



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Arrangements have been made for the return to their owners by the War Shipping Administration of 34 fishing vessels which had been taken over by the Navy early in the war, Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes announced today.

Thirty of the vessels are being returned to owners in the Alaskan salmon industry. The other four are purse seiners used in the California sardine industry. These vessels are in addition to a number of craft being returned by the Army to Alaskan owners.

"Lack of vessels has been one of the chief reasons for the falling off of fishery production," the Coordinator said, "at a time when we have been asked to produce as never before. Every boat that can be returned to the fishing industry ought to be put back in service as rapidly as possible."

The purse seiners are being returned to a fishery which has been badly in need of vessels. The pilchard, or California sardine, is of great importance both for low cost food and as a source of vitamin rich oil and meal used in animal feeds.

The purse seiners, so called because they fish with nets which close up on their catch like a purse, are 70-ton vessels--large for their type. It is estimated that these craft can, if used for fishing steadily through the season, produce 6,000,000 (six million) pounds or more each.

"There are other important fisheries where vessel shortages are acute," Coordinator Ickes said, "and we are working with the War Shipping Administration to obtain relief as soon as possible."