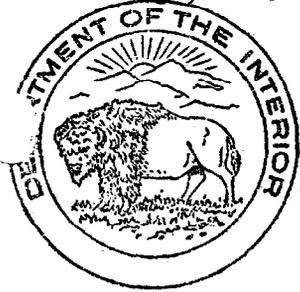


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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The yield of U. S. fishery products in 1945 probably will equal the average prewar figure as a result of the restoration of approximately normal operating conditions in the fishing industry, but according to present indications will fall slightly below last year's level, the Fish and Wildlife Service reported to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes today.

The catch of all species is expected to total approximately 4.4 billion pounds, which is equivalent to the average production during the five years preceding the war.

The chief reason for the lower tonnage this year, compared with 1944, is a decline of about 225 million pounds in the catch of pilchards or California sardines, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service said. The pilchard industry accounts for about one-fourth of the total U. S. fish catch, hence the relative success of this fishery may determine whether the year's total is above or below average.

By November 17, the 1945 catch of pilchards had reached a total of 353,501 tons, compared with 466,909 tons by the same date last year. Owing to the generally improved manpower situation in the canneries, however, the pack of canned pilchards totaled 3,132,322 cases, an increase of about 9 per cent over last year.

Production for the fresh fish markets is generally high throughout the country. All the major ports of New England, which receive the catches made by the trawling fleets on the New England and Nova Scotian banks, have handled more fish this year than at any time since the beginning of the war. Landings at the principal New England ports - Gloucester, Boston, New Bedford, Provincetown and Portland,

amounted to about 525 million pounds by mid-November this year, compared with about 430 million pounds in 1944.

In New York, receipts of fishery products rose from 190,285,865 pounds during the first three quarters of 1944 to 217,075,480 pounds in 1945. The figures include rail and truck shipments from other production centers as well as fish landed by vessel at New York.

Receipts at the port of Seattle for the first 10 months of 1945 were up 35 per cent over last year. Landings for this period in 1945 totaled 70,716,955 pounds, comprising chiefly halibut, rockfishes, flounders, salmon, and sablefish.

Landings of fresh and saltwater fish in the Gulf of Mexico area increased about 15 per cent over last year, totaling about 9 million pounds by the end of October. Receipts of hard crabs also increased from 10,323,000 pounds to 11,767,000 pounds. Oysters, on the other hand, declined slightly, from 507,000 barrels to 435,000 barrels this year.

In the Chesapeake Bay area, receipts at Norfolk amounted to 24,703,590 pounds for the first ten months of the year, a gain of about two and a half million pounds over 1944.

In contrast to the generally upward trend of the fresh fish trade, production of canned fish, with the exception of pilchards and tuna, is behind 1944. Increases in the pack of these two species are not enough to offset declines in salmon, mackerel, and Maine sardines, with the result that the total canned fish pack is approximately 6 per cent under 1944.

On both coasts the pack of mackerel is extremely small. On the Atlantic Coast, only 44,351 cases had been canned by the end of September, compared with 175,998 cases last year. The pack of Pacific mackerel through October was 309,251 cases, as against 645,320 cases in 1944.

The Maine sardine industry, with a pack of 2,007,784 cases for the first three quarters of the year, was running almost 20 per cent behind the 1944 pack, while on

the Pacific Coast the pack of salmon declined from 5,138,647 cases in the 1944 season to 4,833,333 cases in 1945.

California tuna, which along with pilchards is a bright spot in the otherwise gloomy picture of canned fish production, provided a pack of 2,995,757 cases to October 31, or 437,000 cases ahead of the pack on the same date last year. The total pack of tuna in 1945 will probably be the largest since 1940.

Although receipts of shrimp are holding up fairly well -- 222,152 barrels to the end of October, compared with 288,483 barrels last year -- the canned pack is only 113,813 cases, which is approximately a third of the 1944 pack.

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