



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DECLINES NOTED IN 1957 COMMERCIAL FISHERY HARVEST

The Department of the Interior's preliminary review of commercial fisheries of the United States for 1957 shows a decline in the catch, a decline in the pack of fish used for human food, an increase in the pet food pack, a decline in the number of fishing craft used, a decrease in the number of fishermen, and a slight increase in the number of shore installations handling the products. The per capita consumption remained steady at 10.2 pounds.

This review is prepared annually by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The current issue differs from previous ones in that it contains more complete and current domestic data and is available to the public and to the industry some weeks earlier than usual. Related leaflets on packaged and canned products for 1957 have also been prepared and are available

The total catch for 1957 was 4.75 billion pounds compared with 5.25 billion pounds in 1956. Declines were noted in both the food fish harvest and in the industrial fish catch. Menhaden, the chief industrial fish, was down 20 percent, and this 400 million pound drop was responsible for the loss in the industrial fish category.

The 1957 catch of industrial fish was 2.23 billion pounds compared with 2.58 billion pounds in the previous year. The food fish catch dropped from 2.67 billion pounds to 2.52 billion.

Among the species taken in smaller quantities in 1957 were cod, haddock, Pacific halibut, Atlantic ocean perch, salmon, tuna, oysters, and shrimp. The catch of herring, flounders, mackerel, pollock, scallops, and lobsters was up somewhat while the 40.6 million pound Dungeness crab harvest and the whiting catch of 132.8 million pounds established new high records.

The fishing boats were manned by 142,000 men instead of 144,000 as in 1956; in the shore establishments, estimated employment was 100,000. The estimated number of boats totaled 84,000.

The average price per pound, boatside, for the 1957 catch was 7.39 cents compared with 7.03 cents per pound for the 1956 catch. But because of the decreased catch the total value of the 1957 harvest was below that of 1956. The accompanying figures show the estimated values of the 1957 catch at the various trade levels with 1956 values in parenthesis:

Producer (fisherman) --- \$351,000,000 (\$369,018,000)

Processor --- \$592,000,000 (\$622,000,000)

Wholesaler --- \$836,000,000 (\$879,000,000)

Retailer --- \$1,091,000,000 (\$1,147,000,000).

San Pedro continued to be the Nation's No. 1 port in both landings and value of landings; the 354,400,000 pounds of principally tuna, mackerel, and sardines landed there bringing \$25,440,000 boatside. Lewes, Delaware, was second in landings with 286,224,000 pounds of menhaden and Reedville, Virginia, was third with 256,766,000 pounds of menhaden. Gloucester, Massachusetts, was fourth in total landings but second in landings of food fish with 248,928,000 pounds. Other important ports included Beaufort-Morehead City, North Carolina; Boston, Mass.; San Diego, California; New Bedford, Mass.; Portland and Rockland, Maine, and Astoria, Oregon.

Tuna led the food fishes in pounds harvested, with 295,600,000 pounds. Salmon was next with 257,200,000 pounds and then came shrimp with 204,400,000 pounds. The Maine herring catch was 153,600,000 pounds, most of which went to human consumption. Haddock and ocean perch harvests were almost identical, each being more than 133,000,000 pounds. The whiting catch was 132,800,000 pounds. The menhaden harvest was 1.7 billion pounds, accounting for 35 percent of the total catch.

The boat value of several of the food fish catches was higher in 1957 despite the fact that some of the catches were smaller than in the previous year. The shrimp harvest was down 20 million pounds but the boatside value was \$74 million, or \$3 million above the 1956 figure. The value of the salmon catch was \$39,300,000. The value of the tuna catch was \$38,400,000, or \$5 million below 1956. The tuna harvest was down about 33 million pounds. The value of menhaden taken in 1957 was \$22,100,000, or \$6 million below the 1956 figure.

The quantity of fish canned for human food in 1957 was 644,682,000 pounds compared with 657,642,000 pounds in 1956. There were 342,255,000 pounds of pet food and bait canned in 1957 compared with 321,777,000 in 1956. The value of the 1957 pack of all canned fishery products was \$334,766,000; that of the 1956 pack was \$349,516,000. There was a \$15 million drop in food canned for human use and a slight rise in the value of fish canned for pets.

Tuna led the field in number of pounds canned with a record 232,456,000; salmon was next with 152,875,000; mackerel was third with 59,696,000; Maine sardines were next with 46,007,000; and then clam chowder with 36,554,000. There were 342,255,000 pounds of pet food processed. The 1957 packs of tuna, Maine sardines, mackerel and pet food were higher than those of 1956; the packs of salmon and clam chowder were lower.

Thirty percent of the harvest, or 1,428,000,000 pounds, went into the channels of trade as fresh or frozen fish; 24 percent was canned and two percent was cured. Byproducts--oil and meal--fish sold as pet or animal food and bait, accounted for 2,104,000,000 pounds or 44 percent of the catch.

Fifty-four percent of the 1957 production, 2,560,000,000 pounds, was taken by Atlantic Coast fishermen. Fishermen from the Gulf States and the Pacific Coast each took 17 percent of the total; Alaskans caught 8 percent and the fishermen operating in the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system caught 4 percent. Most of the fishing was done in waters off the shores of the United States and Alaska but nearly half a billion pounds, or about 10 percent of the catch was taken on the high seas off foreign shores. More than half of this catch was tuna.

Fisheries of the United States and Alaska, 1957, a Preliminary Review, is listed as Fishery Leaflet 393. In addition to data on production, processing, prices and supplies of the domestic catch there is considerable information on the fishery imports and exports and on world fisheries. This leaflet is available through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C. The two related bulletins which are also available are Packaged Fish--1957 CFS 1755 and Canned Fish and By-Products--1957 CFS 1756.

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