



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Halibut fishing in the waters south of Cape Spencer, Alaska will end on June 20, making the 1943 halibut season in this area the shortest in history and releasing a large number of vessels for food production in other fisheries, according to Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes.

The halibut season is terminated by law when the landings approach the quota established by the International Fisheries Commission, which regulates the halibut fishery under the terms of a treaty with Canada. This year the total catch of halibut was set by the Commission at 50,500,000 pounds, a million pounds over the 1942 quota.

By June 20, about 23,000,000 pounds of halibut will have been taken on the grounds south of Cape Spencer. Nine million pounds have already been brought in from the waters north and west of Cape Spencer, leaving somewhat less than 20,000,000 pounds to complete the quota on the western banks. It is estimated that halibut fishing west of the Cape will end early in September.

The speed with which the permissible catch of halibut was taken this year on the southern fishing grounds is believed to be due to several causes, of which the shortening of "layovers" in port and increased abundance of fish are probably most important.

In past years the industry has sought to spread the catch over a longer season by a self-imposed system requiring each boat to remain in port a week or more between trips to the fishing grounds. The purpose of the layovers was to avoid putting the entire catch of halibut on the market in a short time. This year, however, with sharply increased demands for fish, the required time in port was shortened and in some cases eliminated to prevent waste of manpower and vessels.

Many of the halibut boats will soon enter the albacore fishery, which should be in full swing in early July off Washington and Oregon, or will outfit for shark fishing. Others will continue halibut fishing west of Cape Spencer.

In contrast to most other sections of the country, where landings of fish have decreased because of wartime interference with normal operations, most of the fisheries of the northwestern Pacific have registered appreciable gains in

the early months of 1943. At Seattle, landings of halibut, ling cod, rockfishes, sablefish, soupfin shark, and shark livers rose from 2,370,000 pounds during the first four months of 1942 to 3,714,000 pounds for the same period in 1943. Receipts by Seattle wholesale dealers also showed marked gains, increasing from 4,996,552 pounds during the first four months of 1942 to 6,567,099 pounds in the comparable period of 1943.