

## ADDITIONAL NOTES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER.

WOOD'S HOLE, *October 8, 1872.*

Captain J. B. EDWARDS says there has been a falling off of all kinds of fish this year as compared with last year, except herring, or alewives. They were more abundant in the spring than they had been for twenty years.

Blue-fish have not been caught anywhere in the sound as much as last year; and at Hyannis it has been the same. They have not caught as many this year as last.

Tautog fell off half in the early part of the season, and there have not been anything like as many caught this year as last.

English herring do not come here much in the spring, but in the fall they are taken for bait in gill-nets. November appears to be their running month.

The small scup, of the size that were plenty last year, have been quite scarce this year. A man can catch forty or possibly one hundred in a day on the best grounds here; but before we had pounds I could catch boat-loads in a day.

The pounds at Waquoit did not do much this year, but at the pounds below Falmouth they caught a great many herring. The alewives have been much more plenty than usual this season. I think Captain Spindel got five hundred and sixty Spanish mackerel at one time, and they got three hundred at Menemsha at the same time. Cod were much more plenty in the bay formerly than now.

Captain ISAIAH SPINDEL took up his pound last week, Tuesday, October 1. It did not pay as much this year as last, as there was no market for the menhaden. He had seen menhaden with spawn in them, not ripe, late in the spring. There is no spawn in them now, and they must have spawned some time since last spring. Menhaden are as large and fat in October as at any time.

We take a few English herring in the spring, possibly a thousand; they are what we call "blue-backs;" they come about the 10th or 12th of May. I have seen schools of the same fish in the bay, and have caught them in a purse-net in the spring. They come a little before the menhaden, among the early fish. We never catch any in the fall in pounds, though they are frequently taken in gill-nets.

The fishing was later this year than last. We got 35 barrels of scup about the 30th of May, very large, some weighing 4 pounds.

We did not get as many fish generally as last year; about as many tautog, not so many sea-bass nor scup; blue-fish, about one-fourth as many; squeteague, not one-fourth as many. We got eight hundred more Spanish mackerel than last year. The price of these averaged 20 cents a pound. We got five porpoises and many pilot-fish. We got twice as many ceros as last year, some of which weighed 23 pounds. We got 12½ cents a pound for them. The price for fish generally was about the same this year as last, though not quite so good for mackerel. They are always poor in the spring.

The blue-fish we got this year were small, averaging 2½ to 3 pounds, though we got a few that weighed 10 to 12 pounds.

I was on the coast of North Carolina last winter, and they said they got mackerel about the 20th of March. The run of mackerel that come inside of Massachusetts Bay are much larger than those outside. They do not bite, but are taken in seines and gill-nets. They weigh 3 pounds, many of them; are very fat, and a splendid fish. They are sold fresh.

They are the mackerel that are poor in the spring. They get them in Massachusetts Bay in January.

The small scup that were here last year now weigh not far short of half a pound; but there are not so many small ones, though I have some very small.

VINAL N. EDWARDS did not meet with many small scup like those seen a year ago, but there are many half-pound scup. He had not seen any mullet this season. There are many young menhaden. As he caught tautog with the hook, about the 1st of July, he had seen the spawn running out. The eggs are about the size of No. 3 shot. A part of the eggs seem to ripen at a time. The Quisset men told me they had not done half as well this year as last. Peter Davis, of Noank, who fished on Naushon, said he had not done half as well.

I did not find any menhaden with ripe spawn in them this summer, and I examined them carefully. I caught some last Saturday, but they had no spawn in them. We never see any young menhaden till July or August. I have caught them not more than an inch or an inch and a quarter long.

NEW BEDFORD, *October 9, 1872.*

Mr. CLARKE, fish-dealer, of the firm of Clarke & Bartlett, says blue-fish are as plenty in market this year as they were last, even if scarcer in the sound.

Scup have not been very plenty here. Ten years ago a man could load a boat with scup, here in the bay, in a day.

Fish, generally, are growing more and more scarce every year; and we can see a positive difference in the numbers between this year and last. The scarcity has been increasing for five years. The little scup that were here last year are not so plenty this year.

In this vicinity tautog are about run out; they are not worth fishing for.

The smacks are about killed off; they used to get a load in two weeks, but now they cannot get half a load in three weeks. We depend on traps mostly for fish. In the spring they catch the large tautog and glut the market with them, and after that they have to throw them away.

The regular retail price for tautog is 10 cents a pound. Cod retail at 8 cents, and scup about 8 cents, dressed.

We have had blue-fish in market all the time this season.

I think it would be better for the fishermen and all concerned if there were no traps in the world. As long as they can, the trappers will hire men to go before committees of the legislature and swear that fish grow more plenty all the time. The trap-men make all the money, while the smack-men make nothing all summer. I know two smack-men who have not made enough all summer to pay for their bread and butter, and they tried hard, too. There have been no large scup for about four years. Many poor families in this city suffer for the want of bread in consequence of the traps.

We got some pompanos this summer, for which we got 25 cents a pound. They came here last year, first, of any account.

Mr. WILLIAM A. BASSETT, a dealer in fish, says small scup are more plenty this year than last, (evidently referring to scup that weigh about 5 ounces.)

I think blue-fish have been as plenty as last year, but they are generally small, weighing  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 pounds.

They do not get as many squeteague on the Vineyard shore as last year, though small squeteague have been rather plenty this year. We get a few pompanos. Tautog are rather scarce.

English herring are brought here from about Noman's Land. They are about half as large as the alewives that we get in the spring. They are caught about the last of October.

Menhaden have been very plenty this year. There have been very few boats fishing in our harbor this year. Our common alewives were never more plenty than this spring; we could not sell them, they were so plenty; they could be bought for 25 cents a barrel. The Vineyard fishermen turned out a great many, because they could not sell them.

In Clarke's Cove the pound-men did pretty well, as the herring helped them out in the spring. There are seven pounds between this city and Mishaum Point.

Six of the small scup in the shop were weighed, amounting to 2 pounds and 1 ounce, or an average of a little over 5 ounces each.

*Dates when the fish were first brought in.*

*Herring*, April 3, from Westport. In 1870, from Edgartown, six hundred herring, April 1. *Tautog*, April 17, from North Tisbury, and one shad. *Mackerel*, about 2d of May. *Striped bass*, May 4, from the Vineyard. *Scup*, May 7. *Blue-fish*, about June 1; most plenty from 10th to 14th of June.

Mr. BASSETT said he had no doubt that the pounds had caused the decrease in the fish.

Mr. PRESBREY LUCE, of Martha's Vineyard, says he has a pound on the north side of the Vineyard, at Paintville. Scup were quite plenty there this year and last; he got 50 barrels at one time.

Blue-fish were more scarce about the Vineyard this year than last. The business of pound-fishing there has been overdone, and the pounds generally there have not done as well this year as the last. Mr. Luce thought the proposition in regard to a close time, as proposed in the bill prepared last year, a fair one, and did not think there would be any material opposition to such a law.