

REVIEW OF THE PELAGIC WET FISHERIES FOR 1968 AND 1969

The total wet-fish landings in California for calendar 1968 (57,646 tons) was the second lowest recorded since the failure of the sardine fishery. Only in the year 1965 (50,254 tons) were the fishermen less successful (Table 1).

During 1968, jack mackerel (27,834 tons) and squid (12,466 tons) catches were better than those recorded in the preceding two and four years, respectively but the northern anchovy (15,538 tons) catch was below expectations. The Pacific mackerel (1,567 tons) catch remained dismally low, despite a noticeable (about 300%) improvement over 1967. Only minimal amounts of Pacific sardine (62 tons) were taken for use as dead bait.

By contrast, the total 1969 landings (105,300 tons) were better and the highest recorded since 1958. Pacific sardine (53 tons) and Pacific mackerel (1,179 tons) were negligible and jack mackerel (25,961 tons) landings were only fair; however, squid (10,390 tons) landings were the third largest ever, and the northern anchovy (67,632 tons) catch exceeded all previous years.

During the fiscal period (July 1968–June 1969), 36 seiners fished in California waters. There were 23 "large" (60 feet and over) and 13 "small" purse seiners. Thirty-one of these vessels were based in San Pedro, two at Port Hueneme, and three sailed from Monterey. The largest Monterey seiner fished in southern California during part of the season.

Twenty lampara boats (excluding those seeking only live-bait) operated statewide, five were based at southern California ports and 15 at Monterey.

Pacific sardine

The moratorium on Pacific sardines remained in effect, but in 1969 was modified to provide for the taking of up to 250 tons annually for use as dead bait. This was passed by the Legislature in mid-year and became effective in November. By the end of the year, eight tons had been taken for this purpose, mostly from San Diego Bay.

The preliminary figures for the Baja California sardine catch indicate that a moderate drop occurred during the 1968–69 season (Table 2).

Northern anchovy

The California Fish and Game Commission again authorized a 75,000-ton reduction fishery, beginning August 1, 1968 (northern permit area), and September 15, 1968 (southern permit area), and ending May 15, 1969, in both areas.

Fishing began in the northern permit area on August 13, after a price agreement of \$18/ton. Northern

permit boats landed 2,354 tons through December, failed to land any fish in January, February or March, and caught only 382 tons during April and May, for a season total of 2,736 tons (Table 3).

The southern California fleet began fishing on October 17, after reaching a price agreement of \$17/ton with a provision for increases based on increases in market quotations for meal. No increase was negotiated during this season. Southern California boats landed northern anchovies in each month of the season. Through December, 10,343 tons were landed, with an additional 3,404 tons being taken January through March. In April and May, fishing improved and 11,567 tons were added for a grand total of 25,314 tons (Table 3).

Until about the first of December the southern California reduction fleet (16 boats) operated primarily in the Anacapa Island-Port Hueneme area. Subsequently, and until the season closed on May 15, the majority of the catches were made within a triangular area bounded by Point Dume, Santa Catalina Island and Dana Point.

Live-bait catches showed an increase in 1968 over previous years, while the total 1969 catch approximated that of earlier years (Table 4). Since the live-bait catch is determined from voluntary records, these figures are relative and probably minimal.

Mackerel

The low Pacific mackerel catches (Tables 1 and 5) reflect the depressed status of the population. Most Pacific mackerel were taken incidentally with loads of jack mackerel. Jack mackerel catches, while up from the 1967–68 season, were still approximately 10,000 tons less than the previous 10 year mean. Most of the jack mackerel were taken near San Clemente Island and Cortes Bank, with lesser amounts coming from Santa Catalina and Santa Barbara Islands, and the inshore waters near San Pedro.—*David Ganssle*

TABLE 1
Landings of Pelagic Wet-Fishes in
California in Tons; 1964–1969

Year	Sardine	Anchovy	Pacific Mackerel	Jack Mackerel	Herring	Squid	Total
1964.....	6,569	2,488	13,414	44,846	175	8,217	75,709
1965.....	962	2,866	3,525	33,333	258	9,310	50,254
1966.....	439	31,140	2,315	20,431	121	9,513	63,959
1967.....	74	34,805	583	19,090	136	9,801	64,489
1968.....	62	15,538	1,567	27,834	179	12,466	57,646
1969*.....	53	67,632	1,179	25,961	85	10,390	105,300

* Preliminary.

TABLE 2

Sardine Catch in Tons; 1964-1965 through 1968-1969
(Period June through the following May)

Season	California	Baja California	Total
1964-65	6,103	27,120	33,223
1965-66	719	22,247	22,966
1966-67	344	19,529	19,873
1967-68	71	27,036	27,107
1968-69	17	*14,044	14,061

* Preliminary June 1, 1968-March 31, 1969.

TABLE 3

Anchovy Landings for Reduction in the Southern and Northern Permit Areas; 1965-66 through 1968-69

Season	Southern Permit Area	Northern Permit Area	Total
1965-1966*	16,468	375	16,843
1966-1967†	29,589	8,021	37,610
1967-1968‡	852	5,651	6,503
1968-1969§	25,314	2,736	28,050

Seasons:

* November 12, 1965, through April 30, 1966.

† October 1, 1966, through April 30, 1967.

‡ September 15, 1967, through May 15, 1968.

§ August 1, 1968, through May 15, 1969.

TABLE 4

Commercial Landings and Live Bait Catch of Anchovies in Tons; 1964-1969

Year	Reduction	Other Commercial	Live Bait	Total
1964	0	2,488	5,191	7,679
1965	171	2,695	6,148	9,014
1966	27,348	3,792	6,691	37,831
1967	32,349	2,455	5,387	40,191
1968	13,795	1,743	7,176	22,714
1969*	65,214	2,419	5,538	73,171

* Preliminary.

TABLE 5

Jack and Pacific Mackerel Catch in Tons, 1964-1965 through 1968-1969
(Period May through April)

Season	Jack Mackerel	Pacific Mackerel
1964-1965	39,540	12,437
1965-1966	33,831	3,794
1966-1967	22,889	2,038
1967-1968	18,709	691
1968-1969*	30,101	1,644

* Preliminary.