



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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The pilchard fishery, which normally accounts for about one-fourth of all U. S. fish production, in the season just ended produced 486,816 tons of fish, Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes announced today. Production in the previous season was 501,114 tons.

The production of pilchards, which are canned as California sardines or reduced to meal and oil, would have been substantially greater except for an exceptional decline in Southern California. All other sections showed increases.

In the San Francisco area, production was up 9 percent; the Monterey area increased production by 16 percent. Fishermen at San Pedro and San Diego, however, brought in 33 percent less fish than in the season before.

Because of the critical importance of the pilchard fishery its operations last year were regulated under the Coordinated Pilchard Production Plan. This plan was designed to maintain production at the highest rate possible and to achieve a maximum output of canned fish.

While California ports are the main centers of the pilchard fishery, there is also some production in Washington and Oregon. Approximately 13,400 tons were landed at ports of those states last season as against only 500 tons in the previous year. The season in those states was completed prior to the issuance of the regulatory order in 1943 but this year the Washington and Oregon pilchard fisheries will also come under the regulation.

During the 1943-44 season production of canned sardines was 3,149,889 standard cases. Canned sardines, since they are concentrated protein food and can easily be shipped, have been in considerable demand for lend-lease use and for the armed services. For this reason the War Food Administration set the production goal for the season at 4,500,000 cases. Inability of the industry to achieve this production was in part due to lack of vessels, many of which have been requisitioned from the fishery by the Navy, and lack of cannery workers.

A considerable portion of the pilchard catch is reduced to oil and meal. The meal is used in the manufacture of poultry feed to provide the indispensable animal protein, and the oil, which is a source of Vitamin D, is also used to fortify feed and has many industrial uses. Production of meal this year was 76,032 tons, compared with 71,828 tons in 1942-43, and oil production was 14,304,253 gallons, as against 12,508,958.

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