

TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Additions to the Fleet of U. S. Fishing Vessels

DECEMBER 1952 AND ANNUAL TOTALS 1949-52: A total of 29 vessels of 5 net tons and over received their first documents as fishing craft during December 1952--4 less than in December 1951. Louisiana led with 8 vessels, followed by Florida west coast with 6 vessels, and Florida east coast with 4 vessels.

During the 12 months of 1952, a total of 675 vessels were documented for the first time as fishing vessels, compared with 780 vessels in 1951. Of the total vessels documented during 1952, 438 were built in 1952, 64 in 1951, and the remainder (173) in years prior to 1951.

Vessels Obtaining Their First Documents as Fishing Craft, December 1952 and Annual Totals 1949-52						
Section	December		Annual Totals			
	1952	1951	1952	1951	1950	1949
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
New England	-	1	30	36	36	35
Middle Atlantic	2	-	26	34	45	44
Chesapeake	2	4	65	36	81	87
South Atlantic	5	5	89	118	153	1/369
Gulf	17	12	161	173	167	
Pacific Coast	3	8	203	284	231	327
Great Lakes	-	-	13	25	12	38
Alaska	-	3	88	71	83	96
Hawaii	-	-	-	3	4	5
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	29	33	675	780	812	1,002

1/ DATA FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC AND GULF COMBINED PRIOR TO 1950.
NOTE: VESSELS HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE VARIOUS SECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR HOME PORT.



Federal Purchases of Fishery Products

FRESH AND FROZEN FISH PURCHASES BY DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, JANUARY 1953:

The U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps in January 1953 purchased 1,558,172 pounds of fresh and frozen fishery products for the military feeding of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force (see table). This was an increase of 40.4 percent in quantity and 33.1 percent in value as compared with purchases in December 1952, but a decrease of 32.8 percent in quantity and 22.6 percent in value from January 1952 purchases.

Purchases of Fresh and Frozen Fishery Products by Department of the Army (January 1953 and 1952)			
QUANTITY		VALUE	
January		January	
1953	1952	1953	1952
Lbs.	Lbs.	\$	\$
1,558,172	2,317,411	840,016	1,084,996

An average price of 53.9 cents per pound was paid for fishery products purchased in January 1953, and 46.8 cents in January 1952. This is an increase of 15.2 percent, a good indication that there were purchases of higher-priced fishery products this year.



Metal Cans--Shipments for Fishery Products, 1951-52



Shipments of metal cans for fishery products during the 12 months of 1952 totaled 107,856 short tons of steel as compared with 105,704 short tons of steel during the year 1951, according to a February 18 report issued by the Bureau of the Census.

NOTE: STATISTICS COVER ALL COMMERCIAL AND CAPTIVE PLANTS KNOWN TO BE PRODUCING METAL CANS. REPORTED IN BASE BOXES OF STEEL CONSUMED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF CANS, THE DATA FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS ARE CONVERTED TO TONS OF STEEL BY USING THE FACTOR: 23.0 BASE BOXES OF STEEL EQUAL ONE SHORT TON OF STEEL.



Michigan's Great Lakes Catch of Larger Species Declining

Michigan's catch of the larger fresh-water fish species (lake trout and whitefish) in the Great Lakes has been declining in recent years, while the catch of smaller species (smelt, herring, and chubs) has been increasing. The principal reason for this trend is the sea lamprey which has nearly wiped out lake trout populations in all the Great Lakes except Lake Superior. Recent reports indicate the sea lamprey is on the increase in Lake Superior also, states the Michigan Department of Conservation in a recent news bulletin.

The total volume of the catch in the Great Lakes has changed only slightly in recent years, but the value has dropped as the larger and more valuable species are being replaced by the smaller and less valuable species. This means reduced income to the fishermen.



New Bottom-Fishing Area Discovered Off California Coast

A new bottom-fishing area has been discovered recently off the California Coast by a research team of commercial fishermen and the California Department of Fish and Game. The new grounds (about 600 square miles 140 to 350 fathoms deep) lie 25 to 30 miles off the coast from Morro Bay and Avila. The potential of this bottom fishery is estimated at \$3 million annually, reports the California Department of Fish and Game in a February 11 news release.

Two vessels, the Alamo and Empire II, were used in the three-day survey which produced the find. A State biologist reported "mature and heavy Dover soles were found in quantity and plenty of rockfish were taken, indicating that summer trawling might be as rewarding as that off Eureka."

The research cruise was completed early in February. The two boats used special deep-trawling gear and tested Santa Lucia Bank and its shoreside trough. Objectives were to check potential fishery resources and determine if commercial trawling grounds existed in these deep waters.

The commercial captains, both Eureka fishermen, volunteered their vessels for the research cruise, and the Department's Marine Fisheries Branch assigned a biologist and supplied nets for the experimental deep-water drags.



North Pacific Exploratory Fishery Program

"JOHN N. COBB" TO EXPLORE COMMERCIAL SHELLFISH RESOURCES IN SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA (Cruise No. 15): The commercial possibilities of shellfish resources in Southeastern Alaska again will be explored by the Service's exploratory fishing vessel John N. Cobb on a cruise that began at Seattle, Wash., on March 2. Particular emphasis will be placed on finding areas containing shrimp in commercial quantities. This will be the fifth in a series of similar exploratory cruises.

The vessel will commence explorations in Yakutat Bay, fishing both inside and ocean waters in the region, and then will fish certain bays in the Cross Sound area, and off the west coast of Chichagof Island, particularly in the Khaz Bay area. Beam trawls and shrimp traps will be used. Bottom characteristics will be determined by use of a recording depth-finder, and water temperatures and bottom samples will be obtained at each fishing station.



Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations

"CHARLES H. GILBERT" FINDS MANY SMALL SCHOOLS OF TUNA WEST OF HAWAII (Cruise No. 7): A surprisingly large number of small schools of skipjack and yellowfin tuna were found in the area west of Hawaii and Lanai Islands as far as 150 miles offshore by the Service's Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations research vessel Charles H. Gilbert on a cruise completed on February 14. This was the third tuna-survey by this vessel for signs of skipjack schools in waters north and south of the Hawaiian Islands to a distance of 150 miles.

Preliminary tests on the use of chemical fish attractants in place of live bait were also carried out. It is planned to further explore the use of the tuna attractant developed at Coconut Island by Dr. Albert Tester of the University of Hawaii. If the fish extract can be successfully applied at sea to take the place of live bait in "chumming" for skipjack, it will have wide application here and off the west coast of the United States as well. Several tuna were captured alive and put in the ponds at the University of Hawaii Marine Laboratory at Coconut Island for further testing with the chemical attractant.

In addition, a wide variety of biological specimens were obtained including the uncommon snake mackerel made famous in the accounts of Kon Tiki expedition. Several bands of humpback whales were observed off Molokai and the Kona coast of Hawaii.

These survey cruises will continue intermittently during the winter and increase later in the spring when the skipjack normally appear in abundance around the Is-

lands. These surveys carried out as part of a joint program with the Territory Fish and Game Division are designed to study the possibility for an expansion of the tuna fisheries around the Hawaiian Islands. The scientists of both departments are determined to discover where the skipjack go in the winter and whether or not the fishery can be extended over a larger portion of the year than at the present time.

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"HUGH M. SMITH" (Cruise No. 19) AND SAMPAN "TRADEWIND" FISH TUNA IN LINE ISLANDS AREA: A one-month commercial tuna-fishing trip to the Line Islands area was completed February 12 by the Hawaiian sampan Tradewind and the Service's Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations research vessel Hugh M. Smith. Both vessels caught 22 tons of yellowfin tuna and 2 tons of market fish.

The Tradewind fished for tuna with live bait. Its Captain reports that bait (mostly mullet, Mugil longimanus) of suitable size for yellowfin fishing was scarce at Palmyra Island, but easily obtained at Christmas and Fanning islands. Surface schools of yellowfin tuna were small and scattered; no large concentrations were encountered, although more schools were observed in the Palmyra area than at the other islands. About half of the 14 tons of yellowfin tuna was caught off Palmyra Island and half off Fanning Island. The two tons of market fish, mostly papio (Caranx sp.), were taken at Christmas Island.

The Hugh M. Smith on this cruise carried out a program of experimental long-line fishing, surveyed the oceanic conditions surrounding the islands, and incidentally supplied fuel and ice to the Tradewind. While the live-bait fishing of the sampan was not outstanding, the experimental long-line fishing by the Hugh M. Smith showed yellowfin tuna catches as high as 14 and 19 fish per hundred hooks. This indicated a high abundance of subsurface yellowfin tuna in the waters close to the islands. The total catch of 8 tons of yellowfin tuna (including shark-eaten fish) by the Hugh M. Smith were delivered to Kauai for canning. The main purpose of the research vessel's cruise was to learn something about the distribution of tuna about the islands instead of trying to catch the maximum amount of fish.



Pennsylvania's Commercial Fish Catch in Lake Erie, 1952

The total catch of fish in Lake Erie by Pennsylvania commercial fish companies in 1952 totaled 2,211,835 pounds (see table), with an ex-vessel value of

Pennsylvania's Commercial Fish Catch in Lake Erie, 1952		
Species	Quantity	Value
	Lbs.	\$
Blue pike	1,142,297	203,153
Yellow perch	108,268	22,150
Whitefish	808,414	398,061
Cisco or lake herring	31,020	12,928
Yellow pike (pike perch)	21,042	5,603
Catfish	2,322	440
Carp	598	12
Sturgeon	405	346
Burbot	26,964	539
Mulletts	10,864	371
Sheepshead or gray bass	9,340	264
White bass	49,801	8,408
Smelt	500	10
Total	2,211,835	652,285

\$652,285, according to a recent bulletin from the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Gill nets accounted for 90 percent of the volume (1,995,657 pounds) and 94 percent of the total value (\$612,726). Trap nets caught 6 percent of the total catch (140,800 pounds) and 4 percent of the value (\$23,190), while pound nets accounted for the remaining 3 percent of the catch (75,378 pounds) and 2 percent of the value (\$16,369).



Shrimp Production for South Atlantic and Gulf States, 1952

Estimated shrimp production in the South Atlantic and Gulf States during 1952 amounted to about 199,400,000 pounds (table 1). September and October were the

Table 1 - Shrimp (Heads on) Production for South Atlantic and Gulf States (By Months and States), 1952^{1/}

Month	North Carolina ^{2/}	South Carolina	Georgia ^{3/}	Florida	Alabama	Mississippi & Louisiana	Texas
	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.
January	-	10,000	-	3,858,559	118,440	4,671,300	5,267,843
February	-	13,520	-	3,028,640	158,340	7,809,648	5,452,610
March	-	20,160	-	3,439,554	213,780	3,276,840	2,558,014
April	-	16,632	50,400	1,599,718	245,070	3,537,786	2,975,109
May	-	123,144	188,496	2,579,097	112,350	7,943,807	3,959,412
June	-	405,552	336,000	2,750,586	505,260	8,160,075	3,514,438
July	-	456,288	487,200	2,478,700	1,213,632	7,778,001	4,237,840
August	-	514,920	204,960	2,850,512	1,396,382	8,836,317	5,622,041
September	-	1,016,064	453,600	2,735,112	1,125,519	10,318,623	9,144,546
October	-	905,520	394,800	1,796,474	1,237,152	11,794,440	8,230,454
November	-	291,480	189,840	3,656,312	4/600,000	4/7,300,000	4,030,570
December	-	5/139,900	62,160	5/2,100,000	4/200,000	4/6,500,000	4,299,554
State Totals ..	4/5,920,000	3,913,180	2,367,456	32,873,264	7,125,925	87,926,738	59,292,431

^{1/} PRELIMINARY.

^{2/} DATA NOT AVAILABLE BY MONTHS.

^{3/} BASED ON SALES OF PREPAID TAX STAMPS INSTEAD OF ACTUAL LANDINGS.

^{4/} BASED ON AN ESTIMATE DERIVED FROM FISHERY MARKET NEWS SERVICE RECORDS OF DAILY LANDINGS.

^{5/} ESTIMATED.

NOTE: AS REPORTED BY RESPECTIVE STATE AGENCIES. ORIGINAL DATA IN BARRELS; CONVERTED TO HEADS-ON SHRIMP ON BASIS OF 210 POUNDS PER BARREL (EQUIVALENT TO 125 POUNDS HEADS-OFF SHRIMP). TO CONVERT HEADS-ON DATA TO HEADLESS SHRIMP, MULTIPLY BY .595.

months of heaviest production, while March and April were the lowest months. Louisiana was the leading producer of shrimp, followed by Texas and Florida.

Table 2 - Shrimp (Heads on) Production for South Atlantic & Gulf States, 1950-52

State	1952 ^{1/}	1951 ^{1/}	1950
	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.
North Carolina	2/5,920,000	6,902,400	8,311,300
South Carolina	2/3,913,180	1,729,793	7,746,400
Georgia	4/2,367,456	3,596,880	11,156,700
Florida	32,873,264	33,319,598	22,906,100
Alabama	2/7,125,925	5,641,924	5,006,500
Mississippi	{ 3/87,926,837	{ 93,172,000	9,460,300
Louisiana			77,835,100
Texas	59,292,431	60,637,746	45,812,000
Total	199,419,093	205,000,341	188,234,300

^{1/} PRELIMINARY.

^{2/} BASED ON AN ESTIMATE FROM FISHERY MARKET NEWS SERVICE RECORDS OF DAILY LANDINGS.

^{3/} DECEMBER LANDINGS ESTIMATED FROM FISHERY MARKET NEWS SERVICE RECORDS OF DAILY LANDINGS.

^{4/} BASED ON SALES OF PREPAID TAX STAMPS.

NOTE: AS REPORTED BY RESPECTIVE STATE AGENCIES. ORIGINAL DATA IN BARRELS; CONVERTED TO HEADS-ON SHRIMP ON BASIS OF 210 POUNDS PER BARREL (EQUIVALENT TO 125 POUNDS HEADS-OFF SHRIMP). TO CONVERT HEADS-ON DATA TO HEADLESS SHRIMP, MULTIPLY BY .595.

When compared with the record-production year of 1951, shrimp production in 1952 dropped almost 3 percent, attributed mainly to a decline in Louisiana landings (table 2). But shrimp production in 1952 was almost 6 percent greater than in 1950.



Shrimp Vessel Operators Advised by Texas Banks of Possible Loan Action

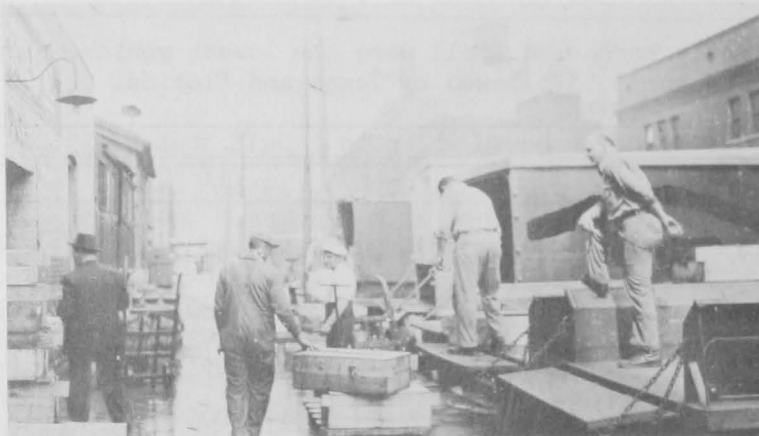
Certain banks in Texas, holding mortgages or notes against shrimp vessels, have advised vessel owners that their loans or notes will be declared in default if the vessels are seized by Mexican authorities within 10 miles of the Mexican coast, except in case of emergency. This information was received by the Service's New Orleans Market News Service office. The following is an excerpt from the notification forwarded to owners of shrimp vessels who have loans from these Texas banks:

"You are hereby advised that you or your crew members are forbidden to take this boat, which is mortgaged to our bank, closer than ten (10) miles to any part of the Mexican coast at any time (except in case of emergency for repairs or due to bad weather). Should you or any of your crew members violate this stipulation and take the boat in closer to the Mexican shore than this ten-(10) mile limit, our bank shall then declare our note in default and shall demand from you payment in full of your note to us."



Wholesale and Retail Prices

WHOLESALE PRICES, JANUARY 1953: A seasonal decline in production was responsible for increases in the wholesale prices for edible fishery products from December 1952 to January 1953. But compared to the previous year, prices were somewhat lower. The edible fish and shellfish (fresh, frozen, and canned) wholesale index for January 1953 was 110.5 percent of the 1947-49 average (see table)--5.6 percent higher than in December 1952, but 3.5 percent below January 1952, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor reports.



UNLOADING FISH AT THE FULTON MARKET, CHICAGO, ILL.

For the drawn, dressed, or whole finfish subgroup items, average wholesale prices in January increased 8.2 percent over the previous month, but were 13.9 percent under a year earlier. Western halibut at New York City was the only item under this subgroup which dropped in price from December to January. Whitefish at Chicago jumped 71.7 percent as supplies became short, and the ex-vessel price for large offshore haddock at Boston rose 16.2 percent.

Fresh processed fish and shellfish prices were 7.5 percent higher than in December and 11.9 percent higher than in January 1952. Fresh haddock fillet prices

were up 42.5 percent over December, but were 15.4 percent below January 1952. Fresh shrimp prices increased 10.7 percent from December to January and were 50.5 percent higher than a year ago. Shorter supplies and an exceptionally good demand have kept shrimp prices at a very high level for the past number of months. Shucked oysters declined slightly in line with the usual seasonal trend.

Table 1 - Wholesale Average Prices and Revised Indexes for Edible Fish and Shellfish, January 1953 and Comparisons

Group, Subgroup, and Item Specification	Point of Pricing	Unit	Avg. Prices (\$)		Indexes (1947-49 = 100)			
			Jan. 1953	Dec. 1952	Jan. 1953	Dec. 1952	Nov. 1952	Jan. 1952
			1953	1952				
ALL FISH AND SHELLFISH (Fresh, Frozen, and Canned)								
Fresh and Frozen Fishery Products:								
Drawn, Dressed, or Whole Finfish:								
Haddock, large, offshore, drawn, fresh	Boston	lb.	.13	.11	131.7	113.3	177.0	174.7
Halibut, Western, 20/80 lbs., dressed, fresh or frozen	N.Y.C.	"	.33	.34	103.2	104.5	137.0	102.2
Salmon, king, lge. & med., dressed, fresh or frozen	"	"	.49	.49	110.7	2/109.5	109.7	120.9
Whitefish, mostly Lake Superior, drawn (dressed), fresh	Chicago	"	.58	.34	142.5	83.0	109.1	156.2
Whitefish, mostly Lake Erie pound or gill net, round, fresh	N.Y.C.	"	.49	.48	99.1	96.1	94.0	88.0
Lake trout, domestic, mostly No. 1, drawn (dressed), fresh	Chicago	"	.61	.61	124.0	124.0	120.9	129.1
Yellow pike, mostly Michigan (Lakes Michigan & Huron), round, fresh	N.Y.C.	"	.41	.39	96.1	91.4	96.1	99.7
Processed, Fresh (Fish and Shellfish):								
Fillets, haddock, sml., skins on, 20-lb. tins.	Boston	lb.	.39	.27	131.0	91.9	129.3	154.9
Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), headless, fresh or frozen	N.Y.C.	"	.78	.70	122.5	110.7	96.4	81.4
Oysters, shucked, standards	Norfolk area	gal.	5.13	5.25	126.8	129.9	129.9	136.1
Processed, Frozen (Fish and Shellfish):								
Fillets:								
Flounder (yellowtail), skinless, 10-lb. pkg.	Boston	lb.	.34	.34	119.2	119.2	119.2	143.7
Haddock, sml., skins on, 10-lb. cello-pack	"	"	.25	.27	92.0	98.5	93.9	122.7
Ocean perch, skins on, 10-lb. cello-pack	Gloucester	"	.24	.24	114.4	114.4	114.4	125.2
Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), 5-lb. pkg.	Chicago	"	.79	.73	121.1	111.8	94.9	84.8
Canned Fishery Products:								
Salmon, pink, No. 1 tall (16 oz.), 48 cans per case	Seattle	case	19.71	2/18.71	104.4	99.1	99.1	109.6
Tuna, light meat, solid pack, No. 1/2 tuna (7 oz.), 48 cans per case	Los Angeles	"	14.50	14.50	90.5	90.5	90.5	81.2
Sardines (pilchards), Calif., tomato pack, No. 1 oval (15 oz.), 48 cans per case	"	"	9.15	9.25	106.8	108.0	109.4	102.2
Sardines, Maine, keyless oil, No. 1/4 drawn (3 1/2 oz.), 100 cans per case	N.Y.C.	"	7.45	7.20	79.3	76.6	76.6	102.7

1/REPRESENT AVERAGE PRICES FOR ONE DAY (MONDAY OR TUESDAY, IF AVAILABLE) DURING WEEK BEGINNING JANUARY 12.
2/REVISED.

Higher frozen shrimp prices (8.3 percent over December) were entirely responsible for the 2.4 percent increase in the processed frozen fish and shellfish prices from December to January and for the fact that the average prices for this subgroup were 2.8 percent higher than a year earlier. Frozen haddock fillets dropped 6.6 percent in January, while fillets of flounder and ocean perch remained unchanged. Heavy stocks of frozen groundfish fillets adversely affected the market for frozen haddock fillets. On the other hand, unusually low inventories have kept frozen shrimp prices at very high levels during recent months. January prices for all frozen fillets were substantially lower than a year ago.

Canned fishery products average prices rose 3.2 percent from December to January. The largest increase was for Maine sardines--13.5 percent. Pink salmon, the only other canned item to increase, rose 5.3 percent. Canned tuna sold at December prices, while California sardines sold 1.1 percent lower. January 1953 canned fish prices were 1.3 percent lower than in the same month in 1952 due mainly to substantially lower quotations for Maine sardines and slightly lower prices for canned pink salmon.