



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Release

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HERRING FISHING

HERRING FLEET AT WORK IN STRAIT OF GEORGIA

December, 1961

Our story covers herring fishing being carried out by fleets with purse-seiners in the waters along Canada's Pacific coast, in the Strait of Georgia -- about 50 miles north of Vancouver. Herring are among the most plentiful of fish found in many waters throughout the world. Those taken in British Columbia waters are 4" to 10" in length, and weigh 1 1/2 to 7 ounces.

The herring industry is of top ranking commercial importance to British Columbia. The majority of fish caught are processed into fishmeal for fertilizer and stock feed, and fish oil for industrial use. Some herring is frozen or sold as fresh bait, but very little is used as a fresh food product. Herring are caught all along the fiord-like coast of British Columbia. The Department of Fisheries controls the fishing times by fixing quotas for well defined areas of the coast. As herring of these separate areas do not mix with those of other areas, each is assured of adequate spawning fish to continue one of the major fisheries of Canada's west coast.

Because of the chaotic conditions in the world market for fishmeal in 1960, less than a month was spent in herring fishing that year. However, the 1961 catch was the second largest in history and fishmeal marketing conditions became stabilized. There are various seasons for herring fishing, but the main fishing takes place from October to March when the herring move from offshore towards the inshore spawning grounds.

Schools of herring are found by echo sounders which also show the level of fish in relation to the bottom of the sea. When a school is located, the boat sets its seiner (net) around them, the purse line is pulled in tightening the bottom of the net like the mouth of a purse thus leaving the fish in a relatively shallow net. The fish are bailed directly into the hold of the ship or, when packers are used, directly into the packer for shipment to the cannery. Sets of 300 to 400 tons are not uncommon in this type of herring fishing, and large sets up to 1,275 tons have been reported.

750 men, in 96 boats, were on the herring in 1961. It is an expensive operation -- boat values are from \$75,000 to \$150,000. The purse-seiner alone is worth \$7,000 to \$14,000.

## Shot list

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1. LS pan left to right of fishing vessels at sea
2. MS fishing boat PACIFIC RAIDER approaching camera surrounded by sea gulls
3. MLS dory, two fishing vessels, and one lowering purse-seiner (large net)
4. MCS early morning sun shining through purse-seiner, men in foreground lowering net
5. MS men lowering purse-seiner into sea, pan down to fish trapped in net
6. CS men lowering net
7. MS bucket-type net hauling herring out of purse-seiner, swinging across and unloading herring into hold
8. CS herring in hold
9. MS more herring in bucket-type net being swung across onto boat
10. MS two men working winch, bucket swinging across in foreground
11. MS bucket releasing herring into hold and bucket swinging away
12. HAMS three men working on purse-seiner
13. MS men working - trapped herring in net
14. MLS fishing boat with gulls flying around
15. MS bucket being hauled up with herring and emptied into hold, and swinging back into purse-seiner
16. MCS bucket pulled along and lifted from sea, emptied into hold
17. CS fisherman hauling on handle of bucket net
18. MS floats of purse-seiner with fish in background
19. CS fisherman hauling in bucket
20. MS bucket swinging across and unloading herring into hold
21. CS fisherman watching
22. MSHA fisherman, purse-seiner filled with herring
23. CS herring swimming around in purse-seiner
24. MCS fisherman looking at herring in purse-seiner
25. MS fishermen hauling bucket across to hold
26. CU herring being released from bucket into hold
27. MS pan up along floats of purse-seiner to WESTERN PIONEER
28. MCS herring in hold, hold being closed off
29. MS purse-seiner being hauled on board fishing boat
30. CS man among net of purse-seiner
31. MS fishermen working on purse-seiner, hauling aboard fishing boat
32. LS fishing boats, gulls flying around, with land in background.