INFORMATION SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

# WILDLIFE TIPS AND BRIEFS

A CLIPSHEET ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY MOVES OFFICES TO CHICAGO

Leaving only a small liaison staff in Washington, D. C., the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, began moving its national headquarters on August 16 expecting to reopen its offices in the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Ill., on August 22.

Included in the 193 names listed in travel instructions for the move were all Washington employees of the Service, excepting those on the liaison staff, members of the Service who will man the office of the Fishery Coordinator, and those who remain with the collections of specimens maintained by the Service in the National Museum.

Nearest field station to Washington will be that on the Patuxent Research Refuge east of Laurel, Md., where bird-banding and other investigations will be continued.

Estimates of the number of vacancies existing in the organization following the transfers and resignations of employees who could not make the move were not available, but the number of employees in the Service's Washington office before the Chicago move was announced was 396.

## DAY WILL BE D. C. LIAISON MAN FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Albert M. Day will be the Fish and Wildlife Service's liaison officer in Washington, D. C., upon the agency's transfer to Chicago, reports the Service. John R. Gardner will be his assistant.

Employed by the agency since 1919, Mr. Day has been Chief of the Division of Federal Aid since its organization in 1939 and during the past year has also been a special liaison officer between war agencies and wildlife interests. He will be succeeded as Federal Aid chief by his former assistant, Robert M. Rutherford, but will continue his liaison work with the war agencies.

Mr. Gardner, who was the administrative officer of the former Bureau of Fisheries, has been employed in the Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of the Chief Counsel since 1940, soon after the Service was established by consolidating the Bureaus of Fisheries and Biological Survey.

LAKE HURON WHITEFISH
FACING EXTERMINATION

The famous whitefish of Lake Huron, highly prized food fish, is rapidly on the way to disappearance from the markets, according to an analysis of the commercial fishery records by biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior,

Recently compiled figures show that the 1941 catch dropped to the lowest level in the history of the fishery, totalling only 114,000 pounds, or 2.8 percent of the record 1931 yield of 4,140,000 pounds.

The continuous decline of the whitefish catch since 1932 is attributed by the Fish and Wildlife Service to the widespread use of the so-called deep trap net. An impounding net highly efficient for the capture of whitefish, the deep trap net was introduced into Lake Huron in 1928 in the vicinity of Alpena and rapidly spread into other sections of the lake. By 1933 the net was in operation in all United States waters of Lake Huron, removing the whitefish more rapidly than nature could replace them.

Investigations of the deep-trap-net fishery begun in 1931 by the Michigan Department of Conservation and the former United States Bureau of Fisheries revealed the net as a serious menace to the stocks of whitefish. At the close of the 1935 season it was outlawed in the Michigan and Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan, and the following year was banned in Indiana and the Michigan waters of Lake Superior. Deep trap nets may now be operated only in the Michigan waters of Lake Huron and in Lake Ontario.

Rapid removal of the fish by trap nets, which operate in deep water where large numbers of whitefish congregate, at first sent production skyrocketing from a normal level of about 1-1/2 million pounds to a peak of more than 4 million pounds in 1931 and 1932.

In spite of continued heavy fishing, the catches of whitefish have since declined steadily, and in areas where trap-nets are used most extensively they have virtually ceased. By 1938 the total catch had dropped to 558,000 pounds; by 1939 to 255,000 pounds. The following year the 1939 figure was cut almost in half, and the 1941 catch was even smaller. In central and southern Lake Huron the yield of whitefish in 1941 was only 15,000 pounds, as compared with 3,309,000 pounds in 1932.

The virtual destruction of Lake Huron's fishery for whitefish is one of the problems that has occupied the attention of the International Board of Inquiry for the Great Lakes Fisheries, appointed in 1940 to investigate the causes of this and other instances of severe depletion of formerly productive Great Lakes Fisheries. A formal report on the findings and recommendations of the Board, which includes members from both Canada and the United States, is soon to be issued.

## STATES GET REDUCED ALLOTMENTS FOR WILDLIFE RESTORATION WORK

Apportionment of $1,128,000 among the 48 States for the restoration of wildlife under the Pittman-Robertson Act for the fiscal year 1943 was recently announced by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes. With sums matched by the States, the grand total available for Federal-aid wildlife work in the States will be $1,504,000. For 1942 the Federal apportionment amounted to $2,530,000.

Michigan headed the apportionment list, receiving $62,630 of Pittman-Robertson funds. Texas ranks second with $59,159; Pennsylvania third, $57,372; New York fourth, $50,236; and California fifth, $50,163. Apportionments to the States are made on the basis of the ratio which the area of each State bears to the total area of all the States and the ratio which the number of paid hunting-license holders in each State bears to the total number of license holders in the country.

Pittman-Robertson funds are used to finance projects set up and directed by State governments for the restoration of all forms of wildlife within the individual States. All projects are approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of Secretary Ickes to determine whether they are sound in character and design. The Federal Government pays 75 percent of the cost of the project and the State 25 percent. Funds appropriated by Congress for this purpose cannot exceed the amount received from the 10 percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition.

During the year ended June 30, 1942, the 46 cooperating States, Alaska, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico submitted and had 301 projects approved involving $2,077,486 of Federal funds. Of the projects approved, 111 costing $857,497 were for the purchase of lands, 99 costing $620,002 were for developments of lands and waters, 70 costing $492,902 were for surveys and investigations into problems of wildlife management necessary for proper administration of wildlife resources, and 21 costing $107,085 provided direction and coordination of the wildlife restoration programs undertaken by the States. Including State contributions, the total estimated cost of these projects amounted to $2,769,981. At present all but two States, Georgia and Nevada, have passed legislation permitting the States to participate in the program.

From the total appropriation of $1,250,000 for Federal Aid to the States made available by Congress to the Department of the Interior for 1943, $100,000 was deducted for the administration of the provisions of the Act. An additional deduction of $22,000 included $12,000 for Alaska and $5,000 each for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Wildlife restoration projects have been inaugurated in all but Hawaii where action had to be postponed because of the war.

Allotments to each State are as follows: Alabama, $17,535.05; Arizona, $23,344.75; Arkansas, $13,885.10; California, $50,162.62; Colorado, $30,814.87; Connecticut, $3,044.43; Delaware, $1,418.27; Florida, $15,290.56; Georgia, $17,207.47; Idaho, $23,019.47; Illinois, $34,020.89; Indiana, $34,602.93; Iowa, $24,997.54.

Kansas, $21,426.02; Kentucky, $16,229.39; Louisiana, $17,462.07; Maine, $13,237.97; Maryland, $7,182.53; Massachusetts, $7,153.32; Michigan, $62,629.86; Minnesota, $41,264.92; Mississippi, $16,657.15; Missouri, $27,882.59; Montana, $34,268.74; Nebraska, $23,959.06; Nevada, $21,552.85; New Hampshire, $5,887.51; New Jersey, $10,635.21; New Mexico, $24,672.59; New York, $50,235.52; North Carolina, $20,307.42; North Dakota, $17,158.74.

Ohio, $46,775.95; Oklahoma, $20,244.41; Oregon, $25,186.89; Pennsylvania, $57,372.30; Rhode Island, $843.03; South Carolina, $12,127.17; South Dakota, $20,980.29; Tennessee, $14,266.86; Texas, $59,158.51; Utah, $21,004.40; Vermont, $5,045.21; Virginia, $17,460.16; Washington, $29,113.94; West Virginia, $17,036.32; Wisconsin, $32,066.22; Wyoming, $20,170.93. Total for the United States, $1,128,000.00.

## SERVICE MAKING EQUIPMENT SURVEY FOR FISH INDUSTRY

A survey to determine the requirements of the commercial fisheries as to nets, vessels, fuel, and other raw and manufactured products is now being conducted by field agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

The halibut fishery survey has been completed and it is expected that by the end of August most of the areas and other fisheries will have been completely covered so that tabulation of data can begin.

By means of this survey the Service is endeavoring to ascertain the amount of critical materials needed to keep the fishing industry at normal production in wartime. The data, when compiled, will be used by the recently established Office of Fisheries Coordination to assist the industry in its equipment problems.

## ASHBROOK APPOINTED FUR CONSULTANT ON WAR WORK

Frank G. Ashbrook, in charge of the Fur Resources work of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, for the past 20 years, has been appointed as an advisor to the War Department on furs and the fur industry, according to an announcement made by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

In his capacity as a specialized consultant, Mr. Ashbrook will continue work already instituted by the Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the Resources Division of the Quartermaster General's Office to solve problems concerned with furs and skins for cold-climate clothing, airplane suits, and other equipment required for Army use.

Cooperative studies now in progress are concerned with determining the relative values of hair seal and mohair for ski climbers; obtaining more detailed information on furs suitable for vests and sleeping bags; learning ways to substitute furs or fur fibers for wool, mohair, and other commodities; and locating sources of supply sufficient for Army use.

Mr. Ashbrook, a trained biologist and fur technician, is familiar with the methods employed by the raw-fur trade, dressers and dyers, manufacturers and retailers, and has represented the Government in many important legal and other situations requiring expert knowledge of the trade, both here and abroad. In 1930, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson who was, at that time, Secretary of State, designated Ashbrook as Commissioner General to represent the United States at the Fur Trade Exposition and Congress, held at Leipsig, Germany. In that capacity he served the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce and traveled in 17 European countries.

His services were loaned to the Treasury Department in 1937 to travel to the Orient and make a special investigation and report on the methods employed by the Chinese in dressing lamb, kid, and dog skins. This investigation was carried on cooperatively with the Treasury and State Departments.

## BUFFALO, ELK, AND DEER SALE ADVERTISED BY U. S. REFUGES

Announcing its annual clearance sale of surplus big-game animals from national refuges, the Fish and Wildlife Service is this year advertising 130 buffaloes, 42 elks, and 40 mule deer to be selected by officials in charge of the Government herds.

Sold as part of the Service's management programs on the refuges, these surplus animals include only those that can not be accommodated on the available ranges without danger of overgrazing.

Sixteen of the buffaloes, 40 elks, and all the mule deer are offered alive on the condition that they are to be used for propagating purposes. Sportsmen and others looking for big-game roasts and steaks will, however have a chance at 114 buffaloes and 2 elks.

Prices and other terms can be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Merchandist Mart, Chicago, Ill., the agency's new national headquarters, or from the refuges where the animals are sold. These are:

National Bison Range, Moiese, Mont.; Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Cache, Okla.; Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine, Nebr.; and Sullys Hill National Game Preserve, Fort Totten, N. Dak.

## NEW LEAFLET AVAILABLE ON RAISING DOMESTIC RABBITS

With the production of food such a vital item in America's war program, the wider use of domestic rabbit meat--home grown and home consumed--will permit the release of other meat for the armed forces and for exportation to our Allies, asserts the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

In addition, "the home use of this fine-grained, pearly white, and nutritious meat will add variety to the family diet throughout the year," according to a pamphlet, "Domestic Rabbits in the Food for Freedom Program," issued recently by the Service.

Dealing entirely with the small unit operated for producing rabbit meat as economically as possible for home consumption, this leaflet reports that "rabbits are being raised in every State in the Union. They may be kept in the city backyard as well as on the farm, in fact, wherever poultry raising is permitted."

## EXPECT FEWER HIGHWAY DEATHS TO WILDLIFE AS WAR CURBS SPEEDING

Autoists who conserve tires and gasoline by reducing their speed will also save the lives of many wild birds and mammals, predicts the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

No national estimates of wildlife's highway mortality have ever been made, according to the Service, but the many observations that have been made by individuals show that the losses are tremendous. In one case a Service biologist noted nearly 100 rabbit carcasses a mile over a 2-3 mile stretch of highway in Utah.

Principal cause of the accidents is without doubt the high speed of automobiles, declares Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Often it is impossible to save a wild life without risking human life or an accident to the automobile. However, in a great many cases even a slight let-up in speed will give wild creatures a chance to be out of danger.

## MAINE

### ADDITIONAL ATLANTIC SALMON PLANTS MADE IN STATE WATERS

In continuation of efforts being made by the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, to restore the Atlantic salmon to New England waters, the first plant of this species, under a new program of restoration, was made recently in the St. Georges River. At Heart Falls a total of 17,600 marked fish from the 1940 spawning was planted.

Dr. George A. Rounsefell, in charge of the Service's New England salmon restoration work, reports that an attempt is being made to hold a small number of silver salmon in a fenced portion of the Pemaquid River to determine this river's suitability, under summer conditions, before using the river for stocking.

The Atlantic salmon, which was formerly abundant in Maine waters and a valuable asset to the State's commercial fisheries, has declined almost to the point of extinction. In 1940, only 2,000 pounds of salmon, valued at $593, were taken commercially in Maine waters.

The facilities of the State of Maine, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the New England Salmon Research Committee, headed by Wm. C. Herrington, Service biologist, are being used to the fullest extent to assure the success of a carefully planned and scientifically directed program to restore the Atlantic salmon to commercial importance in New England. Government scientists will be aided in their research by holders of the William Converse Kendall fellowships established by sportsmen's organizations at the University of Maine.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### "TRASH" FISH AUGMENTS NATION'S FOOD SUPPLY

"Trash" fish, caught by the North Atlantic otter-trawl fleet, may help solve the problem of obtaining enough sea food for our armed forces and for shipment to our Allies, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Trash fish consists of species and sizes of edible fish taken in the course of normal fishing operations but thrown overboard because of lack of a sufficient market and value to justify the time, trouble, and hold space necessary to save them. To make use of this potential source of food requires no increase either in fishing fleet or fishing equipment. It does require, however, the establishment of markets which the trade can develop through properly-handled publicity.

The difficulty of maintaining adequate supplies of food fishes in the face of a growing demand becomes greater with each new check on fishing activities and increase in market requirements, states the Service. The demand for canned fish for lease-lend and military use, in particular, has increased so much that priorities have been granted for use of tin cans for fish while they have been denied for such foods as fruits and vegetables.

Recent notes on discarded fish (1940-41) aboard a large otter trawler, covering fishing during a 6-month period, showed 396,000 pounds of haddock landed in comparison with 230,000 pounds of fish discarded, or 58 percent as much "trash" as haddock. This consisted of 130,000 pounds of mixed hake and whiting, 59,000 pounds of yellowtail flounder, 31,000 pounds of dabs, and 10,000 pounds of dogfish. In addition, quantities of skates and monkfish were discarded--all useful and nutritious food fishes.

In view of rising prices for the staple commercial species of fish, large quantities of these now-wasted food supplies should find a ready market.

## OREGON

### OREGON COMMERCIAL SMELT CATCH IS 767,360 POUNDS

The total catch of smelt for the 1942 season in Oregon, taken by commercial fishermen, amounted to 767,360 pounds, reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Forty-eight returns, representing 55 of 63 permittees, showed a catch of 669,916 pounds, based on data collected by the Oregon Fish Commission.

Sport fishermen, according to estimates, caught 500,000 pounds, making a gross catch of 1,267,360 pounds. Since sample counts showed the smelts to average 9.3 individuals to a pound, the total catch was about 118,000,000 individuals. Service biologists believe that the escapement was fully 50 percent, which would place the total run conservatively at 236,000,000 individuals.

## VIRGINIA

### CHESAPEAKE BAY BLUE CRAB INVESTIGATIONS UNDER WAY

Management investigations on the valuable blue crab fishery of Chesapeake Bay, which has undergone a severe decline since 1939, are now well under way, reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Since imports of Japanese canned crab ceased when war operations began in the Pacific, Chesapeake Bay crabs are now the greatest source of supply. When National war plans call for a larger and more efficient production of all food-stuffs, this fishery which brings a livelihood to thousands of citizens in the Chesapeake Bay region must be made to produce as freely and abundantly as possible.

The primary aim of the present research, which was recently requested by conservation officials of Maryland and Virginia, is to determine the influence on the commercial supply of crabs of certain conservation measures that were recommended by the Service following a survey in November 1941.

The most important recommendation made was the seasonal establishment of a sanctuary for egg-bearing or spawning crabs in lower Chesapeake Bay. This sanctuary area of some 400 square miles is known to be an important spawning ground for the blue crab and may prove to be the only area of significant spawning within Chesapeake Bay.

The principal problem which faces Service biologists in future crab conservation research is to determine the influence of this sanctuary on future yields of soft and hard crabs. The protection of an adequate spawning reserve of crabs within this area may result in an increase in the catch of soft crabs of one year of age during 1943; also, the catch of hard crabs likewise may show an increase in late 1943, according to such benefits as may occur from an increase in the number of spawning crabs.

John C. Pearson, Service biologist who recently completed a report on the decline in abundance of these crabs, is conducting the present investigations. Some 86 soft crab shedding houses in Chesapeake Bay are cooperating with the Service by supplying data required for an analysis of the catch per unit of effort of soft crabs.

## WASHINGTON

### NEW PILCHARD PRICE SET FOR 1942 SEASON

A price agreement was established for the 1942 Northwest pilchard fishery on June 25 when reduction plant operators contracted to pay $20 per ton for pilchards received in Oregon and Washington until July 20, and $25 per ton for the remainder of the season, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. These prices compare with an opening price of $11.50 per ton a year ago. Reduction plant operators have also agreed to pay War Risk Insurance to the members of the fishing craft. This will amount to about $40 per man per month.

Recent reports from the West Coast indicate that the pilchard fishery in the Pacific Northwest was practically a failure up to August 1. There

were no deliveries of pilchards during June and less than 500 tons were caught off the Washington coast and delivered to Grays Harbor reduction plants during the first week of July. No landings were made in either Washington or Oregon during the remainder of the month. The oil content of the fish taken was exceptionally low and operators obtained less than 10 gallons of oil per ton of raw fish, which is by far the lowest received in the Northwest in the history of the fishery.

In 1941 approximately 9,000 tons of pilchards were landed at Washington and Oregon ports during June and July.

## WASHINGTON

### HALIBUT FISHERMEN HAVE PROFITABLE 1942 SEASON

From an economic standpoint, in returns to the fishermen, the 1942 halibut season has been one of the most successful to date, reports the Division of Fishery Industries, Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Prices paid for halibut over the Seattle Fishing Exchange during May 1942 averaged 14.3 cents per pound, compared with an average of 10.05 cents during May 1941. In June 1942 halibut prices paid the fishermen at Seattle averaged around 18 cents per pound for the medium grade and 16 cents per pound for other grades. This represents a record price paid during this period of the year and ranges from 6 to 7 cents per pound greater than corresponding prices paid in June 1941.