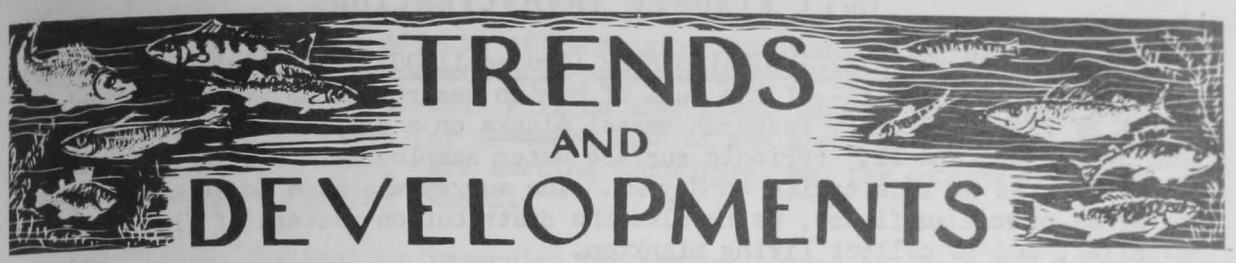



## Additions to the Fleet of U. S. Fishing Vessels

First documents as fishing craft were issued to 62 vessels of 5 net tons and over during April 1953—2 less than in April 1952. Washington led with 12 vessels, followed by Louisiana with 8 vessels, and Virginia, Florida east coast, California, and Alaska with 6 vessels each, the Bureau of the Customs reports.

Vessels Issued First Documents as Fishing Craft, April 1953 and Comparative Data

| Section | April | | January-April | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1953 | 1952 | 1953 | 1952 | 1952 |
| | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number |
| New England ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 30 |
| Middle Atlantic ..... | 2 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 26 |
| Chesapeake ..... | 6 | 2 | 23 | 19 | 65 |
| South Atlantic ..... | 10 | 3 | 29 | 29 | 89 |
| Gulf ..... | 15 | 13 | 65 | 39 | 161 |
| Pacific ..... | 19 | 18 | 40 | 52 | 203 |
| Great Lakes ..... | 3 | - | 5 | 4 | 13 |
| Alaska ..... | 6 | 23 | 16 | 47 | 88 |
| Total ..... | 62 | 64 | 187 | 208 | 675 |

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

## Cans--Shipments for Fishery Products, January-May 1953

Total shipments of metal cans for fish and sea food during January-May 1953 amounted to 33,257 short tons of steel (based on the amount of steel consumed in the manufacture of cans), compared to 28,237 short tons shipped during the same period in 1952. This is based on a July 24 report issued by the Bureau of the Census.

Provided a certain percentage of the shipments earmarked for fish and sea food are not retained for inventory purposes, production of canned fishery products during the first half of 1953 should be higher than in 1952.

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.

## Gulf Fishery Investigations

"ALASKA" CONDUCTS BICLOGICAL SURVEY (Cruise 11-3C): A biological survey--primarily plankton sampling--of the Gulf of Mexico was conducted by the Service's Branch of Fishery Biology research vessel Alaska on a cruise completed at Galveston, Texas, on June 11. Periodic surface water samples were also collected. The vessel started on this cruise on May 27. The survey was made to determine spawning areas of various fishes, to resolve the distribution pattern of fish larvae and juveniles, and to collect living plankton.

Being limited primarily to plankton sampling, the cruise was laid out to include areas that previously had yielded the greatest concentration of plankton, especially fish eggs and larvae; and an area encompassing the "humps" between 30 and 100 fathoms just north of the 28th parallel in the northwest Gulf.

Superficial examination of samples obtained once again showed a marked decrease of plankton outside the 100-fathom contour.

Salinity and temperature records along the cruise line were obtained with the Foxboro dynalog recorder. Periodic surface water samples were taken for subsequent inoculation of selected media in an attempt to culture certain of the smaller planktonic forms.

As the ship was under way continually, dip-net fishing was limited to a few hours in port and while at anchor over a 9-fathom shoal in the northwest Gulf. No noteworthy specimens were captured.

Trolling with feather and nylon jigs while under way during daylight hours was moderately successful. Included in the catch were 4 Atlantic blackfin tuna, 38 little tuna, 2 king mackerel, 9 great barracuda, and 2 dolphin. From Key West to Heald Bank the vessel almost continually encountered sargassum weed in scattered masses and "streaks," which frequently fouled the lures and probably eliminated many potential strikes.

## International Fishing Boat Congress Arouses Considerable Interest

Reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, sponsors of the forthcoming International Fishing Boat Congress to be held at the Delano Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, November 16-20, 1953, indicate larger than anticipated advance registration for the meeting. This meeting will be held concurrently with the Gulf and Caribbean Fishing Institute, sponsored annually by the Marine Laboratory, University of Miami.

More than 40 naval architects, fishing-vessel construction experts, and others interested in fishing-vessel design, have indicated their plans to attend the Fishing Boat Congress.

About 30 technical papers covering a wide variety of vessel problems are already scheduled for delivery or summarization at the meeting. There will be 3 papers on European trawlers; several papers on the design and construction of American trawlers, tuna vessels, and small fishing craft; and at least 1 paper each on the modern-

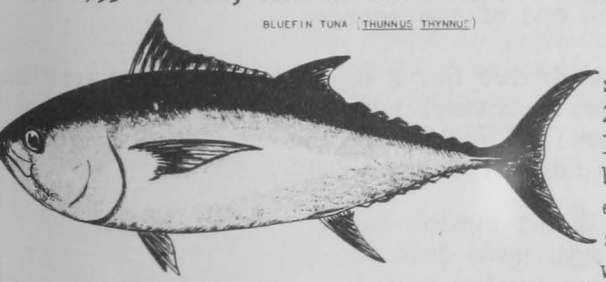
zation of fishing boats in Chile, India, and Pakistan. Problems concerning stability of tuna clippers, the effects of loading on the trim of trawlers, and selection f engines for all types of craft will be pointed up in detail. The economical aspects of various types of vessels will be discussed. Papers on new deck gear, and escription of new trawlers for freezing fish at sea are also included. There will e papers on safety at sea, tank testing techniques, and the owner's viewpoint of hat is needed in a fishing vessel.

For further information regarding the meeting, write to: Food and Agriculture rganization of the United Nations, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome, Italy; or ranch of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Department of the nterior, Washington 25, D. C.

## New England Tuna Explorations

BLUEFIN TUNA EXPLORATION FOR 1953 STARTED: The commercial fishing vessel Marjorie Parker has been chartered for one month by the Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries to continue the exploratory fishing for New England bluefin tuna which was started in the summer of 1951, and followed up in 1952. The charter will be extended for three months.

The Marjorie Parker sailed July 15 from Portland, Maine, on the first cruise of the 1953 season, and is scheduled to return to that port about July 30.


BLUEFIN TUNA (THUNNUS THYNNUS)

The vessel will operate south and southeast of Georges Bank, approximately 25 miles outside of the 100-fathom curve line on the southernmost edge of the bank. A series of long-line fishing operations will be conducted at selected stations near the edge of the Gulf Stream, working in a northeasterly direction towards the Northern Edge of Georges Bank and the Gully between Georges and Browns Banks.

An attempt will be made to locate tuna schools and operate tuna-fishing gear under commercial fishing conditions in areas considered favorable for tuna concentrations. A series of bathythermograph casts will be made at each fishing station in order to plot thermocline levels of the region.

Several types of fishing gear will be operated during the cruise. Redesigned Japanese-type long lines carrying considerably more branch lines and hooks than the regular Japanese long line will be the principal gear employed. Surface troll lines will be operated while the vessel is traversing the area. Floating drift-gill and trammel nets will be operated when favorable conditions are indicated. Masthead lookouts for schools of tuna will be maintained during daylight hours.

* * * * *

SOME BLUEFIN TUNA CAUGHT BY "MARJORIE PARKER" (Cruise No. 1): An initial 14-day trip in search of bluefin tuna in the offshore waters from the edge of the Gulf Stream south of Georges Bank to the Boon Island, Maine, area in the North Atlantic was completed by the schooner Marjorie Parker on July 28. The schooner has been chartered by the Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries in order to continue the

exploratory fishing for New England bluefin tuna which was initiated in the summer of 1951. On this cruise the vessel's crew also tested long-line fishing gear.

Early stages of the trip were devoted to exploring the waters along the inshore edge of the Gulf Stream in an attempt to find bluefin tuna. No tuna schools were sighted in the area and a series of long-line sets were unsuccessful. Surface water temperatures of from 71° F. to 74° F. were recorded in the vicinity.

First schools of tuna were observed on the southwest part of Georges Bank and a set of 10 baskets of long lines, totaling 230 hooks, resulted in a catch of 2 bluefin tuna averaging 35 pounds (round weight) each. Additional sets made in the same general area proved unproductive.

Fishing operations during the last two days of the trip in the South Channel area and along the Cape Cod coast near Chatham, Massachusetts, were also relatively unsuccessful, and only a few tuna were caught.

Surface trolling gear was operated during daylight hours. Four tuna were caught by this method.

In contrast with last year's fishing when blue sharks were taken in large numbers on practically every long-line set, very few sharks were caught on the long lines during this trip.

A total of 15 long-line sets with an aggregate of about 2,800 individual hooks was operated on the cruise. The vessel landed 500 pounds of bluefin tuna. The fish was frozen and stored for disposal at the end of the season.

The vessel was scheduled to leave on Cruise No. 2 on July 30. Using long lines, surface trolling gear, hand lines, and drift-trammel nets, the vessel was to fish for tuna in the Gulf of Maine between Portland and Mt. Desert Island, German Bank, Jeffreys Bank, Cashes Ledge, and Northern Edge of Georges Bank.

## North Carolina Studies Effect of Heat and Low Water on Bay Scallops

An experiment to determine the effect of heat and low water on Bay scallops in North Carolina sounds was started early in June by the Institute of Fisheries Research of the University of North Carolina, the Service's Fishery Marketing Specialist in that area reports. The 1952 summer season was one of the poorest years for bay scallops in the history of the fishery, and the Institute is trying to determine if the high temperatures of last June killed the scallops when they were exposed at low tides. In order to check this theory, the researchers have taken a marked area of shoal water, counted the scallop population, marked the scallops with indelible ink, and then transplanted half the population in deeper waters. In late July and early August the two areas of scallops will be compared. If the results of the experiment show that scallops can be transplanted to deeper waters and maintain their rate of growth, and that scallops in shallow waters are harmed by the hot weather, then the Institute may recommend transplanting generally if it is economically feasible.

## Pacific Seamount Named After a Fish and Wildlife Service Service Exploratory Vessel

The name Cobb Seamount for the 18-fathom peak which lies approximately 270 miles west of Willapa Bay, Washington, was officially approved by the Board on Geographic Names on July 21, 1953.

This seamount was discovered by the John N. Cobb on August 1, 1950, while the vessel was engaged in offshore albacore explorations. The vessel is one of several exploratory fishing vessels operated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries.

Later the John N. Cobb returned to the seamount and experimental fishing with regular halibut long-line gear resulted in good catches of large red rockfish (Sebastodes ruberrimus) on the slopes and ledges of the seamount. A few halibut were also taken. Attempts at trawling the terraces near the peak resulted in lost and damaged gear, indicating the area is too rough for trawling.

The Coast and Geodetic Survey has announced that the Cobb Seamount will appear on all future charts of the area.

## Wholesale Prices for Fishery Products, June 1953

The usual seasonal spurt in production caused June prices for edible fishery products to drop substantially below May levels. The edible fish and shellfish (fresh, frozen, and canned) wholesale index for June 1953 was 100.9 percent of the 1947-49 average (see table)--lower than May 1953 by 5.6 percent and June 1952 by 1.8 percent.

Although June average prices for the items in the drawn, dressed, or whole finfish subgroup rose 0.7 percent over the previous month, they were still 9.7 percent below a year earlier. Higher prices this June for West Coast halibut and salmon more than offset the drop in the ex-vessel price of large haddock at Boston. Every single item in the subgroup was priced substantially below a year ago, except for whitefish at New York City which was priced considerably higher.

Fresh shrimp prices, which had been climbing steadily since October 1952, dropped 26 percent from May to June this year. Increased production in the Gulf and South Atlantic was the principal cause for the price drop. Lower shrimp and oyster prices were reflected in the June fresh processed fish and shellfish index which was 16.6 percent lower than in May but 11.1 percent above June 1952. Fresh haddock fillet prices remained steady at May levels, but were 1.8 percent lower than a year earlier.

Frozen shrimp prices (like those for fresh shrimp) also dropped substantially in June. Prices for frozen shrimp in June were 26.9 percent lower than in May, but still 20.2 percent above June 1952. Although from May to June there was no change in frozen flounder fillet prices, haddock fillet prices increased 11.7 percent while ocean perch fillets dropped 4.4 percent. Compared with June 1952, all frozen fillet prices this June were lower. Principally because of the lower shrimp and ocean perch fillet prices, the processed frozen fish and shellfish index declined 14.7 percent from May to June, but was still 2.4 percent higher than a year earlier.

While canned Maine sardine prices decreased 6.9 percent from May to June, all other items included in the canned fishery products index showed no price fluctuations. The drop in Maine sardines was attributed to the beginning of the new canning season, but the pack has been reported substantially below 1952. Canned salmon and

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

| Group, Subgroup, and Item Specification | Point of Pricing | Unit | Avg. Prices 1/ ($) | | Indexes (1947-49 = 100) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | June 1953 | May 1953 | June 1953 | May 1953 | Apr. 1953 | June 1952 |
| ALL FISH AND SHELLFISH (Fresh, Frozen, and Canned) | | | | | 100.9 | 106.5 | 98.9 | 102.8 |
| Fresh and Frozen Fishery Products: | | | | | 103.2 | 112.2 | 99.4 | 105.1 |
| Drawn, Dressed, or Whole Finfish: | | | | | 97.4 | 96.7 | 81.8 | 107.9 |
| Haddock, large, offshore, drawn, fresh | Boston | lb. | .09 | .09 | 87.1 | 90.1 | 50.6 | 102.5 |
| Halibut, Western, 20/80 lbs., dressed, fresh or frozen | N.Y.C. | " | .31 | .29 | 95.9 | 90.5 | 94.4 | 102.2 |
| Salmon, king, lge. & med., dressed, fresh or frozen | " | " | .48 | .47 | 108.4 | 104.5 | 107.9 | 120.9 |
| Whitefish, mostly Lake Superior, drawn (dressed), fresh | Chicago | " | .36 | .50 | 88.0 | 122.7 | 105.3 | 96.7 |
| Whitefish, mostly Lake Erie pound or gill net, round, fresh | N.Y.C. | " | .52 | .60 | 104.1 | 121.3 | 101.1 | 88.0 |
| Lake trout, domestic, mostly No. 1, drawn (dressed), fresh | Chicago | " | .52 | .48 | 106.5 | 98.4 | 79.9 | 107.8 |
| Yellow pike, mostly Michigan (Lakes Michigan & Huron), round, fresh | N.Y.C. | " | .45 | .31 | 105.5 | 72.7 | 51.0 | 106.7 |
| Processed, Fresh (Fish and Shellfish): | | | | | 111.9 | 134.2 | 123.3 | 100.7 |
| Fillets, haddock, sml., skins on, 20-lb. tins | Boston | lb. | .27 | .27 | 91.9 | 91.9 | 81.7 | 93.6 |
| Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), headless, fresh or frozen | N.Y.C. | " | .74 | 1.00 | 117.0 | 158.1 | 137.5 | 93.3 |
| Oysters, shucked, standards | Norfolk area | gal. | 4.50 | 4.75 | 111.3 | 117.5 | 117.5 | 111.3 |
| Processed, Frozen (Fish and Shellfish): | | | | | 106.5 | 124.3 | 115.3 | 104.0 |
| Fillets: Flounder (yellowtail), skinless, 10-lb. pkg. | Boston | lb. | .31 | .31 | 108.7 | 108.7 | 115.7 | 129.7 |
| Haddock, sml., skins on, 10-lb. cello-pack | " | " | .21 | .19 | 79.0 | 70.7 | 78.1 | 89.3 |
| Ocean perch, skins on, 10-lb. cello-pack | Gloucester | " | .22 | .23 | 103.5 | 108.3 | 112.0 | 108.3 |
| Shrimp, lge. (26-30 count), 5-lb. pkg. | Chicago | " | .78 | 1.06 | 119.6 | 163.5 | 134.2 | 99.5 |
| Canned Fishery Products: | | | | | 97.5 | 98.0 | 98.2 | 99.4 |
| Salmon, pink, No. 1 tall (16 oz.), 48 cans per case | Seattle | case | 19.70 | 19.70 | 104.4 | 104.4 | 104.4 | 109.6 |
| Tuna, light meat, solid pack, No. ½ tuna (7 oz.), 48 cans per case | Los Angeles | " | 14.80 | 14.80 | 92.4 | 92.4 | 92.4 | 89.6 |
| Sardines (pilchards), Calif., tomato pack, No. 1 oval (15 oz.), 48 cans per case | " | " | 9.25 | 9.25 | 108.0 | 108.0 | 108.0 | 109.4 |
| Sardines, Maine, keyless oil, No. ¼ drawn (3¾ oz.), 100 cans per case | N.Y.C. | " | 6.70 | 7.20 | 71.3 | 76.6 | 79.3 | 71.3 |

1/ REPRESENT AVERAGE PRICES FOR ONE DAY (MONDAY OR TUESDAY) DURING THE WEEK IN WHICH THE 15TH OF THE MONTH OCCURS.

sardine prices in June this year were lower than in June 1952, but canned tuna prices were up 3.1 percent. June 1953 canned Maine sardine prices were the same as a year earlier. The canned fishery products index for June 1953 was 1.9 percent below the same month in 1952 and 0.5 percent lower than in May this year.