing industry. All other sardine fishing regulations are controlled by the Legislature.

Federal Purchases of Fishery Products

FRESH AND FROZEN FISH PURCHASES BY DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, APRIL 1952: The Army Quartermaster Corps during April 1952 purchased 2,849,408 pounds of fresh and frozen fishery products for the military feeding of the U. S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force (see table). This was an increase of 19.9 percent in quantity and 19.3 percent in value over March purchases and an increase of 4.4 percent in quantity and 16.7 percent in value over April 1951 purchases.

Purchases of Fresh and Frozen Fishery Products by Department of the Army
(April and the First Four Months, 1951 and 1952)

QUANTITY				VALUE			
April		January-April		April		January-April	
1952	1951	1952	1951	1952	1951	1952	1951
lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	$	$	$	$
2,849,408	2,729,426	9,716,797	8,647,236	1,316,859	1,128,474	4,546,503	3,618,945

Purchases for the first four months of 1952 were greater by 12.4 percent in quantity and 25.7 percent in value as compared with January-April 1951. The average price per pound of 46.8 cents paid for fresh and frozen fishery products during the first four months this year was higher than the 41.8 cents per pound paid during the same period a year earlier.

Fishery Products Marketing Outlook, April-June 1952

Civilian supplies and consumption of fishery products in 1952 apparently have been running at about the same level as a year earlier, and are expected to continue to do so at least through mid-year. Slightly less canned fish commodities have been available than in the comparable period of 1951, but the indicated increase in the consumption of fresh and frozen products about offset the decline in the canned items. The index of retail prices of all fishery products in urban areas for the first quarter of 1952 averaged 350.2 (1935-39=100)--about the same as a year earlier, according to reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Indications are that retail prices during the second quarter may decline a little to a level about the same as in the April-June months of 1951.

Production: The commercial catch of fishery products during the winter of 1952 was somewhat smaller than a year earlier. Part of the decline resulted from the fact that unfavorable weather hampered commercial fishing operations off the New England coast. Besides weather conditions, economic factors were partly responsible for a shift in the type of fishing operations. The strong market demand for cod and haddock encouraged fishermen to concentrate their production activities on these species, with less emphasis on fishing for ocean perch than in the winter of 1950-51.

Freezings and Holdings: Commercial freezings of edible fishery products in the United States and Alaska during January-April totaled 54.3 million pounds, 0 percent greater than in the same months last year. All of the increase occurred during January; freezings in the three subsequent months were not quite as large as a year earlier. The volume of fishery products frozen is expected to increase by mid-1952, reflecting the seasonal expansion in landings. Cold-storage holdings are nearing their seasonal low, but are running much higher than a year earlier. On May 1, 1952, they amounted to about 113.5 million pounds, 27.9 percent above those on the preceding May 1 and the largest on record for that date.

Canned Fish: Total supplies of canned fish were a little smaller in January-April than a year earlier. Slightly more pink salmon was available, but supplies of the other popular species of canned fish were somewhat smaller. Prospects are that total supplies will continue below a year earlier at least until after mid-year, when the new packs start moving into distribution channels.

TYPICAL NEW ENGLAND LARGE TRAWLERS DOCKED AT THE END OF THE BOSTON FISH PIER. PRODUCTION BY THESE TRAWLERS BEGINS TO INCREASE BEGINNING WITH MARCH AND REACHES A PEAK IN JUNE AND JULY EACH YEAR.

Foreign Trade: Imports of frozen fillets of groundfish (cod, haddock, hake, pollock, cusk) and ocean perch during the first four months of this year totaled 42.7 million pounds, more than 35 percent above a year earlier. Indications at this time are that imports of these products will continue at a high rate during the second quarter. Exports of canned fishery products during January-March lagged significantly behind the rate in the same months of 1951. The decline in exports was in large part due to foreign trade restrictions and, to a lesser extent, to smaller supplies and higher prices than last year of the species of canned fish which are popular abroad. Exports of canned fishery products during the second quarter of 1952 probably will continue at a lower rate than a year earlier.

This is a partial abstract of a report prepared by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and published in the former agency's April-June 1952 issue of The National Food Situation.

Metal Cans - Shipments for Fishery Products, March 1952

Total shipments of metal cans for fishery products for March this year amounted to 4,959 short tons of steel (based on the amount of steel consumed in the manufacture of cans), which was considerably below the 5,458 short tons of steel during the corresponding month in 1951. A decline in West Coast tuna canning was largely responsible for this drop in use of metal cans for packing of fishery products. This is based on a report issued by the Bureau of the Census on May 21.

Shipments of metal cans for fishery products for the first three months this year amounted to 13,634 short tons of steel, compared with 16,751 short tons of steel for the corresponding period in 1951.

NOTE: DATA CONVERTED TO SHORT TONS OF STEEL ARE ON THE BASIS OF 23.0 BASE BOXES OF STEEL PER SHORT TON OF STEEL.

North Atlantic Fishery Investigations

LARGER-MESH NETS TO BE TESTED BY SERVICE: Through cooperation with the fis ing industry, biologists from the Woods Hole Station of the Service's Northwest Atlantic Fishery Investigations will sail on the trawler Michigan to test larger mesh nets in order to obtain information necessary for the management of the Nort Atlantic offshore groundfish fisheries. The vessel with its regular crew will fish on Georges Bank on a normal commercial cruise, except that the mesh size of the trawl nets used will be larger than regularly used.

The purposes of the experiments are: (1) to determine whether an experimental cover on the cod end of the net has any effect on the escapement of haddock, (2) to determine the selectivity of various sizes of meshes on the sizes of haddock caught by otter trawls.

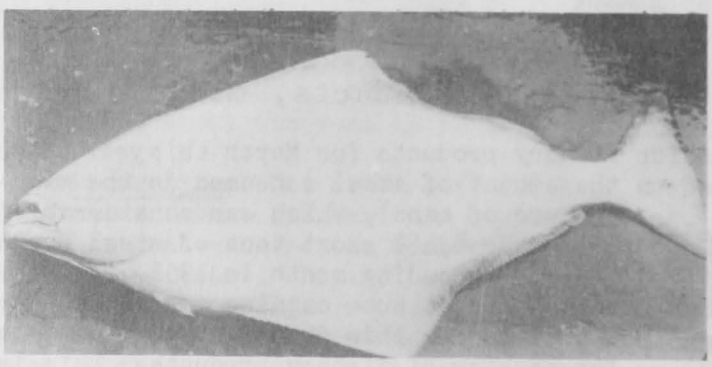
On the first cruise, a cod end with a 4-7/8-inch mesh (inside measurement) will be used. If time permits, some tows will be made with a cod end of 5-1/2-inch mesh. Port and starboard nets will be fished alternately, one with a 1-1/2-inch cotton cover and one uncovered. All haddock caught in the cod end and the cover will be measured.

On the second cruise, testing of a 5-1/2-inch mesh cod end will continue and if time permits, a standard commercial cod end (3-7/8 inch) will be tested also.

The vessel will leave on the first cruise from the Boston Fish Pier June 4, 1952, and return June 12.

Pacific Halibut Areas 1B and 2A Closed

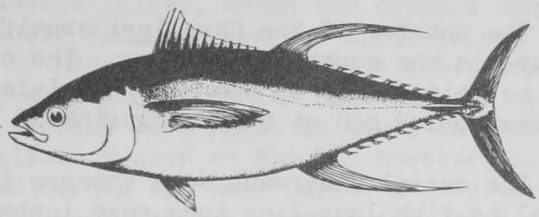
The International Fisheries Commission announced May 28 that Pacific halibut Areas 2A and 1B would be closed at midnight (PST) June 8, 1952, to all halibut fishing, except that provided for in Section 5 of the 1952 Pacific Halibut Regulations and Article 1 of the Convention. By that date the Commission estimates that the quota of 25,500,0 pounds for Area 2A will have bee filled. No quota was establishe for Area 1B, but this area is t be closed with Area 2A. These two areas in 1951 were closed a midnight (PST) on May 28. How ever, the season this year open at 12:01 a.m. (PST) May 14 instead of 12:01 a.m. May 1 as it did in 1951. The 19 season for Areas 2A and 1B will be only 26 days long, compared with 28 days in 1951, 32 days in 1950, 34 days in 1949, 32 days in 1948, 39 days in 1947, and 42 days in 1946. No closing dates have been announced as yet for other areas.



Area 2A includes all convention waters off the coasts of the United States and Alaska and Canada between Area 1B and a line running through the most weste point of Glacier Bay, Alaska, to Cape Spencer Light, thence south one-quarter ea and is exclusive of Areas 2B and 2C, and of the nursery areas. Area 1B includes all convention waters between a line running northeast and southwest through Cap Blanco Light and a line running northeast and southwest through Willapa Bay Ligh on Cape Shoalwater.

Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations

QUALITY OF EQUATORIAL CANNED YELLOWFIN TUNA EXAMINED: The quality of canned equatorial yellowfin tuna was examined by the Service's Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations through cooperation with Hawaiian Tuna Packers, Ltd., according to a May 15 report.



YELLOWFIN TUNA (NEOTHUNNUS MACROPTERUS)

Yellowfin of various sizes as well as groups handled in various ways after capture were canned separately and are now under study. Preliminary examinations indicate that yellowfin of 140 pounds produce a canned product only slightly inferior to yellowfin of 80 pounds. None of the canned product from the equatorial cruise showed "blood streaks," a common problem among tuna packers. Fish purposely bled upon capture produced no better canned product than the unbled fish.

PROGRAM FOR FY 1953: At the annual meeting of the Industry Advisory Committee of the Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations held in San Francisco Marcy 25-26, the following future program for the Investigations was decided upon:

1. Continuation of the survey and investigation of equatorial yellowfin tuna stocks south of the Hawaiian archipelago and eastward to about 120° W. longitude in relation to features of the equatorial current system.

2. Continuation of skipjack studies in the Hawaiian archipelago with emphasis on off-season whereabouts of skipjack. Possibilities for sampan live-bait fisheries along the leeward islands to be considered, and if feasible, survey work to be undertaken on bait supplies and adjacent tuna supplies.

3. Continuation of tuna reaction studies as bearing on live-bait substitutes.

4. By charter arrangement, determine productivity on a commercial basis of equatorial long-line fishing by vessel operating on a share basis.

As opportunity affords:

5. Continuation and extension of research designed to to develop sources of high-seas bait suitable for live-bait fishing.

6. Consider, devise, and employ instrumental or other means to discover stocks of skipjack and small yellowfin as surface schools or beneath the surface or in other states of aggregation.

7. Investigate means of improving long-line catches by:

   a. Increasing knowledge on depths to reach with hooks to get maximum catches.

   b. Gear and gear-handling improvements.

To be held in indefinite abeyance:

8. Investigation of equatorial regions west of 180°.

NEW VESSEL READY: The new vessel (Charles H. Gilbert) built for the Investigations was accepted by the Service in Tacoma, Washington, on April 30. The vessel proceeded to San Diego immediately where it was docked for minor alterations. About May 20 the vessel sailed on an experimental fishing cruise across the equator at 120° and 130° W. longitude.

* * * * *

PURSE SEINER CHARTERED TO TEST COMMERCIAL TUNA FISHING SOUTH OF HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: A large Pacific Coast purse seiner (Cavalieri) has been chartered by the Service's Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations to test the commercial tuna-fishing possibilities in the equatorial region south of the Hawaiian Islands. The vessel arrived in Honolulu on May 16 from San Francisco.

Explorations and experimental fishing in the region of the central Pacific Ocean during the past 2½ years have uncovered large populations of big yellowfin tuna in a band along the equator south of the Hawaiian Islands. The scheduled trip of the Cavalieri to this region will test the feasibility of commercial ex-

ploitation of these new-found tuna stocks. If the trip is successful, it is anticipated that both Hawaiian and West Coast commercial interests will follow the Cavalieri's example, and it is hoped that a large commercial fishery may eventually develop utilizing this untapped vast fisheries resource.

The charter of the Cavalieri specifies that the vessel must fish at least 30 days in the equatorial region. The catch belongs to the crew and vessel and will be sold either in the Hawaiian Islands or on the West Coast depending upon the best price bid at the conclusion of the trip.

The vessel underwent some changes in Honolulu to make it possible for the vessel to fish long-line tuna gear instead of the purse seine, and it sailed for the equator late in May. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service research men are on board to study the catch and make biological observations in the region south of Hawaii.

The crew is made up of experienced long-line fishermen, mostly from Hawaii, while the vessel's master is a local fisherman and experienced navigator.

West Coast Tuna Clipper Lands Fare at Gloucester

A West Coast tuna clipper, Sun Jason, unloaded on June 7 at Gloucester, Massachusetts, a fare of tuna caught by pole and line (using live bait to chum the fish to the vessel) in the offshore waters off South America, mainly off Colombia. The 600,000 pounds of frozen tuna were purchased by a Gloucester fish cannery. After fishing for 45 days, the bait boat covered about 2,800 miles on its trip from the fishing grounds to Gloucester via the Panama Canal. The fish, which consisted mostly of yellowfin and skipjack tuna, were unloaded at a Gloucester freezer for storage.

TYPICAL CLIPPERS USED ON THE WEST COAST FOR FISHING TUNA WITH POLE AND LINE. LIVE BAIT IS USED TO CHUM TUNA TO VESSEL. THE SUN JASON IS A VESSEL SIMILAR TO THOSE SHOWN.

The Sun Jason, a San Diego, California vessel, was manned by a crew of 14. It is reported that the distance from the fishing grounds where the vessel fished to San Diego is practically equal to the distance from the fishing grounds to Gloucester. Two Gloucester fishing records were broken by the Sun Jason in landing tuna at that port: (1) the vessel landed the largest fare of tuna ever landed at that port and (2) the vessel covered the longest distance from fishing grounds to port of any fishing vessel unloading at that port.

Wholesale and Retail Prices

WHOLESALE PRICES, APRIL 1952: The usual seasonal climb in production which occurs in April accounted for the general drop in prices of fishery products at the wholesale level which occurred during that month. The edible fish and shellfish (fresh, frozen, and canned) revised wholesale price index for April 1952 was 105.2 percent of the 1947-49 average--3.9 percent below the previous month and 0.1 percent lower than in April 1951 (see table).

Except for salmon, most salt-water species of fresh dressed or whole fin fish during April showed marked declines in prices. On the other hand, due to certain Hebraic holidays which occurred during the month, prices of most fresh-water varieties rose substantially. Drawn, dressed, or whole fin fish prices this April were 4.5 percent below the previous month, but still 7.7 percent higher than in April last year. Fresh large offshore haddock prices, which had dropped considerably from January to March, continued their downward trend. April prices for this variety were 20.6 percent less than in March, but 1.4 percent above April 1951. Frozen Western halibut prices at New York City, which had been rising steadily for several months, dropped 1.5 percent from March to April in anticipation of the opening of the new Pacific halibut season on May 14; however, these prices were still 10.0 percent higher than during the same period a year earlier. The opening of the new salmon season on the West Coast accounted for the higher prices reported for the first arrivals of fresh king salmon at New York City--prices were 8.5 percent higher than in March and 9.8 percent higher than in April 1951.

Table 1 - Wholesale Average Prices and Revised Indexes for Edible Fish and Shellfish, April 1952 with Comparative Data

Group, Subgroup, and Item Specification	Point of Pricing	Avg. Prices ($) 1/	Indexes (1947-49 = 100)			
		April 1952	Apr. 1952	Mar. 1952	Feb. 1952	Apr. 1951
ALL FISH AND SHELLFISH (Fresh, Frozen, and Canned)			105.2	109.5	108.2	105.8
Fresh and Frozen Fishery Products:			107.4	114.4	114.3	102.9
Drawn, Dressed, or Whole Fin Fish:			111.9	117.2	118.4	103.9
Haddock, large, offshore, drawn, fresh	Boston	.08	86.0	108.3	120.0	84.8
Halibut, Western, 20/80 lbs., dressed, fresh or frozen	New York City	.35	106.8	108.4	106.8	97.1
Salmon, king, lge. & med., dressed, fresh or frozen	" " "	.58	128.7	118.6	120.9	117.2
Whitefish, mostly Lake Superior, drawn (dressed), fresh	Chicago	.73	179.7	161.1	156.2	146.0
Whitefish, mostly Lake Erie pound or gill net, round, fresh	New York City	.90	182.0	156.7	106.2	168.2
Lake Trout, domestic, mostly No. 1, drawn (dressed), fresh	Chicago	.67	137.3	133.2	133.2	121.5
Yellow pike, mostly Michigan (Lakes Michigan & Huron), round, fresh	New York City	.40	93.8	155.9	99.7	98.5
Processed, Fresh (Fish and Shellfish):			101.1	111.5	108.8	100.8
Fillets, haddock, small, skins on, 20-lb. tins	Boston	.29	97.0	115.7	125.9	98.0
Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), headless, fresh or frozen	New York City	.59	93.3	110.7	102.8	90.4
Oysters, shucked, standards	Norfolk area	4.50	111.3	111.3	111.3	113.6
Processed, Frozen (Fish and Shellfish):			103.8	109.6	110.9	103.2
Fillets: Flounder (yellowtail), skinless, 10-lb. pkg.	Boston	.39	136.7	136.7	143.7	133.2
Haddock, small, 10-lb. cello-pack	"	.25	91.1	113.4	122.7	89.4
Ocean perch (rosefish), 10-lb. cello-pack	Gloucester	.23	110.7	113.2	120.4	122.8
Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), 5-lb. pkg.	Chicago	.61	94.1	96.4	88.7	87.9
Canned Fishery Products:			101.9	102.2	99.2	110.2
Salmon, pink, No. 1 tall (16 oz.), 48 cans per case	Seattle	21.00	109.6	109.6	109.6	130.4
Tuna, light meat, solid pack, No. ½ tuna (7 oz.), 48 cans per case	Los Angeles	14.25	89.0	89.0	81.2	93.7
Sardines (pilchards), California, tomato pack, No. 1 oval (15 oz.) 48 cans per case	" "	9.38	109.4	109.4	102.2	78.8
Sardines, Maine, keyless oil, No. ¼ drawn (3¾ oz.), 100 cans per case	New York City	9.65	102.7	105.9	105.9	69.4

1/REPRESENT AVERAGE PRICES FOR ONE DAY DURING WEEK BEGINNING APRIL 14.

Processed fresh fish and shellfish April prices were 9.3 percent below March, but 0.3 percent above April 1951. Both fresh shrimp and fresh haddock fillets were quoted substantially below (16.0 and 16.2 percent, respectively) March levels. However, April prices for shrimp were 3.2 percent higher and for haddock fillets 1.0 percent lower than reported in the same month in 1951.

Lower prices for almost all frozen fillets accounted for the drop in the processed frozen fish and shellfish index of 5.3 percent from March to April; however, this index was still 0.6 percent higher than in April 1951. Although April frozen fillet prices were substantially below the previous month, prices for haddock fillets were still 1.9 percent and flounder fillets 2.6 percent higher than in April

1951, while ocean perch fillets were 9.9 percent lower. The frozen shrimp market weakened slightly and April prices dropped 2.4 percent below March levels, but were still 7.1 percent above April a year ago.

The April index for canned fishery products was 7.5 percent below the same month a year earlier and 0.3 percent below March. In April nearly all canned fishery products remained steady at March levels, except Maine sardines which were quoted 3.0 percent lower than in March. Compared with April 1951, this April's prices were 16.0 percent lower for pink salmon and 5.0 percent lower for tuna, but 38.8 percent higher for California sardines and 48.0 percent higher for Maine sardines.

RETAIL PRICES, APRIL 1952: Although between mid-March and mid-April there was a substantial increase (1.1 percent) in the prices paid for all foods by urban families of moderate incomes, retail prices of all finfish increased only slightly. The retail price index for all foods this April was 1.9 percent above the same month a year earlier.

Because of increased production at this time of the year, retail prices for fresh, frozen and canned finfish dropped 0.4 percent from mid-March to mid-April and were 1.5 percent below the same period last year.

Fresh and frozen finfish prices from March 15 to April 15 also dropped 0.4 percent, but they were still 3.2 percent higher than in mid-April 1951. Canned finfish prices continued to decline and were 0.3 percent below mid-March and 9.6 percent lower than in mid-April last year.

Table 2 - Adjusted Retail Price Indexes for Foods and Finfish, April 15, 1952, with Comparative Data

Item	Base	INDEXES		
		Apr.15,1952	Mar.15,1952	Apr.15,195
All foods	1935-39 = 100	230.0	227.6	225.7
All finfish (fresh, frozen and canned)	do	346.3	347.6	351.7
Fresh and frozen finfish	1938-39 = 100	295.5	296.7	286.4
Canned salmon: pink	do	459.3	460.9	508.1

Retail prices on April 15 for frozen ocean perch fillets averaged 46.4 cent per pound, while frozen haddock fillets averaged 50.7 cents per pound. The previous year frozen ocean perch fillets retailed at 46.9 cents and frozen haddock fillets at 50.2 cents per pound. Canned pink salmon retailed at an average of 56.8 cents per 16-oz. can, compared with 62.9 cents per can in mid-April 1951.

Table 3 - Average Retail Prices and Price Ranges of Individual Finfish Products, April 15, 1952

Product	Unit	United States	
		Average	Range of Prices
Frozen Finfish Fillets:			
Ocean perch[1]	lb.	46.4	29-75
Haddock[2]	lb.	50.7	30-69
Canned Finfish:			
Salmon, pink	16-oz. can	56.8	42-77

1/ PRICED IN 46 CITIES OUT OF 56. 2/ PRICED IN 47 CITIES OUT OF 56.