



COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REVIEW



A review of developments and news of the fishery industries
prepared in the BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES.

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Use of funds for printing this publication has been approved by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, May 10, 1960.

5/31/63

CONTENTS

COVER: A sponge boat bringing in its catch to Tarpon Springs, Fla. Other boats of the sponge fleet in the background. Sponge harvesting techniques were brought to the United States more than a hundred years ago by Greek sponge fishermen. The demand for natural sponges continues because man may imitate but has never duplicated the natural sponge. (See p. 34 of this issue.)

Page		Page
1	..Shrimp Exploration in Central Alaskan Waters by the M/V <u>John N. Cobb</u> , October-November 1959, by Fred Watne and Harold C. Johnson	
9	..Physical and Chemical Properties of Shrimp Drip as Indices of Quality, by Sammie Bethea and Mary E. Ambrose	

Page	TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS:
	Fishing Vessel and Gear Developments:
15	.. Equipment Note No. 8--New Hydraulically-Driven Block, by Harold C. Johnson
	Alaska:
16	.. Forecast for 1961 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon Run
16	.. Harvesting Annual Salmon Runs Creates Great Interest
17	.. Sixth Species of Salmon Caught in Alaskan Waters
	American Samoa:
17	.. Tuna Landings, October 1960
	Byproducts:
18	.. New Technical Advisory Unit to Stimulate Research on Fish Meal and Oil
	California:
18	.. Big 1960 Salmon Run to Sacramento River
18	.. Investigation of Abalone Resources Continued (Airplane Spotting Flight 60-21)
19	.. Pelagic Fish Population Survey Continued (Airplane Spotting Flights 60-19 and 60-22)
19	.. Cans--Shipments for Fishery Products, January-September 1960
	Central Pacific Fisheries Investigations:
20	.. Identification of Pacific Tuna Larvae
	Dams:
20	.. Interior Department Recommends Against Immediate Power License on Middle Snake
21	.. Federal Aid Funds for Fish and Wildlife Restoration
	Federal Purchases of Fishery Products:
21	.. Department of Defense Purchases, January-October 1960
	Florida:
22	.. Fisheries Research Through September 1960
	Food Spoilage:
23	.. Grant Made for Study of New Approach to Control of Food Spoilage
	Great Lakes Fisheries Exploration and Gear Research:
24	.. Commercial Potential of Under-Utilized Fish Stocks in Lake Michigan Surveyed (M/V <u>Capitol I</u> Exploratory Cruise 3)
	Great Lakes Fishery Investigations:..
24	.. Lake Erie Fish Population Survey for 1960 Season Completed (M/V <u>Musky II</u> October 1960)
25	.. Lake Michigan Fish Population Survey Continued (M/V <u>Cisco</u> Cruises 9 and 10)

Page	TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS (Contd.):	Page
	Great Lakes Fishery Investigations (Contd.):	
26	.. Abundance of Spawning Lake Trout in Western Lake Superior Studied (M/V <u>Siscowet</u> Cruise 8)	
	Groundfish:	
27	.. Study Compare Fishing Costs in New England and Canadian Industries	
	Gulf Exploratory Fishery Program:	
27	.. Exploratory Fishing for Industrial Fish Continued (M/V <u>Oregon</u> Cruise 71)	
	Maine Sardines:	
28	.. Canned Maine Sardine Stocks, November 1, 1960	
29	.. Canning Season Ends	
	Marketing:	
29	.. Edible Fishery Products Marketing Prospects, Winter 1960/61	
	North Atlantic Fisheries Exploration and Gear Research:	
30	.. Boothbay Harbor Exploratory Fishing Activities Shifted to Gloucester	
30	.. New Exploratory Fishing and Gear Research Chief Appointed	
	North Atlantic Fisheries Investigations:	
30	.. Gulf of Maine Surveyed for Young Haddock and Other Species (M/V <u>Delaware</u> Cruise 60-12)	
	North Pacific Exploratory Fishery Program:	
30	.. Good Shrimp Fishing Grounds Found off Central Oregon (M/V <u>John N. Cobb</u> Cruise 48)	
	Oregon:	
31	.. New Fish Ladders Recommended at Willamette Falls	
32	.. South Atlantic Exploratory Fishery Program: Extensive Survey Made off Florida East Coast for Stocks of Shrimp and Scallops (M/V <u>Silver Bay</u> Cruise 26)	
	Sponges:	
34	.. Color Film on Natural Sponge Industry	
	Tuna:	
35	.. Core-Sampling Technique for Raw Tuna	
	United States Fishery Landings:	
36	.. Commercial Landings for 1960 Expected to Equal 5-Year Average	
36	.. January-September 1960	
38	.. United States Fishing Fleet Additions, September 1960	
38	.. U. S. Fish Meal and Solubles Production and Imports, January-September 1960	

CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Page		Page	FOREIGN (Contd.):
	TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS (Contd.):		Honduras:
	U. S. Foreign Trade:		67 .. Foreign Trade in Fishery Products, 1959:
39 ..	Edible Fishery Products, September 1960	67 ..	Shrimp Fishery
39 ..	Imports of Canned Tuna in Brine Under Quota		Iceland:
39 ..	Imports and Exports of Selected Fishery Products, January-September 1960	68 ..	Production of Processed Fishery Products, 1958-59
	Virginia:		India:
41 ..	Fisheries Laboratory Receives Grant to Study Concentration of Radioactive Particles by Marine Animals	69 ..	FAO Biologist Surveys Pearl-Oyster Beds
41 ..	Large Number of Blue Crabs Tagged in Chesapeake Bay	69 ..	New Ice and Cold-Storage Plant Completed Near Bombay
42 ..	Marine Laboratory Expands Research Program	70 ..	Shrimp-Producing and Exporting Firms Seeks Capital for Expansion
	Washington:	70 ..	Japan:
43 ..	King Salmon Eggs Donated for Planting in Japanese Rivers	70 ..	Exporters Consider 1961 Canned Tuna Trading Agreement
43 ..	Plantings of Young Salmon in 1960 at Record High	71 ..	Exports of Canned Tuna in Oil, April-August 1960
44 ..	Spawning Salmon Escapement Good Despite Poor Catches	71 ..	Firm Negotiating Export of Frozen Tuna to Soviet Union
44 ..	Wholesale Prices, November 1960	71 ..	Eastern Pacific Tuna Fishing Forecast for December 1960
	Wisconsin:	71 ..	Tuna Explorations in Indian Ocean
46 ..	Commercial Otter-Trawl Fishing in Lake Michigan Waters	72 ..	Tuna Fishing Poor in Atlantic
	FOREIGN:	72 ..	Recently-Purchased British Whaling Fleet to Operate in Antarctic
	International:		Libya:
	Food and Agriculture Organization:	72 ..	Fisheries Trends, July-September 1960
47 ..	34th Session of Council Ends		Malaya:
47 ..	Joint Policy Committee on Oceanography Recommended at 34th Session of Council	73 ..	Shrimp Fishing Industry
48 ..	Training Personnel and Attracting Capital for Fisher- ies Discussed at Meeting		Morocco:
	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade:	73 ..	Fishery Trends, July 1960
49 ..	United States Supplementary List of Items for Trade- Agreement Negotiations		New Zealand:
	Great Lakes Fishery Commission:	73 ..	Tuna Fishery Proposed
51 ..	Initial Chemical Treatment of Lake Superior Lamprey- Producing Streams Completed		Norway:
	Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council:	74 ..	Expedition Fishes for Tuna off West Africa
51 ..	Ninth Session Held in Karachi	74 ..	Fishermen Fear Depletion of Fish Stocks
	International North Pacific Fisheries Commission:	74 ..	Quota Set for 1960/61 Antarctic Whaling Season
51 ..	Seventh Annual Meeting Held in Vancouver	75 ..	Salt-Fish Export Prospects to Brazilian Market Improve
	Argentina:	75 ..	Shrimp Industry
52 ..	Shrimp Fishing Industry Trends, October 1960		Poland:
	Australia:	76 ..	Aids Development of Guinea's Fishing Industry
53 ..	Spiny Lobster Exports and Industry, Fiscal Year 1959/60		Portugal:
	Brazil:	76 ..	Export of Seaweeds Prohibited
54 ..	Fish Meal and Oil Industry	77 ..	Fishery Trends as of Third Quarter 1960
	British Honduras:	77 ..	Cod-Fishing Fleet Ends Season with Better Catch
56 ..	Shrimp Fishing Industry Undeveloped	77 ..	Price Controls on Fresh Fish Sales Extended
	Burma:	77 ..	Shrimp Fishery Undeveloped
56 ..	New Joint Japanese-Burmese Fishing Company Proposed	78 ..	Tuna Production and Foreign Trade, 1958-59
	Canada:		Senegal:
57 ..	British Columbia Canned Salmon Pack Drops Sharply in 1960	79 ..	Tuna Industry Prospects and Plans for 1960/61 Season
57 ..	British Columbia Fishery Trends, 1960		Spain:
59 ..	Fishery Cooperatives, 1959	80 ..	Market for Canned Albacore Tuna in United States Slow
60 ..	Ontario's Sea Lamprey Fishery	80 ..	Vigo Fisheries Trends July-September 1960
60 ..	West Coast Dogfish Liver Subsidy		Thailand:
	Ceylon:	81 ..	Duty Lowered on Fish Meal
60 ..	Fishing Enterprise Plans to Expand		Union of South Africa:
	Cuba:	81 ..	Fishery Products Exports Not Affected by Boycotts
61 ..	Government Aids Fishing Industry to Expand	81 ..	Fishing Firm Tries Long-Lining for Tuna
61 ..	Wholesale and Retail Fish Prices Regulated for Certain Species	82 ..	Pelagic Fishing Season Ended in July with Record Landings
	Denmark:	82 ..	Tuna Research and Commercial Possibilities
62 ..	Fisheries Trends, Third Quarter 1960		U. S. S. R.:
	El Salvador:	83 ..	Experiments on Transplanting Pacific Salmon in Atlantic Ocean Successful
62 ..	Shrimp Industry Trends, Third Quarter 1960	83 ..	Herring Transplanted from Baltic to Aral Sea
62 ..	Two Firms Seek U. S. Funds to Build Shrimp Vessels	83 ..	Seaweed Processing Plant Planned for White Sea Area
	Egypt:	84 ..	Woman Serves as Captain on Large Fishing Trawler
63 ..	Fisheries Trends, October 1960		United Kingdom:
	Finland:	84 ..	Fishery Loans Interest Rates Revised
64 ..	Fisheries Trends, 1959-60	84 ..	Imports of Canned Salmon from Russia Increased
	German Federal Republic:	85 ..	Shrimp Industry and Foreign Trade
65 ..	Fishing Fleet Looks for New Fishing Grounds		FEDERAL ACTIONS:
	Ghana:		Department of the Interior:
65 ..	United States Tuna Packer Signs Fishery Agreement		Fish and Wildlife Service:
	Greece:	87 ..	Fishing Vessel Subsidy Excluded from Mortgage Insurance
66 ..	Stern Trawler Factoryship to Fish in North Atlantic		Department of State:
	Greenland:	87 ..	More Public Participation in 1961 United States Tariff Negotiations Proposed
66 ..	Fishing Industry, 1960		U. S. Tariff Commission:
		88 ..	Submits Proposed United States Tariff Schedules
		89 ..	Eighty-Sixth Congress (Second Session)
			FISHERY INDICATORS:
		90 ..	Chart 1 - Fishery Landings for Selected States
		91 ..	Chart 2 - Landings for Selected Fisheries

Contents continued page III.

CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

Page		Page	
	FISHERY INDICATORS (Contd.):		FISHERY INDICATORS (Contd.):
92 ..	Chart 3 - Cold-Storage Holdings and Freezings of Fishery Products	94 ..	Chart 6 - Canned Packs of Selected Fishery Products
93 ..	Chart 4 - Receipts and Cold-Storage Holdings of Fishery Products at Principal Distribution Centers	95 ..	Chart 7 - U. S. Fishery Products Imports
93 ..	Chart 5 - Fish Meal and Oil Production--U. S. and Alaska		RECENT FISHERY PUBLICATIONS:
		96 ..	Fish and Wildlife Service Publications
		97 ..	Miscellaneous Publications



THE ACTIVITY AND CATCHABILITY OF THE LOBSTER

Drs. Don McLeese and Dick Wilder of the Fisheries Research Board's St. Andrews Station have been studying activity and catchability of lobsters. Their report appears in the Station's anniversary number (Volume 15, Number 6) of the Journal of the Fisheries Research Board. Activity was measured by the speed with which a lobster retreats when a bright light is turned on it.

When lobsters are accustomed to water of a certain temperature, their walking rate increases with water temperatures from 36° to 50° F. and again from 68° to 77° F. but there is little change between 50° and 68° F. Lobsters used to colder water became more active when temperature increased but those used to higher temperatures slowed down when moved to either cooler or warmer water.

Fishing experiments in Passamaquoddy Bay showed how much catches fall off as water temperatures go down in the fall. The change in catches fits in well with the decline in activity as shown in the laboratory experiment. The relationship between activity and catchability helps in the interpretation of catch per unit of effort data. It also explains the improvement in fishing as waters warm in the spring. (Bulletin, Fisheries Council of Canada - May 25, 1959.)



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