

**158.—HOW TO CATCH CARP.****By ROBERT A. MARTIN.**

[From a letter to C. W. Smiley.]

The way to catch carp with a hook and line is just this: Let a person having a pond in which they are kept feed them with bread at a particular place, and when the fish have learned to come for such bread, let him get some good strong genuine Limerick hooks (not the American imitation of them), and tie them on strong oiled silk lines, on which lines there are corks, and bait with bread (bakers' bread, or any kind of bread that after pressing in the hand he can make stay on the hook), and throw out some two or three lines tied to good strong poles, one line on each pole, and very quickly he will have about the number of bites that he throws out baited lines. After hooking all the fish, he might hand all the poles except one to some person to hold, until he had worried down one carp; and after getting that one out, he might then work one by one on the remainder.

Three carp weighing from three to five pounds each ought to be enough for one day's sport and eating. They are very sharp and shy after one has been caught and played long enough to scare the others, and will stop biting for some hours afterwards. It takes a very good line and the best sort of a hook to hold them, and of course a good pole is also necessary. The genuine Limerick hook is, I think, hand-made. But little, if any, sinker is required, as the weight of the hook will sink the bait.

After being fed with bread (especially bakers', or what is called light bread, which will float on the water), it is best to fish shallow, say about one foot or one and a half feet. If they have been scared, then it will be necessary to fish deeper, say in two and a half or three feet. They bite best, of course, in the spring and fall months. They are the gamiest and best-winded fish I ever saw; and the only trouble is, that after catching some two or three the remainder will be scared off. This, however, could be partially overcome in a good-sized pond by the owner having some three or four places where he baited them, so that after they were scared at one place he could go to others, provided he was fishing both for sport and profit (in the latter case, catching them to sell).

As a pan fish they do not compare with our millpond chub or speckled perch, but they are good pullers. They bite quickly like a chub, and not like round-fish (a sort of mullet or sucker). The bread or bait of

course should cover well the barb of the hook. For carp weighing from one to two pounds smaller hooks of the kind named would be better. I wonder that more of our country people do not make ponds and raise the German carp. Properly cooked, they are very fair eating; but to one who loves a good, square, long-winded, honest pull by a fish, I do not know anything to equal them. If they are once hooked, one is sure to get them, provided he knows how to handle a fish and has good tackle.

PETERSBURG, VA., *January 1, 1885.*

#### 159.—STRANDING OF A PIGMY SPERM-WHALE.

By **JAMES R. HOBBS.**

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

Surfman T. N. Sundlin found the fish, which came ashore  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of the station during a gale of wind and a high tide, which caused it to be badly chafed. I sent three men with a horse and cart for it, but they could not put it in the cart. It was 9 feet long. The men pulled the fish upon the shore, and I had it covered with a light sail. On Sunday the gale abated, and I succeeded in carrying home the fish, which I identified as a pigmy sperm-whale. While the whale was on the beach the sail blew from off its head, and the birds picked out one of its eyes. The gale had injured the boat that runs here, so I boxed up the whale and in a small boat carried it a distance of five miles to a fish-boat and shipped it to Elizabeth City, N. C. Like all other fish of its kind, handling causes the skin to peel off.

KITTY HAWK LIFE-SAVING STATION,

*Sixth District, North Carolina, January 1, 1885.*

REPLY BY PROFESSOR BAIRD.

I have great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt yesterday of the specimen, the stranding of which you telegraphed me on December 26. I was much gratified to find it a specimen of the very rare pigmy sperm-whale (*Kogia*). The localities which this whale has been previously known to inhabit are the Gulf of California and the waters about Australia.

The specimen sent us by the life-saving service of Port Monmouth, N. J., a year ago, was the first ever known to occur in the Atlantic Ocean. Your specimen is the second, and fortunately is of a different sex—a male, which gives to us a complete history of the species. The animal you send is full-grown, and represents a group of pigmy sperm-whales, all of which are very rare.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 6, 1885.*