

## **The National Institute Of Fisheries Of Cuba**

THE PRESENT Cuban government, aware of the deficiencies which have existed in all branches of the fishing industry during the past, and aiming to incorporate that valuable part of the public wealth into the general economic development plans now underway, created the National Institute of Fisheries on January 11, 1955.

The Institute is invested with the power to participate in all matters related to the fisheries, both the conservation and utilization of the aquatic products, and the adoption of measures intended to raise the standard of living of the fishermen. The Institute is governed by a Directive Council and an Executive Committee. In these are represented all sections of the fisheries, that is vessels owners, industrialists, retailers, commission agents and fishermen, as well as delegates from the governmental departments related to the fisheries.

In addition, the Institute provides information and answers questions, scientific and practical, on any matter related to the fisheries. It prepares and publishes literature in regard to the utilization of fishery products and distributes such material to the industry. It also compiles and publishes statistics on production, imports and exports, public and industrial consumption, fishermen, boats and gear, and other subjects related to fishing and the fishery trade in Cuba. Licenses for fishermen, boats, nets and other equipment, and for wholesale and retail establishments are issued by the Institute.

This agency also inspects the industry for compliance with the laws and rules regulating the capture of fish and other aquatic life, and its sale and manufacture. Enforcement of the sanitary laws are in charge of the Cuban Public Health Department in cooperation with the Institute.

In its first year of activity the Institute has devoted its major attention to the study of such measures as may contribute most effectively to the development of the fishing industry and to the welfare of the fishermen. The Institute has made a determined effort to assist all interests connected with the industry.

With the aim of reducing the operating costs of fishermen, the Institute has put into service two freezing plants located at important fishing ports, and is formulating plans to install others. Soon, with some financial aid from the Bank of Economic and Social Development, an organization of the Cuban government, the construction of the first fishery landing facilities at Havana will be started. It is not necessary to list all benefits that will come from this, but the Havana Fishery Terminal will constitute a major improvement in the mode of operation of the Havana fisheries.

With the further cooperation of the Development Bank, the Institute in a short time will have refrigerated freight cars and trucks that will allow the shipment of fish and shellfish to all parts of the country. The Institute will provide for the installation of display refrigerators in all commercial establishments that sell fish and other marine food products, thus insuring its maintenance in optimum condition up till time of sale.

The Institute has already attained one of its more important objectives, that is to produce confidence among management and workers in the stability and future of the industry. This policy of the Institute contributed significantly to the formation of the "Cuban Cod Company" that soon will start the construction of its first plant in the port of Mariel. Other Cuban and foreign

concerns have announced their intention of investing capital in Cuba in the development of the fisheries.

The Institute is taking the necessary steps to establish an aquarium, a museum and a library. It is conducting studies of technology and of methods of re-population of the rivers and other fresh waters. It is planning the construction of freezing plants, the formation of fishermen and boat owners' cooperatives and the establishment of schools where fishermen's sons will be taught methods of fishing.

It should be emphasized that Cuba, by virtue of its geographical position, is ideally located for fishing activities and for production of marine products, not only for its own use, but also for export to other countries. In the fisheries and in other marine enterprises investors may find in Cuba excellent opportunities. The National Institute of Fisheries will gladly furnish information to all persons—industrialists, administrators or scientists—who make requests about prospects and conditions in Cuba.

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## **Marine Fisheries of the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico**

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THIS PAPER is a progress report on the investigations of the fisheries of the Yucatán Peninsula, México, carried on by the author from 1954 to the present, under the auspices of the Mexican Institute of Natural Renewable Resources and the Fisheries Department of México.

The zone of study, called "the Southeast," includes the States of Campeche and Yucatán, and the Territory of Quintana Roo. The two states are located on the Gulf of México, while Quintana Roo faces the Caribbean, with British Honduras on the South.

The Peninsula has an area of about 138,000 square kilometers (54,000 square miles), and a very low index of population. The main cities, and therefore the main markets within the Peninsula, are Mérida, Campeche, Chetumal, Progreso, Ciudad del Carmen, and Valladolid. There is no exact information on the total local consumption of fishery products, but it is known that the figure is small. This is due to the low density of population rather than a lack of appreciation for sea food, as the "Yucatecos" have been great fish consumers since the times of the Mayan Empire.

Local transportation facilities are very limited. The only important highway goes from Puerto Juarez on the Caribbean (a port planned for construction in front of Isla Mujeres) to Campeche and the small town of Champotón, passing through Mérida. From the main highway, several minor roads take off to smaller towns. In Quintana Roo, transportation is done by mule, "plataforma"—a railroad car without cover, moved by animal traction—boat, or plane. The only land communication between the Peninsula and the rest of the country is the railroad, but most fresh or frozen fishery products are distributed by air. There is an important road under construction that will link Yucatán to the rest of México, but as it has to cross very rough and swampy country, it will not be ready until 1959 or 1960.

Campeche Sound includes the continental shelf from about Términos