

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISHERY REPORT EMPHASIZES PRESERVATION OF INSHORE AREAS

Twenty-one percent--1.1 billion pounds--of the total United States near-record 1961 fish catch was taken from the coastal waters between Pascagoula, Miss., and Port Arthur, Tex.--only 300 miles apart as the crow flies--according to a review released today by the Department of the Interior.

This confirms conclusively the importance of conserving the environment of The Nation's inshore areas for the control, cultivation, and concentration of fisheries, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial fisheries declared. The effects of altering coastlines, for industrial growth and urban development must be assessed carefully for the protection of bays, inlets, and estuaries needed for fishery resource development, the Bureau said. The items taken from the waters between Pascagoula and Port Arthur consisted largely of menhaden, unclassified fish for animal food, crabs, oysters, and shrimp.

Statistics compiled by the Bureau for 1961 reveal that United States fishermen took 5.1 billion pounds of fish, shellfish, and other aquatic products having an ex-vessel value of about \$364 million--about 200 million pounds and \$10 million more than in 1960 and only two percent under the record 5.3 billion pounds taken in 1956.

Increased landings of menhaden, tuna, jack mackerel, salmon, and king crabs accounted primarily for the gains. The record catch of menhaden was 45 percent of the total United States catch; packers of canned tuna put up the largest tuna pack in history. The catch of king crabs, sea scallops, and striped bass also hit new highs. Cod, haddock, anchovies, and Pacific mackerel also were taken in considerably greater volume, while large declines occurred in catches of herring in both Maine and Alaska, sardines, shrimp, and whiting.

Prices for most items advanced during the year and, according to the "Wholesale Prices and Indexes for Edible Fishery Products," prices were 7.8 percent higher in December 1961 than in December 1960.

During 1961, the domestic catch for human consumption continued static, 17 percent below the 1948-1953 average. It was exceeded in quantity by that taken for industrial products, bait, and animal food. Imports of edible fishery products increased over 100 percent.

Copies of the survey, "Advance Report on the Fisheries of the United States, 1961 (Fishery Leaflet 532)," can be obtained by writing the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C.

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