SUMMARY REPORT OF SOVIET FISHING OFF ALASKA,

JANUARY-JULY 1969

U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries
Washington, D.C.

Information submitted by the Government of the United States in response to a request made at the Commission's 1968 Annual Meeting--see 1968 Proceedings, p. 150 (Doc. 1127-App. 3, item X(7))
The number of fishery vessels continued to increase throughout January 1969 to over 130 by month's end. That was about 40 vessels more than during the previous month and 20 vessels more than in January 1968. Most vessels fished for herring and flounders in the central and eastern Bering Sea, respectively.

One medium trawler fished Pacific perch in the Gulf of Alaska, along the 100-fathom curve south of Kodiak Island. Soviet perch fishing in other areas off Alaska was discontinued by early January.

The Soviet herring fleet north of the Pribilof Islands continued to expand from about 48 vessels in late December 1968 to about 70 by the end of January.

The trawlers had good catches throughout the month. A joint U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Coast-Guard fisheries patrol observed the herring fleet in mid-January. The average drags by the stern and side trawlers lasted one hour and the catches ranged between 1 and 15 metric tons with an average of 6-7 tons per haul. It was also found that many of the trawlers were using what appeared to be mid-water gear—the first known appearance of such gear in this fishery.

The number of Soviet vessels in the eastern Bering Sea flounder fishery increased from about 40 vessels during the first part of January to about 50 by month's end.

During early January, the Soviets abandoned the groundfish trawl fishery in the central Bering Sea. The five medium trawlers operating in the central Bering Sea moved presumably to the herring fishery north of the Pribilof Islands. A second group of vessels (12-15 medium trawlers and at least 1 reefer) continued fishing north of the Fox Islands throughout January.
MONTHLY SUMMARY OF SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
January 1969

U.S.S.R.
- 20 stern trawlers
- 20 medium trawlers
- 3 factory ships
- 3 reefers
- 1 tug
- 1 tanker
- early Jan.

CANADA
- 5 medium trawlers
- early Jan.
- Groundfish
- 15 medium trawlers
- 2 reefers
- early Jan.
- 12 medium trawlers
- 1 reefer
- mid-late Jan.
- Sablefish and turbot

Herring

Flounder

1 medium trawler
- mid-late Jan.
- Pacific ocean perch

15 stern trawlers
15 medium trawlers
- 7 reefers
- 1 tanker
- 1 tug
- early Jan.

18 stern trawlers
20 medium trawlers
- 2 factory ships
- 6 reefers
- 1 tanker
- 1 tug
- mid-late Jan.

5 stern trawlers
1 medium trawler
- 1 reefer
- early Jan.
- Pacific ocean perch
- and transshipping
The number of Soviet vessels increased from 130 in late January to 160 in February. The increase resulted from vessels added to the eastern Bering Sea flounder fleet and groundfish trawl fleet. All Soviet fishing activities off Alaska during February 1969 were in the eastern and central Bering Sea. No vessels were sighted in the Gulf of Alaska (see map).

In February 1968 about 100 Soviet fishery vessels were sighted; the 60 percent increase in the number of vessels in 1969 was due to more vessels in the central Bering Sea herring fleet.

The flounder fishery in the eastern Bering Sea is following the same pattern in 1969 as it did in previous years when the number of vessels increased from 50 to 70 during February. At the month's end the fleet consisted of 25 factory trawlers, 30 medium trawlers, 13 factory vessels and refrigerated transports, and 2 support vessels.

About 70 vessels (25 factory trawlers, 30 medium trawlers, 12 factory and refrigerated transport vessels, and 3 other support vessels) in the Soviet herring fleet northwest of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea remained throughout February.

The 12 medium trawlers fishing for groundfish (primarily arrow-tooth flounder and sablefish) off the Continental Shelf edge north of the Aleutian Islands in the eastern Bering Sea were joined by an additional 6 medium trawlers this month, which fished in shallower waters and caught primarily Alaska pollock. This fleet of 18 medium trawlers was supported by 2 refrigerated and processing transport vessels.
MONTHLY SUMMARY OF SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
February 1969

U.S.S. R.

Herring
25 stern trawlers
30 medium trawlers
5 factory ships
7 reefers
2 tankers
1 tug

Early Feb.
12 medium trawlers
2 reefers

Late Feb.
18 medium trawlers
2 reefers

Sablefish, Turbot, and Pollock

Early Feb.
20 stern trawlers
20 medium trawlers
2 factory ships
6 reefers
1 tug

Late Feb.
25 stern trawlers
30 medium trawlers
3 factory ships
10 reefers
1 tug

Flounder

Early Feb.
20 stern trawlers
20 medium trawlers
2 factory ships
6 reefers
1 tug

Late Feb.
25 stern trawlers
30 medium trawlers
3 factory ships
10 reefers
1 tug

ALASKA

CANADA
March 1969

Between 160 and 165 fishing and support vessels were sighted off Alaska throughout March or about the same number as the previous month. But there was a change in the distribution of the fleet and the species sought. The number of vessels in the herring fishery in the central Bering Sea declined steadily throughout the month but at the same time king crab fishing in the eastern Bering Sea and shrimp fishing in the Gulf of Alaska started. In March 1968 about 100 Soviet vessels engaged in fisheries off Alaska; the 60-percent increase in the number of vessels in March 1969 was due to more vessels engaged in both the central Bering Sea herring fishery and the eastern Bering Sea flounder fishery.

The flounder fishery in the eastern Bering Sea is following a different pattern in 1969 than it did in prior years when the number of vessels in that fishery began declining in March. This year about 70 vessels (25 factory trawlers, 30 medium trawlers, 13 factoryships and refrigerated transports, and 2 other support vessels) continued operations throughout March. In addition to flounder, smaller quantities of Alaska pollock were observed in the catches of some of the trawlers. The longer-than-normal duration of that fishery at such a high level could be accounted for by the fact that as the catches of flounder decline the vessels fish for Alaska pollock instead. Pollock are being used mostly for reduction to fish meal.

The herring catches in the central Bering Sea are apparently not falling off as sharply as in past years because the number of vessels in that fleet is not declining as rapidly as in past years. In that fishery at the month's end there were about 23 stern trawlers, 25 medium trawlers, 10 factoryships and refrigerated transports, and 2 other support vessels. In past years, the effort in that fishery by the end of March had been reduced to only a few vessels.

The number of medium trawlers fishing for bottomfish (primarily arrowtooth flounder and sablefish and possibly Alaska pollock) off the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern Bering Sea decreased from 18 to 12 during the month. Most of the vessels leaving that fishery moved into the Gulf of Alaska to fish for shrimp.

The Soviet king crab fishery season on the Continental Shelf north of the Alaska Peninsula in the eastern Bering Sea started in mid-March with 1 factoryship and 3 tangle net-setting trawlers.

By late March, a second factoryship, 3 additional net-setting trawlers, and probably 2 exploratory vessels joined the fleet. This is the same level at which that fishery was conducted in 1968.

Two factoryships and 10 medium trawlers had begun fishing for shrimp on Portlock Bank east of Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska by the end of March. The fishery this year began about 2 weeks later than in 1968.
SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
March 1969

- **Early March**
  - 25 stern trawlers
  - 30 medium trawlers
  - 5 factory ships
  - 7 reefers
  - 2 tankers
  - 1 tug

- **Mid-March**
  - 1 factory ship
  - 3 medium trawlers

- **Late March**
  - 23 stern trawlers
  - 25 medium trawlers
  - 4 factory ships
  - 6 reefers
  - 1 tanker
  - 1 tug

- **TURBOT, SABLEFISH, AND POLLOCK**
  - Early March
    - 18 medium trawlers
    - 2 reefers
  - Late March
    - 12 medium trawlers
    - 1 reeler

- **SHRIMP**
  - Late March
    - 2 factory ships
    - 10 medium trawlers

- **FLounder**
  - Late March
    - 25 stern trawlers
    - 30 medium trawlers
    - 3 factory ships
    - 10 reefers
    - 1 tanker
    - 1 tug

- **KING CRAB**
  - Late March
    - 2 factory ships
    - 8 medium trawlers
April 1969

The number of fishery vessels off Alaska dropped rapidly from 165 at the end of March to slightly over 80 at the end of April. The herring and flounder expeditions were reduced with some of the vessels shifting to ocean perch fishing in the western Gulf of Alaska and along the eastern Aleutian Islands. The deep-water trawl fishery for groundfish in the eastern Bering Sea was nearly abandoned as most of the trawlers shifted to shrimp fishing in the Gulf of Alaska.

The 82 vessels present at the end of April 1969 was about a dozen more than in April 1968. The difference this year is primarily attributable to a second shrimp fishing fleet in the Gulf of Alaska and to continued fishing by vessels of the herring and flounder fleets in the eastern and central Bering Sea.

The anticipated decline in the number of vessels fishing for flounder began in early April, but unlike in other years the withdrawals were halted in mid-month and a fleet of about 20 vessels continued fishing the rest of April. The remaining fleet of 15 medium trawlers and 5 support vessels was concentrated along the Continental Shelf edge south of the Pribilof Islands, a favored Alaska pollock fishing area and recent patrol sightings indicated that vessels of that fleet have shifted from flounder to pollock.

Herring fishing continued sporadically in April; at month's end, only 5 medium trawlers and 1 processing refrigerator still remained. In that area of the central Bering Sea (north and west of the Pribilof Islands) the vessels could easily shift from herring fishing to deep-water trawling for groundfish and possibly shrimp.

The deep-water trawl fishery for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern Bering Sea was abandoned in early April as vessels transferred to the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Alaska. In late April, as other expeditions continued disbanding, 2 medium trawlers resumed the groundfish trawl fishery along the Shelf edge west of the Pribilof Islands.

Throughout April, the 2 factoryships and 8 tangle net-setting trawlers continued fishing crab north of the Alaska Peninsula. Observations by a BCF Agent indicate that, as in 1968, most Soviet catches consist of tanner crab rather than king crab.

In early April, a second Soviet fleet began fishing shrimp near the Shumagin Islands in the western Gulf of Alaska. Consisting of 1 canning factoryship and 6 medium trawlers, the fleet remained in that region throughout the month. This was the first Soviet fishing for shrimp near the Shumagin Islands since the U.S. contiguous fishery zone went into effect in March 1967. The other Soviet shrimp fishing fleet remained on Portlock Bank east of Kodiak Island throughout April. The number of accompanying medium trawlers with the 2 factoryships in this fleet was increased to about 15 in early April and remained at that level throughout the month.
SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
April 1969

U.S.S.R.

HERRING

Early April
- 10 stern trawlers
- 15 medium trawlers
- 5 reefers
- 1 tanker
- 1 tug

Late April
- 5 medium trawlers

PACIFIC OCEAN

PERCH

Early April
- 5 stern trawlers
- 5 medium trawlers
- 1 reefer

Late April
- 15 medium trawlers

SHRIMP

Early April
- 2 factory ships
- 15 medium trawlers
- 1 tanker

Late April
- 3 stern trawlers

TURBOT, SABLEFISH, AND POLLOCK

Late April
- 2 medium trawlers

CRAB

Early April
- 1 factory ship
- 6 medium trawlers

PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH

Early April
- 5 stern trawlers
- 5 medium trawlers
- 1 reefer

Late April
- 12 stern trawlers
- 1 reefer

CANADA

Early April
- 1 medium trawler
- 12 stern trawlers
- 1 reefer

Late April
In Soviet fisheries off Alaska, the sharp decline which began in April continued in May. From nearly 80 vessels in early May, the number decreased to about 20 by month's end. Principal causes were the termination of the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and the withdrawal of the king crab and groundfish fleets from the eastern Bering Sea.

Despite this drastic decrease, the 21 vessels which remained at the end of May is twice as many as at the end of May 1968. Although shrimp and crab fisheries were ended in May 1968 and 1969, the larger number of vessels this year is the result of increased perch fishing along the Aleutian Islands.

The Pacific ocean perch fishery in the western Gulf of Alaska declined rapidly from 10 stern trawlers and 2 refrigerated fish carriers during the first week of May to 2 stern trawlers by mid-month and 1 stern trawler by month's end.

Pacific ocean perch fishing along the Aleutian Islands increased from 5 stern trawlers to 10 stern trawlers and 1 refrigerator by the end of May. Primary emphasis was in the Samalga-Seguam Passes region in the eastern and central Aleutians; there were, however, at least 2 stern trawlers fishing off the western Aleutians by late May. Perch catches, as observed by BCF Resource Management Agents, were poor both in the Gulf of Alaska and off the Aleutians.

Five medium side trawlers supported by a refrigerator continued fishing for bottomfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the central Bering Sea through May. In addition to these vessels, which remained on the grounds after the disbanding of the herring expedition, 2 medium trawlers fishing west of the Pribilof Islands were joined by two stern trawlers in late May (see chart). Vessels were trawling in depths of up to 500 fathoms for various species of bottomfish, including sablefish, Alaska pollock, arrowtooth flounder, and rockfish.

The 20-vessel fleet which shifted from the flounder fishery to fishing pollock and sablefish south of the Pribilof Islands had been reduced by mid-May to less than 10 vessels and shifted fishing off the Alaska Peninsula where it was disbanded after a few days of fishing.

Apparently again this year king crab catches were poor—the two Soviet tangle-net fleets withdrew from the Alaskan area in mid-May.

In 1968 both Soviet fleets withdrew from the fishery by May 2 with a total king crab catch of 22,442 cases. This year's catches are probably not much larger—far below the catch quota of 52,000 cases allotted the U.S.S.R. by the United States under a bilateral agreement.
By mid-May the two fleets fishing shrimp east of the Kodiak Island had joined the third such fleet east of the Shumagin Islands in the western Gulf of Alaska. Soviet officials aboard one of the factory vessels, during a visit by Coast Guard-BCF officials, said that their shrimp catches east of Kodiak were not good and that their trawlers had been hampered by bad weather. Catches observed by BCF Agents patrolling the shrimp grounds east of the Shumagin Islands appeared to be good. All 3 shrimp fleets withdrew from the Alaskan area by late May, at about the same time as in 1968.
June 1969

Between 20 and 25 vessels fished off Alaska during June. About the same number of Soviet vessels was sighted off Alaska in May 1969 and June 1968. The Soviet fishery vessels sighted were about equally divided between the Pacific ocean perch fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and along the Aleutian Islands and the groundfish trawl fishery in the Bering Sea.

Soviet trawlers fished for ocean perch along the 100-fathom curve in the Gulf of Alaska and along the Aleutian Islands throughout the month. The number of vessels in the Gulf increased from 1 factory trawler in early June to 3 by month's end. Along the Aleutian Islands the number of Soviet vessels sighted decreased from a dozen factory trawlers in early June to about 3 factory trawlers and 6 medium trawlers supported by 1 refrigerated fish carrier at month's end.

The Soviet trawl fleet fished for pollock, sablefish, arrowtooth flounder, and rockfish off the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern and central Bering Sea. The fleet consisted of about 10 trawlers supported by 1 refrigerated carrier throughout the month. The fleet was concentrated in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands with only about 2 medium trawlers active in the eastern Bering Sea northwest of Unimak Pass.
July 1969

The number of Soviet fishery vessels off Alaska decreased from 20 to about 12 in July, or about half the number of vessels fishing there during June 1969 and in July 1968. This is the lowest number of vessels sighted since the Soviets began year-round fisheries off Alaska in 1963.

The Pacific ocean perch fishery in the Gulf of Alaska is following the same pattern as in the past few years when fishing with only a few trawlers had been sporadic. Three stern trawlers fished for ocean perch in the Gulf the first two weeks of July and then departed from the Alaskan area. Along the Aleutians only 2-3 trawlers fished for ocean perch in July, one-half less than in July 1969. A short-lived ocean perch fishery, which began in mid-June 1969 with 5 medium trawlers supported by 1 refrigerated fish carrier, ended in early July.

The trawl fishery for pollock, flatfish, ocean perch, and Pacific cod along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea was continued by a fleet of 10 medium trawlers supported by 1 refrigerated fish carrier during the first half of July. About mid-month the number of medium trawlers was reduced to 8 and fishing concentrated in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands.
Fig. 2 - SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
July 1969

Groundfish
8 medium trawlers
1 refrigerator

Ocean Perch
2 stern trawlers -early July-

Ocean Perch
2-3 stern trawlers and
5 medium trawlers -early July
1 refrigerator