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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

#### ADVANCE RELEASE:

For Thursday Afternoon Papers  
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Americans in 1943 ate a larger quantity of unfamiliar fish and shellfish than in any previous year, and apparently liked it, according to the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries.

Shark steaks, carp fillets, smoked buffalo fish, mussel chowder, squid, and dozens of other items have been appearing on the country's menus with increasing frequency as a result of a campaign to bring neglected salt and fresh water foods to the attention of the public. The West Coast even got a taste of whaleburgers for the first time since the last war.

Helping with the campaign to persuade Americans to use more fully the food resources of their coastal waters, lakes, and streams were the fishing industry, various state agencies and colleges, newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and newsreels.

Records for the year indicate that American taste is less conservative in culinary matters than had generally been supposed.

During the year greatly increased amounts of shark steaks and smoked shark were consumed. Prior to the last year only a limited quantity was marketed. In Seattle, which has a wide choice of seafoods, soupfin shark steaks were, at the end of the year, bringing a higher price than any other fish with the exception of the famous chinook salmon. On the East Coast, Florida, the chief producer, was unable to supply the demand after frozen shark steaks had become a familiar item in retail stores.

Carp, which came to the United States streams via China and Europe is now available in large quantities over most of the country, was generally ignored as food until last year. In Chicago, however, one of the great fish markets of the country, in two weeks out of the last four more carp has been handled than any other fin fish with the exception of halibut and salmon.

Canned sea mussels, a product placed on the market in quantity for the first time in 1943, were received so well that the new industry in Maine and Massachusetts packed 40,000 cases--representing well over a million pounds of food.

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The demand for fresh water species has been so great during the year that Idaho tench and catfish, for example, began appearing regularly in the Seattle markets and some shipments of these species even went to Hawaii.

The squid, an active mollusk distantly related to clams and oysters but lacking a shell, until recently was appreciated principally by gourmets and persons of southern European origin. This year squid was canned in quantities greater than ever before and achieved a considerable sale in fresh or frozen form. Chicago reported receiving 160,000 pounds in 1943, as against only 18,000 pounds the year before. California is the largest producer of canned squid, much of which was marked for export. The New England area is the main source of the fresh and frozen product which is consumed at home.

Clams native to the Puget Sound area are coming in for a fuller share of appreciation as a result of missionary work in their behalf. With little neck clams bringing \$7 a sack and butter clams \$6 a sack, the present season is likely to be a profitable one for clam diggers. Market reports show that clams are selling at the rate of 50 to 70 sacks per day in Seattle, whereas a year or more ago only about a dozen sacks per day came into the markets.

Use of fresh-water turtles--ingredients of soups, stews, and other savory dishes--took an upward turn in the larger urban markets. In Chicago, a good barometer for the middle west, sales of this aquatic food reported to the Fish and Wildlife Service were up 50 per cent in 1943 over the previous year.

The more startling increase of 500 per cent was registered by Chicago's sales of the bowfin, a common fish of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River region. The bowfin is often taken by hook and line fishermen but formerly appeared only in small quantity in commercial markets.

Fishermen and dealers are now inclined to take more care in the preparation of these formerly neglected species, a fact which will tend to increase sales still further, the Fishery Coordinator's office reports. They are taking time to fillet the carp, which eliminates the bones and simplifies preparation for the table. Buffalo fish, a relative of the carp, is appearing more often in the choice smoked form. The red or squirrel hake, another species that is getting increased attention, is also being filleted in much greater quantity and shipments to the middle west are increasing.

Although America's taste for water foods has become more varied, it still has far to go. Of 185 kinds of fish and shellfish available, only about 30 are taken in quantities of 10,000,000 pounds or over a year, the Fishery Coordinator's office said.

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