



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FEBRUARY 24, 1957

UNITED STATES FISHERIES YIELD RECORD CATCH

The 1956 record catch of commercial fish, 5.2 billion pounds, was worth \$363,000,000 to the fishermen, the Department of the Interior reported today. This compares with \$338,000,000 which the 1955 catch was worth "at boatside". The data includes the Alaska catch.

Fish and Wildlife Service reports show that the previous record was 4.9 billion pounds, taken in 1941. The 1955 catch was 4.8 billion pounds.

Total utilization of fish for all purposes--human food and industrial--in 1956 was 7.6 billion pounds, of which more than a third, or 2.4 billion pounds, round weight, were imports.

Analysis of the annual catch over the past several years indicates a sharp increase in the amount of industrial fish being taken by American fishermen--one billion pounds in ten years--but a decline in the amount of fish harvested for human food--a 400 million pound drop from the 1947-50 average.

Segments of the fishing industry, particularly the New England groundfish producers and the Pacific Coast tuna men, point out that the food fish catch is far below the production capabilities of the American fishing fleets. Tie-up of fishing craft in some areas for as high as 90 days because of lack of market is cited as evidence of this. The tuna fleet, which once numbered 214 large clippers now numbers only 153 because of these long periods of inactivity.

The per capita annual consumption of fish has remained steady at between 10 and 11 pounds. The imports of fish for human food have increased from 21 percent of the totals in 1947-50 to 35 percent in 1956.

X X X