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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Because landings of Pacific sardines took a sharp upward turn during the October dark of the moon, totaling nearly 300,000,000 pounds in three weeks, the prospect that total production of all U. S. fishery products will exceed the 1943 catch is now excellent, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

As recently as late October, surveys of production in the major fisheries indicated that the 1944 total would fall below the 3,970,000,000 pounds taken last year by nearly 200,000,000 pounds. Tabulation of the October catch of sardines, however, changed the picture completely and the present estimate of 1944 production is 4,169,000,000 pounds.

Pacific sardines or pilchards are the largest single item in the nation's fish catch, normally amounting to about a billion pounds or one-fourth of the total fishery production of the country.

Latest available figures show a total sardine catch of 715,272,000 pounds from January 1 to October 21, which is 89,650,000 pounds in excess of the catch for the same period last year.

During the present season, which began August 1 in northern California and October 1 in the southern ports, Monterey and southern California areas have topped last year's catches by heavy margins, but San Francisco Bay was still lagging more than 22,000,000 pounds behind 1943. The current season's catch, by areas was as follows by October 21: San Francisco Bay, 152,902,000 pounds; Monterey, 277,628,000 pounds; San Pedro and San Diego, 121,908,000 pounds.

Because sardine fishing is done almost entirely during the dark of the moon, when the fish can be sighted by phosphorescence, fishing was interrupted late in October for the full-moon period, and was resumed a few days ago,

Because of war-stimulated demands for the products of the sardine fishery, officials of the Coordinator's office said that even if the recent large catches continue, the quantity of canned sardines, sardine oil, and sardine meal will be far less than military and civilian requirements.

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