

62.—THE FISHERIES OF PENSACOLA, FLA.**By SILAS STEARNS.**

The fisheries at this point have not been so successful and lucrative as usual during the season that is just ending, mainly on account of the boisterous weather that prevailed.

In the red-snapper fishery it was expected at the beginning of the season that there would be a great improvement in the catch and in the regularity of supply, because of the introduction into the business of larger vessels, better crews of fishermen, and some improved methods of capture. But while the well-equipped vessels proved admirably adapted to the work, the supply of fish was but little better than that of former seasons. This circumstance is due to the fact that the red snapper is becoming less abundant and is being taken at greater distances from the market, and that during the very windy weather fishing or searching for the fishing grounds is impracticable.

In addition to the old fleet of red-snapper catchers, there were three well-fitted vessels, carrying crews of 10 or 12 men each, that were made up at Portland and Gloucester, and who were believed to be experts in their profession. There was also employed the schooner *Henrietta Frances*, of Boston, a 75-ton mackerel catcher, with a Portland crew of 18 men. One of these vessels, in charge of Capt. D. E. Collins, of Gloucester, had an outfit of trawls, such as are used at Gloucester and Portland for haddock; but these trawls, after several thorough trials, were laid aside for the old hand-line gear, as they did not prove to be so effective.

The experience of this winter, even with its bad weather, has not enabled the fishermen to determine whether an outfit so expensive as that of the *Henrietta Frances* will be profitable, owing to the fact that there were but few times during the season when she went to sea that the small vessels of 30 and 40 tons did not go, and even on the fishing grounds the smaller vessels would be at work quite as long. There is, however, an advantage in such a vessel, in her ability to make longer and quicker passages, and in having plenty of room for the storage of ice, which will receive greater consideration as the fishing grounds are found farther from the home market.

During this season the vessels of 35, 40, and 50 tons have been the most profitable, especially those without "wells." The smaller "well" smacks made small and infrequent catches through the winter, and the market would have been bare much more than it was had the dependence been wholly upon them.

The following figures show the gross stock of several of the vessels for the winter: *Henrietta Frances*, of 75 tons, \$3,200; *John Pew*, of 42 tons, \$5,811; *H. S. Rowe*, of 56 tons, \$3,000; *Sarah L. Harding*, of 30

tons, \$2,927; Clarence Barclay, of 25 tons, \$2,000. The expense of landing that value of fish was so great that there was practically nothing left for the share of the vessels. The crews are generally hired by the month, the captain, however, receiving a share. The ordinary fisherman receives \$25 per month; the cook, \$30; and the mate, who stows the ice and fish and is general leader of all work, \$40. The crew of the *Henrietta Frances*, who were on shares, after the Portland fashion, realized about \$25 per month for the season.

As an instance of the uncertainty of success attending this fishery I will state that several skippers, who are usually very successful on the New England coast, have made frequent failures here, while exerting themselves to the utmost to prevent it. In this climate a fishing trip cannot be prolonged as it can be farther north, because the supply of ice is soon melted, or else the fish will be unsalable when landed.

The unusually cold spring delayed the run of shore fish, as pompano, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, &c., fully a month. They appear generally by the first of March, while this season they did not come until the first of April, when the best demand for them was over.

The Spanish mackerel was the kind first caught this year, and they seemed to come on the coast at all points simultaneously. Boat after boat came to the market loaded, the crews reporting that they could have taken all that they wanted. The light demand was soon supplied and a good many fish were thrown away, either at Pensacola or at the interior cities whither they had been shipped. It was at this time that the spring flood of lake fish came into the western markets, crowding out Gulf fish by their cheapness. When the demand for Spanish mackerel became so light, the Pensacola fishermen stopped catching more than could be used in the city. During the month of April they have been extremely abundant along the coast; and are now, at the first of May, just entering the bay. This run of mackerel is of a larger size than is remembered as having occurred before in ten years. It is usual for them to appear in schools at the water's surface off shore as early as the middle of February or the first of March, and then in March and the first of April to straggle along the sea-beach in pursuit of "bait," as they are moving toward the bays. There have been seasons when the mackerel would be abundant off in deep water, and but very few would be seen or taken in seines along the shore. This year they seem to be mainly in shoal water and in greater numbers than ever before known here.

Pompanos have not been as abundant as usual. A great many were taken farther south, in the vicinity of Tampa, and shipped from Cedar Keys. These were placed on the market earlier than the fish arrive at the Pensacola section, and while the demand for fish was good. At the beginning of the pompano run here, a car-load of them was shipped from Cedar Keys to New Orleans, where they were sold cheaper than the Pensacola fishermen expected to receive for their catch. So far, the

Pensacola fishermen have caught all the pompanos that they could and have sold them readily, although at a low price. It is probable that there will be a good many taken in May, and as they become less abundant elsewhere the prices will be better.

Bluefish did not appear until the last of April, and none have been seen in a large body. They are caught in company with Spanish mackerel in small lots. The bunches are small in number and the fish small in size. It is strange that there are so few large bluefish on this coast similar to those found on the Atlantic coast. Bluefish will likely be caught all summer in considerable quantities, although the fishermen do not expect as good a run as usual.

The following figures are given to show the difference in the catch of these shore fishes of the past two seasons, from the first run to the 1st of May. In 1884, the season began the 1st of March, and in 1885 it began the 1st of April. Pompano, 1884, 10,632 fish; 1885, 6,988 fish. Spanish mackerel, 1884, 33,212 pounds; 1885, 121,931 pounds. Bluefish, 1884, 39,580 pounds; 1885, 6,000 pounds. The prices of 1885 have averaged one-third less than those of 1884.

PENSACOLA, FLA., *May 1, 1885.*

63.—PROPOSED TRANSMISSION OF SALMON EGGS TO CHILI AND IMPORTATION OF CHILIAN SPECIES OF FISHES.

By JUAN DE LA C. CERDA.

On sending the salmon spawn to Chili it will necessarily have to be under the charge of some competent person, who must not only know how to overcome the difficulties the voyage presents, but also to superintend their hatching in Chili and the preparation of the fish at the first period before letting them loose in the rivers.

In a word, what we want to realize in Chili is the establishment of one or more hatching houses, taking as a model those of the United States, not only for the introduction of salmon, carp, and other foreign fish, but likewise the study of ours, of which up to the present very little is known, since no one has taken the trouble to study them from an industrial point of view.

In order to carry out the wishes of my government to make a contract with the person who is to take the salmon and fit up the hatching houses, I have seen several persons in this city who have been recommended to me as competent in this branch. Up to the present, however, I have not entered into any arrangement with any of these gentlemen, as the epoch for realizing this enterprise is still distant, being in the months of September and October; nevertheless, the necessary preparations must be made in August.

From what I know of some of the rivers in California, as the Sacramento, San Joaquin and its affluents, I can assure you that it would