

# FOREIGN FISHERY TRADE

## Imports and Exports

**GROUND FISH IMPORTS:** From January 1 through March 2, 1946, there were 7,121,792 pounds of fresh and frozen groundfish imported into the United States, the Bureau of Customs of the Treasury Department reported on March 14. The reduced tariff quota for the year is 15,000,000 pounds, or 15 percent of the average apparent consumption of the past three years.

Commodity	Feb.4-Mar.2,1946	Jan.1-Feb.2,1946	February 1945	Jan.-Feb.1946	Jan.-Feb.1945
Fish, fresh or frozen fillets, steaks, etc., of cod, haddock, hake, cusk, pollock, and rosefish	3,497,892	3,623,900	2,549,383	7,121,792	3,908,681



## Japan

**POST-WAR FISHERIES:** The following policy conclusions with respect to the treatment of Japanese fishing and aquatic industries during the occupation period have been approved by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee. They have been incorporated in a Directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur, dated November 19, 1945. They were released on February 18 as a further step in the State Department's program to release to the public, as rapidly as security conditions warrant, full information concerning the Japanese occupation policies which have been adopted by the United States on behalf of the Allies:

"During the period of occupation, the Supreme Commander should be guided, subject to military considerations, by the following general principles:

"a. In order to meet domestic consumption requirements, the Supreme Commander should:

- (1) Insist that appropriate available vessels, facilities, gear, equipment and supplies in Japanese hands be put to use;
- (2) Take such steps as he may deem practical and necessary to provide sufficient fuel for allocation to fishing boats;
- (3) Require the Japanese Government to rehabilitate the production facilities of the fishing, fish fertilizer and seafood processing industries, and facilities for distribution of their products; and

(4) Furnish such other assistance, subject to general policies governing aid to Japanese industry, as he deems necessary.

- "b. The coastal fisheries and fish culture should be utilized as the primary sources for domestic consumption. To the extent that fish culture and coastal fisheries are unable to meet the minimum domestic requirements, deep sea fisheries and other fisheries in water open to Japanese operation may be utilized where security and political considerations permit. Deep sea fishing in areas near United States territory or near United States island responsibilities should not be authorized. Japanese fishing should not be permitted near areas under Allied jurisdiction without prior permission from the country concerned. These prohibitions should continue until international agreements are negotiated permitting Japanese fishing in these areas.
- "c. In order to determine (1) the effect on Japanese food supply of restrictive measures enforced for security or other reasons, and (2) the extent to which the United States and other nations should be permitted to exploit fisheries previously exploited by the Japanese, the Supreme Commander should immediately obtain from the Japanese Government available surveys and other data concerning the resources of all Pacific fishing areas previously exploited by the Japanese.
- "d. Japanese fishing operations should conform strictly to:
- (1) The provisions of agreements relating to whaling to which the United States is a party;
  - (2) The provisions of other agreements relating to conservation to which the United States is a party;
  - (3) The policies or rules governing specific fisheries announced by the United States, or by other governments in conformity with policies announced by the United States with respect to coastal fisheries;
  - (4) The Japanese national and local regulations for the conservation of fisheries.
- "e. Such fishery products may be exported as can be produced by vessels, facilities, gear, equipment and supplies not suitable for or convertible to use in providing for domestic consumption, and which are needed (1) to supply United Nations needs for animal proteins and oils or (2) to secure foreign exchange for essential imports.
- "f. In the establishment of local security regulations consideration should be given to ensuring the maximum production of seafood products consistent with security requirements."

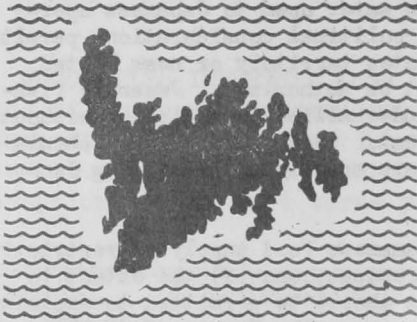


## Newfoundland

**SEAL FISHERY:** The history of the Newfoundland seal hunt is replete with adventure, romance, and tragedy, according to a report received by the State Department from the American Consulate General at St. John's, Newfoundland.

The report is extracted as follows:

Newfoundland's hair seal-fishery has been the subject of considerable comment and agitation during recent years owing to the fact that this once flourishing and not unimportant industry has sharply declined during the past several years.



The early seal-fishery in Newfoundland was prosecuted with seal nets, followed by ice-skiffs, gallopers, small schooners, brigs, brigantines, and barks. In 1855, 400 vessels were engaged, with 13,000 men. From that date, the decline in sailing vessels commenced, and 25 years later sailing vessels in connection with the seal-fishery were a thing of the past. The employment of steamers in connection with the seal-fishery commenced in 1863; by 1906, 25

steamers were engaged, with 4,061 men. The number of steamers gradually declined, however, until 1938, when only eight, with 1,459 men, were employed, representing a fall in 32 years of 17 steamers and a decrease of 2,602 men.

The total number of seal skins exported from Newfoundland up to recent years reflected the declining number of ships and men employed. Until 1858, it was common for exports to exceed the half-million mark, with 1831 being the record year (686,836 seal skins). The half-million mark was never again reached, with the single exception of the year 1902 (527,686 seal skins). Average annual exports of seal skins during the early part of the 20th century averaged well over 200,000, but after World War I, dropped to an average of less than 150,000.

Probably the most reliable index of production can be found in export figures, inasmuch as available figures for annual seal catches cover only those caught by the sealing steamer fleet, excluding those caught by offshore nets and auxiliary vessels. However, since steamers have been responsible for the greater part of annual catches, statistics covering catches made by the sealing steamer fleets give a good picture of general trends.

The table below shows the number of steamers and men prosecuting the seal fishery, together with total catches in quantities and values, for the years 1936-1944\*:

Production of Sealing Steamer Fleets 1936-1944,\*Inc.

Year	No. of Steamers	No. of Men	Seals Caught	Net Value	Value to Men
1936	8	1,460	183,689	\$224,495.22	--
1937	7	1,305	113,340	205,033.34	--
1938	8	1,459	226,747	490,664.42	\$163,554.80
1939	7	1,291	97,345	149,399.36	49,766.45
1940	7	1,307	159,687	205,030.29	66,670.00
1941	4	606	42,666	67,178.63	22,131.00
1942	3	309	4,698	11,685.94	3,903.35
1944*	1	121	6,697	17,682.69	5,845.51

\*No steamers prosecuted the seal fishery in 1943 and 1945.

All values in Canadian dollars. \$1.00 U.S. - \$1.10 Canadian.

Source: Compiled by writer from data in Annual Reports of Newfoundland Fisheries Board. 1944 figures furnished separately by the Board.

It may be observed from this table that the seal-fishery has irregularly declined until it has all but reached the vanishing point during the past few years.

During the two years when no steamers engaged in the seal fishery (1943 and 1945), a number of small wooden auxiliary vessels were employed, and landsmen caught a number of seals with the use of nets offshore. Unfortunately, no record was kept of the catch by each auxiliary vessel in these two years, nor are any figures available concerning the catch of seals by landsmen.

The following table shows exports of seal skins from Newfoundland for the fiscal years 1925 to 1945 by quantities and values:

Exports of Seal Skins from Newfoundland--Fiscal Years 1925-1945\*

Year	Quantities	Values	Year	Quantities	Values
1925-26	132,509	\$183,271	1935-36	154,973	\$254,629
1926-27	174,693	258,690	1936-37	214,441	305,285
1927-28	336,269	606,517	1937-38	194,899	307,635
1928-29	187,449	444,198	1938-39	98,511	164,989
1929-30	184,613	349,858	1939-40	203,354	418,102
1930-31	202,543	321,942	1940-41	166,815	231,681
1931-32	40,617	62,965	1941-42	129,765	235,008
1932-33	132,660	232,762	1942-43 (9 mos.)	25,784	69,310
1933-34	229,917	535,717	1943-44	17,561	47,451
1934-35	154,937	285,614	1944-45	34,410	147,722

\*Fiscal years ended June 30 to 1941-1942, inclusive; nine months period 1942-43 ended March 31; subsequent periods based on new fiscal period April 1-March 31. Quantities in imperial gallons: one imperial gallon equals 1.20094 U.S. gallons. Values in Canadian dollars: \$1.00 U.S. equals \$1.10 Canadian.

Source: Compiled by Newfoundland Fisheries Board from Annual Newfoundland Customs Returns.

With respect to general trends, it may be seen from this table that exports generally exceeded the 150,000 mark in quantity until 1942-43, when exports fell to about 25,000 and remained close to that figure in the succeeding two fiscal years. This was largely due to the depletion of the sealing fleet by loss of vessels at the icefields, requisitioning of vessels for war purposes, and so forth. The high point was reached in 1927-28 when over 336,000 skins were exported, about two-thirds of which went to the United States.

Seal oil exports fluctuated irregularly between about 300,000 and 800,000 imperial gallons,<sup>1/</sup> from 1925-26 to 1941-42. Exports then fell well below the 300,000 mark, and reached figures below the 100,000 mark in succeeding fiscal years. During the war, the British market greatly diminished, and Canada became the leading market for the relatively small exports.

The United States market had already become unimportant through the imposition of a processing tax by the United States in 1934.

The most important of the varieties of seals hunted by Newfoundlanders are the Harp and the Hood of the Hair breed. The name "Harp" is given to the species because of a brown patch on the sides which is thought to resemble a harp. The "Hood" gets its name from the peculiar formation of the head of the male, which is covered with loose skin. The Harps are spotted cream and brown in color, and are about six feet long when fully grown. The Hoods are grey with brown spots; when fully grown they measure nearly nine feet and are much heavier than the Harps.



The Hoods come from the shores of Greenland, and are by nature a warlike tribe. Fierce and independent, they move in scattered families, riding the floes

<sup>1/</sup>One imperial gallon equals 1.20094 U.S. gallons.

where the ice is heavy and rugged. The Harps are mild, docile, and gregarious, probably coming from the more sheltered recesses of Hudson's Bay. Late in October, both leave the ice and start south, the Hoods crossing from Greenland to Labrador, where they meet the Harps. From then on they seem to travel in two long, parallel columns, the Hoods always taking the outer or seaward position. Thus they move slowly in a southerly direction until they reach the great Ocean Banks off Cape Race.

Returning north, they again mount the ice about the end of February, in the neighborhood of the Straits of Belle Isle. This is the whelping season, and the seal hunt begins as soon as the young are about a month old.



Survivor of Newfoundland's Once Great Sealing Steamer Fleet

The Newfoundland seal hunts have commenced early in March and have been attended with great pomp and ceremony. It is said that old sealing captains possess an instinct which annually leads them to the seal herds. Usually the seals have been located in the vicinity of Funks Islands, between 50 and 100 miles off Notre Dame Bay, on the northeastern coast of Newfoundland.

No scientific studies of the growth and movement of seals in Newfoundland waters have ever been made.

The sealing industry has, in the past, been an important source of earning power. At the beginning of this century, the industry was giving direct employment, for nearly two months, to about 3,500 men and to many more by indirect employment.

The main reasons that have been given for the decline of this industry are:

1. The high cost of outfitting and repairing ships caused largely by taxation-- a very large proportion of the principal items required in connection with outfits and repairs being subject to considerable taxation.
2. Heavy direct taxation on profits in successful years without consideration or allowance for losses on the venture in other years.
3. The closing of the United States market to Newfoundland seal oil by the imposition of a prohibitive tax as a processing tax, since the inauguration of which several years ago absolutely no seal oil has been sold there, whereas previously 50% or more of the seal oil production was sold there.

Lack of government interest in fostering the sealing industry has been largely responsible for the recent decline of the seal-fishery. No protest has been made by the Government to the United States with respect to the prohibitive processing tax.

However, it is widely believed--even in seal-fishery circles--that the primary reason for the decline of the Newfoundland seal-fishery has been a natural depletion in the seal herds; yet this factor is not listed among the three main reasons leading up to the decline of the seal-fishery.

The Board of Trade Committee, consisting of leaders in the sealing industry during recent years, makes the following statement in its report:

"It seems rather obvious that the aerial survey is of great importance before anything else is done, as there seems to be a general opinion that the seal herds have been very seriously reduced in recent years. A thorough survey can be made and this point cleared up."



Newfoundland Seal Hunters at Work

It is reported that only one steamer is scheduled to engage in the seal-fishery during 1946. The probability is that several motor vessels will also engage in the seal-fishery, definite plans having been made for four such vessels to leave.

The seal-fishery has perhaps never been an industry of major importance in Newfoundland. In terms of money, the industry has always been small compared to the cod-fishery. Nevertheless, the industry has had a two-fold value: It has given direct employment to several thousands of men during the off-season, and it has given indirect employment through a large part of the year to shipbuilders, blacksmiths, and engineers.

What is really needed at the present time, however, is a careful and disinterested governmental study of the seal-fishery. Such a study should be sufficiently thorough to cover an analysis of results for past seasons, a careful consideration as to the types of vessels which should be employed, and recommendations as to government fiscal policies. Recent aviation developments, in addition, should make it possible for the Government to conduct a highly useful series of aerial surveys.

A favorable report by the Government might well lead to the revival of a seal-fishing industry, which is nearly as old as Newfoundland itself, and which has a very real potential value to the economy of Newfoundland.



## Philippines

**SURVEY OF FISHERIES:** A 4-month field survey of the commercial fishing industry of the Philippine Islands has been undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, to determine what equipment, materials, and funds will be needed to restore the fisheries to early production, according to an announcement by that Department on March 3.

The fishing industry of the Philippines, normally one of the chief sources of protein foods in the Islands, was completely destroyed by combat action and by vandalism and confiscation by the Japanese occupation troops, and practically no vessels, fishing gear, or shore facilities remain.

The survey is being undertaken at the direction of President Truman, who also requested the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War to cooperate by providing assisting personnel from their Departments, as well as transportation and other facilities. The survey has also been welcomed by the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines, and the President of the Philippines, as promising much needed assistance to the war-torn Islands.



Because of the critical food situation in the Philippines, the immediate restoration of the fisheries to productiveness is regarded as essential. It is believed that this can be accomplished in much less time than will be required to reestablish other sources of protein foods and of adequate agricultural crops.



## OYSTER ENEMIES

The chief enemy of the oyster is the starfish, which infests the productive oyster beds in Buzzards Bay, Narragansett Bay, and Long Island Sound, and consumes hundreds of thousands of bushels of oysters annually. This pest can be reduced by mopping, dredging, or by spreading lime over oyster grounds.



The oyster drill, a marine snail widely distributed on the coast, and particularly abundant in the New England and Middle Atlantic States and in the lower part of the Chesapeake Bay, consumes a million dollars worth of oysters annually in Delaware Bay alone. It has been spread by careless oyster planting, not only along the Atlantic Coast, but on the Pacific Coast as well, and to Europe. Drills can be controlled by trapping and by the use of a special dredge; but coordinated and well planned State-wide or interstate campaigns are necessary to achieve success in destroying the centers of infestation.



Conch, drumfish, and various skates or rays frequently attack oyster beds in the Gulf of Mexico, devouring tremendous quantities. Oyster planters construct elaborate fences to keep the fish away and even resort to dynamiting to eliminate drums. Among the birds, the scaup duck is notorious for consuming large quantities of small oysters exposed at low tide.



Besides these enemies which actually devour oysters, are many parasites and commensals which invade the tissues and shells and impair the quality of oyster meat. Many other creatures compete with the oyster for space, and wreak damage by fouling the shells planted to catch set, or by smothering the young after they have attached themselves.