

At the end of fiscal year 1957-58 (September 1958) a survey of the fishing habits and harvest of resident sports fishermen was made by an independent marketing research group for the Game and Fish Commission. Belden Associate

Not included in this collection are numerous other activities of the Marine Division, which might be considered as significant. One of these being the preparation and issuance of a Bulletin entitled "The Texas Oyster Fishery" on the Crabs of Texas. Statistical data collection has been continued and is reported in some detail in the Annual Report of the Game and Fish Commission for the fiscal year 1959-1960. This report may be obtained from the Game and Fish Commission, Austin, Texas. One additional bit of survey work that has produced significant results is a repeat survey of the salt water fish harvest of Texas sportsmen.

There are some reports in this collection which are not the direct result of investigational studies. One of these is a report on the contract drum fishing program which is actually a management activity. Another is a report to the Governor and members of the Legislature on the application of the Texas Shrimp Conservation Act of 1959. This report was required by that Legislature to be presented to the Legislature meeting in 1961 and is included here since the two portions prepared by Dr. Gordon Gunter contain resumes of investigational programs or rather the combined results of investigational programs in various regions.

Despite the necessary and inevitable changes in personnel the work has continued along the same lines and as planned, with the single exception of a drastically reduced project in Area M-1. Area M-1 encompasses some 50 odd square miles of surface waters in Sabine Lake and has been reported on earlier. Since the lake supports a very limited marine fauna and conditions ordinarily resemble those of a freshwater situation it was decided early in 1960 to sharply reduce the activities in that area and make only periodic samplings of conditions and populations. The biologist working in Area M-1 was transferred to Area M-3 which was near enough that periodic visits could be made by the man already familiar with conditions in Sabine Lake.

This collection of reports presents the results obtained in various investigational and management projects undertaken during calendar year 1960. Some of the work had been accomplished earlier, however, for all intents and purposes it may be considered as a part of the 1960 activity. It is the second volume of such reports; the last having been distributed in early 1960 covering the work of the year before. The organizational setup and activity outline as explained in last years report has been continued through this year.

MARINE LABORATORY  
ROCKPORT, TEXAS  
March 21, 1961



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Dallas, Texas, conducted this survey in which some 2,000 households were visited and resident salt water anglers interviewed to determine facts about their fishing activities during the previous year. The volume reporting on the results of that survey was quite bulky and could not be reproduced, however, some of the findings are listed here for comparative purposes. The survey was carried out a second time at the end of the 1959-60 fiscal year. The results and comparisons are very interesting. For example it was determined that in the 1957-58 survey some 748,000 resident fishermen landed 39,586,000 lbs. of redfish, speckled trout, flounder, drum and shrimp. These same fishermen fished an average of 5.2 hours on 9.4 occasions and landed an average of 1.08 lbs. per man hour of fishing. The 1959-60 survey showed that only 665,200 fishermen brought in 26,322,000 lbs. of the same species, but fished only 7.7 times during the year and stayed only 4.7 hours each trip. For them this produced a catch of 1.09 pounds per man hour of fishing. Had we relied solely on the harvest figures as has been done in past years it would have appeared that the population of redfish, speckled trout, flounder and drum was in some danger of depletion; however, by gathering the data on effort expended in accomplishing the harvest it is shown that the catch per unit of effort has remained fairly constant and in fact a very small increase is noted.

Commercial landings of all species show a general increase with the major increase being in pounds of menhaden landed which was up 26% over the year before. There was also a 17% increase in landings of grooved shrimp. Some of the other less important species has even higher percentage rises and a few showed considerable decline; however, a 72% increase in poundage of crabs is noted, accounted for largely by increased effort. Since detailed data on number of fishermen, quantity of gear, and other necessary data are lacking for a catch per unit effort measurement in the commercial fishery very little except total poundage of landings can be learned from the commercial statistics, however an attempt is being made to obtain this data from representative fish dealers in various areas of the coast and it is hoped that in future years this program can be enlarged to present a more nearly complete picture of population trends.

It is the hope of all of us who have contributed to the preparation of these reports that they will be of some value in achieving a better understanding of problems facing the marine fisheries of this and other areas. As before these are not intended to serve as complete or final reports but merely to put on record the findings as of this date. Suggestions for improvement of the data or any interpretations would be appreciated, and any supporting information or contradictory information available from the recipients of these reports would likewise be appreciated.

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