

gives further insight into possible future problems in the Gulf area. Soviet Bloc vessels in the southern mid-Atlantic area accounted for about 91% (sea herring and Atlantic mackerel) of the total southeastern catch but only 52% of the value. Cuban, Mexican and Japanese vessels fishing in the Gulf accounted for only 8.6% of the catch (snapper, shrimp and tuna) but 46% of the value. Consequently, the monetary motivation for further foreign exploitation of Gulf fishery stocks is considerable.

The probability of a considerable expansion in foreign exploitation of Gulf snapper and grouper stocks is not great with existing fishing methods (creole longlines and handlines) and sea bottom conditions on the grounds (rock, coral and loggerhead sponges). Japanese longlining efforts for Gulf tuna, however, have apparently increased by about 50% in the last 3 years. In addition, Cuba now has about 30 longline vessels obtained from Spain, and they have shown an interest in the tuna stocks in the northwest Gulf. Increases in tuna exploitation are, therefore, likely.

Exploitation of shrimp stocks seems to offer the greatest possibility for foreign fishing expansion in the Gulf area. Foreign exploitation of shrimp in international waters off the U.S. Gulf coast has at least doubled in the last 3 years. The combined Mexican and Cuban shrimp fleet is currently estimated at 720 modern trawlers capable of distant water fishing. Development of a prototype shrimp trawler is underway in the Soviet Union and these vessels could be deployed in the Gulf and Caribbean from bases in Cuba. Approximately one-third of the Gulf coast shrimp catch, with a value of about \$36 million, comes from international waters off the U.S. Gulf coast. Uncontrolled foreign fishing would constitute a significant threat to the shrimp industry of the southeastern United States.

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