



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

For Release TO PMs OF MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 1943. W

Demand for shark meat, a food tasted by few Americans before the war, has suddenly grown to such proportions along the eastern seaboard that fishermen are unable to fill orders for it, according to a report today to Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes.

Samples of quick-frozen shark steaks and fillets - white-meated and comparable to the prized swordfish in texture and with haddock in flavor - were recently shipped to Washington, D. C. and other cities in eastern and southern areas at the suggestion of representatives of the Coordinator's Office. Restaurant managers and food distributors who sampled the shark meat were so enthusiastic that their orders already have exceeded the supply in sight for the immediate future, Charles E. Jackson, Acting Deputy Coordinator, said.

Although sharks are taken for their skins or for the valuable liver oils at various points along the Atlantic coast, most of the shark meat now available for eastern markets comes from Florida, with the chief producing areas located off Fort Pierce and Salerno.

While sharks could now be disposed of in carload shipments to eastern buyers, the industry is so new that few fishermen have entered it as yet and the available supply is accordingly limited, Mr. Jackson said. Special equipment is required to catch sharks on a commercial scale.

The steaks and fillets of shark, cellophane-wrapped and packed in five-pound cartons, are prepared by a freezing plant in Miami. The principal source of supply is a byproducts firm in Fort Pierce, which uses only the livers and fins of the sharks and formerly discarded from three to five million pounds of meat annually for lack of a market.

In an effort to utilize all edible fish, representatives of the Coordinator's Office brought together representatives of the two firms, and as a result of this meeting the freezing plant is now buying all the sharks it can get from Fort Pierce.

About eight or nine species of sharks are taken in a relatively small area off Fort Pierce, Mr. Jackson said. Gear used by Florida shark fishermen resembles the long trawl lines still used to some extent in New England for cod, except that chains are used instead of twine because of the sharp teeth and the size and strength of the sharks, which run to 500 pounds or more off the Florida coast.

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After dressing and removal of the valuable livers at Fort Pierce, the sharks are shipped in refrigerated trucks to Miami where the steaks and fillets are cut, wrapped, and packaged. Part of the product is quick-frozen; the remainder placed on the market fresh.

Before the east coast shark boom developed, more than 100,000 pounds had been sold in Chicago markets this summer.

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