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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Commercial Fisheries

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UNITED STATES IMPORTS OVER HALF OF FISHERIES PRODUCTS USED

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today the United States continues to be the world's largest importer of fishery products despite vast unused resources available in waters usually fished by United States fishermen.

Secretary Udall said that in 1964, for the second consecutive year, over half the supply of fish and shellfish was of foreign origin. The estimated live weight of edible and industrial fishery products imported was 7,509 million pounds, 62 percent of the total supply of 12,032 million pounds.

Imports of edible fishery products in 1964 were 2,395 million pounds, live weight basis, a rise of five percent over 1963. Of all fish used for human food in the United States in 1964, 49 percent was imported. Imports of industrial fishery products rose 18 percent in 1964 to a total 5,114 million pounds, over 71 percent of the supply.

The total United States catch, edible and industrial, declined to 4,523 million pounds, seven percent less than in 1963, and was the smallest catch since 1953. However, the $390 million paid fishermen in 1964 was nearly $13 million, or four percent more than in 1963, and the second highest value on record.

The lower volume was caused by sharp declines in landings of menhaden and Atlantic herring, and reduced catches of Pacific halibut and mackerel, tuna, shrimp, and Atlantic Ocean perch.

The high value of the 1964 landings came from a larger catch of high-priced Pacific salmon, blue crabs from the Atlantic and Gulf waters, and Alaska king crabs, together with higher average prices for tuna, shrimp, and scallops.

Donald L. McKernan, Director of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, said per capita consumption of commercially caught fish and shellfish was maintained at 10.6 pounds, a figure which has changed little in recent years. He said sales of canned tuna increased five percent over 1963 with the increase provided entirely by domestic pack, as imports of canned tuna dropped about five percent. However, the increase in domestic pack was possible because of increased imports of frozen tuna. Domestic tuna landings were down five percent from a year earlier.

Mr. McKernan said that although fishing effort is increasing seasonally, supplies likely will be limited during the second quarter of this year. On April 30 supplies of frozen fishery products were down more than 13 percent from a year ago.

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