

*Tuna and the Construction of Fisheries Science in the Pacific, 1941–1954*

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While there has been much attention paid to the impact of the military on the development of oceanography more broadly, there is little attention on the impact of the military on the development of fisheries science. After World War II, science became a tool of government; in particular, fisheries science became a tool of the State Department, used to structure post-war relations in terms beneficial to the US. The military, with the assistance of federal fisheries scientists, was also used immediately after the war, to find the scientific information that would help the Americans stake a claim to the high seas areas where the Japanese had fished before the war, particularly the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands, now under American control. Nobody had any idea of the magnitude of the tuna resource at the time, but as American scientist Wilbert McLeod Chapman put it, tuna might well be the buffalo of the Great Plains, a food source of enormous potential. This work looks at the translation of Japanese fishery documents that were central to the construction of what came to be called recruitment fisheries oceanography, first published in 1954.