



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR REPORTS NEW RECORDS IN "AVERAGE" YEAR FOR UNITED STATES FISHERIES

In terms of total catch and value the Nation's commercial fishery activity for 1960 could be called "average", but a review of the data available at the Department of the Interior shows that five production records were broken, four new import marks were established and the catch of one species hit a hundred-year low.

This preliminary information was provided by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Detailed information will be available in Fishery Leaflet 393, in about six weeks.

The total catch for 1960 was 4,850,000,000 pounds--270 million pounds below the catch of 1959; the value at boatside was estimated at \$347 million dollars, or one million dollars more than in 1959. In eight previous years the value has exceeded that figure.

The amounts received by fishermen for California tuna, Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic shrimp and Alaska salmon increased sharply. The income from the New England groundfish harvest and from the Gulf and Atlantic menhaden fishery declined sharply, primarily because of reduction in price. The Washington salmon fishermen also had reduced income because of the decline in the catch.

San Pedro, California, was the leading U. S. port in both volume, 360 million pounds, and value to the fishermen, \$40,000,000. Lewes, Delaware, was second, 281 million pounds; then Pascagoula, Miss., 213 million; Gloucester, Mass., 194 million. New Bedford, with good scallop landings, was second in value with \$13,000,000; then Boston, \$9,400,000 and Gloucester, \$6,400,000.

Production records were established on:

Tuna, with a record pack of 15,200,000 cases compared with the previous record of 14,332,000 in 1959;

Sea scallops, with record landings of 26,500,000 pounds of meats compared with the previous high, 24,644,000 pounds taken in 1959;

Gulf menhaden, with record landings of 831,000,000, about 79 million pounds above the previous mark set in 1959. (Other menhaden fisheries showed decreases.)

Menhaden oil production of 23,675,000 gallons compared with the previous high of 22,428,000 gallons in 1956.

The Bristol Bay salmon run established a near record, yielding a domestic catch of 15 million fish with 22 million fish escaping to the spawning beds.

The oyster take of 59 million pounds of meats hit practically an all-time low. It has been well over 100 years since the annual oyster harvest has been that small. The 1960 harvest was less than 40 percent of that taken in 1880.

Record imports are noted on shrimp, 113.4 million pounds; fresh and frozen spiny lobsters, 32.3 million pounds; canned oysters, seven million pounds; fresh and frozen sea scallops, 6.9 million pounds. Imports of groundfish fillets and blocks were less than in 1959 but higher than any other year.

As the result of the conversion of tuna clippers to purse seiners, that is converting from line fishing to seines, the California tuna industry made a good economic recovery. Vessel trips average 35 days, instead of 80 days as previously. Sixty-seven converted purse seiners were operating at the end of the year.

The South Atlantic and Gulf shrimp catch was 236 million pounds, or eight percent above the 1959 catch, but the harvest on the Pacific coast was 12.6 million pounds or 39 percent down from the previous year. The total catch of groundfish (cod, cusk, haddock, hake, pollock and ocean perch) was 337 million pounds, or four million pounds less than in 1959. The Atlantic catch was up nearly four million pounds, but the Pacific catch of cod was down nearly eight million pounds. The catch of Pacific and jack mackerel was up; the total catch of menhaden was 1,993,000,000 pounds, 209 million pounds below 1959; the pack of sardines was 1,975,000 cases, up 222 thousand cases from the previous year, and the pack of California sardines was 636,000 cases, or 119 thousand less than in 1959.

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