
Vol. IV, No. 4. Washington, D. C. April 15, 1884.

16.—A SEARCH FOR MACKEREL OFF BLOCK ISLAND, MONTAUK, AND SANDY HOOK, IN NOVEMBER, 1883.
By J. W. COLLINS.

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

The following facts which I have obtained from Capt. Adoniram J. Burnham relative to a cruise he made last month in search of mackerel in the waters off Block Island, Montauk, and Sandy Hook, may prove of some interest to you; therefore I take the liberty of submitting them to your consideration.

Captain Burnham left Provincetown on November 1 in the schooner *Hereward*, of Gloucester. The vessel was fitted for purse-seining, having one seine boat and two seines. Besides this, she carried a good supply of the best menhaden bait for tolling up mackerel, and plenty of jigs and lines.

The wind blew strong from the westward on the day that the *Hereward* left Provincetown; therefore she anchored that night at Hyannis. On the following morning she got under way and beat over to Tarpaulin Cove, where she lay until the next day. Leaving Tarpaulin Cove early on the morning of November 3, with a moderate northwest wind Captain Burnham stood out of Vineyard Sound, from whence he steered off to the southward of Block Island. When about 8 miles southwest of Block Island he hove to and "tried" for mackerel, throwing out ground menhaden toll-bait. He "raised" a school of tinkers and caught 50 or 60 fish, which averaged about 10 inches in length. These mackerel seemed disinclined to take the hook, though they were quite plenty alongside the vessel; not, however, sufficiently abundant to warrant setting a seine around them. Another trial was made about 7 to 8 miles farther south, with the same result as before, small mackerel being tolled up and about 60 of them caught.

"It was a beautiful evening," says Captain Burnham, "and probably we should have seen some schools if mackerel had been plenty."

That night the wind blew up fresh from the southwest, and the *Hereward* ran into New London, where she lay over Sunday, November 4. Monday morning, November 5, the wind having moderated, the schooner got under way, and passing Block Island and Montauk—the latter in the afternoon—stood off on a south-southeast course, the wind being southwest by south. The morning of November 6, the *Hereward* hove to and "tried" for mackerel 70 miles south-southeast from Montauk, her position being latitude 39° 56' north, longitude 71° 03' west. No mackerel were tolled up. Two other attempts were made during the

day to "raise" fish, but without success. After making the morning trial the schooner stood 27 miles west by south, and hove to in latitude $39^{\circ} 49'$ north, longitude $71^{\circ} 37'$ west. The last trial for the day was made 20 miles west of the locality last given, in latitude $39^{\circ} 47'$ north, longitude $72^{\circ} 04'$ west.

During the day Captain Burnham saw flocks of sea geese (*Phalaropes*); gulls were fairly abundant, and occasionally a gannet was noticed. Shoals of porpoises were also seen, but no whales. While the birds and porpoises are considered as indications of the presence of mackerel, Captain Burnham looks upon the absence of whales as quite significant, since, he says, "in this locality, in spring, whales are almost always seen where there are large bodies of mackerel."

After making the last trial for the day, the Hereward headed in for Fire Island, and between 3 and 4 o'clock on the morning of the 7th, when some 18 to 20 miles from the land, the vessel ran through 5 or 6 schools of small fish which Captain Burnham thought were tinker mackerel of the size usually called "spikes." At that time the wind was blowing strong from northwest, and the Hereward stood in under the land, and finally worked over to Sandy Hook lightship, which was reached about 3 p. m. About sunset of the same day the wind moderated, and during the night the schooner ran off southeast from the Hook. On the morning of the 8th she hove to about 30 miles southeast from the highlands of Neversink, where small mackerel—8 to 9 inches in length—were tolled up, and about a half barrel caught on hook and line. No large or medium-sized mackerel were noticed, even in the water.

There was a moderate to brisk breeze from southwest to south-southwest during the day. After the morning trial mentioned above, Captain Burnham stood off shore on a southeast course until the vessel was 88 miles from the land. Attempts were made to "raise" mackerel at intervals of 10 or 15 miles during the day, but without success. About 60 to 70 miles from the land, sea birds were the most abundant, but beyond that limit few were seen.

After making the last "trial" for fish for the day the Hereward ran 16 miles north-northeast, and hove to until the moon set, which was about midnight; after which she ran for Sandy Hook, a bright lookout being kept for fish. When she was about 60 miles off the land, saw scattering small fish, which were thought to be "spikes." This was not far from the locality where we saw small fish darting about on the morning of November 5, when we were running for the Gulf Stream in the Albacross.

Though the Hereward ran through these fish for nearly an hour, they were not seen in sufficient abundance to set the seine, even had they been of larger size. As it was, they were too small to be of any use.

Captain Burnham spoke a New York pilot-boat, part of the crew of which went on board the Hereward. In answer to inquiries, the pilots

said that they had never seen mackerel in the water off New York, except in the spring, when the fish were moving north.

The Hereward stood in to the land, and went into Sandy Hook, where she lay until November 13, the weather in the mean time being too rough for the prosecution of further researches. Leaving the Hook on the 13th, she ran down the south side of Long Island, at a distance from the land of 3 to 5 miles. The wind was blowing strong from the westward at the time, and no fish were seen; indeed, there would have been little probability of seeing any in such weather, if mackerel had been plenty in the locality. No further attempt was made to find fish, for Captain Burnham came directly home to Gloucester, and gave up mackerel fishing for the season.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *December 11, 1883.*

17.—DEPLETION OF FISH IN PANGUITCH AND BEAR LAKES, UTAH.

By **ANDREW L. SILER.**

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

I intend devoting the most of my time to fish-growing, as it is only a question of time, and that, at the present rate of depletion, a very short time, when the food-fishes inhabiting our waters will become so scarce that they will not be found in our markets. In Panguitch Lake, near this place, the fish are being rapidly exhausted, although the fishermen that fish that body of water say that the fish are as plenty as they were ten years ago; but at present the average weight of the fish caught out of that lake is 1 pound, while the fish caught eight or ten years ago averaged 3 pounds.

The time is very near at hand when, if we have fish from Panguitch Lake, we will have to restock it with Schoodic (or land-locked) salmon or white fish, or both.

I add an extract from the Deseret News in regard to the fish of Bear Lake. The same thing that has taken place there will certainly take place in the lakes of Utah unless our Territorial legislature takes steps to restock our waters.

"The famed Bear Lake covers some 150 square miles, and washes on three sides the rolling hills. It used to be full of funny beauties, splendid speckled trout. Some weighing nearly 20 pounds have come from there; but, alas, through unlawful methods and at unseasonable as well as seasonable times, is now only a pleasant memory of the past. Mullet and suckers roam the unfathomed depths and glide in the tributaries and outlet of the lake."

HILLSDALE, UTAH, *January 21, 1884.*