



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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United States and Alaska production of fish and shellfish in 1944 will probably reach, and may exceed, four billion pounds, Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes said today.

The estimated production of fish and other marine foods next year is expected to be somewhat higher than the 1943 production, and greater by 300,000,000 pounds than the 1942 total. It will, however, be lower than the normal production of about 4,400,000,000 pounds.

Three species of fish, pilchard, menhaden, and salmon account for more than half of U. S. and Alaska production. It is estimated that in 1944 the production of pilchards, which are canned as California sardines and which are also important as a source of fish meal and oil, and menhaden, will be at least as large as in 1943. It is probable that the poundage of salmon taken will be larger than it was in 1943.

Hope for improved production from the fisheries stems chiefly from the fact that a substantial number of new vessels will be available for service next year. Since July 1 materials have been allotted for 528 new vessels of all types. Of these 261 were scheduled for completion in the last two quarters of 1943, 143 in the first quarter of 1944, 72 in the second quarter, 41 in the third, and 11 in the fourth. In some cases the completion of vessels will be held up due to lack of engines or parts of engines made necessary by the Navy's expanded program of landing barge construction, but it is believed most of the craft will be ready to enter the fisheries early enough to add to production totals.

Failure of the fishing industry to meet production goals last year and this year was in large part due to the lack of vessels. Early in the war the armed services requisitioned more than 700 craft of the fishing fleet and although some of these have been returned to their owners, most of them are still in service, many in far distant corners of the world.

The pack of canned fish is expected to increase by about ten percent over the 1943 totals. Increases are looked for in packs of salmon, Maine and California sardines, and tuna. Somewhat smaller packs of oysters, clam products, shrimp, crabs, and mussels may be in prospect, mainly because of the heavy demand for these products in the fresh state.

Supplies of fresh fish, mainly brought in on the Atlantic Coast, may be larger than 1943's disappointing totals, depending on prompt settlement of the fishermen's strike now underway at Boston, New Bedford, and New York, and entry of new vessels into the East Coast fisheries.