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U. S. MISSION PUSHING DEVELOPMENT OF MEXICAN FISHERY RESOURCES

To provide an inexpensive source of valuable animal protein in the diet of its low-income groups, Mexico is stocking reservoirs, hydroelectric dams, and irrigation impoundments with fresh-water fish, and is developing a program of rural fishponds, Milton J. Lindner, chief of the U. S. Fishery Mission to Mexico, reported to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service today in Washington, D. C.

A farm-pond program developed in southern and southwestern United States relieved food shortages during World War II. It has become a permanent benefit in correcting diets deficient in proteins for the inhabitants of areas in the United States where only small quantities of protein foods are available.

Mr. Lindner, who is now in this country, disclosed that this is one of the many projects undertaken by Mexico to develop its fishery resources, since the Service established the Mission in Mexico City in June 1941.

Lack of natural lakes and suitable rivers, periodic rainy seasons, and the use of most of the streams in Mexico's central plateau region for irrigation purposes have blocked the growth of the country's fresh-water fisheries.

Bluegills and largemouth black bass have been found "to do quite well" in central Mexico, Mr. Lindner said. The absence of hatchery facilities, so far, has limited the work with these species to small-scale introductions, however.

Improved production and stocking techniques introduced by the U. S. Fishery Mission have also heavily increased the stocking of trout in inland Mexico's colder waters.

Marine fishery research is receiving attention too, Mr. Lindner said. A marine fishery laboratory has been built at Guaymas. Investigations include tagging experiments on shrimp, and the collection of catch statistics and oceanic data on tides and temperatures taken on Mexico's important fishing grounds. The investigations will show the extent of Mexico's marine fishery resources, Mr. Lindner believes, and will determine future expansion of the Mexican fishing industry. He also hopes that continuing investigations will be undertaken so that annual assessments of the stock of fish available to commercial fishermen can be made.

There is great mutual interest in Mexico's fishery resources between the nited States and the Latin American republic. Many of the marine species common to the United States and to Mexico are migratory between the two countries.

Major Mexican fisheries depend on the United States for a market (75 percent of the Mexican catch is either exported to the United States or is carried there in U. S. vessels). Almost 85 percent of the tuna landed by U. S. fishing vessels from 1935 to 1944 was taken off the coasts of Mexico; and a substantial proportion of the annual U. S. Gulf of Mexico shrimp catch of 150 million pounds, worth 15 million dollars to American fishermen, comes from banks off the Mexican coast.

These factors prompted the organization of the U. S. Fishery Mission to Mexico. It is assisting both countries in uncovering facts about the little-known resources of Mexico and is assisting Mexico in training a competent staff of fishery investigators.

Present plans call for the continuation of the Mission for at least two more years. It acts in an advisory capacity to the Directorate-General of Fisheries and Allied Industries in Mexico's Ministry of Marine. Funds and personnel for cooperation with the Mission are supplied by the latter agency. The Fishery Mission is conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service under the U. S. Government program for cooperation with the American Republics.

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