

## 36.—NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN APRIL, 1886.

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The customary activity and enthusiasm in the fishing industry at this season has not been observable during the past month. The fear of a treaty with England, or some arrangement by which foreign-caught fish would be admitted free of duty, has been a cloud over the business all the spring. This has in a measure disappeared, only to be followed by others—by disasters, an unusually small demand, and the lowest prices for years—all of which had a depressing effect, and vessels have been fitted out for the fishing grounds but slowly.

Contrary to the expectations of many, since July, 1885, at which time the small duty was imposed upon pickled and dry fish of foreign importation, prices have been much lower and the demand less than in past years, when imported fish was free of duty. This may largely be accounted for by the great decline in all other provisions, fish apparently suffering the most.

The aggregate receipts for the month vary but little from those of the corresponding month of last year; more vessels have been engaged in the halibut fishery and less in the cod fishery. The receipts of the former accordingly show an increase; the latter, a decrease.

George's Bank has been the fishing ground for a large fleet of nearly 200 sail, three-fourths of which were from Gloucester. Cod and haddock were abundant, but vessels averaged small fares of codfish from having poor bait. The haddock catch being marketed at Boston fresh, the receipts at Gloucester show only the small amount of haddock that arrived from an occasional overstocked fresh market. Halibut have at times been plentiful, and again few were taken on these grounds.

Ipswich Bay, from October until May, is a favorite resort for codfish, and is one of the most prolific fishing grounds on the coast. During the past six months the fish have been abundant most of the time, more so than for years. The fleet fishing in this bay during January, February, and March numbered 42 sail of netters and 20 of trawlers; during April 40 vessels used trawls and 20 used nets. As this change was caused chiefly by the nets having been worn out so near the end of the season, they were not replaced.

In the absence of full returns we notice a few of the Ipswich Bay fleet: Schooner Northern Eagle, from October 17 to April 28, with 12 men and 30 nets, caught 327,000 pounds of cod and 80,000 pounds of pollock; schooner Sarah C. Wharff, December 15 to April 25, with 8 to 10 men, 4 or 5 dories, and 40 to 48 nets, caught 367,000 pounds of cod; schooner Hector, October 10 to April 30, with 10 men and 24 nets, caught 227,000 pounds of cod and 144,000 pounds of pollock; schooner Abby A. Snow, October 16 to April 30, with 12 men and 30 nets, caught 330,000 pounds of cod and 97,000 pounds of pollock; schooner Estelle S. Nunam, with

10 men, caught with trawls 60,000 pounds of cod in three days; schooner Clara R. Grimes, with 12 men, caught with trawls 50,000 pounds of cod in 3 days. The pollock were caught in Massachusetts Bay; codfish were all caught from 1 to 5 miles from shore in Ipswich Bay.

Halibut receipts show an increase of 324,890 pounds over the corresponding month last year. All arrived fresh, and were caught mostly on Grand and Western Banks; one fare of 30,000 pounds caught off Newfoundland arrived in a British vessel. Prices have widely fluctuated, generally low, on April 22 selling for 2½ cents per pound, the lowest price for many months.

Mackerel have been a few days late in showing up and working north. The fleet daily left for the fishing grounds, 125 sail being engaged about the last of the month. The first catch of mackerel for the past eight years has been as follows:

Year.	Date.	Year.	Date.
1870.....	April 13	1883.....	March 31
1880.....	April 2	1884.....	March 31
1881.....	March 22	1885.....	March 28
1882.....	March 31	1886.....	April 10

Forty sail of the fleet were this year, on April 10, in latitude 37° 55', longitude 75° 10', when the first mackerel were seen. The schooners Alice C. Jordan and Ellen M. Adams, both of Gloucester, were the only vessels that secured fares. The first new salt mackerel arrived at New York on April 26, and sold for \$5 a barrel. Quite a large body of mackerel was seen the first of the month, but foggy weather much of the time prevented fishing, and only a small amount has been landed. The catch has nearly all been marketed fresh, selling at low prices, ranging from \$1 to \$6 per 100 fish, mostly at \$1 to \$2 per 100.

Another year may now be added to many previous ones as financially disastrous to all engaged in the early southern mackerel fishery, and by many it is thought to be injurious in other ways.

Iceland and Greenland will be visited on halibut trips by nine vessels, all from Gloucester, and the only vessels that will fish in these waters from the United States this year. The names and dates of sailing of this small fleet are as follows:

Name of vessel.	Date of departure.	Destination.
Schooner Mist.....	April 1 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Margaret Mather.....	April 8 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Landseer.....	April 9 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Mystery.....	April 15 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Clytie.....	April 15 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Arthur D. Story.....	April 19 ...	Iceland.
Schooner Mary E.....	April 9 ...	Greenland.
Schooner Herbert M. Rogers, ready to sail April 30 for Greenland.		
Schooner Seth Stockbridge will sail June 2 for Greenland.		

Weir and trap fishing will be carried on much more extensively than of late years, a large and constant demand for fresh bait being made by the New England fishing fleet. Up to the last of the month but few fish had been caught, the weirs having been down but a short time, but herring seem to be late in arriving. On April 13 the first herring, only 27 fish, were caught in traps in Gloucester harbor.

In addition to numerous minor disasters, the following fishing vessels have been lost during the past month: Schooner Electric Light, bound south on a mackerel trip, on the evening of March 27, when 25 miles south of Cape Henry, during a dense fog, was run into by the schooner Anne Lord, of Bangor, Me., and immediately sunk. The crew were saved, all else being a total loss. She was a fine vessel of 93 tons, built in 1883; the loss of vessel and outfit was about \$11,000. On April 23, schooner Eureka, on a mackerel trip, sunk at Delaware Breakwater; crew saved; loss \$4,000. Schooner Nettie Adams, shore codfishing, during a dense fog went ashore at Rye Beach, N. H.; crew saved. The vessel was small, old, and not of great value.

*Receipts of fish at Gloucester, Mass., in April, 1886.*

From—	Fares.	Codfish.	Halibut.	Haddock.	Hake.
		<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>
George's Bank .....	137	2,962,000	145,400	155,000	5,000
Grand Banks .....	31		954,000		
Brown's Bank .....	11	256,000	62,200		
Western Bank .....	11	765,000	72,000		
New England shore .....	3	30,900			
Ipswich Bay, nets .....	6	37,000			
Ipswich Bay, trawls .....	10	174,000			
Off Newfoundland* .....	1		30,000		
Banquereau .....	1		25,000		
Off Sable Island .....	1		15,000		
Total .....	212	4,214,900	1,303,600	155,000	5,000
Total, April, 1886 .....	250	4,592,000	978,710	185,000	

\* British vessel; duty free.

The following is the position of the New England fishing fleet during the last week of April:

Position.	Object.	No. of sail.
Grand Banks .....	Halibut .....	40
Do .....	Codfish .....	50
Western Bank .....	Halibut .....	20
George's and Brown's Banks .....	Cod and halibut .....	180
Off the south coast, latitude 37° to 39°, longitude 74° to 75° .....	Mackerel .....	125
On the way to Iceland or Greenland .....	Halibut .....	9

The mackerel fleet is working northward in the path of steamers bound to and from the south. The George's and Grand Banks fleets are more or less in the pathway of European steamers. During May over one hundred vessels will be added to the Grand Banks fleet.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., May 17, 1886.