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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****INFORMATION SERVICE****FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

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Atlantic and Gulf Coast States were warned by the Fish and Wildlife Service today not to allow planting of Japanese seed oysters in their waters in order to avoid hybridization of the Eastern oyster and prevent the importation of dangerous oyster pests.

A substantial industry has developed on the Pacific Coast based on the Japanese oyster which grows quickly to large size and is well adapted to canning but lacks the appearance and flavor of native oysters,

Although experts of the Service believe that the West Coast industry could become entirely independent of Japan as a source of seed oysters, renewed importations are expected due to the cheapness of the Japanese product. It has already been announced that seed oysters will be available next year for export.

According to Dr. Paul S. Galtsoff, biologist in charge of the Service's shellfishery investigations, the dread Japanese oyster drill has already been imported into northwestern waters along with the seed oysters and has become well established. The drill, a species of snail, is very difficult to control. So far the only effective means of destroying the drill is to locate the eggs in rocky or concrete crevices at low tide and burn them with a blow torch—a slow and expensive method of control.

The Japanese oyster is more prolific than the Eastern oyster and if planted on the natural beds of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts would outgrow the native form

and possibly replace it. In addition, Dr. Galtsoff said, laboratory experiments have shown that the Japanese and Eastern oysters interbreed although the quality of the hybrid is unknown.

Most Eastern states have laws or regulations preventing the planting of Japanese seed oysters in their waters and these laws and regulations should be continued and reaffirmed, Dr. Galtsoff declared.

The idea of importing oysters from Japan for cultivation in the waters of the Pacific Coast originated in 1899 when, at the request of the State Fish Commissioner of Washington, it was suggested by Professor Mitsukari that oysters from the beds of Hokkaido would be best adapted for transportation to America. In 1902 the first shipment consisting of four carloads of oysters was delivered at Seattle and planted in Puget Sound. The following year planting operations increased to 12 carloads.

In 1905 another attempt at planting was made by a group of Japanese residents which acquired oyster lands in Samish Bay near Bellingham for the purpose. The planting efforts remained on a fairly small scale, however, until 1922 when an American concern acquired the Samish Bay grounds. From 1925 the number of cases of Japanese seed imported to the Pacific Coast steadily increased from 492 to 68,044 in 1935. From that year importations declined until in 1941 only 9,672 cases were purchased. There were 45 American buyers in that year and the seed were planted in Puget Sound, Gray's Harbor, and Willapa Bay.

The standard case is about four cubic feet capacity, guaranteed to contain between 12,000 and 20,000 oysters. Despite the lengthy journey from Japan, the young oysters usually arrive in the United States in good condition with relatively low mortality. The pre-war price was about \$5 a case delivered at Seattle.

From the early days of the new industry the Bureau of Fisheries, predecessor of the Fish and Wildlife Service, insisted that efforts be made to make the industry less dependent on foreign seed by developing methods of producing seed

oysters in home waters. Extensive studies were made under the direction of the Service concerning the spawning and setting of Japanese oysters in Puget Sound and other bodies of water on the Pacific Coast. These observations, according to Dr. Galtsoff, showed that each year since 1934 there has been a set of Japanese oysters, of variable size, in Quilcene and Dabob Bays. The seed (it is gathered on strings of shells) has been used commercially to some extent and the Japanese species of oyster spread and covered the shores of the Hood Canal south to Hoodsburgh and adjacent areas.

A fair commercial catch of seed oysters was obtained in 1941 and fairly heavy setting was observed that year in Oakland and Oyster Bays and in the southern part of Puget Sound. Regular observations in Puget Sound and Willapa Bay were discontinued during the war but it is known that due to low summer temperatures there was no setting in 1944 and 1945.

"In this respect," Dr. Galtsoff said, "the conditions on the Pacific Coast are not different from those encountered by oyster growers of the North Atlantic states where good setting cannot be expected to occur every year and the industry depends on seed obtained during the most successful years."

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