



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Recalling its century-old glory as the center of the world's whaling operations, New Bedford, Massachusetts, has now become the third ranking port for the handling of fresh fish in the United States, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today. First and second places are held by Gloucester and Boston, respectively.

One of the few fishing ports in the United States to show an increase in landings since the war began, New Bedford received a total of 62,000,000 pounds of fish and shellfish in 1943, compared with 58,000,000 in 1942. Although complete figures for earlier years are not available, the present volume is believed to be about double that of 1940.

The modern fishery boom in New Bedford is built on the flounder fishery, whereas her earlier maritime fame rested on whaling, at its peak in the 1850's. About half of all the fish now landed at this southern Massachusetts port are flounders--chiefly the species known as the yellowtail.

With its yellowtail catches doubling and even tripling recent records, New Bedford is now the center of the U. S. flounder fishery, receiving half of all the flounders landed in New England ports, and about a quarter of the total U. S. catch. Present landings run from 25 to 35 million pounds a year, compared with 10 to 15 million pounds about 1940.

Growth of the New Bedford fisheries while most other ports have been declining is due chiefly to the fact that while many of the big trawlers that fish out of the larger ports have been requisitioned for military service, the New Bedford fisheries are carried on by a variety of smaller boats and the fleet has been able to maintain its size.

Boats fishing out of New Bedford totaled about 135 last year, most of the fleet being small otter trawlers of from 5 to 50 gross tons. Boats of this type are chiefly engaged in the yellowtail fishery. About a dozen medium size otter trawlers also operate out of New Bedford, in addition to a score of scallop draggers and a smaller number of harpooners.

Besides flounders, fish landed in important quantities at New Bedford include haddock, mackerel, cod, sea scallops, and eel pout. About 30 other species are caught in small quantities by New Bedford boats.

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No Man's Land, southwest of Marthas Vineyard, is one of the chief fishing grounds for the New Bedford fleet, which also operates in the South Channel and on Nantucket Shoals. The fishery is active throughout the year, but the largest landings are made during the summer months.