



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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20 TAGGED SHAD RECOVERED, SHOW MIGRATORY HABITS OF SPECIES

Because of successful Fish and Wildlife Service tagging operations, scientists now know more about the life of the shad at sea than ever before, Dr. Lionel A. Walford, chief of the Service's Branch of Fishery Biology, said today.

He announced that 20 of the 236 shad tagged last August in the Gulf of Maine have been recovered by fishermen in coastal rivers from Georgia to Massachusetts. The sea-dwelling shad were tagged to determine their inshore points of origin.

The shad spends most of its life in oceanic waters, but migrates into fresh water rivers to spawn. Little has been known of these spawning migrations. The results of the tagging operations now show that adult shad school up together in oceanic waters to feed, regardless of their native river habitats. When the spawning period approaches, the schools of shad at sea break up, and the fish return to their native rivers. Eventually, the shad leave the rivers to feed at sea.

In cooperation with the Department of Sea & Shore Fisheries of the State of Maine, the shad were tagged by the Fish and Wildlife Service off Mt. Desert Rock in the Gulf of Maine, 17½ miles off the Atlantic coast. Before the tagging operation was performed, it was unknown that the shad migrated to this area for feeding from different Atlantic coastal rivers. The operation demonstrates the interest which each individual Atlantic coastal state has in the marine shad fisheries.

This was the first tagging operation made to study the dispersion of feeding shad in oceanic waters. Louella N. Cable, Service fishery biologist, supervised the work.

Celluloid discs, specially designed for shad investigations, were attached to the cheeks of the fish with stainless-steel rivets. The tags were numbered, and told where and when the shad were released.

The tagged shad were temporarily removed from purse-seines, in which they were captured while feeding on the surface of the Gulf of Maine's shallow water. (The shad are caught in gill nets and pound nets where the fishery is conducted in in-shore bays and rivers, as it usually is.)

Late this month, at least one thousand shad will be tagged in the same area for additional migrational studies. Edgar A. Hollis will supervise this operation.

In 1944 (the last year for which complete statistics are available), 18,325,000 lbs. of shad, valued at \$1,165,000, were caught in the United States.