

# COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REVIEW

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## ARRIVALS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS AT SEATTLE, 1946

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Arrivals of fresh and frozen fish, shellfish, livers, and viscera at Seattle, including local landings and wholesale receipts from southern areas, coastwise vessel arrivals from Alaska, and imports from British Columbia and other Canadian maritime provinces, during 1946, totaled 77,385,000 pounds. This was a decline of 14 percent from the 1945 total receipts of 89,551,000 pounds.

The waters of Washington and Oregon again were the principal sources of supply. Together with Idaho, they accounted for 56,530,000 pounds, or 73 percent of all receipts. Alaska supplied 15,006,000 pounds, or 19 percent, and British Columbia, 5,547,000 pounds, or 7 percent. The Gulf States, California, and other sources (Table 1) contributed less than one-half of one percent.

Table 1 - Receipts by Source - 1946

Source	F R E S H			F R O Z E N		
	1946	1945	Change from 1945	1946	1945	Change from 1945
	Pounds	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Pounds	Percent
Local <sup>1/</sup>	56,082,000	62,551,000	- 10	450,000	-	-
California	17,000	48,000	- 65	-	-	-
Gulf States	74,000	245,000	- 70	162,000	-	-
Alaska	382,000	604,000	- 37	14,624,000	21,805,000	- 33
British Columbia	3,630,000	3,728,000	- 3	1,917,000	527,000	+ 264
Other <sup>2/</sup>	37,000	8,000	+362	10,000	35,000	- 71
Total .....	60,222,000	67,184,000	- 10	17,163,000	22,367,000	- 23

<sup>1/</sup>Washington, Oregon, plus a small amount from Idaho.

<sup>2/</sup>Minnesota, New York, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia.

Fresh and frozen fish from British Columbia amounted to over 5½ million pounds, 30 percent greater than the 1945 import total of 4,225,000 pounds. Sole and other fillets accounted for almost one million pounds of this quantity. This represented an increase of 308 percent over the 1945 imports of filleted fish.

Of the 34 major classifications comprising the total arrivals, 11 accounted for 91 percent of the total volume. Heading the list was salmon--all kinds--with a total of 21,912,000 pounds. In second place was halibut with 20,458,000 pounds, while rockfishes, with 7,118,000 pounds, were in third place. Following these species were:

Soles	- 5,806,000	True Cod	- 1,918,000
Sablefish	- 4,666,000	Oysters	- 1,877,000
Livers and viscera	- 4,579,000	Crabs	- 1,486,000
Lingcod	- 3,484,000	Sole and other fillets	- 1,438,000

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Receipts of fresh and frozen salmon increased about 9 percent over 1945. Since 1946 was a cycle year for chum and sockeye salmon, catches of these species, particularly in the Puget Sound region, were higher. The run of sockeye salmon overloaded the canneries shortly after they started operations and considerable quantities were diverted into the fresh markets. The king and silver salmon runs were spotty and tardy throughout most of the trolling period. While late seasonal catches of kings showed improvements, silvers did not appear in quantity at any time. Local receipts of silver salmon were about one and a half million pounds below the 1945 figure of 2,997,000 pounds. A large part of the 1946 chum salmon catch was taken in Seattle's immediate waters, enabling many purse-seiners to make several sets daily.

Slightly over 353,000 cases of canned salmon were packed in Washington canneries during 1946, 32,000 cases less than in 1945. The canning of sockeyes in the Sound area did not start until the latter part of July, pending a number of adjustments of cannery wages. Ninety-six percent of the current pack consisted of sockeye salmon.

Throughout most of the year, salmon prices were a troublesome problem. On October 1, the OPA removed price control on these fish. Immediately, prices jumped to as high as 43 cents a pound for troll kings and 38 cents for troll silvers. Within a short time, however, prices dropped to an average of 38 cents for kings and 35 cents for silvers. The rise in prices for salmon caught by gill nets and purse seines was less sharp so the leveling-off process was less drastic.

Halibut fishermen, with the season opening on May 1, experienced a very productive year. Weather conditions and vessel catches were generally satisfactory. Halibut fishing was closed in Area II in June after 42 days' operations and in Area III on August 19, 111 days from the opening date. These were the shortest fishing periods on record for both Areas. Landings by the trawl-line fleet at Seattle were 11 percent greater than in 1945.

Of the nearly 60-million pound catch of halibut, Seattle received and handled from all sources, better than a third of that amount, or 20,458,000 pounds. This was about 12 percent below the 1945 receipts of halibut and was due, principally, to the complete halting, for over two months, of shipments of frozen halibut from Alaska, by a coastwise maritime dispute.

During the first part of August when price ceilings were reinstated, Seattle halibut fishermen refused to sell their catch, amounting to nearly a million pounds, at ceiling prices, and froze it for future sale. On August 16, three days before the season closed, the OPA decontrolled halibut and prices for the fresh fish rose from  $17\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pound for mediums to  $28\frac{1}{2}$  cents. After the regular fishing closed, prices for halibut caught incidentally to other types of fishing increased still



PART OF SEATTLE'S WATER FRONT

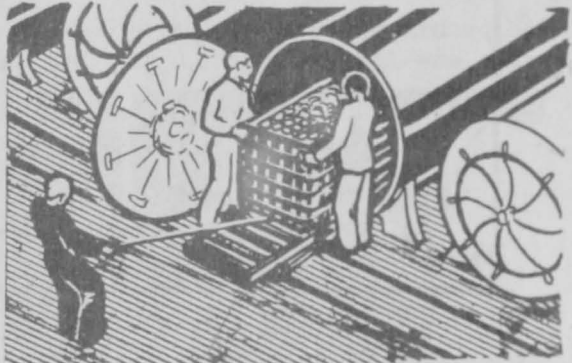
further. A level of 35 cents a pound for all grades was ultimately reached which continued during the balance of the period when halibut is allowed to be caught.

The otter-trawlers enjoyed a productive year making 1,213 trips to the Straits and offshore fishing grounds. They landed 15,911,000 pounds of bottomfish. The bulk of these landings, however, were made during the first seven months of 1946.

Landings of rockfishes and true cod became so heavy that local buyers, as well as those at other Washington and Oregon ports, imposed a 5,000-pound purchase limit per boat for these fish. When the cold-storage stocks of frozen fish were gradually reduced and market conditions became more normal, the purchase limit was removed. Largely as a result of curtailment of purchases by the Armed Forces and the subsequent catch-per-vessel restriction, rockfish receipts totaled only 7,118,000 pounds in 1946 and dropped to about one-half that of 1945. When deliveries of rockfishes and true cod were discouraged, trawl fishermen turned their efforts to catching the more desirable and higher priced soles. These species, mostly English and petrale sole, totaled 5,806,000 pounds, about 4 percent above the 1945 total. Total trawl landings were nearly 34 percent under 1945 when over 24,151,000 pounds were landed.

Fishing for albacore tuna proved to be the mystery of the year as well as the greatest disappointment. Seattle does not usually receive large quantities of

tuna because it lacks canning facilities for this species. However, less than 155,000 pounds of fresh albacore tuna were received during the entire year, about one-fourth of the 1945 receipts. Coastal canning ports in Washington and Oregon reported conditions generally unfavorable throughout the season with this fish failing to appear in quantity at any time. Many vessels abandoned tuna fishing early in the season and changed to other and more productive fishing operations. Indicative of the disastrous season both as to financial outlay and fishing effort was the total pack of canned tuna for Washington and Oregon of about 192,000 cases in 1946 compared with 470,000 cases packed in 1945, and 846,000 cases packed in 1944, the peak year.



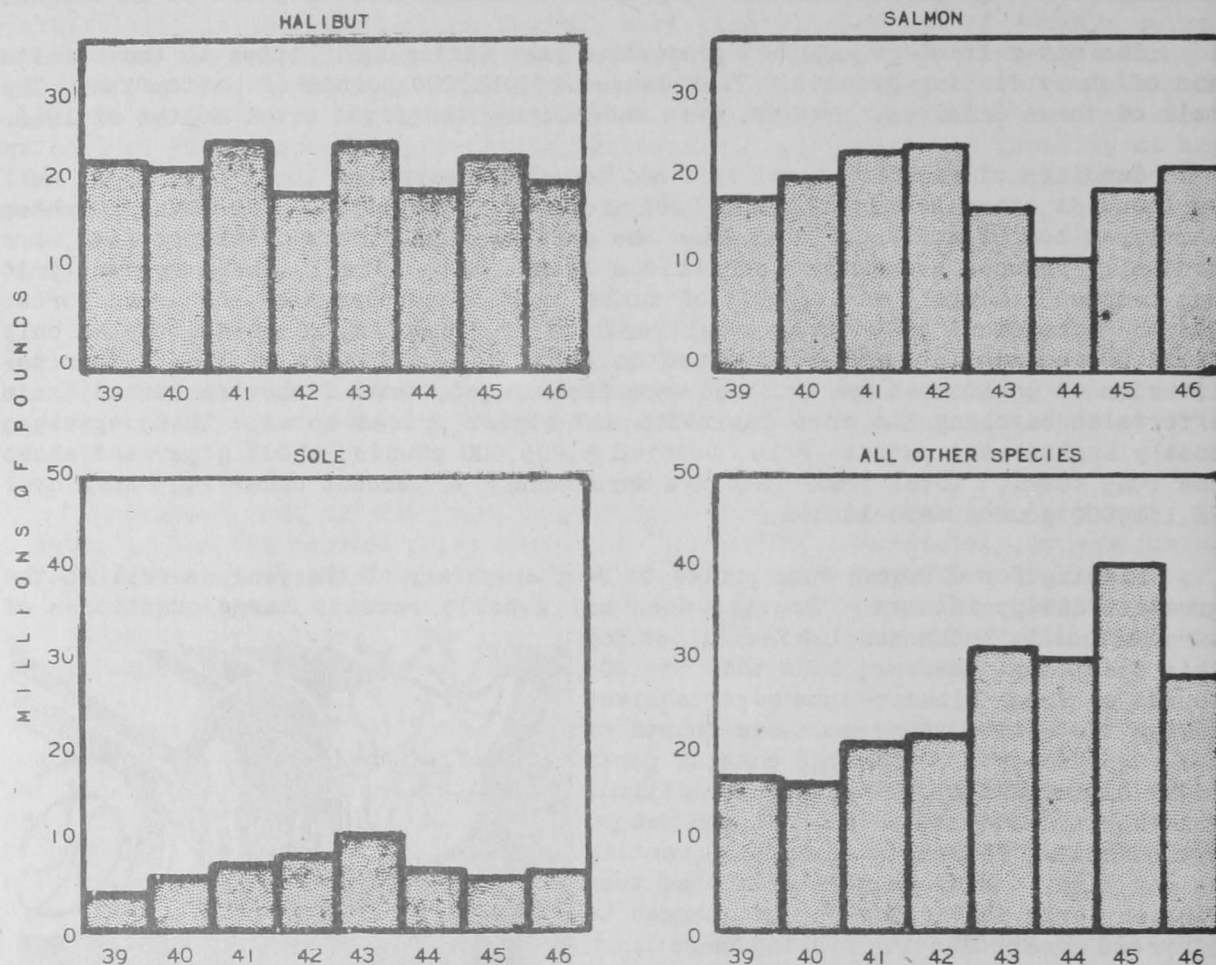
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The west coast maritime dispute which began in October and extended throughout November in the Puget Sound region seriously affected Seattle's receipts of frozen fishery products from Alaska. These shipments, which totaled 21,805,000 pounds in 1945, dropped to 14,624,000 pounds in 1946, a decline of 33 percent. For two months, coastwise traffic was at a standstill with no vessels other than food or relief ships, permitted to land or depart. Heavy quantities of canned and frozen fishery products, meals and oils, awaiting stateside delivery, were forced to remain either in Alaskan warehouses or aboard ship in Seattle's harbor. The dispute was ultimately settled, in December, and shipping rapidly returned to normal.

Despite the decline in total receipts from 89,551,000 pounds in 1945 to 77,385,000 pounds in 1946, the value to fishermen was approximately \$15,393,000, an increase of nearly \$400,000 over the 1945 value of \$14,996,000. Thus, the average price returned to the fishermen rose from 17 cents to 20 cents a pound. The principal reasons for the rise in overall value during 1946 were a number of early upward



## RECEIPTS AT SEATTLE, 1939-1946



adjustments in OPA ceiling prices together with subsequent price decontrol for some selected species, and the eventual removal of all price control, for fresh and frozen fishery products. Salmon and halibut prices, in particular, were doubled and in some cases, tripled in the first upward surge but gradually regained balance and sought more reasonable ranges. Price levels of trawl-caught species and other bottomfish remained fairly steady throughout the year.

In addition to the fresh and frozen receipts, a total of 8,071,000 pounds of cured products arrived at the local port during 1946, an increase of about 5 percent over the 1945 cured fish receipts. The bulk of these products consisted of mild-cured salmon, 5,149,000 pounds; salted salmon, 1,331,000 pounds; and salted herring, 1,202,000 pounds. The nearly 2 million gallons of various fish oils was far below the 1945 oil receipts. Over 12,000 tons of fish meal arrived during 1946 and slightly exceeded the previous year's meal tonnage.

