

Morgan

The Economic Value of the Mink Food Fishery
in Oregon in Relation to the Otter Trawl Fishery,
1952 and 1953

The economic value of the mink food fishery in Oregon in relation to the total Oregon trawl fishery in 1952 and 1953 was largely dependent on fillet market conditions. The demand for trawl-caught fish for the fillet market in 1953 was much less than in 1952. This caused a reduction in the numbers of pounds of fillet carcasses available for mink food and resulted in the delivery of more trawl-caught whole fish for mink food. In 1953, more trawl boats landed fish for mink food than in 1952. Thirty-three boats, almost all of the Oregon trawl fleet, made some landings of whole fish for mink food during the year. A few boats, particularly at Newport, fished almost entirely for mink food throughout 1953. However, the majority of the mink food landings of whole fish were incidental to fish landed for the fillet market.

The whole fish landed for mink food included such fish as turbot, bellingham sole, skate, sand dab, and other fish which have little or no value at present on the fillet market. The landings also included rex sole, starry flounder, and rockfishes which are used to a limited extent by the fillet market; and dover, english, and petrale soles and Pacific ocean perch. The last four species include the bulk of the fish bought for the fillet markets. The whole fish landed in 1953 for mink food was composed, by weight, of 35 per cent of fish species not utilized by the fillet industry, 35 per cent of fish used to a limited extent for the fillet market, and 30 per cent of fish species used extensively by the fillet industry.

Following is a table which shows the landings of trawl-caught fish for the fillet markets and the landings of whole fish for mink food during 1952 and 1953. Also listed are the dollar values received by the fishermen for these products. The price received by the fishermen for the fillet market fish ranged from four cents a pound for rockfish to seven cents a pound for petrale sole with an average of five cents a pound, which was the figure used to compute the value to the fishermen for the fillet fish. The fishermen received $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound for whole fish delivered to the Oregon Fur Producers Association's plants for mink food.

Table 1. Pounds of Whole Fish Landed for the Fillet Market and for the Mink Food Market and the Values Received by the Fishermen for These Products, 1952 and 1953.

	Pounds Landed		Value Received	
	1952	1953	1952	1953
Fillet Market fish	20,500,000	8,000,000	\$1,025,000	\$400,000
Mink Food Whole Fish	1,300,000	5,000,000	32,500	125,000
	21,800,000	13,000,000	\$1,057,500	\$525,000

The economic condition of the 1953 fillet market is reflected in the fact that only 39 per cent as much fish was landed for the fillet market in 1953 as in 1952. The effect of the fillet market conditions on the whole fish landings of mink food can be seen when it is noted that in 1952, 6.0 per cent by weight of the total otter trawl landings was sold for mink food, while in 1953, 38 per cent of the total otter landings was used for mink food.

As has been mentioned, the amount of fish carcasses available for mink food controls, to a great extent, the amount of whole fish that is landed for mink food. According to Marve Hille, manager of the Oregon Fur Producers Association, the fillet carcasses used for mink food represent 60 per cent by weight of the total pounds of fish landed for the fillet market. On this basis, the approximate poundages of fish carcasses that were sold for mink food in 1952 and 1953 were 12,000,000 pounds and 5,000,000 pounds respectively. The sale of fish carcasses for mink food increased the price received by the fishermen for all trawl-caught fish sold to the fillet market by about $\frac{1}{2}$ cent a pound, an indirect value to the fishermen.

The following table shows the value to the fishermen from the sale of whole fish for mink food and the value derived indirectly for the sale of fish carcasses for mink food. In both 1952 and 1953 some of the fish carcasses were ground and frozen and shipped to out-of-state mink ranchers.

Table 2. The Approximate Value Received by the Fishermen from the Sale of Whole Fish and Fish Carcasses for Mink Food, 1952 and 1953.

	1952	1953
Direct Value*	\$ 32,500	\$125,000
Indirect Value**	102,500	40,000
Total	<u>\$135,000</u>	<u>\$165,000</u>

* Whole fish landings for mink food (see Table 1) @ $2\frac{1}{2}\phi$ per lb.

** Total fillet market fish landings (see Table 1) @ $\frac{1}{2}\phi$ per lb.

The relationship between the dollar value received by the fishermen from the sale of whole fish and fish carcasses and the dollar value received by the fishermen for all trawl fish landed in 1952 and 1953 was $\frac{135,000}{\$1,057,500}$ and $\frac{165,000}{\$525,000}$ respectively. Thus, 13 per cent in 1952 and 38 per cent in 1953 of the total dollar value received by the trawl fishermen in those respective years was derived, directly or indirectly, from the sale of whole fish and fish carcasses for mink food.

The calculated first wholesale value of whole fish and fish carcasses, which were sold to mink ranchers, indicates the approximate total monetary value of the mink food fishery. The first wholesale value used here includes the price paid to the fishermen for whole fish and to fillet plants for the fish carcasses and the cost of processing and operating margin of the mink food plants. This should represent the total monetary value of the mink food fishery. These values for 1952 and 1953 are given in the following table.

Table 3. The Total Monetary Value of the Mink Food Fishery as Based on the First Wholesale Value, 1952 and 1953.

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>
Whole fish*	\$ 45,500	\$175,000
Fish Carcasses**	240,000	112,500
	<u>\$285,500</u>	<u>\$287,500</u>
	* 5,000,000 pounds @ $3\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per lb. - 1953 1,300,000 " " " " - 1952	
	** 5,000,000 pounds @ $2\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ per lb. - 1953 12,000,000 " " 2¢ " - 1952	

The foregoing data indicate that the monetary value of the mink food fishery in 1952 and 1953 was a little less than \$300,000 annually. The value of the mink food fishery to the fishermen, however, varied with the economic condition of the fillet fish market. Thus, the 1953 mink food fishery was worth considerably more to the fishermen than was the 1952 mink food fishery. The mink food fishery has resulted in greater utilization of trawl-caught fish by providing a market for a portion of the catch which would have been discarded dead at sea. As a result of experiments at the Experimental Fur Farm at Oregon State College a mink food market has developed for some species of fish that are not used for human consumption. It is hoped that other species of fish, which are not used for human food, will be found useful as mink food, thus reducing or eliminating the landings of whole fish that are utilized as human food.

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