



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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With tuna production running nearly 65 percent better than last year, the pack by California canneries during the first third of 1944 is the largest since the record breaking production of 1940, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

The large pack will not necessarily mean more tuna for civilians, however, officials of the Coordinator's Office said. The Army and Navy have already placed orders for a quantity equivalent to about 40 percent of last year's pack, which means that the industry will have to push its production even higher if it is to provide enough tuna to meet civilian demands as well as military orders.

The catch of tuna has been much reduced during the past several years because many of the largest and best vessels of the fleet were requisitioned for war service. Although a few of these vessels have been replaced by new construction, the fleet is still below the size necessary to build up the catch to the pre-war level.

Summarizing current production, the Coordinator's Office reported that a total of 509,002 cases had been packed by the end of April, compared with only 293,598 cases at the same time last year. The 1944 pack is the largest since 1940, when 746,806 cases were packed during the first four months of the year.

This year's increase is almost entirely due to larger catches by the purse seine vessels in March and April. By species, the largest increases have been made in the pack of bluefin, yellowfin, and striped tunas, with the bluefin pack more than triple last year's figure, striped nearly double, and yellowfin up about 45 percent. The pack of bonito and albacore has been smaller than last year, but the heavy catches of these species do not normally begin until later in the year.