

Boston Fish Pier Landings, 1978: A Review

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Introduction

Boston Fish Pier landings in 1978 were the heaviest since 1974 when 28.5 million pounds were landed. The 1978 value was the highest since 1967 when 77.9 million pounds landed brought \$9.6 million to the fishermen.

As was the case in other New England ports, Boston had some new vessels join the fleet in 1978. These new vessel additions were partially responsible for the slight increase in the total number of trips landed in 1978. Also many of the vessels made trips of shorter duration, 5- or 6-day trips, rather than 10- to 12-day trips. The shorter trips made it possible for the vessels to make more trips. The most active vessel made a total of 46 trips during the year. Two new vessels were scheduled to join the fleet in March 1979 and additional vessels later in the year.

Fishing quotas were adjusted many times during the fishing year on the recommendation of the New England Fisheries Management Council with the approval of the Department of Commerce. These adjustments were deemed necessary to avoid placing undue hardship on the fishing industry, keeping in mind the plight of the various regulated fish stocks.

Fish Pier Landings Increase

A total of 651 groundfish trips sold 27.3 million pounds of fish through the

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Off-loading pollock at low tide. (Boston North End in background.)

New England Fish Exchange at the Boston Fish Pier in 1978, valued ex-vessel at \$8.1 million (Table 1). This was a 5.1-million-pound increase over the 1977 landings of 22.2 million pounds from 591 trips, valued at \$6.0 million. The 23 percent increase in landings in 1978 was due to two reasons: 1) The increased number of trips by large and medium otter trawlers landed at Boston (Table 2) and 2) the turning back of the quota clock in October resulted in the landing of 7.3 million pounds of fish from October through December (Table 3). Commencement of a new fishing year for quota purposes began 1 October 1978. The landed weights of all species was up except for blackback and lemon sole

flounders (Table 1). The blackback flounder landings were off mainly due to the decrease in the total number of small inshore otter trawler trips. The decrease in lemon sole landings was partially due to the haddock quotas—vessels spent less time fishing eastern Georges Bank where most of the lemon sole are normally caught.

The 1978 total ex-vessel value rose 35 percent from 1977. The increased landings and higher ex-vessel prices of all species except large and market cod, and large haddock were accountable (Table 4).

Cod

This was the leading species landed in Boston again in 1978 with 9.9 mil-

lion pounds (36 percent of the total landings), up 15 percent from 1977's landings of 8.6 million pounds. The value gained 27 percent due to the increase in landings. For five different months the landings were over a million pounds (Table 3). On 26 December record ex-vessel first-sales prices were established on the three sizes of cod—large 95¢ per pound (average for the year was 29.87¢), market cod \$1.00 (annual average was 31.92¢), and scrod cod \$1.01 (annual average 30.65¢).

Haddock and Scrod

Large haddock landings of 2.7 million pounds, valued at \$1.1 million ex-vessel in 1978 were up compared with the 2.2 million pounds in 1977 which also sold for an ex-vessel value of \$1.1 million. The total landings might have been higher if the Canadian Government had not banned U.S. vessels from fishing in northwest Atlantic Canadian waters (Subarea 4X) after 4 June. The 1978 value remained about the same as in 1977 due to the decrease in the average ex-vessel price paid for large haddock—47.86¢ a pound compared with the previous year's average of 53.78¢. The price drop was due mainly to the larger amounts of large haddock landed in February. Haddock prices also set a new record high when the first-sales ex-vessel price reached \$1.41 a pound on 26 December.

Haddock scrod landings of 4.7 million pounds in 1978 were up 29 percent from the previous year's landings of 3.7

Table 1.—Boston Fish Pier landings by species, 1978 and 1977 (landings in round weight).

Species	1978			1977		
	Pounds ... In 1,000 ...	\$/Value	Avg. ex-vessel prices (¢/lb.)	Pounds ... In 1,000...	\$/Value	Avg. ex-vessel prices (¢/lb.)
Cod	9,926	2,630	—	8,655	2,071	—
Large	—	—	29.87	—	—	32.23
Market	—	—	31.92	—	—	32.18
Scrod	—	—	30.65	—	—	22.47
Cusk	334	76	25.87	232	46	22.51
Haddock, large	2,724	1,142	47.86	2,268	1,067	53.78
Haddock, scrod	4,732	1,628	39.26	3,663	1,056	32.87
Hake, white	539	109	27.50	509	98	25.77
Pollock	4,336	920	23.97	3,314	600	20.34
Ocean perch	2,794	629	22.52	2,184	451	20.72
Flounders						
Blackback	392	186	47.30	398	148	37.24
Dab	497	269	54.02	323	143	44.25
Sole, gray	252	164	65.12	135	81	60.15
Sole, lemon	43	26	55.49	45	20	42.77
Yellowtail	406	197	48.69	336	157	43.34
Halibut	3	5	187.35	1	2	143.89
Whiting	—	—	—	9	1	13.62
Wolffish	235	32	16.80	176	18	12.10
Scallops, sea (meats)	19	46	250.00	—	—	—
Unclassified	44	12	25.96	3	1	20.13
Totals	27,276	8,071	33.35	22,251	5,960	30.26

Table 2.—Trips by month, type and size of gear, and total landings and value.

Month	Gear					Monthly totals		1978	
	Otter trawlers			Line trawlers	Other vessels	Total 1978	Trips 1977	Landings \$/value	
	Large	Medium	Small					(In 1,000)	
January	11	20	13	4	—	48	53	1,304	500
February	15	16	4	2	—	37	40	2,652	726
March	15	24	5	1	—	45	31	1,932	666
April	11	24	11	1	—	47	37	1,843	460
May	11	32	8	1	—	52	45	1,741	418
June	7	37	12	—	—	56	58	2,240	464
July	9	37	9	—	11	56	52	1,867	578
August	18	54	5	3	—	80	73	3,368	1,017
September	22	38	9	3	21	73	50	3,058	966
October	24	29	10	—	—	63	64	3,169	926
November	18	30	2	—	—	50	48	2,577	764
December	16	26	2	—	—	44	40	1,525	586
Totals 1978	177	367	90	15	2	651	—	27,276	8,071
1977	166	238	129	58	—	—	591	22,251	5,960

¹Scallop.
²Seine boat.

Table 3.—Boston, Mass., fishery landings by month, species, and value.

Species	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total	\$/Value
	In 1,000 lb.												In 1,000	
Cod, mixed	400	1,107	549	626	868	1,157	518	1,031	1,125	1,491	800	254	9,926	2,630
Cusk	6	8	23	17	10	23	26	43	47	52	42	37	334	76
Haddock, large	123	507	168	68	67	156	223	381	281	266	354	130	2,724	1,142
Haddock, scrod	403	572	299	302	213	307	355	869	532	461	320	99	4,732	1,628
Hake, white	8	11	22	15	8	22	30	35	124	97	110	57	539	109
Pollock	153	194	466	390	196	225	274	585	452	444	514	443	4,336	920
Ocean perch	25	93	261	190	227	221	351	247	329	206	276	368	2,794	629
Flounders														
Blackback	103	76	50	22	18	11	8	11	48	29	11	5	392	186
Dab	8	20	26	63	36	47	26	46	42	58	54	71	497	269
Sole, gray	6	6	18	41	23	20	13	14	19	14	36	42	252	164
Sole, lemon	14	10	4	5	2	1	—	—	—	3	4	—	43	26
Yellowtail	42	29	27	41	37	24	8	84	28	32	43	11	406	197
Halibut	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	3	5
Scallops, sea	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	—	—	—	—	—	19	46
Wolffish	13	19	19	63	36	25	12	18	8	6	8	8	235	32
Bluefish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	—	—	—	14	1
Unclassified	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	4	8	9	4	—	30	11
Total landings (1,000 lbs.)	1,304	2,652	1,932	1,843	1,741	2,240	1,867	3,368	3,058	3,169	2,577	1,525	27,276	—
Total value (\$1,000)	500	726	666	460	418	464	578	1,017	966	926	764	586	—	8,071

million pounds. The landings would have been greater if there had not been catch restrictions imposed by the Fishery Management Plans. It had been reported that fishermen spent as much time steaming away from haddock scrod as they spent fishing for them. When they arrived at a new fishing area they were unable to continue fishing as they again found more haddock scrod than they were permitted to catch. The total ex-vessel value of the haddock scrod landings in 1978 was \$1.6 million as compared with the previous year's total value of \$1.1 million. The average ex-vessel price for haddock scrod in 1978 was 39.26¢ a pound, however, the first-sales price reached a record high on 26 December when scrod was bid up to \$1.30 a pound. This year's landed value was up 45 percent due to this year's average ex-vessel price of 39.26¢, an increase of 6.39¢ a pound from 1977's average of 32.87¢.

One of the reasons for the 1978 increase in large and scrod haddock landings was attributed to the weekly quota that was established and the amount allowed for overrun compared with the trip quotas per vessel in 1977.

Many vessels fished for the weekly limit and the allowed overrun—some vessels even recommended the establishment of a 3-week fishing period. Some of the fishermen had mentioned that the quotas should be set according



Fishing vessel *Eleanor Eileen* off-loading groundfish trip at Boston Fish Pier.

to the number of crew members because a medium otter trawler that fishes on Georges Bank has about the same expenses as a large vessel—both go to sea with 6-8 crewmen.

Pollock

Pollock ranked third in volume of landings at Boston in 1978 with a total of 4.3 million pounds, up 31 percent

Table 4.—Boston, Mass., ex-vessel prices by month and species (landed weight) and yearly average ex-vessel prices (\$/cwt.).

No. of trips	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1978	1977
48	37	45	47	52	56	56	80	73	63	50	44	651	591	
Cod														
Large	39.57	27.23	35.22	26.26	22.33	18.33	30.76	29.48	34.00	28.90	33.01	51.90	29.87	32.23
Market	36.00	31.04	43.78	25.10	25.31	21.10	39.41	38.89	36.51	29.61	36.20	58.31	31.92	32.18
Scrod	35.78	28.52	39.14	25.14	22.37	20.38	39.21	39.06	35.16	29.39	34.74	55.44	30.65	22.47
Cusk	39.64	27.69	33.42	21.28	24.60	15.77	20.94	23.98	25.26	22.79	27.60	36.53	25.87	22.51
Haddock, large	57.61	37.86	56.10	50.82	57.42	41.00	41.15	49.64	52.16	48.18	42.40	79.95	47.86	53.78
Haddock, scrod	44.65	30.57	51.78	39.09	35.54	27.20	34.85	37.90	41.77	40.98	40.66	76.03	39.26	32.87
Hake, white	58.40	49.19	49.23	45.50	42.77	20.67	23.61	21.82	18.77	23.61	24.91	42.28	27.50	25.77
Pollock	28.50	24.63	27.84	22.02	25.26	22.97	24.99	21.65	27.32	24.46	20.68	22.02	23.97	20.34
Ocean perch	36.67	21.51	23.54	20.31	19.93	17.92	20.40	22.78	21.23	26.16	24.01	26.35	22.52	20.72
Flounder														
Blackback	48.39	42.04	47.60	30.74	36.86	33.67	54.90	49.07	53.23	66.02	52.29	48.31	47.30	37.24
Dab	72.02	49.11	64.08	29.18	31.35	35.64	59.72	62.98	69.56	64.61	55.87	69.36	54.02	44.25
Sole, gray	96.46	53.31	77.90	46.42	39.65	40.58	66.57	67.52	75.67	81.08	70.53	85.05	65.12	60.15
Sole, lemon	69.68	48.04	51.04	28.50	57.28	50.00	—	—	—	63.59	57.73	58.00	55.49	42.77
Yellowtail	64.39	50.44	59.64	32.41	39.43	34.38	61.68	36.15	68.74	65.54	51.93	50.00	48.69	43.34
Halibut	—	176.61	—	—	—	—	—	175.00	169.44	200.00	200.00	—	187.35	143.89
Whiting, rnd.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.62
Wolffish	22.95	15.98	20.64	14.23	14.54	12.07	18.96	19.28	20.19	23.29	21.84	24.17	16.80	12.10
Scallops, sea	—	—	—	—	—	—	250.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	250.00
Value (\$1,000)	500	726	666	460	418	464	578	1,017	966	926	764	586	8,071	5,960
Total landings (1,000 lb. rnd. wt.)	1,304	2,652	1,932	1,843	1,741	2,240	1,867	3,368	3,058	3,169	2,577	1,525	27,276	22,251
Average ex-vessel price	43.18	31.16	38.52	27.94	27.01	23.43	32.05	34.14	35.76	33.30	33.54	33.19	33.35	30.26



Off-loading cod from fish holds by winch.

from the previous year's total of 3.3 million pounds. The 1978 value of the pollock landings totaled \$0.9 million, 54 percent above the 1977 value of \$0.6 million. The gain in value was attributed to the heavier increase in the average ex-vessel price from 20.34¢ the previous year to 23.97¢ in 1978. Again, August was the month of heaviest pollock landings totaling 585,000 pounds compared with August 1977 with only 421,000 pounds (Table 3). The August 1978 average ex-vessel price of 21.65¢ (Table 4) was below the annual average of 23.97¢ a pound, but higher than that for 1977 of 20.34¢ (Table 1). The 1976 pollock annual average ex-vessel price was only 18.97¢ when 5.6 million pounds were landed.

Ocean Perch

Ocean perch landings in 1978 of 2.8 million pounds were up 28 percent from 1977's 2.2 million pounds. The 1978 landings might have been higher except that some of the vessels that landed ocean perch in Boston in previous years unloaded in Gloucester although some

Off-loading cod and ocean perch from Boston "highliner."



of the fish were shipped to Boston by truck.

Hake

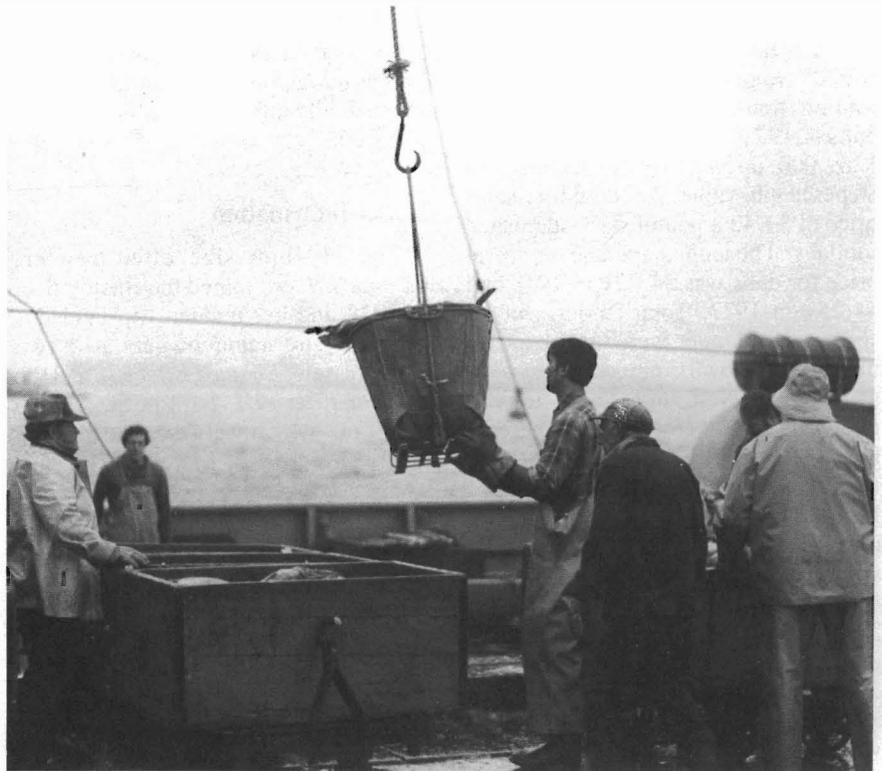
Hake landings in 1978 of 539,000 pounds were up 6 percent from the previous year's landings of 509,000 pounds. A record high first-sales price was established for hake when 80¢ a pound was recorded on 26 December. The year's average ex-vessel price of 27.50¢ showed a slight increase over 1977's average of 25.77¢.

Cusk

Cusk landings of 334,000 pounds in 1978 were valued at \$76,000 compared with the previous year's 232,000 pounds valued at \$46,000. The average ex-vessel price in 1978 of 25.87¢ a pound was up from the 22.51¢ average the previous year.

Flounder

Flounder landings of 1.6 million pounds valued at \$0.8 million increased 28 percent in quantity and 53 percent in value compared with the previous



"Lumper" off-loading fish into 500 pound boxes.

Three boxes of ocean perch being weighed up by Massachusetts Port Authority scaleman; vessel checker to left of weighing station is recording weight



year's total landings of 1.2 million pounds valued at \$0.5 million. The leading flounder species landed was dabs—497,000 pounds, valued at \$269,000, up 54 percent in quantity and 88 percent in value. A record first-sales price of \$1.42 a pound was established for dabs. The annual average ex-vessel price for dabs was 54.02¢ in 1978 and 44.25¢ in 1977. Total landings of all species of flounder were up except for blackbacks (down 2 percent because of a decrease in the small otter trawler fleet) and lemon sole (down 4 percent because of the haddock quota—the trips spent less time on eastern Georges Bank). Other flounders landed and values were: Yellowtail, 406,000 pounds valued at \$197,000 (with record first-sales price of 95¢); blackbacks, 392,000 pounds valued at \$186,000; gray sole, 252,000 pounds valued at \$269,000 (record first-sales price of \$2.00); and lemon sole, 43,000 pounds valued at \$26,000.

Scallops

One scalloper landed a total of 19,000 pounds of sea scallops, valued

at \$46,000 in the month of July. Although it was rumored that other scallopers would unload in Boston, it never occurred.

Vessel Information

The medium size otter trawler, *Eleanor Eileen*, joined the Boston fleet in 1978 and her maiden trip landed 1 August. The same owners had two other vessels, *Eleanor Eileen II* and the *Eleanor Eileen III*, built in St. Augustine, Fla., which were expected to join the Boston fleet in March 1979. Also two new Gloucester vessels, the *Paul & Domenic* and the *Vito C*, landed trips in Boston in 1978.

The small vessel, *Salvi & Joe*, sank at the dock but was raised and sold to a New Bedford interest in January. However, it sank a second time at the dock during the February "Blizzard of '78." Again, it was raised and has since departed for an unknown destination.

For various reasons, nine vessels that had landed a total of 43 trips in 1977, failed to land any trips in 1978 at the Boston Fish Pier. Were it not for the

decrease in the line trawler and small otter trawler trips along with the other vessels previously mentioned, Boston might have had well over 700 trips in 1978.

Other Information

The Channel Fish Company closed its facilities on the Fish Pier in July and moved to East Boston, although it continues to buy fish through the New England Fish Exchange. The D&F Fish Company moved into the facilities vacated by the Channel Fish Company at 31 Fish Pier.

Future Expansion

A complete revitalization of the Boston Fish Pier was expected to commence in the spring of 1979 and continue over the next 3 years at a cost of \$10 million. The Massachusetts Port Authority also plans to renovate the neighboring Commonwealth Pier at a cost of between \$10 to \$20 million. Future plans for the Commonwealth Pier do not include its use by the fishing industry.