

tutions, and often out of reach of government officers. The method of personal visitation I could extol very highly from personal experience and from close examination of results of that kind of work performed by others, but the present purpose has been to treat solely of the collection of material by mail.

U. S. FISH COMMISSION,
Washington, D. C., December 10, 1882.

NOTES ON THE MENHADEN FISHERY.

By OSCAR O. FRIEDLAENDER.

[Letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

Very large bodies of menhaden appeared on the Long Island coast between Fire Island and Rockaway Inlet last week, and all the boats did well. They were evidently driven in by sharks, as all the steamers caught lots of them. On Wednesday our steamer, the Leonard Brightman, caught 11 sharks, none less than 8 feet long, among 180,000 menhaden. We must have had last week not less than 350 sharks at the works. The destruction of these ferocious fish by the menhaden fleet during the season must be between 20,000 and 50,000, which should not be lost sight of. Steamers fishing between Barnegat and Harrifurt report fish all along the coast. I shall be pleased to furnish you a full report of catches at the close of the season.

My theory that the menhaden leave one locality for another to find better feeding ground seems now generally adopted. Between Cape May and Harrifurt, where the largest bodies of fat fish are found, they remain in spite of great numbers of steamers going there regularly to load up. Captain Church's steamers, especially the Humphrey, had a regular harvest there, loading up twice a week for three or four weeks past. If you determine to issue a circular regarding the seines, it strikes me that you may include not to commence fishing before May 15. Some opponents of the menhaden interest seem to believe that the spawning season commences about April 1 and extends to June. I differ with these gentlemen on that score on account of the poor quality of the menhaden caught early in May, but to satisfy these gentlemen and not to hurt our interests too much I do not doubt but all northern factories would submit to a recommendation from you not to open before May 15.

36 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, September 11, 1882.