Sater - Int. 2879

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1-21-48

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FEBRUARY 3, 1948.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

"The critical world food situation has continued to emphasize the necessity of exploring fully the potential productiveness of our commercial fisheries and of developing neglected resources," Director Albert M. Day stated in the Fish and Wildlife Service's annual report to Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug which was made public today.

Director Day asserted that perhaps the most significant post-war trend of the American fisheries is the expansion of the industry westward into regions of the Pacific formerly exploited by Japan. "The Fish and Wildlife Service," he said, "has taken advantage of every opportunity to add to existing knowledge of tunas--the most valuable resource of that region."

In reporting on the status of the fisheries of Alaska, Mr. Day said that red salmon runs of western Alaska have declined in abundance in recent years despite the fact that at least 50 percent of each year's run has been allowed to ascend the rivers to spawn.

Biological research has paid large dividends for the Alaska herring fisheries, according to Mr. Day. Annual sampling of the age composition and abundance of the chief races of herring exploited by the fishery has enabled the Service to set catch quotas in each district which prevent depletion of the spawning stocks and stabilize the annual yield.

In the New England states the Service has been aiding the oyster industry by issuing bulletins describing the conditions of the oyster bottoms, the presence of such oyster enemies as starfish and drills, and by predicting the time of spawning and setting of oysters.

Research on the North Atlantic fishing banks has demonstrated that abundance of the haddock has declined severely during the past three years due in part to the relative failure of the 1941, 1942, and 1943 year classes. The Service has recommended to the Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission a course for restoration of haddock stocks by restricting the mesh of fishing gear to sizes that will protect the young, immature fish.

Service technologists carried on studies involving the chemical problems of handling fish. These included tests to determine differences in methods for sorting, brining, smoking, and processing Maine sardines, a detailed study of the

chemical structure of fish oils to determine factors responsible for changes in composition; studies of packaging to learn what materials retain good appearance, texture, and flavor in frozen fishery products; and investigations of ways to promote the stability of vitamin A.

To assist the Gulf of Mexico fisheries for the valuable red snapper and grouper to expand into new, deep-water fishing areas, a fishery engineer of the Service designed several items of gear, including new kinds of traps, and a new type of rod and power gurdy. On the Pacific coast engineering studies were made in connection with an 8,500-ton factory ship designed for canning and freezing fish and shellfish at sea.

The output from Federal fish hatcheries during calendar year 1946 totaled 4,661,303,260 eggs, fry, and fingerling or larger fishes. Approximately 11,760,000 fish were furnished to stock farm ponds throughout the country.

On the wildlife phase of the report, Mr. Day stated that waterfowl management investigations of 1947 show that the conditions of our waterfowl resource is still serious. The decline which began in 1945 continued into 1947 at an alarming pace. Decreases in wintering ducks and geese were chalked up for all flyways except the Central. Mallards, widgeons, black ducks, blue-winged teal, wood ducks and ruddies showed declines while increases were recorded for the pintail, shoveller, green-winged teal and ringneck. All of the geese with the exception of the blue and white-fronted species also decreased during the year. The status of woodcock is satisfactory. Both bandtailed pigeons and white-winged doves are apparently holding their own, except in a few local areas.

Two biologists made a reconnaissance of several of the remote Canadian-Arctic islands in cooperation with the U. S. Navy. Some of the northernmost breeding grounds of our migratory birds, including eiders, scoters, old-squaw ducks, brant, several sandpipers, lapland longspurs, snow buntings, and horned larks, which visit the United States during the winter, were explored.

Nine Cooperative Wildlife Research Units, financed by State game departments, land-grant colleges, the Wildlife Management Institute, and the Fish and Wildlife Service operated research and training programs at full capacity in Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. The Alabama unit was inactive because of shortage of personnel.

The number of Federal wildlife refuges at the end of the fiscal year 1947 was 291. During the last five years the major emphasis in the Service's wildlife refuge program has been on the acquisition of wintering refuges for waterfowl along both coasts, and especially in areas near the Gulf of Mexico. During that period 11 new refuges have been acquired in California, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Florida.

The Service was able last year to do a bigger job of controlling predatory animals and injurious rodents in the face of higher costs than ever before in its history by the use of new and unusually effective methods involving the expanded use of airplanes, coyote getters, and such new rodenticides as "1080". Expenditures were at the rate of $1 of Federal funds for every $2.57 spent by the agencies and individuals benefiting from the work.

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