

"Thar's Liquid Gold In Them Thar Sharks"

Discovery That Scorned Fish Are Vitamin-Rich Launches Huge Industry

By JOHN RICE
NEA Service Staff Correspondent
SAN FRANCISCO—In the Pacific, the shark was once just a nuisance. Now it's a prize eagerly sought by fishermen—for shark livers contain an immense quantity of Vitamin A, which has become immensely valuable since fish oil imports were cut off by the war.

From Canada to Mexico, shark fishing has tidal-waved into an estimated \$75,000,000 business and Pacific Coast fisheries are riding the crest.

Fishermen who have been earning only a fair living, now average well over \$200 a week in a frenzied hunt for certain varieties of sharks. Some, worth \$40 a ton in 1938, now bring \$1200 to \$1800 a ton.

Record profits were made when a four-man boat, out of San Francisco for five days, made a \$7000 catch to net \$1100 for each fisherman.

That's an exception, not the rule, and everybody on the Pacific coast would be out catching sharks. Average for a three-man boat is \$700 to \$1200 a week.

This fabulous boom can be traced to a San Franciscan, Tino J. Guaragnella, representative of a large drug concern. He started buying shark liver in 1938, using the oil to fortify poultry feed.

By accident, he discovered that the huge livers of the common soupfin shark (10 to 25 percent of the entire weight) carry nearly 20 times the Vitamin A potency of other fish.

FOUR TRILLION
UNITS BOUGHT BY U. S.

Compared with cod liver oil's



A mere drop in the shark-boom bucket is this 20,000-pound haul of dogfish shark, pictured aboard the drag boat Warren H., out of Astoria, Ore. With this vitamin-rich variety worth around \$300 a ton, the catch should assay about \$2000.

average of 1000 International
Units of Vitamin A per gram,

and halibut's 5000 units per gram, the average 100,000-unit yield from soupfin sharks really makes the oil "liquid gold." And when Guaragnella found also that the livers were more than 50 per cent oil, the boom was on.

Already this year, the United States government has purchased nearly four trillion units of Vitamin A. Much of this is given to our Army and Navy flyers; the rest is sent to England, perhaps Russia, under Lend-Lease.

Vitamin A is for flyers what glasses are for near-sighted persons. It tends to facilitate night flying by preventing night blindness; it lessens eye fatigue and is claimed to increase vision.

This alone might account for the fact that demand is still four times larger than supply. But shark liver oil has countless other uses.

One of the most important is in lubrication. Secret experiments are being carried on, testing its use for stratosphere engines, where ordinary lubricants are affected by the extreme and rapid temperature changes. Highly refined, it makes a topnotch oil for fine mechanisms.

The British are using it to fortify margarine for national health. Many milk companies are using it to improve their products. Pharmaceutical manufacturers use it in many preparations. Vast amounts go into poultry feed to speed growth and improve egg and meat qualities.

Meanwhile, top-notch research men are working constantly to find new uses for both the carcasses of the shark and the residue of the liver. Such developments as have been made are still secret, but may be startling.

With all these uses for their catch bringing shark prices up to nearly triple that paid for the next most expensive fish—the pompano—small wonder that Pacific coast fishermen are making hay.

SOUPFIN: "A LAMB AMONG SHARKS"

The big halibut fleets of Oregon the tuna fleets of California—even a few crab fishermen—have joined the parade. There's money in that fish ocean and more than 1000 boats are out getting it. About 80 per cent of the fish-

Real Life Santa Tells What Kids Prefer For Yule

E. S. Payne, formerly an assistant division superintendent for the Denver Tramway corporation, now is a Pullman conductor. One month each year, December, he takes a layoff to play Santa Claus in the toy department of a Denver department store. "I do it just because I love children," says Payne. "No man who doesn't like children can be a successful Santa because children are quick to sense dislike." Store officials say Payne is one of the best they ever had. As frequently as possible he learns a child's name before he reaches the Santa booth, and when the child appears Payne calls him by his name and writes his "I want" in a big book. Payne attends many holiday parties, impersonating Saint Nick. "Sure," he says, "my head's in a whirl frequently after a hard day but it still is a lot of fun. December's my happiest month."

What They Want Most

Discussing the presents most preferred, Payne says:

"The scientific age is reflected more each year in what children request. This year I've had more orders for doctor and nurse sets than anything else and chemistry sets and similar things are high up on children's lists. That's a tip for fathers and mothers."

"The war hasn't had much effect upon what younger children choose for Christmas. Very few of them ask for toy machine guns, tanks or bombing planes."

"I don't believe it is a significant sign even if children do want war machines. When they do request such presents it apparently is just because that thing has caught their fancy tem-

ing is done in deep water, 40 miles out. Baskets (large loops of line supported by floats and carrying 45 to 90 hooks baited with sardines or sole) are standard tackle but some fishing is done closer to shore with nets.

The soupfin shark is trim and graceful, not at all vicious. Fishermen call it "a lamb among sharks." It weighs 45 to 55 pounds along the American coastline, gets much bigger off Mexico. Besides the soupfin, the dogfish shark is the best bet for oil. Tons of these are caught annually, especially in Oregon, where there is a good market for their livers. Blue, thrasher and mud sharks are of some value.

Pacific coast fishermen know they have hold of a good thing and that only two things can stop it.

1. A government-fixed price on shark liver.
2. Development of a synthetic Vitamin A.

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porarily; the toy has no lasting effect upon them.

"In general small tots want what they see before them."

"The older children have very definite ideas, however. It usually is easy for me to tell from what sort of families they come. This is especially true with children from extremely poor families who request such useful things as overcoats, or overshoes, and children from extremely wealthy families who want only frivolous trinkets."

"I've raised three boys and now I have three grandchildren and I think the best children's presents are those that are useful, instructive or health-promoting. 'Give the gift problem a little thought; buy wisely and stay within your means.'"

Grange to Meet—Riversdale grange will meet Friday night at 8:15 o'clock at the hall. The refreshments will be in charge of Mr. and Mrs. N. D. Love, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Ewens and Mr. and Mrs. R. Harmon.

Invasion of Hotel Room Draws \$21,000 Verdict

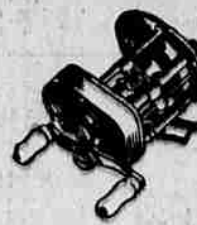
CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Dec. 3 (AP)—A superior court jury yesterday awarded \$21,000 to a couple in suits in which they charged a Boston police sergeant made a wrongful entry into their hotel room and subjected them to questioning reflecting on their marital status.

Police Sergeant Geo. Smith and proprietors of the Milner hotel in Boston each were ordered to pay half of the award.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren M. Hatch, of Sydney, N. S., alleged that the police made a forceful entry into their room in January, 1939, questioned Mrs. Hatch while she was unclothed, and then ordered them from the hotel.

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