



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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An abundance of fresh and frozen fish but short supplies of at least some kinds of canned fish are indicated in a survey of production by the U. S. fishing industry during the first 9 months of the year, released today by the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries.

Although total landings of fishery products at the end of the third quarter of 1944 showed a slight decline compared with the same period last year, supplies of fresh fish are at least 10 percent above 1943 production. The total pack of canned fish, however, has declined by about 200,000 cases. Production of fishery byproducts used in animal feeding and for many industrial purposes also is below last year's.

Chief items on the debit side of the report are Pacific sardines or pilchards, Alaska salmon, shrimp, and menhaden. Relatively poor catches of salmon and sardines were due in large part to an actual scarcity of fish.

On the other hand, substantial gains have been made in the fisheries for tuna, Maine sardines, Pacific mackerel, and Alaska herring, and in landings of fresh fish at New England ports.

Officials of the Coordinator's Office estimate, on the basis of available figures, that total fishery production for the year 1944 may be about 3,800,000,000 pounds, compared with 3,970,000,000 pounds last year. Actual production may exceed the estimate, however, because large landings of pilchards recently made in California will, if continued, materially reduce the deficit in the catch of this species.

Pilchard landings through September totaled 417,946,000 pounds, compared with 511,718,000 for the same period last year. Pilchards are the most important single item in the catch in terms of volume of production and are used in the manufacture of canned sardines, meal, and oil. The pilchard catch this year has been processed as follows: 1,329,178 cases of sardines, 32,358 tons of meal, and 6,155,840 gallons of oil.

Tuna landings continued the substantial lead over last year's record which has been maintained throughout 1944. By the end of September the total landings of tuna at California ports had passed the hundred-million-pound mark, totaling 106,224,831 pounds, as against 89,180,517 pounds in 1943. Oregon tuna fisheries contributed about 20,000,000 pounds in addition.

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The pack of canned tuna shows a corresponding increase over last year; 2,308,806 cases compared with 1,893,428. Unlike most other canned fish, tuna is not requisitioned by the Government, although considerable quantities are purchased directly by the military services. However, the large pack is expected to mean more tuna on the shelves of grocery stores.

With only a small pack from scattered localities still to be reported, production of Alaska salmon by September 16th totaled 4,838,000 cases, a drop of approximately 500,000 cases from last year.

Canned shrimp will continue to be scarce, with a pack of only 195,183 cases by Gulf of Mexico plants covered by the survey, or about 100,000 cases below the 1943 pack. Actual landings of shrimp have declined less sharply, but unusual quantities have been marketed as fresh or frozen shrimp, instead of going to the canneries.

Herring have been plentiful along the Maine coast and the canneries have been well supplied with young herring or sardines. A pack of 2,475,507 cases of sardines is reported, as against 1,890,526 cases last year.

The New England ports of Boston, Gloucester, New Bedford, and Portland landed 351,898,000 pounds of fresh fish, an increase of 30,000,000 pounds over last year. Total landings for the year are expected to show further increases over 1943 production, because last year the fleet remained in port during part of November and December as a result of price disagreements.

Pacific mackerel, which has been lagging behind 1943 figures, took a sudden spurt as the season of heavy production got under way in September and now stands at 37,237,308 pounds for the 9 month-period, as against 24,891,897 pounds last year. Almost the entire catch is canned, and the pack on September 30 was 391,151 cases, compared with the 1943 figure of 251,674 cases.

Reports from Alaska indicate an increase in the catch of herring, which supports one of the most important fisheries of the Territory. The season's operations resulted in a yield of 108,068,000 pounds, a gain of 24,000,000 pounds over last year. Alaska herring is used chiefly in the manufacture of meal for animal feeding and oil for various industrial uses.

The yield of oil from the Atlantic coast menhaden fishery is slightly under last year's figures - 4,437,406 gallons compared with 4,751,850 - but with the season of heavy production in the important North Carolina fisheries just opening up, it is considered possible that much of the deficit may be made up before the end of the year.

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