



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES PRODUCTION SHOWS DECLINE

Although the catch of food fishes like cod, haddock, pollock and mackerel and many other species of fish are down this year in New England, 245,000,000 pounds of rosefish (ocean perch) were landed in the area as compared to last year's record landing of 238,000,000 pounds, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports.

The landings of all species of fish at the Massachusetts ports of Gloucester, Boston and New Bedford indicate the trend.

	Pounds (1948)	Value (1948)	Pounds (1949)	Value (1949)
Gloucester	251,113,154	\$11,234,871	253,000,000	\$10,500,000
Boston	199,980,363	16,182,503	171,572,000	12,126,000
New Bedford	77,571,522	11,772,568	105,000,000	9,600,000

While the poundage of the fish landings at New Bedford and Gloucester went up this year, the increase represents a much larger proportion of trash fish which were taken during 1949 for reduction purposes. These trash fish sold for approximately 1 cent a pound — which accounts for the more than \$2,000,000 decline in the 1949 value.

Rosefish (called ocean perch in parts of the Midwest and elsewhere) have been increasing in favor with consumers since the mid-1930s, when an enterprising fish dealer found that the fish could be filleted and sold in the Midwest where a fresh-water perch market had outstripped its sources of supply.

In 1931, only 118,000 pounds of rosefish were caught. The colorful fish were sold at first to fish markets for display. Gradually, as the filleting industry increased, rosefish were caught in increasing quantities: 65,000,000 in 1938, 178,000,000 in 1946, and finally the 1949 record of 245,000,000.

Practically the entire catch is taken by otter trawls in depths of 50 to 125 fathoms. Fishing is carried on throughout the year, but only during the daylight hours, for the fish scatter or rise off the bottom at night. The fish are landed primarily at Gloucester, Rockland, Portland (Me.), and Boston.

Rosefish is one of the few commercial species giving birth to live young instead of eggs. The young are spawned from June until September and are abundant at or near the surface throughout the summer. The fish grow slowly at a rate of about an inch a year until around their eleventh year, when they mature. Little is known

about their migrations, but there is some evidence that the larger fish move about over considerable distances so that an intensive fishery on one ground will affect the rosefish populations on others.

The rapid expansion of the rosefish fleet and catch has considerably diminished the yield from the nearby grounds as the accumulated stocks of older fish were caught. In order to supply the market the fleet has expanded operations to progressively more distant grounds and is concentrating to an increasingly great extent on small fish. The Fish and Wildlife Service has recently made a study of the effect of these developments on the productivity of the rosefish resource. It is working to develop practical measures which will protect the smaller fish and otherwise provide conditions necessary for the maximum continuous yield from this fishery.

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