



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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The nation's biggest fishery, that for pilchards, or Pacific sardines, is continuing its recent upward trend and at the beginning of December catches totaled 25 percent over last year's landings for the same period, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

Landings of pilchards for the period from January 1 to November 25 totaled 983,850,000 pounds, compared with 783,396,000 pounds caught during the same period last year. With the exception of 1941, this is the largest catch made during the past five years.

The heavy landings in October and November swamped canneries, worked reduction plants to capacity turning the fish into meal and oil, and at some of the ports made it necessary to control the catch by imposing limits on the quantity taken per boat.

Because of the acute shortage of cannery labor, the pack of sardines this year will not show an increase proportional to the gain in production, officials of the Coordinator's Office said. The pack to November 25 totaled 3,070,819 cases, compared with 2,712,734 cases last year. Since sardines are in heavy demand for overseas shipment, every possible pound is canned.

The heaviest increases in pilchard catches, compared with last year, have been in the fishing areas near Monterey. Small gains have been made at San Pedro and San Diego. San Francisco, on the other hand, has actually handled somewhat fewer fish than last year.

The pilchard industry operates on a seasonal basis, fishing beginning August 1 and ending March 1. For the current season the increase in production now amounts to a 36 per cent gain over last year.