



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1940

DECOYS LURE TARPON TO SURFACE FOR AIR

Fish decoys used to lure the fighting tarpon to the surface of the water may be a development of the future in the realm of sports fishing, as the result of experiments conducted at the Woods Hole, Mass., biological laboratory of the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is indicated in reports submitted to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes. Although the use of decoys to entice ducks and other wild fowl is a device long familiar to huntsman, use of a decoy is not so common among fishermen.

Development of the tarpon decoy in experiments which should prove of interest to game fishermen and manufacturers of fish tackle, was brought about through investigations by Dr. Arthur Schlaifer, former New York Aquarium scientist, at the Woods Hole Station.

Those familiar with the habits of tarpon know that this fish periodically rises to the surface of the water to gulp air. It does this even in well-oxygenated water, and in spite of the fact that it possesses a relatively large area of gill surface.

Apparently the amounts of air needed by the tarpon, however, are insufficiently supplied by the gills alone. In fact the swim-bladder of tarpon—in addition to its

buoyancy functions--has a special tissue, well-supplied with blood vessels, which acts as an accessory breathing apparatus. By this means the tarpon supplements its air diet, the rise-and-gulp phenomenon being necessary to effect this.

In studying the importance of this odd air-breathing habit, Dr. Shlaifer observed that the air-gulping rise of the tarpon is often induced in one fish by the rising of another!

In studying this interesting phenomenon, Dr. Shlaifer made use of simple glass rods and various models of different shape and color. Although reds, greens, blues, yellows, and combinations--all of a silvery, shiny quality--were used in coloring the decoys, no one shade seemed more effective than another in luring the tarpon to shoot to the surface.

The models used were, in the main, all fish-shaped. Weighted so as to sink in the water at the end of a line, they were dropped into the tank, then rapidly drawn to the surface. Following the "leader" like sheep over a stile, the live tarpons rose to the surface. Certain of these decoys are apparently very effective, according to Shlaifer's tests, and induced rising of the majority of young tarpons which were in the experimental aquarium.

#

Eggs Stuffed with Tuna

Mix tuna fish with a little fresh horseradish, mixed with the yolks of hard boiled eggs, then fill this mixture into whites of eggs.

Seafood Cocktails

While shrimp and oyster cocktails are perennial favorites, clams, crab-meat, lobster meat, or practically any cooked flaked white fish may be used. Chill thoroughly and blend with cocktail sauce, as follows:

Cocktail Sauce

6 Tbsps. tomato catsup
4 " lemon juice
2 " grated horseradish (more or less as desired)
1/8 Tsp. salt

Celery salt and tobasco sauce to taste.

Blend all ingredients thoroughly. (Minced olives may be added, if desired; also Worcestershire sauce.)

Oyster Stuffing

An old-time favorite, taken from Marjorie Mosser's "Good Maine Food", utilizes oysters in the stuffing of turkey or other fowl in this manner:

3/4 cup butter
2 Tbsps. minced onion
2 Tbsps. parsley, chopped
1-1/2 cups chopped celery
6 cups soft bread crumbs
1 pint oysters, chopped
Salt and pepper

Saute onion, parsley and celery in melted butter. Add bread crumbs and heat well. Add chopped oysters and seasonings.

Shellfish Salads

An easily made salad in which shrimp, crab, or lobster meat may be used is taken from Practical Fish Cookery (Bureau of Fisheries, F.C. 19).

1 lb. cooked shrimp, crab meat, or lobster
1 head lettuce
2 cups finely minced celery
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt, paprika, and mayonnaise

Dice the shellfish, and mix with celery, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and seasoning. Clean the lettuce and arrange into 6 nests about 4 inches across. Use a small cup as a mold, fill with the shellfish mixture and press firm; invert the molded contents into each lettuce nest. Add a teaspoonful of mayonnaise and paprika or crossed strips of pimento. (If desired, the celery may be omitted or replaced by capers, olives, etc.)

Opportunities afforded by the large assortments of fishery products are almost without bounds, and it appears that the housewife with some knowledge of fish and shellfish and a certain amount of ingenuity can delight her guests with new surprises at every occasion.

#