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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Production of seafoods in the Gulf of Mexico area increased substantially during the first quarter of 1945, compared with the previous year, according to figures releases today by Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes.

In response to the heavy demand for shrimp, production of this shellfish increased 40 per cent over the same period in 1944, the Coordinator said. Favorable weather and no interruption of fishing by strikes, which disrupted the industry last year, helped make the larger catches possible.

A total of 43,226 barrels of shrimp were received at Gulf coast centers of the industry, compared with 30,885 barrels during the first three months of 1944. Catches for this season are normally light: peak production in the shrimp fishery is in the fall months.

The catch of hard crabs rose from 744,108 pounds in 1944 to 1,056,580 pounds; production of fresh-cooked crab meat from 79,153 to 99,186 pounds. The yield of other specialities, including crayfish, frogs, turtles, terrapin, and processed crab meat, was approximately triple the 1944 production of these items, totaling 35,799 pounds.

Bowfin, buffalofish, carp, catfish, and gaspergou or sheepshead, all fresh water fish, increased slightly in quantity caught, production for the first quarter of 1945 totaling 179,196 pounds, compared with 160,809.

Salt water fish and oysters were the only Gulf coast fishery products to show a decline in production. Still hampered by the serious labor shortage, the oyster industry's output declined 19 per cent — 257,200 barrels compared with 316,820 last year. Production of salt water fish, including thirty or more species, totaled 1,354,645 pounds, a decline of only about 2 per cent from 1944.

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