

excellent place for growing and fattening oysters, which I have been told would produce ample food for the fish the year round. I have but little experience in this new business to me, and would be thankful for any suggestions that you or Professor Baird may give me in the enterprise, and, if I can communicate anything new and of interest to you, will gladly do so.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE FLORIDA SHAD FISHERY.

By J. H. OSBORN.

SORRENTO, ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA,

December 18, 1881.

HON. SPENCER F. BAIRD,

Commissioner of Fisheries :

SIR: At your request I will give you such information as I can in relation to shad. I fished for six years on the Hudson at Hyde Park; have fished on the Upper Saint John's, at the mouth of Lake Munroe, for the past five winters. In the winter of 1876 and 1877 shad were very plentiful; I could catch as high as 200 in one day.

I use a drift-net, 5-inch mesh (string measure), 25 meshes deep. The average depth of the river is 15 feet. Shad have been dropping off for the past two winters, until now I have to fish nights to catch fifty shad with a net 300 feet long. (The river is about 150 yards wide.) With two other drift-nets beside my own (which would cost about \$20 apiece) during the month of March I could catch about 300 a day. Shad run here from January 10 up to about the 25th of March. We do not fish after March 1, because they get very soft after that time. They are ripe about March 5, and are running the best then. I think the river ought to be stocked as high up as possible, say at the head of Lake Harney or Lake Jessup. The lakes are dead water, or, in the North River parlance, slackwater. They are very shallow, only about 7 feet in the channel, with a very gradual bottom, and good sandy beach. In March the water gets very warm on the shores of the lakes. The river proper has no beach; 10 feet of water 3 feet from shore. Would have to catch the shad at the mouth of the lakes in the narrow river. If I can be of any service to you, will be only too happy to help to get the river stocked. I think we ought to have some laws to prevent setting gill-nets at Palatka and Melaka. They completely block the river, and prevent any shad from coming up.

Hoping we may get our rivers stocked in the near future,

I am, respectfully, yours,

J. H. OSBORN.