



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW ICING PLAN PROVES VALUE TO NEW ENGLAND FISHERMEN

A new fish-icing plan is proving its worth to the New England ground-fish industry by getting fresher fish on the consumer's dining table, the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service reported today.

The impetus behind the increasing usage of new fish-icing techniques is a series of full-scale, commercial demonstrations aboard fishing vessels at sea. The work is being done by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and is sponsored by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries with funds supplied through the Saltonstall-Kennedy program for improvement of the domestic fishing industry. Boston-based vessels are used in the demonstration with full loads of fish iced according to techniques developed by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries compared with loads iced under conventional methods.

The new method relegates to "Davy Jones" many of the practices which have been followed for years. In some instances it has been difficult for boat owners to initiate changes, but the pressure of economics is beginning to outweigh the force of tradition. These new icing practices are a long step toward answering public demand for a uniformly better product.

Bureau of Commercial Fisheries' research has shown that the process of getting full-flavored fish to the family table begins at the time the fish are taken out of the water--and that mistakes made in that first hour cannot be rectified later.

The new technique is simple. Fish are eviscerated and each fish is thoroughly washed immediately after being caught; each individual fish is surrounded by sufficient ice to chill it rapidly and keep it chilled. Much of the secret of the success in handling fish by the new method is in the way the fish are stored and iced. After the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries developed the technique, it entered into a contract with the Massachusetts division of Marine Fisheries to demonstrate proper handling and icing techniques under commercial fishing conditions.

Through the cooperation of the industry, a man trained in the Bureau's new method goes aboard fishing vessels and demonstrates the handling and icing of the fish. In port, under the supervision of State inspectors, the results of the improved method can be compared with results from conventional means. The entire load of fish from one such demonstration cruise was recently adjudged "the best fish seen in this port for a long time".

The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries also has a contract with the National Fisheries Institute for the development of "Rules and Guidelines" for proper procedures in handling fish aboard vessels and in processing plants.

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