

Some 20,000 people depend upon it directly for their livelihood, and the market value of the seafoods which it produces and processes has for many years been in excess of \$75,000,000 annually. Altogether, about 40 species of fish and shellfish are harvested commercially by Maine fishermen. Among the most important are ocean perch, herring, whiting, cod haddock, cusk, hake, pollock, flounder and alewives. Major shellfish items include lobsters, soft-shell clams, scallops, mussels and crabs. According to statistics compiled by the United States Department of Interior, the total landings in Maine during 1967 were 196,058,944 pounds of raw product worth almost \$23,000,000 to the fishermen.

In recent years conditions in the domestic fisheries have been growing steadily worse, both for the producer and the processor. As far as the fishermen are concerned, landings of most species have declined, as imports have taken an ever greater share of the market. Prices paid to the fishermen have fluctuated slightly from year to year, but over a twenty-year period the net increase per pound has been only from one to three cents, depending on the species. This small increase in income has been more than offset by increases in the cost of living, in the costs of vessels, repairs, gear, fuel and insurance. In fact, it has been more than offset by the decrease in total production alone.

The present situation of Maine fishermen is clearly indicated by the figures in the table below. (Note: all totals are for round, not dressed, fish.)

	1947 landings		1957 landings		1967 landings	
	Pounds	Average price (cents)	Pounds	Average price (cents)	Pounds	Average price (cents)
Cod.....	4,205,000	5.5	3,352,000	3.6	2,988,000	6.3
Cusk.....	567,000	4.8	584,000	4.6	11,000	6.7
Haddock.....	3,389,000	6.8	4,667,000	9.4	2,062,000	10.4
Hake.....	3,494,000	4.6	2,870,000	3.6	1,054,000	5.8
Pollock.....	4,310,000	3.2	3,719,000	2.6	1,095,000	5.0

To add to their problems, Maine fishermen working in the groundfish industry are forced to go to sea in vessels which have an average age of close to 24 years. Even worse, the largest trawlers in the groundfish fleet now have an average age of 32 years. Since the average useful age of a large trawler is considered, optimistically, to be no more than 25 years—with smaller draggers luck to survive 12 to 15 years of hard use—it is clear that the entire fleet is living on borrowed time. It is no wonder that the average age of Maine fishermen increases each year and that few young men are attracted to fishing as a trade or a way of life.

Maine's processors, too, are faced with equally difficult problems. The state's important sardine industry has for years been fighting a losing battle with imported sardines. One symptom of this decline may be seen from the fact that five years ago there were 30 sardine canneries in Maine. Now there are only 22. This industry, however, is vitally important to the economy of the state. During peak production periods, it still employs some 4,000 cannery workers—for the most part in areas which have been declared economically depressed where jobs of any kind continue to be notably scarce.

The Maine sardine industry has not remained passive during these years of decline. It has not been content to sit in a corner crying for government handouts while foreign competition slowly strangled it to death. Instead, through the Maine Sardine Council, the industry created a self-imposed tax, and with these funds it has carried out an aggressive program of advertising, sales promotion, quality control, product improvement, and technological research. Altogether, the Council has spent some \$7.5 million for this purpose. Yet, in spite of this huge investment, the industry has found itself less and less able to compete with highly subsidized imports.

Groundfish processors in the state are no better off. Like the sardine canners, they are caught in a grinding economic strangulation caused by rising labor and production costs and increasingly strict governmental quality standards on the one hand, and on the other by a rampaging flood of seafood imports which is fast approaching one billion pounds a year, throughout the country. Again, there have been plant closures and jobs lost, and each year the plant owners find it more and more difficult just to stay in business, let alone to carry out essential modernization programs. It should be noted that the loss of such plants in Maine creates