



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

*Office
Hes
4/11/56*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release APRIL 11, 1956

FWS ANALYSIS SHOWS ECONOMIC VALUES OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

It would take a capital outlay of \$10½ billion at four percent annual interest to maintain earnings equivalent to those obtained in the American Commercial Fisheries during 1955, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay said today. Secretary McKay based his statement on an analysis of the 1955 fisheries made by the Fish and Wildlife Service and released today in Fishery Leaflet 393.

Earnings, which in this instance include profit on the investment and the wages or commissions paid those who handle the fish in the various States, are estimated statistically as follows: At the boat side, 75 percent of the value of the catch at that point; at processor level, 10 percent of the value at that stage; wholesale, five and one-half percent; retail, eight percent.

The catch for 1955 was 4.6 billion pounds and the value to the fisherman was \$325,000,000. At the processor level and 1955 catch was worth \$548,000,000; at the wholesale level, \$775,000,000, and at the retail level, \$1,010,000,000. In all instances these are slightly below the 1954 figures; the value to the fisherman of fish in that year was \$360,000,000.

There were 555,000 workers employed as the result of the activities of the fishing industry. Of these 153,000 were fishermen, 4,000 transporters and 98,000 shore workers which include those engaged in canning and other processing. There were 300,000 employed indirectly in such industries as gear manufacture, boat building and manufacturing processing equipment. This is slightly less than the 568,394 employed in 1950 but considerably higher than the 428,965 at work in 1945.

American fishermen and businessmen had an investment with a replacement value of \$958,000,000 in the commercial fish business in 1955. The \$958,000,000 figure is an estimated replacement value based upon 1955 data which shows that boats and gear in the commercial fisheries represented an original investment of \$428,204,000, freezing and processing plants, \$215,649,000; wholesale facilities, \$193,475,000, and fish units in retail establishments, \$92,257,000.

There were 87,000 craft of all types engaged in the year's fishing. These included 11,000 vessels of five tons net and over; 48,000 motor boats and 26,000 other boats, all engaged in fishing. In addition there were 2,000 boats used for transportation of fish and shellfish between the fishing grounds and the docks.

The Pacific Coast States had the highest number of processing plants, 148. Of these Washington led with 76, California second with 52 and Oregon next with 20. The South Atlantic and Gulf States were next with 131 plants, Louisiana having 63 and Mississippi 23. The New England States had 84, of which 63 were in Maine; the Middle Atlantic States had 46 with 20 in New Jersey and 16 in New York. There were

20 processing plants in the Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes regions, of which 11 were in Iowa. Alaska was far in front among areas outside the continental United States with 109; Puerto Rico and American Samoa had one each and Hawaii 2. There were 400 plants in which fish were canned and 227 in which byproducts were processed. The total number of plants, with duplications excluded, was 579.

The monthly catch in 1955 hit its peak in July when 887,800,000 pounds of fish were taken. The April catch was 170,200,000 pounds and the December catch 271,400,000 pounds.

In value at the boat the shrimp industry was at the top, a position it has held for several years. The 1955 value for shrimp was \$70,000,000. Tuna and salmon follow in that order.

The 1955 supply of canned sardines was considerably below that of 1954. Heavy reductions in the supply of canned salmon and more moderate reductions in canned tuna stocks are noted. There was a decrease also in the supply of ground fish fillets, including ocean perch. Slight increases are noted in the supplies of shrimp, canned crab meat and northern lobsters.

The menhaden catch accounted for nearly 40 percent of the total production. Both the salmon and tuna catches were down sharply in 1955.

San Pedro, California, retained its leadership of individual ports in pounds of fish landed, 365,000,000, followed by Reedville, Virginia, with 305,000,000; Lewes, Delaware with 274,000,000 and Gloucester, Massachusetts, with 265,607,000 pounds.

The breakdown of manufactured products for 1955 was not available at the time of the analysis but the 1953 figures show that \$585,995,000 value at the processor level was divided as follows: Canned products, \$306,874,000; packaged shellfish, \$115,994,000; byproducts, \$74,372,000; packaged fish, \$52,163,000; cured fish, \$36,592,000. Since the estimated value of the 1955 catch at the processor level is \$548,000,000 the value of the various categories will probably be correspondingly less.

Fresh-water fishing in 1953 employed the most number of fishermen, 24,000; salmon was next with 21,000, then clamming with about 16,000 and shrimping fourth with 15,000. There were 14,000 engaged in taking oysters; other fisheries employed less than 9,000 each with the Maine herring fishery fifteenth on the list with only 1,050 workers.

Latest data on an area basis is for 1954 when the total American catch was 4,645,000,000 pounds, 45,000,000 pounds higher than the estimated catch for 1955. The data show the Atlantic and Gulf area most productive with 3,301,405,000 pounds, followed by the Pacific Coast States with 825,966,000, Alaska with 337,629,000 pounds and the Great Lakes and Mississippi River fisheries with 180,000,000 pounds.

Imports of edible fishery products for 1954 totaled 803,369,000 pounds compared with 725,195,000 in 1953 and 404,768,000 in 1945.

World data for 1953 included in the report show a catch of 60,000,000,000 pounds of fish. Japan led all nations with nearly 17 percent of the catch. Mainland China and Russia followed in order and the United States was fourth with 8.8 percent of the world catch.

x x x