

United States Department of the Interior, J. A. Krug, Secretary
Fish and Wildlife Service, Albert M. Day, Director

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PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FISH ONLY 13.3 POUNDS (1935) 1/
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Our annual consumption of edible fish and shellfish, as prepared for market including that caught and consumed direct by the fishermen, amounts to about 1,645,000,000 pounds or a per capita consumption of 13.3 pounds. This is based upon domestic production and foreign trade data for the year 1931 when the most recent detailed survey of the production of fresh and processed fishery products was made. This places the per capita consumption on a weekly basis at about one-fourth of one pound. When compared with foreign consumption of fish and shellfish, our own consumption in certain sea coast cities and the consumption of meats, our average seafood figure seems very low.

It will be observed from the table presented herewith that only four species or groups of species contribute more than half a pound to the per capita consumption. Among these, salmon leads with 2.738 pounds. Following in order are the group consisting of cod, haddock, hake, pollock, and cusk with 1.509 pounds; sardines, 0.689 pounds; and oysters, 0.557 pounds. Among those contributing 0.25 pounds (4 ounces) or more are only eight additional species or groups which in order of their importance are sea herring (excluding sardines), mackerel, flounders, halibut, clams, crabs, tuna and tunalike fishes (including Pacific yellowtail), and shrimp.

Most Eaten Fresh

Fresh and frozen products are consumed in greater quantities than all other fishery commodities combined. In order of their importance the per capita consumption of each group of products according to method of preparation was as follows: Fresh and frozen, 8.171 pounds; canned, 3.584 pounds; salted, 0.972 pounds; smoked, 0.288 pounds; edible oil, 0.107 pounds; fresh-cooked, 0.078 pounds; and dried, 0.057 pounds.

Foreign Consumption

Data collected or computed several years ago from various sources have placed the estimated annual per capita consumption of fish and shellfish in various foreign countries as follows:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
Japan	55
Sweden	52
Norway	44
Denmark	39
Portugal	37
England and Wales	35
Canada	29
Netherlands	29
Germany	18
Belgium	17
Spain	16
New South Wales	15
France	14
Australia	13
Uruguay	12
Argentina	10
Italy	9
Chile	8
Egypt	7

Why We Lag

It is evident that our own per capita figure is very low in comparison to that of these countries. No doubt the higher figures for many of these countries are occasioned largely by the closer proximity of the producing areas to a larger proportion of the consumers, which not only lessens transportation costs but makes a larger proportion of the population "fish conscious" by this closer association with fish and people interested in fish. Further, foreign countries do not usually have so severe a problem of introducing new products or species due to the same closer proximity as well as the greater similarity of fisheries throughout most foreign countries. In the United States our species and products vary greatly in the various producing regions.

Seaboard Takes Most

While our annual per capita consumption of fish and shellfish is 13.3 pounds, it is obvious that such a consumption is not uniform over the United States. In areas where production is large, consumption is usually greater, being effected by sales of fresh products, and the reverse follows in regions more remote from production centers in spite of sales of frozen, canned, and cured commodities which frequently have wider geographical distribution than the fresh article. This wide variation in consumption is indicated in some of the earlier reports 2/ of the Bureau of Fisheries showing large per capita consumption of coastal cities, such as New York City which amounted to nearly 32 pounds and Jacksonville, 18 pounds; while in such inland cities as St. Louis and Louisville the per capita consumption was 9 and 6 pounds respectively, and at Atlanta and Pittsburgh, 11 pounds each.

Comparative data on consumption of fish and shellfish are not available over a period of years except for a few products. A computation for about 1924 showed the annual domestic per capita consumption of fish and shellfish at 15 pounds. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce ^{3/} gives the per capita consumption of canned fish in 1899 as 1.91 pounds; 1909, 3.8 pounds; 1919, 3.34 pounds; and 1929, 4.5 pounds. The same Bureau shows the consumption of smoked fish in 1925 as 0.66 pounds.

A comparison of our consumption of fish and shellfish with meats (pork, beef, lamb and mutton, and veal) which are reported by the Department of Agriculture ^{4/}, shows that for every pound of fish and shellfish, 10 pounds of meats are consumed. More specifically, based on 1931 figures, the annual domestic per capita consumption of meats amounted to 133.2 pounds made up of 69.6 pounds of pork; 49.6 pounds of beef; 7.1 pounds of lamb and mutton; and 6.9 pounds of veal.

Available figures for meats (pork, beef, lamb and mutton, and veal) show that the highest point of consumption was reached in 1907 according to Department of Agriculture data. In that year the consumption reached 155.1 pounds. The lowest consumption was in 1917 during the war when only 120.1 pounds were consumed. In 1932 the per capita consumption was 133.4 pounds. Since 1927 it has ranged between 132 and 139 pounds.

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FISH

Item	Pounds	Per Cent
Fresh and frozen	8.2	61.7
Canned	3.6	27.0
Salted	1.0	7.3
Smoked	0.3	2.2
Other	0.2	1.8
Total	13.3	100.0

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FISH AND MEAT

Item	Pounds	Value
Pork	69.6	47.5
Beef	49.6	33.9
Fish	13.3	9.1
Lamb and Mutton	7.1	4.8
Veal	6.9	4.7
Total	146.5	100.0

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FISHERY PRODUCTS

Species	C O N S U M E D A S							
	Fresh and frozen	Canned	Salted	Smoked	Dried	Fresh-cooked	Edible Oil	Total
	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.
<u>FISH</u>								
Alewives	0.113	0.026	0.102	0.004	-	-	-	0.245
Blue pike	.099	-	-	-	-	-	-	.099
Buffalofish	.091	-	-	.006	-	-	-	.097
Butterfish	.080	-	-	.006	-	-	-	.086
Carp	.104	-	-	.001	-	-	-	.105
Catfish & bullheads	.102	-	-	-	-	-	-	.102
Cod, haddock, hake, pollock & cusk	.958	.039	.319	.052	0.034	-	0.107	1.509
Croaker	.122	-	-	-	-	-	-	.122
Flounders	.355	-	-	-	-	-	-	.355
Halibut	.346	-	-	(5)	-	-	-	.346
Lake herring, chubs, cisco & tullibees	.081	-	.034	.056	-	-	-	.171
Lake trout	.079	-	-	.003	-	-	-	.082
Mackerel	.299	.028	.073	.002	-	-	-	.402
Mullet	.157	-	.010	-	-	-	-	.167
Pilchard	-	(6)	-	-	-	-	-	(6)
Rockfishes	.057	-	-	-	-	-	-	.057
Salmon	.586	2.063	-	.079	.010	-	-	2.738
Sardines	-	.689	-	-	-	-	-	.689
Sea herring	.021	(6)	.424	.048	-	-	-	.493
Scup	.074	-	-	-	-	-	-	.074
Shad	.083	.001	-	.001	-	-	-	.085
Squeteagues or "sea trout"	.213	-	-	-	.001	-	-	.214
Tuna and tunalike fishes, including Pacific yellowtail	.017	.243	-	-	-	-	-	.260
Whitefish	.123	(5)	-	.010	-	-	-	.133
Whiting	.065	-	-	(5)	-	-	-	.065
Yellow perch	.071	-	-	-	-	-	-	.071
Other fish	.838	.077	.010	.020	-	-	-	.945
Total fish	5.134	3.166	.972	.288	.045	-	.107	9.712

(continued on following page)

Species	C O N S U M E D A S							
	Fresh and frozen	Canned	Salted	Smoked	Dried	Fresh-cooked	Edible Oil	Total
	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>
<u>SHELLFISH</u>								
Clams	.158	.132	-	-	-	-	-	.290
Crabs	.139	.092	-	-	-	0.055	-	.286
Lobsters, including spiny lobsters	.036	.014	-	-	-	.010	-	.060
Oysters	.487	.070	-	-	-	-	-	.557
Shrimp	.126	.105	-	-	.012	.013	-	.256
Other shellfish	.091	.005	-	-	-	-	-	.096
Total shellfish	1.037	.418	-	-	.012	.078	-	1.545
Caught for home use (all species)	2.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.000
Grand total	8.171	3.584	.972	.288	.057	.078	.107	13.257

- 1/ This article was published in "Fishing Gazette", February, 1935, pp. 9-10.
- 2/ U. S. Bureau of Fisheries Document No. 996 by R. H. Fiedler and J. H. Matthews; Nos. 1026, 1036, and 1039 by R. H. Fiedler; and Economic Circulars Nos. 50 and 52 by L. T. Hopkinson.
- 3/ U. S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Domestic Commerce Series No. 38, by E. C. Montgomery and C. H. Kardell.
- 4/ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Separate from Yearbook, 1934, No. 1410.
- 5/ Less than 0.001 pounds.
- 6/ Included with sardines.