

SHRIMP THREATENED BY DESTRUCTION OF ESTUARIES

A report of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to the Governor and Legislature paints a discouraging picture of the shrimp fishery's future. The report states that "the continuation of the present trend toward bulk-headed shorelines would result in diminishing shrimp production".

Here are some excerpts: "The life of the shrimp is short, and the period spent in the bays is only two or three months in duration for each successive overlapping swarm. There may be five or six such swarms during the warmer months. This brief but vital period in the bay nursery areas has become the weakest link in the life cycle of the shrimp. It is on this weak link that the future of the shrimp industry must depend.

"The crisis that has arisen is the accelerated disturbance and destruction of the estuarine nursery areas along the Texas coast. While such submerged land areas are public lands belonging to the State of Texas, they are unprotected by State regulation and are open to any and all types of man-made modification

"Rapid development of the coastal region in both industrial and residential expansion has brought piecemeal channel dredging, filling and spoiling throughout the bay systems without overall design or plan. The combined effect of such modification is great."

The report cites a recent B.C.F. study in the Galveston Bay area comparing shrimp production along two similar shorelines -- but one had been modified by construction of a dredgefill bulkhead. Intensive sampling for 10 months produced 2.5 times more brown shrimp and 14 times more white shrimp along the natural shore than along the bulkheaded shore.

The report makes clear what is at stake: "The shrimp fishery is this nation's most valuable commercial fishery, and that of Texas is today the largest of any state. Dockside value to the fisherman amounts to about \$35,000,000 per year."

(Commercial Fisheries Review

March 1967.

CRESTED PIGEONS SIGHTED AT PORT DENISON

Inspector E.I. Forster has reported sighting three crested pigeons at the Port Denison Township.

Until comparatively recent years these birds were seldom seen below Geraldton or Mullewa but have extended their range Southwards in the last decade. Since 1956 a few birds have even been reported around Perth and other sightings have been made in the Eastern Wheatbelt District.