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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

For Release
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Production in twelve major U. S. fisheries in the first quarter of 1944 was 10,000,000 pounds less than in the comparable quarter of 1943, according to reports to Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes.

Production in the group of twelve fisheries for the quarter amounted to 265,235,000 pounds compared with 275,456,000 in 1943, and 243,560,000 in 1942. Chief reason for the reduction was given as the shortage of skilled manpower, although a considerable loss of production was occasioned by lay-offs of fishermen during most of January in Boston, New Bedford, and New York, and similar lay-offs in the shrimp fishery centering at Biloxi, Miss.

Although the California tuna fishery is the only one to show an important gain--14,671,635 pounds compared with 8,372,837 last year--the first months of the year normally account for only 11 percent of the year's production so that the figures for the first quarter do not necessarily indicate the trend of the fisheries for the year, officials of the Coordinator's Office said. All of the most important fisheries, such as salmon, pilchard or California sardine, menhaden, tuna, and shrimp have their peaks of production later in the year.

Landings of Pacific mackerel held up well the first two months of the year but due to poor fishing in March the quarterly total is 7,764,286 pounds compared with 8,730,352 last year.

On the Gulf coast shrimp and oysters showed some decline compared with both 1943 and 1942, but crabs made a substantial increase and most fish landings ran to about the same level as in recent years.

In the New England area landings of cod, haddock, rosefish and other species taken on the offshore banks showed good increases at Gloucester and New Bedford, but declined at Boston and Portland. However, landings at all the New England ports are expected to make a better showing later in the year because of the return of a number of boats requisitioned by the Navy and the construction of new vessels.

During the first quarter canning establishments processed about the same quantity of canned fish as last year. The pack of tuna, mackerel, California sardines, Maine sardines, and shrimp totaled 1,392,461 cases as against 1,257,165 in the first three months of 1943. The pack of tuna and Maine sardines was considerably larger, mackerel and California sardines declined slightly and shrimp fell from 38,076 cases to 4,368.

(over)

Freezing of fishery products increased this year over the two preceding years and the stocks on hand in freezing establishments as of April 1 were the largest for several years.

Statistics of the production and processing of the products of the major U. S. fisheries for the first three months of 1944 follow:

<u>Landings of fish</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1942</u>
Tuna (California)	Pounds	14,671,635	8,372,837	5,962,135
Mackerel (Pacific)	"	7,764,286	8,730,352	8,918,344
Sardine (California)	"	162,834,000	177,808,000	138,886,000
Shrimp (Gulf coast)	"	6,485,850	7,044,450	7,480,620
Oysters (Gulf coast)	"	4,514,685	6,789,360	7,083,347
Hard crabs (Gulf coast)	"	744,108	338,575	959,930
Fish at Gulf coast ports	"	1,550,860	1,577,615	1,458,385
By vessels at Boston	"	28,615,344	32,208,907	42,706,042
By vessels at Gloucester	"	20,152,310	16,630,846	17,698,269
By vessels and boats at New Bedford	"	15,439,551	12,255,790	8,985,872
By vessels at Portland, Me.	"	2,463,421	3,701,959	3,422,229

Holdings and Freezings - U. S. and Alaska

Freezings of fishery products	Pounds	29,095,757	22,521,583	22,317,106
Cold storage holdings, April 1	"	52,786,460	20,782,069	49,079,427
Holdings of cured fish, April 1	"	9,855,813	11,245,277	18,343,904

Canned products

Tuna (California)	Standard cases	310,557	163,289	122,187
Mackerel (California)	" "	84,444	93,197	105,755
Sardines (California)	" "	656,790	845,246	942,293
Shrimp	" "	4,368	38,076	48,825
Sardines (Maine)	" "	336,302	117,357	-

By-products

Tuna-mackerel oil	Gal.	12,450	7,583	19,137
Tuna-mackerel meal	Tons	890	641	449
Sardine oil (California)	Gal.	1,266,674	1,306,707	654,064
Sardine meal (California)	Tons	12,879	13,646	8,886
Menhaden oil	Gal.	41,500	12,112	12,000