



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Don't waste any of your catch--see that it is used for food by someone.

This was the message voiced today to the Nation's sports fishermen--particularly the salt water sportsmen--by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. Although there will not be as many sports fishermen wetting lines next season, the Fish and Wildlife Service urged those who will be able to fish to start now planning ways by which they can add their surplus catches to the national food supply.

These surplus catches frequently have been wasted in years past because they could not be consumed immediately by the anglers or disposed of among friends. However, with the rationing of meat and other essential foodstuffs just ahead, Service officials remind sportsmen that all edible fishes should be consigned to food channels since food is becoming as important as bullets in the war program.

This is in line with the example set by hunters who probably will add about 135,000,000 pounds of meat by the end of 1942 to the Nation's dwindling supply, while enjoying their recreation. Although normal salt-water sports fishing has been curtailed because of war conditions, sportsmen who are able to fish from launches, party boats, rowboats, in the surf and from other vantage points along the shore from Miami, Fla., to Eastport, Maine, and in the Gulf, and who will continue to fish whenever and wherever possible, will land millions of pounds of good, edible fish to increase the supply in our national larder, if proper plans are laid now for handling excess catches.

"The East coast salt water fishing season does not open until spring, but the planning season is open right now," urges Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Because the salvaging of such a perishable food product as fish cannot be handled like scrap rubber or metals, special arrangements must be made in advance in order to assure the proper utilization of the daily surplus catches.

The principal agencies capable of undertaking such a job are the firms and individuals handling fish commercially, since they have the necessary facilities for preventing spoilage. In addition, fish buyers are located in places where the fish are landed. Most catches, however, will consist of relatively small quantities of a variety of species, some of which are not in public demand, consequently dealers can hardly be expected to take care of job lots of fish which cannot be marketed through the regular channels.

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The Service suggests, therefore, that long-shore communities undertake the handling of these fish as a part of their war salvage program. Town docks, or some public space where the community can provide ice and storage facilities, will serve ideally as a central receiving station for surplus fish. Sportsmen's clubs, in lieu of civic agencies, might serve as the collecting agencies and arrange for some designated fish handler to pick up the daily catches.

Surplus catches which cannot be marketed readily should go into the channels of charity by donation to State, county, or town institutions which are responsible for the feeding of large groups of people. Sportsmen, undoubtedly, will be willing to turn over their excess fish to any outlet which can assure that they will be used.

Although estimates of the aggregate volume of salt water fish taken by anglers are sketchy, it is known that the figures are very large. For example, the New York State Conservation Department reports that in 1938 the estimated recreational catch of winter flounders in Long Island Sound was more than one million fish, with a minimum weight of a half-million pounds.

State records for Chesapeake Bay and the other Maryland maritime fishing grounds indicate that these areas attracted 290,000 to 300,000 sports fishermen in pre-war years. A season's take of 10 pounds of fish per fisherman is a most reasonable estimate when fishing is good in Chesapeake Bay. In normal times this amounts to a total of around 3,000,000 pounds. This year, undoubtedly, the figure will be much reduced.

Delaware Bay, the coves and inlets of New England, the Carolina sounds and beaches, the east and west coasts of Florida, and the vast in-shore reaches of the Gulf have been "happy hunting grounds" for the thousands of anglers who fish for food. Even though war conditions curtail sport fishing to a considerable extent, millions of pounds of good food will still come ashore with these fishermen, to be used or wasted according to the degree of effort expended in planning for its utilization.

Although these surplus catches will be of sufficient volume to have relative significance in bolstering food resources, they will not be of sufficient volume to influence the markets which receive the products of the commercial fishing industry.

Temptation to waste any fish caught for sport can be eliminated by providing means for utilizing the entire catch, the Service points out.

"Now is the time to plan."