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UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS STUDY OF FISH CHEMISTRY TO HELP IN AMERICAN DIETARY PROBLEMS

In a move to keep pace with the growing demands for diets which are both nutritive and appetizing, and to assure fish its rightful place in them, the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior has inaugurated a continuous study of the protein, fat, mineral and vitamin content of all species of fish used for food, the Department announced today.

It was explained that there are about 160 species of fish and shellfish used on American tables and that the nutritive elements vary with the subspecies, the season and area of capture, sex and various other conditions. While such technological studies have been made from time to time on a few species, the knowledge of the changing nutritive values of even the most-studied varieties is insufficient to meet modern demands, it was noted, and for most of the 160 species the knowledge is either entirely lacking or fragmentary.

Information secured through this continuous study will be of considerable guidance to dietitians, home economists and others who, directly or indirectly, are concerned with the health of the American people. Data secured will also serve as a means of determining the probable frozen storage life of processed fish, the yield after processing and the potential value of the waste products.

Instructions have been sent to each of the fishery laboratories operated by the Service--Seattle, Boston, Ketchikan (Alaska), College Park, (Maryland) and Pascagoula (Mississippi)--to conduct the necessary chemical analysis on a continuing basis on samples of the fish in their respective areas. These samples will come from commercial catches and from fish taken by the exploratory fishing vessels operated by the Service. Laboratory tests will also be made on any new or unusual fish taken by the exploratory ships.

In the light of present chemistry, fish are divided into two classes, fatty and nonfatty. Fish having more than three percent fat are listed in the fatty category. Cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, yellow perch and yellow pike are among those considered as nonfatty, but the degree will vary from time to time. Salmon, mackerel, ocean perch and sable fish are among the fatty species, with mackerel varying from three to 22 percent and salmon and the others showing variations almost as wide. Pacific rockfish vary up and down from the three percent line; scallops are nonfatty; oysters are nonfatty but high in the carbohydrate-type (glycogen) energy source as well as the valuable protein component.

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