



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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COMMERCIAL FISHERIES SHOW INCREASED PRODUCTION, DECLINE IN PRICES

During 1949, the catch of fishery products in the U. S. and Alaska showed a small gain in volume, but due to a general decline in the price of fishery products the value of the catch was about 12 percent less than in 1948, the Branch of Commercial Fisheries of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced in a preliminary report to Interior Secretary Oscar L. Chapman.

Approximately 4.7 billion pounds of fishery products, estimated to have been valued at nearly \$350,000,000 to the fishermen, were caught during 1949. This was about 100,000,000 pounds greater than the 1948 volume. Rosefish and tuna landings were believed by the Service to have established new records. Menhaden landings on the Gulf and Atlantic coast ranked second or third largest in the history of the fishery, and pilchard landings in California showed a great increase over recent years but did not approach the all-time high.

Preliminary data, as indicated in the report, show that the 1949 pack of canned fish to be somewhat larger than in the previous year. The pack is estimated to run about 850,000,000 pounds, as compared to 782,000,000 pounds of fishery products in 1948. Canned salmon was about 550,000 cases greater than in the previous year: a total pack of 5,375,000 cases for 1949. California pilchards or sardines amounted to about 3,875,000 cases -- 1,200,000 cases above the 1948 production. The tuna pack was approximately the same as the 1948 pack: at about 7,038,000 cases. The production figures of fish meal, fish oil, and fish-liver oil were all above the 1948 level.

Prices for fish products showed a general decline, some items declining sharply. Fish oil, which had reached a peak of 24 cents a pound two years before, was down to 5½ cents during 1949. Sharp price declines were also seen in the amount received by canners for their production of Maine sardines, California pilchards, tuna, and most species of salmon. Canners, which had received an average of about \$23.50 a case for pink salmon in 1948, marketed their 1949 pack at about \$16.00 a case. Decreased prices for canned tuna were reflected in the decline in the price paid fishermen for yellowfin -- the principal species which declined from \$345 a ton to \$310 a ton.

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