

# Fisheries In American Samoa, Fiji And New Caledonia

*In this article the Commission's fisheries officer briefly reports on recent investigations in the above territories.*

By H. VAN PEL

Mr. Charles Ostrander, Extension Agent Supervisor in American Samoa, watches the release in a brackish swamp on Aunu'u Island of a batch of tilapia from Western Samoa. This was early in 1957. The introduction was successful, and today tilapia are taken there regularly.



## American Samoa

THE foremost industry in this territory is fish canning. This activity started in 1954 when the Van Camp Sea Food Company re-opened a canning factory previously closed due to insufficient supplies of fish.

Exports of canned fish and by-products have steadily increased since 1954. The plant employs approximately 400 Samoans of both sexes. This industry is a boon for the population, for not only does it provide the people with a steady

income, but also with a supply of cheap, fresh fish.

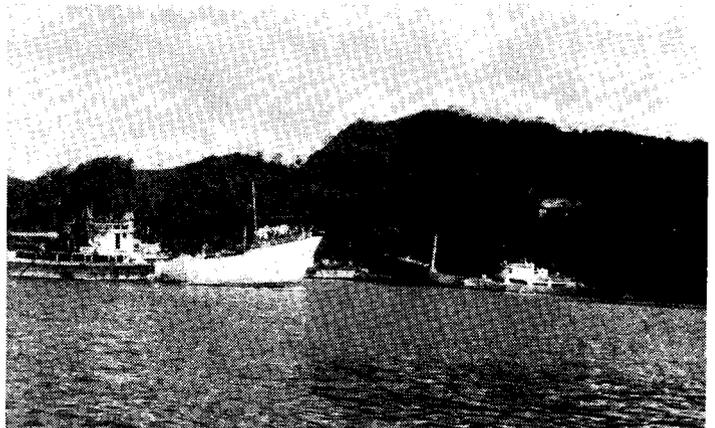
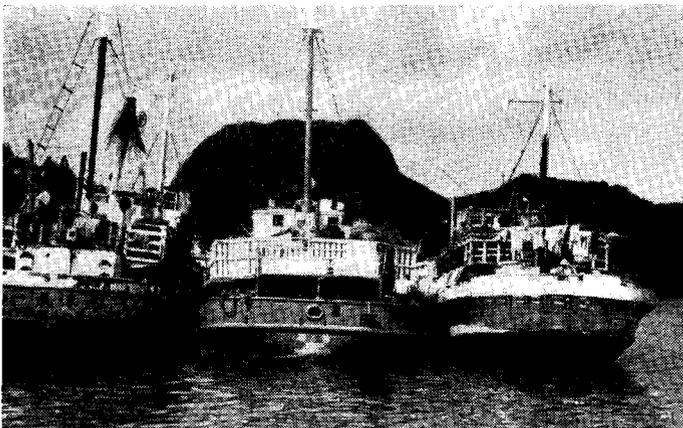
While canned tuna constitutes the main return for the cannery, marlin, wahoo and other fish caught together with the tuna are sold locally, either in canned form or frozen, at 10 cents a pound. Some frozen fish is also exported to Western Samoa.

The cannery also exports fishmeal to the United States. During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1958, the total value of canned fish and by-products exported was U.S. \$5,671,981.

The plant is supplied by some 40 longliners, two of which are Korean boats, the rest being Japanese. Some Samoan fishermen are trained on these boats. Another training scheme operates a launch. There are hopes that a fisheries training vessel will soon be available.

Attention was given recently to the possibility of introducing the commercially-valuable *Trochus niloticus* into American Samoa. The reefs have been investigated, and with few exceptions, have been found suitable for the establishment of trochus.

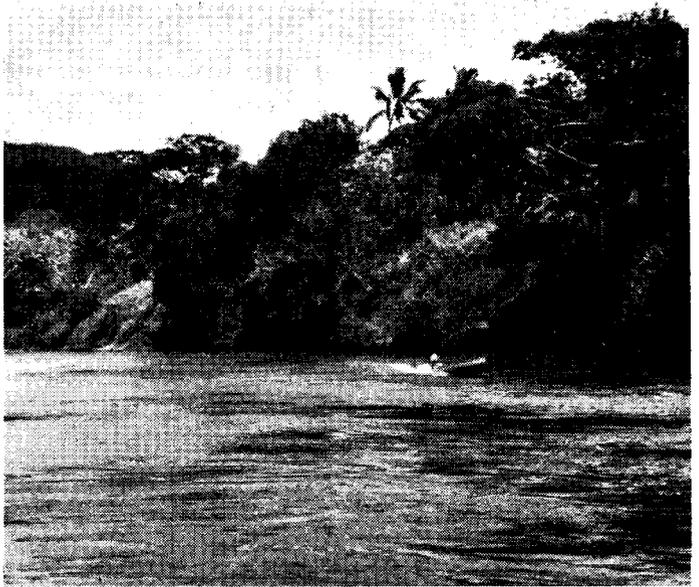
*Tilapia mossambica* were brought



Above: Japanese and Korean tuna longliners moored in Pago Pago harbour, near the cannery. Right: The steel longliner on the right, moored opposite the cannery, is used as a service ship. She also has a refrigerated hold which is used as a temporary store for frozen fish.



When in Fiji Mr. Louis Devambez, the Commission's assistant fisheries officer, caught the kuklia shown above during his survey of rivers, one of which was the Navua (shown at right).



some time ago from Western Samoa to the island of Aunu'u, where they were released in a brackish swamp. This introduction was quite successful and the fish are now caught at night with lights, and consumed locally.

Eighty *Tilapia* were recently taken from Aunu'u to be released in the Leone Creek on Tutuila. None was lost in transport. Once they have become well established, they will be used for food and for bait.

#### Fiji

The Commission's assistant fisheries officer, Mr. Louis Devambez, made some preliminary investigations in February in various rivers of Viti Levu to prepare the way for stocking them with game fish. Final investigations have not been completed.

The first fish to be released in Fijian waters were *Ophicephalus striatus* from the Commission ponds at Port Laguerre, New Caledonia. These fish were about 17 months old, 8" to 10" long. They should start spawning shortly. One 10" female damaged accidentally was dissected and was estimated to contain over 2,600 eggs.

Two other species of game fish are being investigated for eventual introduction in the area, and may be used later on for stocking other rivers in Fiji.

Mr. Devambez visited the island of Ovalau to determine the possibility of establishing a tuna fishing industry. He found that facilities for harbour and shore installations were adequate.

#### New Caledonia

A new fish has been introduced in the Commission ponds at Port Laguerre, New Caledonia. This is *Tilapia zilli*, of which 45 fingerlings were recently received from Honolulu.

These fish have several advantages over *Tilapia mossambica*. They grow bigger, are less prolific, and eat coarser foods. They will be kept in the ponds under observation for some time.

In March, 1957, and August, 1958, *Tilapia mossambica* were released in small numbers in two swamps in the

vicinity of Yaté, in the southern part of New Caledonia.

Upon completion of the new Yaté hydro-electric project, an artificial lake was formed about thirteen miles long and three miles wide, with an area of close on one million acres.

Although they were originally some 130 feet above the normal level of the river, the two swamps stocked with *Tilapia* in 1957 and 1958 have become part of this lake. The *Tilapia* are now present in millions, and anglers are catching them with pole and line, using earthworms for bait. A bag of a few hundred *Tilapia* for two or three hours of fishing is not uncommon. According to these anglers, the fish are quite tasty.

The sight of schools of *Tilapia* swimming unconcernedly among the submerged trees and bushes at the edge of the lake is quite new for New Caledonia.



Experimental fishponds at Sigatoka Agriculture Station, Fiji.