

*Office Rec.  
10/13/52*



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

STUDY OF DOMESTIC TUNA INDUSTRY LAUNCHED

Acting Secretary of the Interior Vernon D. Northrop announced today that the Fish and Wildlife Service has begun a comprehensive study of the Nation's tuna industry, seeking information to help the industry "achieve and maintain a sound position in the domestic economy."

A crisis in the domestic tuna industry arose last year when duty-free imports of frozen tuna from Japan and Latin America, together with increased imports of brine-packed canned tuna from Japan, reached unprecedented proportions. United States tuna fishermen and cannery operators, particularly on the west coast, found domestic markets over-supplied with tuna and were forced to keep their vessels tied up and to close several plants.

As the crisis developed, a bill calling for a 3-cents per pound duty on imports of fresh or frozen tuna was considered by the Congress. The bill passed the House but was turned down by the Senate.

On June 26 of this year, the Senate Finance Committee directed the Tariff Commission to investigate the tuna situation, particularly from the standpoint of foreign competition. The study being made by the Fish and Wildlife Service is the result of a petition sent to Secretary Chapman on July 5 by six west coast senators. The Service study supplements the Tariff Commission investigation, and stresses the long-range position of the domestic industry. Specific subjects being covered by Service fishery specialists working on the project include consumption, distribution, marketing, production, and processing.

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