

SECTIONAL REVIEWS

Chesapeake

VIRGINIA: With the removal of meat controls on October 15, prices of shucked oysters in the Chesapeake area fell to a low level, resulting in glutted markets from unmoved stocks, according to the Service's Fishery Marketing Specialist in Virginia. Being unprepared for this development, oyster packers were somewhat confused, but within several weeks the congestion had disappeared, and November 15 saw tongers at work again.

In Maryland, where oyster production is conducted on a potentially larger scale than in Virginia, owing to public-rock dredging, temporary restrictions on such dredging were promptly announced by the Commission of Tidewater Fisheries to prevent further congestion of the market.

With the decontrol of meat, the price of crabmeat dropped almost as drastically as that of oysters.

The processing of "ribbed" or "marsh" mussels has been resumed by a Virginia firm. After the mussels have been steamed, shucked, and drained, they are shipped to a northern chemical company. The "marsh" mussel differs mainly from the sea mussel in that it is not used for food. The sea mussel is abundant on Virginia's seacoast, but lacks market development.



Although for many years almost extinct, the diamond-back terrapin has again appeared in Virginia waters. They are reported in large numbers, especially in the bays, estuaries, and swamps near the coast.



South Atlantic

The main fishing season along the South Atlantic Coast is during the fall months. In North Carolina, the principal species taken are spot, mullet, trout, pompano, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, croaker, butterfish (harvestfish), menhaden, oysters, crabs, and shrimp. Spot and mullet are also taken in large quantities along the northern coast of South Carolina during the fall months. In South Carolina and Georgia, the heaviest runs of shrimp usually occur in October and November.

The first large spot run of the season occurred along North Carolina beaches about October 1, and beach seiners were busy night and day, the Service's Fishery Marketing Specialist in that area reported. Thousands of pounds of spot were taken, together with a few large croakers and bluefish.

Crabs were reported plentiful in Croatan Sound, but production was limited by the shortage of crabbers.

Fishermen in the vicinity of Salterpath on Bogue Sound, near Morehead City, North Carolina, made a haul of about 12,000 pounds of pompano on October 4. This

was reported as the largest single day's catch in the area and was one of the most remunerative to the fishermen.

Although the oyster season opened in North Carolina on October 1, production is not expected to reach any appreciable size until early December.



Gulf

ALABAMA: Changes in Louisiana shrimp regulations, including strict enforcement provisions which became effective in August, has caused much concern among Alabama fishermen, according to the Service's Fishery Marketing Specialist in the Gulf area. These changes were the result of a new law passed by the 1946 Session of the Louisiana Legislature in an endeavor to conserve and protect the State's important shrimp resources.

Significant changes in the regulations are an out-of-State license of \$2,500 per year required for each shrimp trawler in this category shrimping in Louisiana waters, and a fee of \$200 per day for each crew member on board not a resident of Louisiana. The only State exempted from the new regulations is Mississippi, which has a reciprocal agreement with Louisiana. Mississippi boats will be permitted to fish within 3 miles of Louisiana shores without the fee of \$2,500.

For years the major part of the catch of fish and shrimp has been made by boats basing at Bayou LaBatre and Coden, but fishermen at these ports are now of the opinion that, since the fee for a three-man crew would cost \$600, plus an additional fee of \$2,500 for the vessel if it were an Alabama craft, the returns would not warrant the expense.

Shrimp production at Bayou LaBatre this season has been poorest in its history. Responsible, to a great extent, for this decline were the curtailment of shrimping operations in Louisiana waters and the scarcity of shrimp along the coast. This community was almost entirely dependent on the fishing industries, consequently, many people are at present unemployed with no means of livelihood in view.

Oystermen and dealers in Alabama recently became involved in a price dispute, which temporarily retarded production, but a satisfactory agreement has been reached and operations resumed. A large portion of all the oysters produced in this State are shucked by the oystermen themselves at the oyster houses. The shucked meats are then purchased by the oyster houses for shipment.



Shrimping Vessels

The Gulf menhaden vessels have left for North Carolina ports to engage in the fall menhaden fishery on that coast.