

51.—NOTES ON THE FISHERIES OF GLOUCESTER, MASS.

By S. J. MARTIN.

[From letters to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

SUMMARY.—I give below the amount of fish landed at Gloucester during the month of December, 1884: Codfish from George's Banks, 846,000 pounds; halibut from George's Banks, 9,550 pounds; and fresh halibut from the Banks, 345,000 pounds. Fish caught in cod gill-nets and landed at Gloucester: Codfish, 653,000 pounds; and 267,000 pounds of pollock. There were also landed 144 barrels of mackerel from the Bay of Saint Lawrence; 183,000 frozen herring, caught at Monhegan, and 500 quintals of dried hake, by freight from Maine.

COD-GILL-NETS.—There were caught in gill-nets and landed at Rockport during December, 325,000 pounds of codfish and 10,000 pounds of pollock. There were also caught in gill-nets and landed at Lynn in December, 210,000 pounds of codfish and 16,000 pounds of pollock. There are 7 vessels using cod gill-nets that have gone east as far as Matinicus. I think 50 vessels are too many for Ipswich Bay, and it is well that some of them seek fish on other grounds.

HERRING.—The schooner Cecil H. Low arrived from Newfoundland yesterday morning with 375,000 frozen herring, having been gone from home thirty-five days. This is the earliest date at which a cargo of frozen herring has been brought from Newfoundland. The schooner reports herring plentiful and the weather mild. More vessels are daily expected from Newfoundland.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 4, 1885.*

COD AND HERRING.—Vessels using cod gill-nets find fish very scarce, and though they carry 24 nets, do not average more than 2,000 pounds. The past week there have been two cargoes of frozen herring from Newfoundland and one cargo from Grand Manan. There are 2 more vessels on their way home from Grand Manan with frozen herring, and 5 vessels with cargoes of frozen herring from Newfoundland. Herring sold to-day at \$1.25 per hundred.

VESSELS.—Eight vessels sailed to-day for George's Banks, making a total of 15 thus far. There are 23 vessels after fresh halibut, 28 at Newfoundland after frozen herring, 6 vessels at Grand Manan for frozen herring, and 41 vessels using cod gill-nets in Ipswich Bay. All the vessels which fish on George's Banks will be ready to sail the 1st of February. Some of the southern mackerel-catchers will start the 1st of March.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 14, 1885.*

THE FLEET.—The weather has been extremely cold and windy. The schooner *Virginia Dare* arrived from the banks with frozen herring; most of the crew were frost-bitten. The schooner *Henry Longfellow* has also arrived from George's Banks, with 10 of the men frost-bitten. Vessels from George's Banks bring good fares. Thirty of the fleet sailed for those banks last week, and as many more will sail this next week. Of the 25 vessels which go for fresh halibut, all are out but 1.

Some of the mackerel fleet will start for the south about March 1, while some even talk of starting February 20.

There are 4 vessels on their way home from Newfoundland, and 10 vessels from Grand Manan, with full cargoes of frozen herring. Five vessels have left this port for Grand Manan for frozen herring; and it is expected that in a week's time there will be plenty of these fish. Codfish will be coming in quite freely within ten days.

COD GILL-NETS.—The vessels using cod gill-nets met with better success last week than the week previous. At Rockport 40 boats landed 162,000 pounds of codfish, which brought a large price. The average price during the week was $3\frac{1}{4}$ cents a pound.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 25, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—During the month of January there have been 12 arrivals from George's Banks, landing 330,000 pounds of salt cod and 31,600 pounds of fresh halibut; 6 arrivals from the Banks with 14,300 pounds of fresh halibut; 5 arrivals from Grand Manan with 1,120,000 frozen herring; 2 arrivals from Newfoundland with 775,000 herring; 1 arrival from Eastport with 4,000 boxes of smoked herring; also 19,000 pounds of codfish and 70,000 pounds of haddock caught in nets.

COD GILL-NETS.—There have been landed at Rockport 455,000 pounds of fish; at Portsmouth, 155,000 pounds of fish; and at Lynn 62,000 pounds of fish; all being caught in nets.

Some of the vessels using trawls in Ipswich Bay have done better than the netters. The fish caught on the trawls are mostly males, but not so large as the fish that are taken in the nets, which are mostly females of large size.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 1, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—The George's Banks fleet has not done well, 5 arrivals having landed only 136,000 pounds of codfish and 10,000 pounds of halibut. There have been 9 arrivals from the Banks, 4 landing 62,000 pounds of halibut, and the remaining 5 bringing 84,000 pounds of haddock. The arrivals from Grand Manan were 4, with 970,000 frozen herring.

BAD WEATHER.—For the last twenty-one days the weather has been cold and windy, and during the past week the ice in the harbors has been a foot thick. Vessels at Newfoundland will have a difficult time in reaching home. A telegram from Capt. Charles Martin, of the schooner *Mystery*, at Saint Pierre, Newfoundland, states that he has been waiting with a load of frozen herring since January 21. The

schooner Henry W. Wood, also remaining at Saint Pierre, Newfoundland, on January 28 stated that the weather was very cold, a gale of wind having been blowing from the northwest for six days, and that the gulf is full of drift ice. Two vessels which were bound for home returned to Saint Pierre, Newfoundland, this afternoon, having been out five days. Three vessels from Grand Manan, which have been frozen up for fourteen days in the harbors on the Maine coast, have arrived with cargoes of frozen herring. There are still 6 vessels on the Nova Scotia shore. Eleven Gloucester fishermen have been disabled.

COD GILL-NETS.—Vessels using cod gill-nets meet with little success, and 10 vessels which have been fishing with them in the harbor are frozen in the ice. There are 38 vessels fishing cod gill-nets in Ipswich Bay. During the past week there have been landed by cod gill-nets at Portsmouth, 80,000 pounds of codfish; at Rockport, 70,000 pounds of codfish; and at Gloucester, 10,000 pounds of codfish. The price of the fish has been $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound during the week.

GLoucester, MASS., *February 8, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—During the past week there have been 18 arrivals from George's Banks, 14 landing 275,000 pounds of codfish and 21,000 pounds of halibut, and 4 landing 118,000 pounds of haddock; 4 arrivals from the Banks with 36,800 pounds of fresh halibut; 5 arrivals from Grand Manan with 1,540,000 frozen herring, and 1 arrival from Newfoundland with 600,000 frozen herring.

HADDOCK.—Haddock are very plenty on George's Banks, 1 vessel, with 6 dories and 1,000 hooks to the dory, having caught 50,000 pounds in one day. The haddock are two-thirds females and are full of spawn. The weather for the three weeks has been quite rough, but the codfish on George's Banks have been abundant. The George's vessels which arrived to-day landed from 40,000 to 50,000 pounds, being gone fourteen days.

HERRING.—There have been 3 arrivals to-day from Newfoundland with cargoes of frozen herring, and 3 vessels have already sailed from Grand Manan for this port with full cargoes of frozen herring. Herring are selling at 70 cents a hundred. Half-size herring are quite numerous in Ipswich Bay.

There are 20 sail in Ipswich Bay using trawls; they are doing better than the netters, fishing 4 miles outside of the nets.

COD GILL-NETS.—Notwithstanding the fact that the weather during the past week has been cold and windy, the vessels using cod gill-nets have done well, having landed at Portsmouth 170,000 pounds of large codfish; at Rockport 48,000 pounds of codfish; and at Gloucester 10,000 pounds of codfish. The fish sold for a high price, the average during the week being 4 cents a pound.

The harbor still remains full of ice, and vessels can get in no further than Harbor Cove.

GLoucester, MASS., *February 15, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—During the past week there were 18 arrivals from George's Banks, 15 of which landed 359,000 pounds of codfish and 43,000 pounds of halibut, and the 3 others, 86,000 pounds of haddock; 7 arrivals from Newfoundland, with 305,000 frozen herring; and 5 arrivals from Grand Manan, with 1,774,000 frozen herring.

BAD WEATHER.—The weather has been very rough, and all the vessels which arrive are more or less damaged. The gale of the 15th instant was very heavy on George's Banks, and I fear that great damage has been done on the Grand Banks. A vessel which sailed from this port on January 1, for halibut, has not returned yet, while a number more have been out a long while. The harbor still remains full of ice.

COD GILL-NETS.—The 30 vessels which have been using cod gill-nets in Ipswich Bay lost most of their nets last Monday in a heavy gale of wind. There were, however, 12 vessels in this port with nets on board. During the past week there were caught in gill-nets and landed at Portsmouth 60,000 pounds of codfish; at Rockport, 40,000 pounds of codfish; and at Gloucester, 10,000 pounds of codfish.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 22, 1885.*

COD GILL-NETS.—The amount of codfish caught in cod gill-nets during the month of February, 1885, was as follows: 160,000 pounds landed at Rockport, 150,000 pounds at Portsmouth, and 46,000 pounds at Gloucester. Vessels using cod gill-nets did not do well during the past week. The codfish suddenly left Ipswich Bay on the night of February 24. The fishermen, however, think they will return, as this is not the first time they have all left this bay in one night.

GEORGE'S BANKS.—The codfish are abundant in some places on George's Banks. In two days the schooner Rapid Transit caught 45,000 pounds of codfish on haddock trawls. The schooner Oresa, which carries 8 dories, caught 14,000 pounds of codfish and 90,000 pounds of haddock in three days. Haddock are also plenty on George's Banks, and vessels carrying 6 dories catch from 50,000 to 100,000 pounds in two days. There were 2,000,000 pounds of haddock landed in Boston on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The halibut catchers have not done well, some of them who have been absent seven weeks bringing home only from 15,000 to 20,000 pounds. Most of the vessels went to the Grand Banks, where they experienced rough weather, and found halibut scarce.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 1, 1885.*

MONTHLY SUMMARY.—The following is the summary of the fish landed at Gloucester during the month of February, 1885:

Sixty arrivals from George's Banks, 44 of which landed 898,000 pounds of codfish and 104,000 pounds of halibut, and the remaining 16 327,000 pounds of fresh haddock; 13 arrivals from the Banks, with 189,800 pounds of fresh halibut; 2 arrivals from Le Have Bank with 55,000 pounds of codfish and 14,000 pounds of halibut; 17 arrivals from

Newfoundland with 5,715,000 frozen herring; 10 arrivals from Grand Manan with 4,017,000 frozen herring. There were brought from Maine 16,000 boxes of smoked herring and 50 barrels of salted herring.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 1, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—During the past week there were 19 arrivals from George's Banks, 18 of which landed 2,768,000 pounds of codfish and 30,600 pounds of fresh halibut, the remaining one landed 50,000 pounds of haddock; 5 arrivals from the Banks with 68,000 pounds of fresh halibut; 5 arrivals from Newfoundland with 1,840,000 frozen herring; and 1 arrival from Grand Manan landed 280,000 frozen herring.

HADDOCK.—There are 63 vessels engaged in the haddock fishery, and they have done well during the past twelve days. There are 25 vessels in Boston to-day with average cargoes of 35,000 pounds of fresh fish—half codfish and half haddock—caught on George's Banks. When the haddock catchers baited their trawls with salted porgy slivers ten years ago, they very seldom caught any codfish; on the contrary, since frozen herring have been used for bait, as many codfish as haddock are taken on the trawls. It is easily seen that the fares of the vessels using hand-lines are small in comparison with those of the vessels using trawls, and also the annoyance which the former suffers from the latter, when it is known that as soon as a haddock catcher sees a vessel at anchor fishing for codfish with hand-lines, it will set its trawls completely around the vessel, knowing that a good bottom for codfish is a good bottom for haddock. The haddock catchers carry 6 dories, with 1,000 hooks to the dory, a total of 6,000 hooks; while the 12 men on the vessel using hand-lines fish 12 lines with 2 hooks to the line, a total of 24 hooks. Hence the haddock catchers take the fish. One vessel is now in port with 40,000 pounds of codfish and 20,000 pounds of haddock, the result of two days' fishing with trawls. The day is near at hand when the cod fishermen will use trawls on George's Banks.

COD GILL-NETS.—There were caught in cod gill-nets and landed at Gloucester during the past week 26,000 pounds of codfish. When the codfish left Ipswich Bay all the boats took up their nets, but some of them fitted out trawls, as the boats using trawls were catching a few fish. Captain McCloud went to Ipswich Bay March 3 and took 24,000 pounds of codfish from 24 nets which had been set only two nights. At present there are 10 boats fishing nets in the bay, and they have all done well since last Tuesday, catching more fish in the nets than with the trawls. The cod sold at $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound all the week.

WHALES.—The fishermen say they have never seen whales so numerous on the eastern shore as at present. The steamer Fannie Sprague, of Booth Bay, formerly used in the porgy fishery, which has been fitted out as a whaler, shot six whales last week. Two of them were safely towed to Booth Bay, but the other four, which sunk, are buoyed.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 8, 1885.*

SUMMARY.—The following are the arrivals at this port during the past week: Forty from George's Banks, 39 with 2,099,000 pounds of codfish and 34,600 pounds of halibut, and 1 with 10,000 pounds of haddock; 7 from the Banks with 250,000 pounds of fresh halibut; 1 from Le Have Banks with 10,000 pounds of codfish and 24,000 pounds of fresh halibut; 12 from Ipswich Bay, landing 55,000 pounds of shore codfish caught on trawls; 9 from Grand Manan, with 2,810,000 frozen herring; and 2 arrivals from Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, with 570 frozen herring. There were also received 750 quintals of dried mixed fish by freight from Maine, and 10,000 boxes of smoked herring from Eastport.

GEORGE'S BANKS.—There has been a large school of codfish and haddock on George's Banks, and all the vessels have brought in good fares of both kinds of fish. The halibut catchers did well the last trip, and four fares are being discharged in the harbor at 5 cents a pound by the cargo.

PRICE.—The price of fresh fish is low. Codfish sells for $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound; fresh haddock at 80 cents a hundred pounds. Large codfish, caught in nets last night, sold for $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound. Salt fish sell at better figures; salt fish green from the vessel bring $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound, newly dried George's codfish bring \$4.75 a quintal.

COD GILL-NETS.—Vessels using cod gill-nets still do well. There were 245,000 pounds of codfish caught in nets last week and landed at Rockport and Portsmouth. The schooner Blue Jay landed 16,000 pounds of codfish at Rockport last night, the result of three nights' fishing. The other boats have done equally well.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 15, 1885.*

COD GILL-NETS.—There is a large school of codfish in Ipswich Bay, and a good many are being taken with cod gill-nets. Three weeks ago most of the fish were taken on trawls, but now the trawls have been put ashore and nets are principally used. The cod of the first school that came into the bay this winter were small, averaging 18 pounds each, and were mostly males. The fish now caught average 39 pounds as they come out of the water. I weighed 4 large fish yesterday amounting to 224 pounds. They were mostly females and full of spawn. In two nights last week 3 vessels caught 20,000.

BANK ARRIVALS.—There were 25 arrivals from George's Banks last week, with average fares of 45,000 pounds each. The haddock catchers landed 104,000 pounds of codfish last week. The 4 halibut catchers that arrived last week averaged 30,000 pounds each. All these were from the Grand Banks.

PRICES.—Fresh halibut sold by the cargo at 5 cents per pound, codfish at 2 cents per pound, and haddock at $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound. The large cod caught in nets sold at $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound for steak.

There have 32 vessels gone south for mackerel.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 22, 1885.*