A Summary of the Pacific Ocean Skipjack Tuna Fisheries and a Description, Evaluation, and Distribution of the Principal Baitfishes.

By

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INTRODUCTION

The worldwide annual skipjack tuna, Katsuwonus pelamis, landings since 1966 have been about 300,000 metric tons (FAO, 1972). About two-thirds of the world's catch have been made in the northwestern Pacific by Japanese skipjack tuna vessels, and most of the remainder has been taken in the American eastern Pacific skipjack tuna fishery. The yellowfin tuna, Thunnus albacares, bigeye tuna, Thunnus obesus, and the albacore, Thunnus alalunga, are probably being harvested at near peak levels with the existing gear and fishing methods but skipjack tuna are considerably underutilized (Rothschild and Uchida, 1968; Kawasaki, 1972). Rothschild and Uchida (1968) estimated the potential yield of skipjack tuna in the central Pacific to be in the 100,000's of tons and Hester and Otsu (1973) reported Japanese estimates of the potential yield of skipjack tuna in the Pacific to be as high as 1.5 to 2.0

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