SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES IN THE
BERING SEA AND THE
GULF OF ALASKA

August 1969-July 1970

BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
September 1970
The number of Soviet fishery vessels off Alaska in August remained at about 12, the same as the previous month. This is about half the number of vessels that operated in August 1968 and again is the lowest number since the Soviets began year-round fisheries off Alaska in 1963.

The Pacific ocean perch fishery was confined to waters off the Aleutian Islands where 2 to 3 stern trawlers and 1 medium trawler fished throughout the month. This is about one-third the number of vessels active in this fishery in August 1968.

The trawl fishery for pollock, flatfish, ocean perch, and Pacific cod remained centered along the Continental Shelf edge in the central Bering Sea and was continued by about 8 medium trawlers and 1 refrigerated fish carrier, the same as last month. This is only a few trawlers less than fished in that fishery in August 1968.
About 17 Soviet fishery vessels operated off Alaska in September—5 more than in each of the previous two months. This is about half the vessels reported in September 1968.

The number of vessels fishing for Pacific ocean perch increased from 3 to 6. Continuing to fish along the Aleutian Islands were 2 stern trawlers and 1 medium trawler. The added effort occurred in the Gulf of Alaska where 3 stern trawlers began fishing early in the month.

The number of medium trawlers fishing for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea increased from 8 to 10. The fishery remained centered primarily in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands where 8 of the trawlers supported by 1 refrigerated fish carrier operated. The 2 additional vessels fished along the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern Bering Sea near Unimak Pass.
SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ALASKA
September 1969

U.S.S.R.

ALASKA

CANADA

Groundfish
8 medium trawlers
1 refrigerator

Groundfish
2 medium trawlers

Perch
3 stern trawlers

Perch
1 medium trawler

Perch
2 stern trawlers
The number of Soviet fishery vessels off Alaska decreased from 17 in September to 12 in October. This was less than half the number of vessels off Alaska in October 1968 and, as in July and August of 1969, is again the lowest number since the Soviets began year-around fisheries in 1963. Soviet fisheries off Alaska in October as in each of the previous 4 months included small expeditions fishing for ocean perch in the Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands and for various species of groundfish in the Bering Sea.

About 4 large stern trawlers fished ocean perch. This was about one-quarter of the number of vessels engaged in perch fishing off Alaska in October 1968. The effort was equally divided in the Gulf of Alaska and along the Aleutian Islands with 2 vessels in each of those areas.

The number of medium trawlers fishing for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern Bering Sea decreased from 10 in September to about 7 in October. The fleet continued to be supported by one refrigerated fish carrier. The fishery this month was centered in the central Bering Sea well northwest of the Pribilof Islands. This fishery in October 1968 involved only 3 more trawlers but was spread along the Continental Shelf edge from Unimak Pass in the eastern Bering Sea to well northwest of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea.
The number of fishery vessels increased steadily during November to 31 by month's end. This is 2.5 times the number of Soviet vessels sighted off Alaska the previous month and is the largest number since the end of April 1969. About the same number of vessels were active off Alaska in November 1968 and most of them fished for ocean perch in the Gulf of Alaska and the rest fished for groundfish in the Bering Sea. In November 1969 the distribution was reversed, with most of the vessels fishing for groundfish in the Bering Sea and the rest fishing for ocean perch in the Gulf of Alaska.

The number of stern trawlers in the Gulf of Alaska and along the eastern Aleutian Islands increased from 4 to 7 by mid-month. Those vessels fished primarily for ocean perch along the Continental Shelf edge but also fished in shallower waters on the Continental Shelf taking various species of flatfish. Two refrigerated transports joined the stern trawlers about mid-month. Two medium trawlers also fished for perch in the Gulf of Alaska for about a week in mid-November and then moved to the Bering Sea.

The number of medium trawlers fishing for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea more than doubled in November, increasing from 8 to 17. During the first 3 weeks this fishery was centered in the central Bering Sea but late in the month the emphasis was shifted to along the Continental Shelf edge in the eastern Bering Sea.

By mid-November at least one stern trawler and 3 medium trawlers had begun exploring for herring north of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea. This exploratory fishing took place 2-3 weeks earlier than in previous years.

At least one medium trawler began exploring for flounders on the Continental Shelf north of the Alaska Peninsula in the eastern Bering Sea in late November. This also was 2-3 weeks earlier than in previous years.
FOREIGN FISHERIES OFF ALASKA
November 1969

U.S.S.R.

HERRING
7 vessels
4 vessels

GROUND FISH
4-8 vessels

FLATFISH
1 vessel

GROUND FISH
10 vessels
2 vessels
4 vessels
13 vessels

OCEAN PERCH
2-9 vessels
2 vessels

SADDLEFISH
2 vessels
1-3 vessels
1 vessel

OCEAN PERCH
2 vessels
4 vessels

SOVIET

JAPANESE

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
The number of Soviet fishing vessels off Alaska continued to increase in December, for the second consecutive month, to 125. This was four times the number of vessels sighted the previous month and the largest number since February 1969. It is 50 percent more than in December 1968. The sharp increase was caused by a large build-up of the herring fleet and the beginning of the flounder fishery, both in the Bering Sea.

Ocean perch in the western Gulf of Alaska was fished by about 6 stern trawlers the first week of December and 2 stern trawlers and 2 medium trawlers the second week. The fishery then ended and the trawlers switched to the Bering Sea fisheries.

The number of medium trawlers fishing for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea remained at 17 during December; one refrigerated transport joined the fleet. The fishery was primarily centered north of the Fox Islands in the eastern Aleutians where 13 of the trawlers and the refrigerated transport operated. The other 4 vessels fished in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands.

The winter herring fishery northwest of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea increased from 4 vessels in the latter half of November to over 80 by the end of December. This surpassed the peak number in that fishery last year. The peak effort normally occurs in late January and February. Present indications are that the fishery this year may reach the level of the early 1960's when up to 150 vessels participated. Fishing at the end of December there were about 25 stern trawlers and 40 medium trawlers (including 2 research vessels) accompanied by more than 15 support ships.

The flounder fishery on the Continental Shelf north of the Alaska Peninsula in the eastern Bering Sea was begun in December. Following reconnaissance fishing by one medium trawler in late November, the flounder fleet began to arrive in early December. By the month's end about 12 stern trawlers, 10 medium trawlers, and 4 support vessels were active in that fishery. This is about two-thirds the number of vessels in that fishery at the end of December 1968.
The number of Soviet fishery vessels off Alaska continued to increase in January for the third consecutive month—almost doubled, rising from 100 to nearly 190. A similar pattern in Soviet fisheries off Alaska was observed during the winter months in previous years. The number of Soviet vessels off Alaska at the end of January 1970, however, was over 40 percent higher than at the end of January 1969.

Herring fishing north of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea was intensified in January as the fleet increased from 80 to 115 vessels. Included in the fleet were 45 medium side trawlers, 40 stern trawlers, and 30 support vessels—35 vessels more than at the end of January 1969. Joint Coast Guard-U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries patrols reported that many trawlers were concentrated in small areas and that large schools of herring could be seen near the surface. Soviet herring fishing was adversely affected during the first part of the month due to severe storms which not only scattered the schools of fish but also made fishing hazardous. Nevertheless, even under such adverse conditions, some large factory stern trawlers (BMHTs) caught up to 20 metric tons of herring a day. When, by mid-January, weather improved, Soviet fishermen began to make record catches. The average daily catch per vessel ranged from 25-30 tons, and quite a few BMHTs caught 60 and more metric tons of herring a day. Some herring was frozen, some was delivered to motherships for processing (light salting in barrels) and canning (lightly salted, canned in jelly).

The flounder fishery in the eastern Bering Sea increased to over 50 vessels by the end of January. The fleet included 30 medium side trawlers, 11 stern trawlers, and about 10 support vessels—about the same number of vessels were engaged in this fishery in January 1969. Catches of flounder were by far not as good as in the Soviet Pacific herring fishery. Many a fishermen had to work overtime to bring in the required daily quota—some set and hauled their trawls as many as 10 times and more a day. Even with such effort, catch quotas were often unfulfilled.

Groundfish operations along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea continued throughout January and the number of trawlers increased from 17 to 22. The fishery was centered north of the Fox Islands in the eastern Aleutians where 15 medium trawlers, supported by a refrigerated transport, fished. Four other medium trawlers fished along the Continental Shelf edge in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands.
FOREIGN FISHERIES OFF ALASKA
January 1970

HERRING
115 Soviet
27 Japanese
St. Mathew Islands

FLOUNDER
51 Soviet

GROUND FISH
4 Soviet
8 Japanese
5 Japanese
18 Soviet

Pribilof Islands

SABLE FISH
1 Japanese

OCEAN PERCH
1 Japanese

U.S.S.R.
ALASKA
CANADA
The number of Soviet vessels fishing off Alaska increased slightly in February, rising from about 150 to over 200. The number of Soviet vessels off Alaska in February 1970 was 25 percent higher than in February 1969. The peak number of Soviet vessels normally occurs during the winter months and in 1969 was reached in early March with over 160 vessels. It is expected that more trawlers will arrive in the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and the Soviet crab fishery in the Bering Sea in March, but the number of vessels in the herring and flounder fisheries in the Bering Sea will probably decline.

Fishing for groundfish along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea continued but the number of trawlers decreased from 19 to 16. The fishery remained centered north of the Fox Islands in the eastern Aleutians with 12 medium trawlers accompanied by 1 refrigerated fish carrier. Four other medium trawlers fished along the Continental Shelf edge in the central Bering Sea northwest of the Pribilof Islands.

Herring fishing north of the Pribilof Islands in the central Bering Sea was continued by nearly 115 vessels—about the same number as during the previous month. Included in the fleet were 60 medium trawlers, 35 stern trawlers, and nearly 20 support vessels. The vessels were scattered throughout the central Bering Sea indicating that concentrations of herring had become less abundant. Some of the vessels switched to fishing for Alaska pollock and various other groundfish in the central Bering Sea. Unless large schools of herring are located in early March, it is expected that this expedition will be disbanded by the end of March.

The flounder fishery in the eastern Bering Sea increased slightly, rising from 50 to over 55 vessels. The increase resulted from a shift of about 5 stern trawlers from the herring fishery in the central Bering Sea. Included in the flounder fleet at the month's end were 30 medium trawlers, 16 stern trawlers, and about 10 support vessels (primarily refrigerated transports). The fishery remained centered on the Continental Shelf north of Unalak Island in the eastern Bering Sea.

Early in February, 6 medium trawlers began fishing for shrimp on the Continental Shelf east of the Shumagin Islands in the western Gulf of Alaska. In the next 3 weeks, the fleet more than doubled and the fishing area was expanded into the central Gulf of Alaska. At month's end there were 6 medium trawlers fishing in the Shumagin Islands area and 3 medium trawlers fishing on Portlock Bank off Kodiak Island in the central Gulf.

This is about a month earlier than shrimp fishing had begun on Portlock Bank in previous years. Except for a few weeks in late April and early May of 1969, this is the first time Soviets fished shrimp off the Shumagin Islands since mid-March 1957. The peak number of shrimp trawlers in the past two years has been about 20 vessels supported by 2 to 3 canneries. During the 1970 season, no canneries were sighted with the shrimp fleet, but it is expected that as the herring fleet in the central Bering Sea disbands such vessels will transfer to the Gulf shrimp fishery.
The number of Soviet fishery vessels off Alaska decreased from over 200 at the beginning of March to about 160 at the month's end. This marked a change from the pattern of Soviet fisheries during the previous three months when the number increased steadily. The number at the end of March 1970 was the same as in March 1969.

Soviet fisheries off Alaska this year are following about the same pattern as in previous years. The decrease in the number of vessels resulted primarily from the tapering off of the herring fishery in the central Bering Sea which normally occurs in March. The annual Soviet eastern Bering Sea crab fishery was begun in mid-month, about the same date as in previous years. It is expected the eastern Bering Sea flounder fishery will end in April and that ocean perch fishing in the Gulf of Alaska and along the Aleutian Islands will increase.

Soviet fishing for Pacific Ocean perch off Alaska was resumed about mid-month when 4 stern trawlers and 1 medium trawler began fishing in the Amukta Pass area in the central Aleutian Islands. Late in the month 3 additional stern trawlers began fishing for perch in the western Gulf of Alaska. This is about one week earlier than in 1969.

Groundfish operations along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea continued but the number of medium trawlers decreased from 16 to 12. During March the effort became about equally divided in the eastern and central Bering Sea rather than being primarily in the eastern Bering Sea as it was in February.

The herring fishery in the central Bering Sea began to disband this month and the number of vessels decreased from over 100 to about 60. This has been the pattern in this fishery in previous years and it is expected the fishery will end in early April. Continuing to fish at month's end were about 30 medium trawlers and 15 stern trawlers accompanied by 15 support ships, including several classes of processing vessels.

The eastern Bering Sea flounder fishery remained stable at about 55 vessels throughout the month. The fishery remained centered on the Continental Shelf in the eastern Bering Sea north of Unimak Island and east of the Pribilof Islands. The fleet composition remained the same, at about 30 medium trawlers, 15 stern trawlers, and 10 support ships.

The annual Soviet eastern Bering Sea crab fishery was begun about mid-month by 1 factoryship accompanied by 3 tangle net-setting medium trawlers. Late in the month, a second factoryship, also accompanied by three tangle net-setting trawlers, joined the first on the traditional grounds north of the Alaska Peninsula. It is expected that this year, as in the past two years, the fishery will involve only two factoryship fleets.

Fishing for shrimp in the Gulf of Alaska declined in March when the number of medium trawlers decreased from 19 to 15. The fishery became completely centered on the Continental Shelf east of the Shumagin Islands in the western Gulf late in the month when the Portlock Bank area in the central Gulf was abandoned. Joining the medium trawlers in the Gulf in late March was a canning factoryship. Last year the shrimp trawlers were accompanied by three such factoryships and in 1968 they were accompanied by two such vessels. It is possible that as the central Bering Sea herring fishery disbands, one or two more factoryships will shift to the Gulf shrimp fishery.
FOREIGN FISHERIES OFF ALASKA
MARCH 1970

<table>
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<th>Fish Species</th>
<th>Soviet</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
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<td>Japanese Perch</td>
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The number of vessels fishing off Alaska declined sharply from nearly 150 at the start of April to about 85 at month's end. A similar pattern was observed in April 1969 when the number of fishery vessels decreased to 80.

Pacific ocean perch fishery in the Gulf of Alaska, resumed recently, was short-lived. In early April, 7 medium trawlers fished west of Yakutat Bay in the central Gulf and 2 factory trawlers near Chirikof Island in the western Gulf. All abandoned the Gulf perch fishery in early April, presumably moving to the hake and perch fishing off the Pacific Northwest. A similar decline occurred in the ocean perch fishery along the Aleutian Islands. From 6 stern trawlers and 1 medium trawler fishing in the Samalga-Sequim Passes areas in the eastern Aleutians, the Soviet effort declined to 4 stern trawlers in early April and to 2 stern trawlers and 2 medium trawlers during the remainder of April.

Groundfish trawling along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea increased steadily during April. The principal area of fishing was in the central Bering Sea with 12 medium trawlers in early April; 20 medium trawlers, 5 stern trawlers, and 2 refrigerated transports by mid-month; and 28 medium trawlers and 1 factoryship in late April. There was a slight corresponding decrease in this fishery in the eastern Bering Sea where 6 medium trawlers declined to 2 by mid-month and remained at that level throughout April. A recent Coast Guard-Bureau of Commercial Fisheries aerial patrol observed that catches were principally turbot with some sublefish and pollock.

The size of the herring "expedition" declined rapidly in April and fishing ended by late April. Some vessels moved from herring into the groundfish trawl fishery in the central Bering Sea.

Flounder fishing on the Continental Shelf north of the Alaska Peninsula declined rapidly in April and ended by mid-month. Unlike previous years, however, a group of 15 medium trawlers, 2 stern trawlers and 3 refrigerated transports moved from north of the Alaska Peninsula onto the Continental Shelf grounds west of the Pribilof Islands and continued catching flatfish.

Two king crab factoryships and 8 tangle net-setting medium trawlers were sighted in outer Bristol Bay, north of the Alaska Peninsula. Both factoryships were recently visited by a joint Coast Guard-ECF party. As in 1969, the Soviets are fishing only tangle nets and their catches at the time of the boardings were principally Tanner crab.

The shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Alaska remained relatively constant. In early April, 1 canning factory and 15 medium trawlers remained on the Continental Shelf east of the Shumagin Islands while 4 medium trawlers fished on Portlock Bank east of Kodiak Island.

In mid-April, the Soviet tanker Mazyr was found refueling a group of Soviet shrimp trawlers within the U.S. territorial sea northeast of Kodiak Island. Several large oil slicks were sighted in the area of the Soviet refueling operations. A Coast Guard boarding party arrested the Soviet master for spilling oil in United States waters, a violation of the Federal Refuse Act of 1899. The master was taken to Anchorage, fined $1,500, and then returned to his tanker which had remained offshore near Kodiak.
Soviet fisheries off Alaska continued to decline from about 85 vessels early in the month to about 51 at the end of May mostly due to the ending of crab and shrimp fishing. (At the close of May 1969 there were about 21 Soviet vessels fishing off Alaska and the larger number this year reflects the increased effort in the groundfish and flounder fisheries in the central Bering Sea).

Pacific ocean perch fishing continued at a low level only along the Aleutian Islands chain. Through mid-May, 2 stern trawlers and 2 medium trawlers fished along the eastern and central Aleutians. In late May only 2 stern trawlers were left along the western Aleutians.

Fishing for flounder and various other groundfish species was continuous throughout May on the Continental Shelf west and northwest of the Pribilof Islands. Participating vessels were identified as 15 to 20 medium trawlers, 2 to 3 stern trawlers, and about 3 accompanying refrigerated fish carriers.

The deep-water groundfish catch along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea declined slightly during May. This fishery was conducted in the central Bering Sea and involved 28 medium trawlers and 1 factoryship during the first 3 weeks of the month and then decreased to 20 medium trawlers and a refrigerated transport in late May. Fishing was sporadic north of the Fox Islands with 2 medium trawlers during the first week of May and 3 medium trawlers during the last week.

In mid-May, both Soviet crab canneries and accompanying catcher boats left the eastern Bering Sea and shifted off the Soviet coast. Their departure dates were about the same as in 1969 and it is almost certain that their catches were below 1970 quotas of 52,000 cases of king crab and 40,000 cases of tanner crab (allowed) under the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Agreement.

The Soviet shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Alaska was discontinued during the first week of May.
For the fourth consecutive month the number of Soviet vessels fishing off Alaska continued to decline in June (from over 50 in late May to about 17 in late June). In June 1969 about 25 Soviet vessels fished off Alaska. The lower number in 1970 is due to lack of Soviet perch fishing in the Gulf of Alaska.

Soviet ocean perch fishing off Alaska continued at a very low level and was confined to the western Aleutian Islands. During early June, 2 stern trawlers were active near the Rat Islands; by month's end only 1 remained.

The flounder fleet, which in May included up to 25 vessels on the Continental Shelf west and northwest of the Pribilof Islands, stopped fishing in early June.

The Soviet deep-water groundfish trawl fishery along the Continental Shelf edge in the central Bering Sea declined from 20 medium trawlers to 16 medium trawlers and 1 refrigerated transport. Three or 4 medium trawlers fished off the Shelf edge north of the Fox Islands until mid-June and then departed the Alaskan area.
FOREIGN FISHERIES OFF ALASKA
JUNE 1970

GROUND FISH
16 Soviet
32 Japanese
51 Japanese
10 South Korean
80 Japanese

SALMON
16 South Korean
3 South Korean

OCEAN PERCH
1 Japanese

SALMON
105 Japanese
35 Japanese

SARLIFISH
4 Japanese

WHALING
12 Japanese

CRAB
23 Japanese
The number of Soviet vessels fishing off Alaska declined in July, for the fifth consecutive month, to 13 from about 17 the previous month. About the same number of Soviet vessels fished off Alaska in July 1969.

Pacific Ocean perch was fished by 1 stern trawler along the western Aleutian Islands during the first half of the month. About mid-July that vessel left the Alaskan area ending the 1970 Soviet perch fishery.

The Soviet deep-water groundfish trawl fishery along the Continental Shelf edge in the Bering Sea remained centered northwest of the Pribilof Islands and by mid-July was the only Soviet fishery in the Alaskan area. The number of vessels in that fleet decreased from 15 to 12 medium trawlers. One refrigerated transport supported the fleet.