

ford, as they were full of spawn. The spring and summer fish were bare of spawn.

NEW YORK, *November 29, 1883.*

John Doyle, who is now chief engineer on the New York and Jamaica steamship, and who was three years an engineer with us, reports a solid body of Menhaden about the 1st of last month, 30 miles off Cape Hatteras. This steamer passed through this immense body for fourteen hours; they were apparently bound for the Gulf Stream and were full of sharks. The presence of the latter on our coast this year may account for the scarcity of bluefish.

Never before were our fishermen so much troubled by sharks as this year, and our catch of sharks was unprecedented.

NEW YORK, *December 3, 1883.*

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#### 15.—METHOD OF CATCHING CRABS.

By McMENAMIN & CO.,

[Packers of hermetically sealed goods, such as crabs, oysters, clams, &c.]

Our crab catch has been greatly lessened this season by the high winds that have almost constantly prevailed along the coast. We catch now with trot lines, one man in a small row-boat attending each line. It has occurred to us that if we could use sloops or schooners with dip or other suitable nets, we would be able to work regardless of the general winds.

Your familiarity with the habits of the crab, and your knowledge of the methods of taking fish both in this country and abroad, suggests that you might know of some net that would answer our purpose better than the trot-line.

HAMPTON, VA., *October 8, 1883.*

#### REPLY BY PROFESSOR BAIRD.

I am inclined to doubt very much whether it would be possible to use nets in the capture of crabs, especially such as would have to remain for any length of time under water, or where a considerable number of crabs were collected together. You would, I think, find that those meshed would be immediately devoured by their more fortunate fellow or by accompanying fish.

There are various forms of traps which might be used for catching fish by baiting; but you are, of course, familiar with all of these.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 12, 1883.*